

*Spirit Breathed;
Spirit Blown*



2024 ASSEMBLY BINDER

Central States Synod, ELCA

JUNE 6, 2008
EMBASSY SUITES
10402 S Ridgeview Rd, Olathe, KS 66061

Table of Contents

Section I – General Information

Table of Contents	Page 1
Assembly Welcome – Bishop Candea	Page 3
Presiding Bishop Eaton’s Letter	Page 4
Synod Bishop and ELCA Representative	Page 5
Tentative Assembly Agenda	Page 6
Assembly Procedures and Voting Instructions	Page 8
Slido.com voting instructions	Page 11
Pre-assembly Special Hearings	Page 13
Synod Assembly Offering	Page 14
Synod Statistical Information for the Year	Page 15
Milestone Anniversaries	Page 17
Central States Synod Discernment Team	Page 18
Central States Synod Bishop's Report	Page 21
Special Thanks	Page 23

Section II – Nominations

Nominations Information	Page 1
Nomination Slate	Page 2
Biographical Information on Synod Council Nominees	Page 3
Biographical Information on Churchwide Voting Member Nominees	Page 5
Nomination Form	Page 9
Background Check Disclosure Form	Page 10

Section III – Budget/Finance

Treasurer’s Report	Page 1
Budget Worksheet	Page 5
Staff Compensaton	Page 6
2024 Narrative Budget	Page 7
Salaries and Benefits FYE 2025	Page 10
Salaries and Benefits FYE 2026	Page 11
Congregational Giving	
Border Conference	Page 12
Central Kansas Conference	Page 13
Eastern Missouri Conference	Page 14
Osage Conference	Page 15
Western Kansas Conference	Page 16

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

Section IV – Compensation Guidelines

Summary of changes for 2025	Page 2
Message from Bishop	Page 3
Table of Contents	Page 4
Compensation Worksheet link	Page 4
Section 1: Compensation	Page 4
Section 2: Benefits	Page 7
Section 3: Disability and Leave	Page 11
Section 4: Other Matters	Page 12
Appendix A – Extended Leave	Page 13
Appendix B – Sample Family and Medical Leave Policy	Page 15

Section V – Resolutions

2023 Synod Assembly Actions	Page 1
2024 Synod Assembly Proposed Resolutions Summaries	Page 2
Resolution SA24.01 – A Season of Global Awareness	Page 3
Resolution SA24.02 – Bethany College	Page 4
Resolution SA24.03 – Resolution to Become a Reconciling in Christ Synod	Page 5
Resolution SA24.04 – 2024 Resolution on Peace and Climate Justice	Page 7
Resolution SA24.05 – Pastoral Leadership Transitions in the Central States Synod	Page 9
Resolution SA24.06 – Thanksgiving for Ministry	Page 12

Section VI – Constitution

Chapter 1: Name and Incorporation	Page 1
Chapter 2: Status	Page 1
Chapter 3: Territory	Page 1
Chapter 4: Confession of Faith	Page 2
Chapter 5: Nature of the Church	Page 2
Chapter 6: Statement of Purpose	Page 3
Chapter 7: Synod Assembly	Page 6
Chapter 8: Officers	Page 11
Chapter 9: Nominations and Elections	Page 17
Chapter 10: Synod Council	Page 20
Chapter 11: Committees	Page 22
Chapter 12: Conferences, Coalitions, or Other Area Subdivisions	Page 24
Chapter 13: Congregations	Page 26
Chapter 14: Ministers of Word and Sacrament	Page 28
Chapter 15: Financial Matters	Page 34
Chapter 16: Indemnification	Page 35
Chapter 17: Adjudication	Page 36
Chapter 18: Amendments, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions	Page 37

Assembly Welcome



Welcome to the Central States Synod Assembly. This year we are gathering under the theme ***Spirit Breathed. Spirit Blown.*** We are reminded that it is the Spirit who *breathes* the church into life – calls, gathers and enlightens the whole church and keeps us in the true faith, **united with Christ in baptism.** And it is the Spirit who empowers us to **travel the way of Jesus** and blows us out to **join God’s reign of justice and radical love for the world.**

We will spend time together focusing on the Spirit’s work among us and discerning where the Spirit is calling us as the church. We will do this through:

- Worship and Sharing Meals
 - Thursday evening, we will gather at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Olathe for a meal and opening worship. I will be preaching and presiding at this service.
 - Saturday we will close the assembly with worship at the hotel and Rev. Sara Cutter, our churchwide representative, will be preaching.
 - Throughout the assembly, we will pause for brief prayer and song.
 - Friday evening, we will have a banquet and celebrate milestone ordination anniversaries.
- Bible study and table discussions which will be led by:
 - Rev. Aimee Appell, Director for Evangelical Mission
 - Rev. Donna Simon, Director for Evangelical Mission
 - Rev. Dave Whetter, Bishop’s Associate
- Receiving reports about our work together as the church.
- Electing members to the synod council and as voting members to the churchwide assembly in 2025.
- Discussion and voting on the budget, compensation guidelines, and various resolutions that have been brought forth, including becoming a Reconciling in Christ Synod.

This assembly, breathing in the Spirit, open to the direction the Spirit is blowing, will help us as we enter into intentional discernment in the coming year in preparation to call a new pastor to lead the synod at the Bishop’s Election in 2025. So let us breathe deeply this powerful Spirit that draws us together. Let us spread our minds, hearts, and arms wide to feel the wind of the Spirit blowing us out to be the church in this time and place.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Candea".

The Rev. Susan Candea
Bishop
Central States Synod, ELCA

From Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



April 8, 2024

"We have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (1 John 4:16).

Dear friends in Christ,

Thank you for your faithful and continuing partnership as we work together to help people discover the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Because God's grace and love have made a difference in our daily lives, we want others to experience that same love and acceptance. There are many in our communities who feel alone and are searching for love and connection. Sometimes we feel at a loss to know how to make a difference — what do we say, what can we do, how do we share God's love?

You share this love every day. When you invite others to join in your faith community, to worship, to participate in service activities, to pray together, to share their story — these are all ways our neighbors experience the love of God in community.

There are examples of God's love throughout our church as we work for healing, peace and justice to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

The Spirit is calling us to move together as one church to share the grace and love we experience every day. May God bless your time together.

In Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Synod Bishop and ELCA Representative

**The Rev. Susan Candea,
Bishop, Central States Synod, ELCA**



Susan Candea graduated from California Lutheran College, Thousand Oaks, CA in 1979 with a B.A. in Political Science and then attended Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA where she received her M.Div. in 1983. Since then, she has over 30 years of parish ministry experience and 6 years on synod staff before being elected bishop in 2019.

She has been involved in many aspects of ministry throughout the church including advocacy work, campus ministry, youth gatherings, community organizing, interfaith and ecumenical work. She currently serves as chair of the Leadership Committee of the Conference of Bishops, and Bishops and Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group. She is an advisory bishop for the Quality of Call Initiative in the ELCA, and serves on the boards of LSTC, Bethany College, and Kansas Interfaith Action. In May of 2020 she received an honorary doctorate from Wartburg Theological Seminary.

She is passionate about preaching the gospel and connecting the radical and inclusive good news in ways that challenge us to live out our faith in public ways. She has three sons and two grandchildren and enjoys spending time with her family, going on hikes, and listening to audiobooks (good mystery stories) as she drives the many miles across the synod to be with congregations.

**The Rev. Sara Cutter,
Senior Director for Operations in the Christian Community and Leadership Home Area, ELCA**



The Reverend Sara Cutter serves as the Senior Director for Operations in the Christian Community and Leadership Home Area of the ELCA's churchwide organization. In this role, she manages the operations of a variety of ministries engaged with supporting and nurturing ELCA congregations and growing their leaders. She is also a member of the Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group. Prior to serving the churchwide organization, she led three different parishes of varying sizes and locations. In Pastor Sara's earlier professional days she worked as an engineer and during that time earned an MBA. She is married to another pastor, the Reverend Todd Cutter. Together they have a delightful daughter, Amelia, and two persnickety dogs, Belle and Josie. She is an avid Ohio State Buckeyes fan.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

2024 Synod Assembly Hearings

Pre-assembly - (via Zoom)

Tuesday – May 28

7:00 – 8:30 pm.

Compensation Guidelines Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84413639566?pwd=VFcwaTNzaCs4cWtqSW9tUjJxdnZXQT09>

Meeting ID: 844 1363 9566

Passcode: 117140

Wednesday – May 29

7:00 – 8:30 pm.

Resolutions Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88215797450?pwd=WnB0NlIiLOVRnL09NQXVhZmZlMm1QUT09>

Meeting ID: 882 1579 7450

Passcode: 200252

Thursday – May 30

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Budget Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88407808218?pwd=Ym82VlYwaTh2YXViOXBmcmI2UkFOQT09>

Meeting ID: 884 0780 8218

Passcode: 838350

2024 Synod Assembly Agenda

Thursday – June 6, 2024

2:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Voting Member check-in

2:00- 6:00 p.m.

Display tables open

4:00 p.m.

Voting Member Orientation

5:30 p.m.

Dinner - St. Mark's Lutheran Church

7:00 p.m.

Opening Worship - St. Mark's Lutheran Church

21155 College Blvd, Olathe, KS 66061

(Overflow parking is available at Christ Community Church of the Nazarene,
21385 College Blvd, Olathe, KS 66061 immediately to the West of St. Mark's)

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Friday – June 7, 2024

8:00 a.m. Voting Member check-in

8:30 a.m. Plenary I

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

9:00 a.m. Bible Study and Table Conversation

9:30 a.m. Report from the Bishop & Vice President

10:15 a.m. Nominations

10:30 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. Treasurer's Report & presentation of Budget

11:45 Elections

12:00 p.m. Lunch

Optional Table Discussions -

1. The Spirit Blows us out to advocate for justice.
2. The Spirit blowing the ELCA in a new direction.
3. The Spirit is blowing us together in collaboration.
4. The Spirit Breathing new life.

1:30 p.m. Plenary II

1:30 p.m. Bible Study and Table conversation

2:00 p.m. Election Results

2:15 p.m. Churchwide Report

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. Resolutions

4:00 p.m. Reflecting Together, Synod Discernment

4:45 p.m. Afternoon prayer

5:00 p.m. Break

6:30 p.m. Dinner & Anniversary Banquet

8:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

Saturday, June 8

8:30 a.m. Plenary III

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

8:45 a.m. Bible Study and table conversation

9:10 a.m. Bethany Village

9:20 a.m. Compensation Guidelines and unfinished business

10:15 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. Closing Worship

11:30 a.m. Assembly concludes

Voting Member Information regarding Assembly Procedures

INTRODUCTION

Each synod assembly's authority and procedures must conform to the requirements of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The parliamentary procedures are shaped by the most current version of *Robert's Rules of Order*. Further, each assembly may adopt other specific rules to better conduct its business. Finally, time and experience has led to several ordinary practices that are carried over from assembly to assembly simply because they have proven to be effective.

For the most part, these organizational factors work well to provide an orderly framework within which each voting member may be fully and actively involved in the deliberative process of the assembly. However, at times, these same factors may seem artificially restrictive and notably frustrating if voting members do not know why a specific procedure is being followed or how they may participate at a particular moment. Please know that these rules and procedures have been thought out and evaluated by synod leadership as well as other synods conducting assemblies and gatherings. The intent is to allow the assembly to reliably conduct the business of the synod in the most equitable and accessible format possible.

The chart and notes which follow are a first opportunity for you to understand the procedures of this assembly so that you may fully and actively participate. Another opportunity is the **Voting Members' Orientation** which will be held on Thursday, June 6 at 4:00 p.m. at the Embassy Suites Ballroom. Although oriented towards new voting members, these sessions will be helpful information for all voting members as we will again be utilizing an electronic voting process for elections. Finally, during the assembly, if you have any questions, please feel free to communicate with the synod's officers, council members; Sarah Thomas, assembly parliamentarian; or the Rev. Dave Whetter, Bishop's Associate.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

Voting Member Information

To accomplish this:	You say this:	May you Interrupt?	Is a second necessary?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	Necessary vote	Can it be reconsidered?
Introduce business	"I move that.."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by.."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
Give further study	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES (unless it goes to committee)
Postpone discussion for a period of time	"I move to postpone discussion until..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO (Unless a vote is not taken)
temporarily suspend consideration	"I move to table the motion"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
Raise a question about noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO (usually)
Call for an intermission	"I move we recess for..."	NO	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO
Adjourn the meeting	"I move that we adjourn."	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
Request information	"Point of information"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
Reconsider an action	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY	NO
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move to take from the table..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
Verify a voice vote by having members stand	"I call for a division."	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal from the chair's decision."	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY	YES
Protest a breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE (unless it is unclear)	NO
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion"	YES	NO	NO	NO	2/3	YES (if main motion was not considered)
Suspend rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR CENTRAL STATES SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Prior to the assembly

- Each voting member must register and include a unique email address. (**For voting purposes, voting members may not share the same email address.**)
- Elections will be done using Slido. Voting members will need to access the Slido app through their smartphone, tablet, or computer. Slido can be accessed at www.slido.com or through either the Apple App Store or Google Play. A QR code will also be available.
- Hearings for the budget, resolutions, and compensation guidelines will take place the week of May 28 – 30. (See the assembly material for the schedule.) These hearings are open to any member of the synod, not only voting members.

During the assembly

- **To speak to a motion before the assembly**, voting members are asked to come to the microphone with their voting cards to indicate:
 - **GREEN - For** (wish to speak in favor of the item being discussed)
 - **RED - Against** (wish to speak in opposition to the item being discussed)
 - **WHITE - Question** (have a question regarding the item being discussed)
 - **WHITE - Amend** (would like to make an amendment)
 - **WHITE - Call the question** (request that the debate be closed)
 - Wait to be recognized by the chair and then introduce yourself, include the name and location of your congregation before speaking.
 - The chair will call upon individuals in the order in which they appear at the microphones (alternating when possible, those in favor and those opposed). Each person will have up to **two minutes** to speak once recognized by the chair. Voting members are reminded to always begin their comments with their name and their congregation's name and location.
 - When making an amendment voting members will be asked to submit the written amendment to the synod secretary at the front of the room if possible. When at the microphone, state your amendment, then **wait for the bishop to receive a second**. Once a second has been received, you can speak to why you are making the amendment.
 - When no further speakers wish to comment, or the debate has been ended, the bishop will call for a vote.
 - **Voting** on general business will be done using the voting cards.
 - In favor – hold up the green card
 - Opposed – hold up the red card
 - Abstain – hold up the white card
- Hold up only the card that reflects your vote** until the chair asks that it be lowered.
- The bishop will announce the results. If the vote is too close to call, the bishop will call for a count of the votes. Please follow the instructions to hold your cards up, until the counters come by each table to tally the votes. The bishop will announce the results.
 - **Elections** will be done using Slido. After nominations are closed and the ballot is ready, voting members will be instructed to use the app to cast their ballot.

Whether you are attending your first assembly, or you have attended previous assemblies as a voting member, your full and active participation is both welcomed and necessary for the continued well-being of our synod.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

SLIDO.COM VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

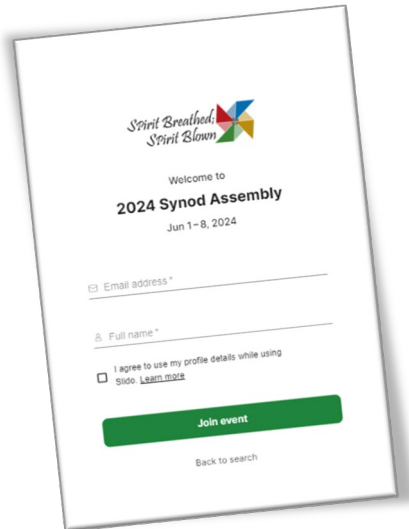
Voting members have multiple options for accessing the Slido voting platform.

USING A WEB BROWSER

- Using a web browser, navigate to www.slido.com. At the top of the page is the option for “Joining as a participant.” Enter the event code **2024CSS-assembly**.

Joining as a participant? #2024CSS-assembly →

- On the next page, enter the email address and full name you used to register for the assembly. (Voting members may not share the same email address.) Click “I agree to use my profile details” and Join Event.



- A four-digit access code will be sent to your email address. Enter the code and confirm.
- You will then be entered into 2024 Synod Assembly.

SCANNING THE QR CODE

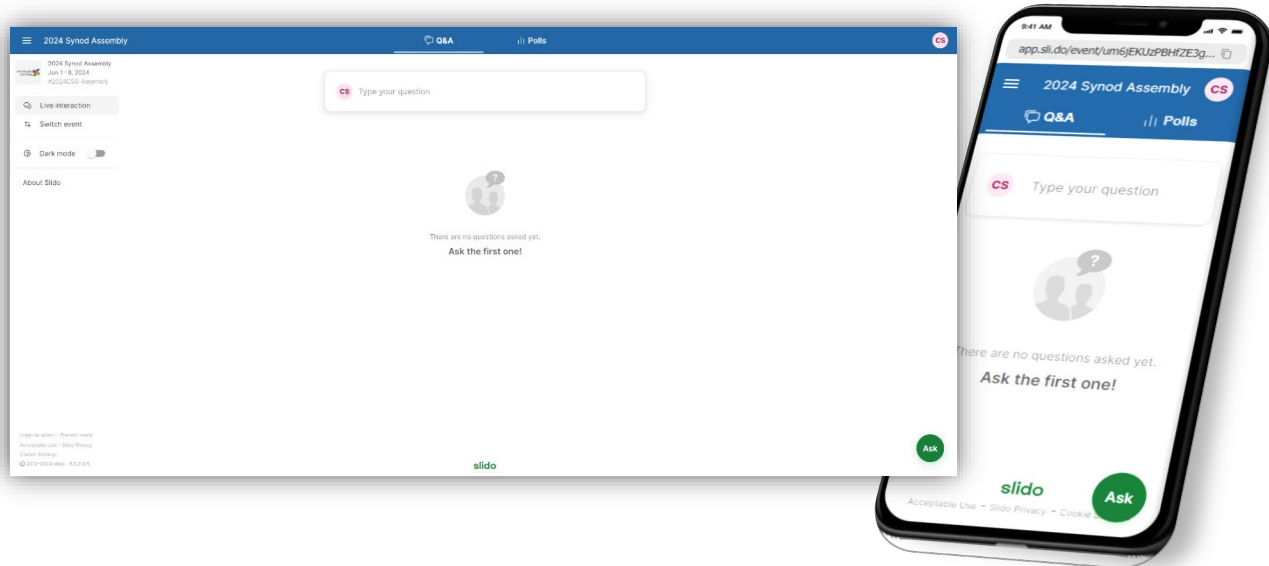
- Voting Members may use a smartphone or tablet by scanning the QR code.
- At the log in screen, enter your email address and full name.
- A four-digit access code will be sent to your email address. Enter the code and confirm.
- You will then be entered into 2024 Synod Assembly



Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

NAVIGATING SLIDO



- At the top of the page, you will see Q&A and Polls. By default, you will be in Q&A mode. You can ask questions or make announcements and seek technical support. Simply type your request in the dialogue box and click the green “Ask” button at the lower right.
- When voting occurs, the Polls will become active, and you can enter your vote on the business before the assembly.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

SPECIAL HEARINGS FOR THE ASSEMBLY

The following hearings will be held prior to the start of the Assembly. These sessions are open to all members of the Central States Synod. Assembly registration is not required.

Pre-assembly - (via Zoom)

Tuesday – May 28

7:00 – 8:30 pm.

Compensation Guidelines Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84413639566?pwd=VFcwaTNzaCs4cWtqSW9tUjJxdnZXQT09>

Meeting ID: 844 1363 9566

Passcode: 117140

Wednesday – May 29

7:00 – 8:30 pm.

Resolutions Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88215797450?pwd=WnB0NllOVnRnL09NQXFvMzNJMm1QUT09>

Meeting ID: 882 1579 7450

Passcode: 200252

Thursday – May 30

7:00 – 8:30 pm

Budget Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88407808218?pwd=Ym82VlYwaTh2YXViOXBmcmI2UkFOQT09>

Meeting ID: 884 0780 8218

Passcode: 838350

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024



Synod Assembly Offering 2024

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. – Matthew 25:35

God richly provides for daily bread — the earth can produce enough food for everyone. Yet, many of our sisters and brothers still go hungry.

As members of the ELCA, we are called to respond. We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work. Fifty years ago, Lutherans in the United States launched the World Hunger appeals to stand with their neighbors experiencing hunger. Now a core ministry of the church, ELCA World Hunger embodies our hope in God’s promise and our faith that God is revealed in the neighbors we accompany together.

The Central States Synod is honoring this milestone and is committed to the ministry. That is why we have selected ELCA World Hunger as the recipient of our 2024 Synod Assembly Offering. You can give now online or present your offering during the assembly, June 6-8.

Congregations are encouraged to use the link for online giving on the [Synod Assembly webpage](https://www.css-elca.org/assembly) (<https://www.css-elca.org/assembly>).

Click on **Assembly Offering** and designate Synod Assembly offering in the drop-down menu.

Or you may mail your offer to the synod office.

Central States Synod
420 W 14th St
Kansas City, MO 64105

These offerings, which are above and beyond a congregation’s regular giving, reflect our commitment not only to the ministries of our synod – the work we do together – but also reflect our hope and trust in God’s abundant care.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

Synod Statistical Information June 2024 - May 2024

Seminarians in Candidacy –

Richard Ashley from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA, as Word and Sacrament
Elizabeth Carr from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque IA, as Word and Sacrament
Sarah Freyermouth from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago IL, as Word and Sacrament
Jennelle Hinck from United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia PA, as Word and Sacrament
Eric Jenson from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago IL, as Word and Sacrament
Megan Mong from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago IL, as Word and Sacrament
Joel Pike from Luther Seminary, St. Paul MN, as Word and Sacrament
Lisa Simmelink from Luther Seminary, St. Paul MN as Word and Sacrament

People New to the Synod –

	Effective Date
Rev. Paul Helege, retired, from Pacifica Synod	July 13, 2023
Rev. Scott Benolkin from Northern Illinois Synod to Bethel Lutheran, St. Louis, MO	August 24, 2023
Rev. Ethan Feistner, from NE Synod, synod council call, Camp Tomah Shinga	September 5, 2023
Rev. Jordan Stone, first call, to Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS	September 10, 2023
Deacon Glenda Pearson, retired, from NE Synod	September 21, 2023
Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse from Greater Milwaukee Synod to Lutheran Church of the Atonement	March 4, 2024

Moves Within the Synod –

	Effective Date
Rev. Ashely Masoni Huber, Synod Council call to specialized ministry	August 14, 2023
Rev. Brenda Rodger, candidate to First Lutheran, Dorrance, KS & Trinity, Hays, KS	August 17, 2023
Rev. Kimberly Knowle-Zeller, from OLFC to non-stipendiary Synod Council call	October 1, 2023
Rev. Joanne Hickey, candidate to Synod Council call to specialized ministry	October 22, 2023
Rev. Brenda Ulrich from Synod Council call to Grace Lutheran, Osage City KS	January 21, 2024
Rev. Anita Strommen from OLFC to Marion Hill, White City, KS	March 1, 2024

On Leave From Call -

	Effective Date
Rev. Bethany Rutten Kempes, 4 th year of OLFC	September 10, 2023
Rev. Jim Peters, 2 nd year of OLFC	February 19, 2024
Rev. Alfie Wyatt, 3 rd year of OLFC	May 14, 2024
Rev. Jeff Alvestad, from Trinity Lutheran Church, Lawrence, KS, 1 st year of OLFC	June 1, 2024

Transfer out of the Synod –

	Effective Date
Rev. Dan Baldwin, KU Campus Ministry to Northeastern Iowa Synod	August 15, 2023
Rev. Michael Ide, retired to Southeastern Iowa Synod	August 16, 2023
Rev. Andrew Patty from Trinity Lutheran, Topeka, KS to Metropolitan New York Synod	December 31, 2023
Rev. Dan McKnight from Kaw Prairie, Lenexa, KS to Metropolitan Chicago Synod	March 25, 2024

Resigned or Removed from Roster –

	Effective Date
Rev. Melaku Tizazu, Synod Council Call, Mission Developer	July 1, 2023
Rev. Anna Ballan, Church Council call	August 18, 2023
Rev. Rick Raymer from Zion Lutheran, Beloit, KS	August 28, 2023

Synod Statistical Information June 2024 - May 2024 (continued)

Retirement –

	Effective Date
Rev. Richard Mueller	August 1, 2023
Rev. Cynthia Schnaath	August 1, 2023
Deacon Cherri Jestmore	August 1, 2023
Rev. Glenda Pearson	September 12, 2023
Rev. Mike Malone	November 1, 2023
Rev. Linda Bollenbach	October 1, 2023
Rev. Katherine Hayes	February 1, 2024
Rev. Barb Jones	March 1, 2024
Rev. Merle Brockhoff	April 1, 2024
Rev. Randy Chapman	April 1, 2024

Deaths –

	Effective Date
Rev. Gerald Leaf	December 6, 2023
Rev. George Campbell	December 28, 2023
Rev. Ray Otto	January 12, 2024
Rev. Len Dale	January 22, 2024
Rev. Roger Gieschen	January 23, 2024
Rev. Chris Launer	February 12, 2024

Congregational Changes –

	Effective Date
Zion Lutheran, Wakeeney, KS disaffiliated	June 25, 2023
Zion Lutheran, Beloit, KS disaffiliated	August 27, 2023
El Nino Divino, Garden City, KS, closed	September 1, 2023
Trinity Lutheran, Otis KS, disaffiliated	December 3, 2023

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

Individuals Milestone Anniversaries

<p align="center">5 Years</p> <p>The Rev. Andrew Baumgartner The Rev. Joel Hinck Mr. Dennis Kemper (PMA) The Rev. Melissa Woepfel</p> <p align="center">10 Years</p> <p>The Rev. Joshua Brecht Mr. John Dumler (PMA) Ms. Andrea Hodges (PMA) Deacon Cherri Jestmore The Rev. Micah Sievenpiper Ms. Sarah Thomas (PMA)</p> <p align="center">15 Years</p> <p>Ms. Mary Lou Anderson (PMA) Mr. Phil Knox (PMA) Ms. Ann McConkey (PMA) Ms. Betty Beijan Schaefer (PMA) The Rev. Delvin Strecker</p> <p align="center">20 Years</p> <p>Deacon Sandra Everingham Ms. Tammy Jahnke (PMA) The Rev. Chad Langdon Ms. Kathy Ouellette (PMA) Ms. Angie Sundell (PMA)</p>	<p align="center">25 Years</p> <p>The Rev. Gregory Eidell The Rev. James Erdman Ms. Nancy Mitchell (PMA)</p> <p align="center">30 Years</p> <p>The Rev. David Carlson The Rev. Linda Diepenbrock The Rev. Evelyn Phillips The Rev. Anita Strommen The Rev. David Strommen Deacon Diane Wagner</p> <p align="center">35 Years</p> <p>The Rev. Peter Jacobson The Rev. Peter Rehwaldt The Rev. Cynthia Schnaath</p> <p align="center">40 Years</p> <p>Deacon Ruth Blundell The Rev. James Brandt The Rev. William Yancey</p>	<p align="center">45 Years</p> <p>The Rev. John Backus II The Rev. James Banner The Rev. Randall Chapman The Rev. Randall Gibbs The Rev. Russell Glaser The Rev. Jimmy Gleason The Rev. William McKay The Rev. George Pejakovich</p> <p align="center">50 Years</p> <p>The Rev. Arthur Wienandt The Rev. Elwyn Luber The Rev. Gary Teske The Rev. James Lohmeyer The Rev. Keith Wiens The Rev. Keith Holste The Rev. Michael Haar</p> <p align="center">55 Years</p> <p>The Rev. James Beaty The Rev. Jeffrey Lindgren The Rev. Jerome Egel The Rev. John Davis The Rev. John Binder Jr The Rev. William Bullock</p> <p align="center">60 Years</p> <p>The Rev. Donald Thuss The Rev. Eugene Moll</p>
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Congregational Milestone Anniversaries

<p>75 Years Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Washington, KS</p> <p>100 Years Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hoisington KS</p> <p>125 Years Immanuel Lutheran Church, Kansas City, MO</p> <p>150 Years Zion Lutheran Church, Hanover KS</p> <p>175 Years Immanuel Lutheran Church, Cole Camp MO</p>
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Congratulations and God's blessings to everyone who is celebrating an anniversary of note this year.

CENTRAL STATES SYNOD DISCERNMENT TEAM



2025 Bishop Election
Reflecting Together in Mindful Preparation

The Discernment Team's Purpose

In early 2024, anticipating the Bishop Election at the 2025 Central States Synod Assembly, the Synod Council established a Discernment Team to:

- design and carry out a process to invite the Central States Synod into a time of discernment concerning the needs, hopes and realities of our life together as the body of Christ in the Central States; and
- design and carry out a process for congregations and voting members to learn consistent biographical information about those discerning a call to be considered as bishop, who agree to share that information.

The Team's Work and Schedule

To that end, the Team began publishing monthly devotions in April 2024. That series, which recognizes our need for the Spirit's guidance, will continue through the 2025 Synod Assembly. The Team also developed questions designed to guide Synod conversations that identify our common understandings about the Synod's ministries, values, challenges, and needs. This will enable rostered ministers, in turn, to discern whether they are open to the call of serving as the Synod's next Bishop.

The Team's remaining timeline is:

- June 2024 - August 2024:
 - Voting members at the Assembly participate in table conversations using the discernment questions (included on page 20).
 - Individuals, congregations, and regional groups respond to the discernment questions through various means currently under development. (Voting members are encouraged to participate in these subsequent conversations.)
- August 2024 - December 2024:
 - The Team collates the responses along with statistical data provided by Synod Staff to develop a description of the Synod and its future calling.
 - The Team develops a set of common biographical questions for use by those who discern they are open to being called to serve as the next Bishop, and develops a process to collect the completed forms.
- January 2025 - March 2025:
 - Rostered ministers review the Synod description and, if they discern an openness to being called as the next Bishop, complete and submit the biographical form.
- June 2025:
 - Nominations may be made at the 2025 Synod Assembly through the ecclesiastical ballot process.
 - Bishop election.

CENTRAL STATES SYNOD DISCERNMENT TEAM



2025 Bishop Election
Reflecting Together in Mindful Preparation

The Team's Members

The Team, facilitated by Cathy Hohl (Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO) and Rev. Lee Bennight (Disciples of the Plains, Stuttgart, KS), includes:

- Rev. Merle Brockhoff – Retired
- Rev. David Frerichs – St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Columbia, MO
- Andrea Keese – Disciples of the Plains, Stuttgart, KS
- Rev. Kim Knowle-Zeller – St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cole Camp, MO
- Bill Lang – Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, KS
- Nancy Nagel – Vice-President, Central States Synod, Peace Lutheran Church, Washington, MO
- Debbie Schroeder-Saulnier – Living Lord Lutheran Church, Lake St. Louis, MO



2025 Bishop Election

Reflecting Together in Mindful Preparation

Discernment Questions

REFLECT

Use these questions to describe the current activities of the Central States Synod.

- What three words describe God's activity within the Central States Synod?
- What three words describe the Central State Synod's contribution to its member congregations?
- What does the current situation require of members of the Central States Synod?

MISSION

The church must constantly adapt to effectively proclaim the Gospel as the world changes. In this section, discuss your dreams for the Central States Synod mission over the next five years.

- How will the Holy Spirit use the Central States Synod to proclaim the Gospel over the next five years? Where is the Holy Spirit calling us to minister?
- What unique gifts do the (a) congregations; and (b) people in the Central States Synod have to support that mission?
 - What will occur if these gifts are used effectively?
- What obstacles must be overcome to fulfill this mission?

LEADERSHIP

Use the questions below to consider the Central States Synod leadership and organizational structure.

- What are the most important gifts for ministry that the incoming Bishop should exhibit to guide the Central States Synod in fulfilling its mission?
- Without identifying a specific person, what type of person is the Holy Spirit looking for to lead us in this mission?
- What organizational structure will best support collaboration throughout the Central States Synod in fulfilling the Holy Spirit's call?

CLOSING

Use these questions to highlight what's most important.

- What question wasn't asked? (You may also offer an answer, at your option.)
- How, if at all, will the Central States Synod change as a result of these conversations?
- What do you want the incoming Bishop to have heard loudly and clearly?

BISHOP'S REPORT FOR THE 2024 SYNOD ASSEMBLY



As we continue to live out our call to join **God's reign of justice and radical love for the world** by **traveling the way of Jesus**, knowing that we are **united with Christ in baptism**, the questions I have been asking this past year are:

- What's church got to do with it?
- How does being the church enable us to participate in God's mission?
- Why do we need the church?

At our Fall Theological conference, Dr. Cheryl Peterson helped me reframe those questions by asking: **Who is the church?** The answer lies with the Spirit. The church is the community of faith brought to life by the breath of the Spirit who blows us out to serve God's world. In the ELCA, we live out this identity in an interdependent relationship as congregations, the synod, and the churchwide expression. As the bishop of the synod, I have worked with these three expressions this year in the following ways:

Congregations

- Preached and participated in worship at 35 congregations across the synod, celebrating anniversaries and installations or simply visiting and being present.
- Had conversations with Trinity Lutheran in Otis, KS, about their concerns regarding the ELCA prior to their vote to disaffiliate in December of 2023.
- Have been working with volunteers, city officials, attorneys, and real estate brokers to sell the property of Bethany Lutheran Church in Webster Groves after the synod assumed administration of the property and closed the congregation. We were finally able to sell the property to another church. **This serves as a reminder that every congregation should develop a plan should they no longer be able to fulfill their purpose as a congregation; they, and not the synod, can make decisions about their property and legacy.**
- 34 of our congregations are served by Parish Ministry Associates or Synod Authorized Ministers – trained lay leaders who preside at communion by my authorization as bishop as an extension of my responsibility as the pastor of the synod. I am deeply grateful for the ministry of these individuals. In August, I conducted two online classes for individuals serving these congregations, lifting up the gifts of Lutheran Theology and how they inform our preaching and presiding at the sacraments.
- My associate, Rev. Dave Whetter, and I work with congregations to help them clarify their purpose and find pastoral leaders. This continues to be a challenge because of the shortage of rostered candidates and the inability of some of our congregations to afford a full-time or even part-time rostered minister.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Synod – We, all the congregations and ministries, are the synod!

- Led online presentations in the fall entitled, **What's Church Got To Do With It?** lifting up the importance of our interdependent relationship with all expressions of the church.
- Launched the Synod's **Ministry Lab**, which provides resources and education for congregations regarding:
 - Good Order – leadership
 - Means of Grace – how to read Scripture through a Lutheran lens.
 - Living Faith – how to do ministry collaboratively.

Check out the synod website at www.css-elca.org/lab for upcoming offerings.)

- Hosted the **Fall Theological Conference** for rostered and synod-authorized ministers. Dr. Cheryl Peterson was our speaker, helping us understand the identity of the church in connection to the work of the Spirit.
- Designed and presented boundary education workshops entitled **A Sacred Trust. All rostered and synod-authorized ministers** actively serving a congregation or ministry were expected to attend. There were five opportunities to attend, including three in-person and two online sessions.
- Worked with the synod council, an amazing group of leaders, to address the budget in light of the continued decrease in mission support received from congregations, as well as other matters, such as the decision to sponsor a resolution to become a **Reconciling in Christ Synod**, which will be presented at this assembly. I hosted conversations with rostered and synod-authorized ministers in early April and then with lay members in May to talk about what it means for the synod.
- I serve on the board of the Kansas Interfaith Action Coalition, which is our synod's public policy office through the ELCA.

Churchwide Expression of the ELCA

- I serve as the chair of the leadership committee of the Conference of Bishops, which meets in person twice a year.
- I am chairing a churchwide task force charged with revising the candidacy process by which individuals become pastors and deacons to make it simpler, more consistent, and more flexible to meet the needs of the candidates and the church. We have been meeting for two years. Our goal is to complete our work by the churchwide assembly in 2025.
- I participate on the boards of the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and Bethany Lutheran College in Lindsborg.
- Seven synods in the mid-west, including ours, are participating in a grant through the ELCA to improve the Quality of Calls for Women in Ministry. Our synod acts as the fiscal agent of this grant, and I supervise the project manager.

I deeply appreciate all the ways in which I am able to serve in and through this **one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church, and continue to breathe** in the wisdom and power of the Spirit to guide my call.



Bishop Susan Candea

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Special Thanks to...

- St. Mark's Lutheran Church for hosting our opening worship and providing space for the Thursday evening dinner.
- Rev. Sara Cutter for joining us from Churchwide.
- Bishop Susan Candea for leading the assembly.
- Rev. Aimée Appell, Rev. Donna Simon, and Rev. Dave Whetter for leading our Bible studies.
- Vice President, Nancy Nagel; Secretary, Rev. Chad Langdon; Treasurer, Scott Schulte; and all of the synod council members for their leadership
- The members of the Synod Discernment Team; Rev. Lee Bennight and Cathy Hohl (facilitators) Rev. Merle Brockhoff, Rev. David Frerichs, Andrea Keese, Rev. Kim Knowle-Zeller, Bill Lang, Nancy Nagel, and Debbie Schroeder-Saulnier
- Members of the Nominations Committee
- Members of the Resolutions Committee
- Members of the Compensation Guidelines Committee
- Ms. Sarah Thomas, Parliamentarian
- The members of all the synod teams and committees who prepared presentations and reports for the assembly.
- The 2024 Synod Assembly Planning Team; Rev. Peter Rehwaldt, Rev. Cynthia Schnaath, Rev. Donna Simon, Rev. Noni Strand, Rev. Jennifer Thomas, Sarah Thomas, and Rev. Melissa Woeppel
- Jill Whetter, for her coordination of the Thursday dinner and the beautiful decorations of the assembly hall.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2024 Nominations for Central States Synod

Introduction

Each year the voting members of the Synod Assembly elect people who have been nominated to various positions, such as members of the Synod Council. Ultimately, the voting members of the Assembly are responsible for the nominations, but they are assisted by members of congregations, area ministry leaders, and the Nominating Committee. There are two stages to the nominating process, one before the assembly and one at the assembly. All Synod Council positions (except the youth positions) require a background check and therefore nominees need to submit a [disclosure form](#) along with the [nomination form](#).

Pre-Assembly

Early in the calendar year, the Nominating Committee works with conferences to fulfill its responsibility as described in the synod bylaws (S9.03.04). Nomination forms are to be submitted to the synod office no later than April 15, 2024. The chair of the Nominating Committee is Pat Bjuland, Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS.

Phone: 816-674-0828. E-mail: pbjuland@sbcglobal.net.

At the Assembly

Nominations may also take place at the assembly as described in the synod bylaws (S9.03.05). People nominated from the floor need to provide information requested on the biographical form and in some cases, a disclosure form.

Participating in the Process

Whether you are a voting member of the assembly or not, if you have questions about how you can participate in the nominating process or would like to suggest someone for nomination, please contact your pastor, the chair of the Nominating Committee, Pat Bjuland, or Tim Anderson at the synod office (913-948-9701, tanderson@css-elca.org).

Helpful information:

Responsibilities for Synod Council members:

- Be the board of directors for the synod and serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- Carry out the resolutions of the assembly.
- Attend council meetings, ordinarily three times a year.
- Interpret the work of the synod through their conferences and across the synod.

The term "persons of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English" (PC/L*) is understood to mean African American, Black, Arab, and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American, and Alaska Native people.

The term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election.

The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election.

It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. (S6.04.B09. Adopted by 2009 Churchwide Assembly)

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

Pre- Assembly Nominations 2024

The Nominating Committee offers the following nominations:

Synod Council Members (3-year term except where noted)

Western Kansas Conference - lay male (incumbent eligible)	Logan Simon*
Osage Conference - clergy male (incumbent eligible)	David Frerichs*
Eastern Missouri Conference - clergy female	Kristina Reyes
At Large - male-POC	Richard Ashley
At Large – female	Diane Bottorf Ingrid Peterson Alesia Roccia

* Incumbent

2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Member

Eastern Missouri Conference - clergy male	
Osage Conference - lay female	Vickie Donnell
Border Conference - lay female	Melodee Blobaum Laura Kamienski Sarah Thomas Joyce Uber
Central Kansas Conference - lay male	Carol Swenson
Western Kansas Conference - clergy male	Robert (Lee) Bennight
At Large POC - clergy female	Kaylie Ines
At Large POC - lay male	Terrence Freeman
At Large Youth/Young Adult - lay female	Brianna Dehn Megan Mong
At Large Youth/Young Adult - lay male	Sam Neff

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Biographical Information—Nominees

Synod Council Nominations

Position: Western Kansas Conference **Name:** Mr. Logan Simon

Congregation membership: Trinity Lutheran, Hays, KS

Congregational Activities: Church council member, worship committee, property committee, and website/technology committee.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Western Kansas Conference gatherings, appointed to fill vacant position on synod council.

Community Activities: Kansas/Ellis County Democrats

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: Osage Conference **Name:** Rev. David Frerichs

Congregation membership: Saint Andrew's Lutheran Church, Columbia, MO

Congregational Activities: Prior to serving three congregations as pastor (Bethany, Tulsa, OK; Zion, Albion, NE; St. Andrew's, Columbia, MO), supported youth ministry and Bible study in my home congregation, worship committee/worship planning team. In current setting have worked with Calvary Episcopal Church to establish Episcopal Lutheran Campus Ministry as well as a shared Youth Ministry program, ELFY.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Currently serve on Synod Council (elected 2021), serve as a member of Bishop Election Discernment Team, in Wichita helped lead Area Ministry Youth Team (before seminary), served on Hotel Life Staff at ELCA Youth Gathering (1991, '94, '97, and 2000), Churchwide Assembly Voting Member (2007), served on the advisory board for Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northeast Community College, Norfolk, NE. While serving in the Arkansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska Synods, I facilitated a number of clergy colleague groups featuring Bowen Theory of Emotional Systems as a resource for ministry and life.

Community Activities: In Albion, NE, I partnered with the sheriff to establish a Mobile Food Pantry serving our community and county.

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: Eastern Missouri Conference **Name:** Rev. Kristina Reyes

Congregation membership: Good Shepherd Lutheran, Manchester, MO (LuMin St. Louis)

Congregational Activities: worship support as needed, social justice postcard action

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: mission table 2020-2023; hearts across the heartland; racial justice team; campus ministry synod team

Community Activities: Missouri Clergy for Transrights, Transgiving, Missouri Clergy for Safer Gun Laws, guest in student classes

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: At Large **Name:** Rev. Richard Ashley

Congregation membership: St. Philip's Evangelical Lutheran, St. Louis, MO

Congregational Activities: Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) serving St. Philip's

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Synod assembly voting member, attend all Theological conferences, member of African Decent Lutheran Association (ADLA), Eastern Conference Care and Conciliation gathering.

Community Activities: active member of the Clergy Coalition, involved with the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, participate in the Ville Collaborative.

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** Yes

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Synod Council Nominations

Position: Border Conference **Name:** Ms. Diane Bottorff
Congregation membership: Trinity Lutheran, Topeka, KS

Congregational Activities: Council president (current & previous), Council secretary, Altar Guild, Nominating Committee, Sunday School teacher, Lector, Usher

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Youth Gathering adult sponsor 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018; Voting member Synod Assembly 2023 and prior years; Member Synod Council 1996 - 1999

Community Activities: Board member Doorstep, Inc; Board member Topeka Lutheran Home Association/Luther Gardens Participate in Walk to End Alzheimer's for over 30 years

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: At Large **Name:** Ms. Ingrid Peterson

Congregation membership: Immanuel Lutheran, Kansas City, MO

Congregational Activities: I have been a member of Immanuel for 40 years. The following activities encompass my participation through several years. Altar Guild (member and past chair), Church Council (member, secretary, vice-president), Church Choir (current), Handbells (current), Sunday School Teacher, Audit Committee (current chair), Nominating Committee (current). I have also participated in volunteering through the MLM Christmas Store held at Immanuel and at various times at the Gathering Table.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Congregational delegate to Synod Convention (1991, 2021)

Community Activities: Volunteer at Overland Park Arboretum.

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: At Large **Name:** Ms. Alesia Roccia

Congregation membership: Family of Christ, Imperial, MO

Congregational Activities: CSS certified Parish Ministry Associate in good standing. Current Congregation President, completing 6 terms. I have served on Family of Christ Congregation Council in every position over 24 years. During my tenure as President, Family of Christ retired the mortgage of the church. I have lead youth education, Vacation Bible School, Worship, Stewardship. I serve as assistant to the minister, lector, and altar guild.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Pulpit supply as a PMA for St. Thomas Holy Spirit and Family of Christ Founder and Director of GSFFAM, a ministry for adults of all abilities with Good Shepherd, Manchester MO Central States Synod Hunger Team: Hunger and Issues of Equity presentation on Food Insecurity for Eastern Missouri communities

Community Activities: Advocate for adults with developmental disabilities, Food insecurity task force and advocacy - Missouri and Illinois, Collaborate with community faith-based programs for feeding the hungry Professional presentations: Hunger and Issues of Equity on Food Insecurity for Eastern Missouri Communities Food Insecurity in the Bi-State Region Food and Faith: serving God's children through nutrition safety and security

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Nominations

Position: Osage Conference **Name:** Ms. Vickie Donnell
Congregation membership: Messiah Lutheran, Springfield, MO
Congregational Activities: Chairs Evangelism Committee and Lay Internship Committee; Member of Congregational Care Committee and Shepherding Teams; Participates in Lutheran World Relief work, Women of the ELCA, Piecemakers; Serves as Assisting Minister and Council Recording Secretary.
Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Served on Central States Synodical Organization of Women of the ELCA Board as Treasurer and President (2017-2023), Voting Member at Synod Assembly (most recently 2021, 2024)
Community Activities: Volunteers at several community organizations, including Council of Churches of the Ozarks.
YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: Border Conference **Name:** Ms. Melodee Blobaum
Congregation membership: Immanuel Lutheran, Kansas City, MO
Congregational Activities: President - Congregation Council, Chair - Altar Guild, Member - Worship and Arts Committee, Prayer Team, Friends of Literature Group
Organizer: Movie Group
Writer: Prayer Team quarterly healing services, annual Longest Night Service, midweek email prayers, Sunday intercessory prayers.
Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Editor, Synod Assembly newsletter, 1995-2001
Community Activities: Board of Managers, Parkway Towers Condominium, Kansas City, Mo.
Member, Parkway Towers Events Team, Welcoming Committee, Communications Committee
Member, Platte Land Trust Board of Directors, 2017-2020 Served one term on Resolutions Committee
YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: Border Conference **Name:** Ms. Laura Kamienski
Congregation membership: Atonement Lutheran, Overland Park, KS
Congregational Activities: taught adult education study, Welcome and Inclusion Team (including ongoing collaboration with Stewardship Team), Small Groups Team, Circle
Synodical/Churchwide Activities:
Community Activities: blood donor, SilverLake Homes Association Board, Embroiderer's Guild of America local, regional, and national offices including education
YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: Border Conference **Name:** Ms. Sarah Thomas
Congregation membership: Our Savior's Lutheran, Topeka, KS
Congregational Activities: Altar Guild, Steam Services, Communion Assistant, occasional pulpit supply
Synodical/Churchwide Activities: I'm a Parish Ministry Associate and preside at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Valley Falls, KS once a month.
Community Activities: I'm a sponsor for the National Honor Society at Washburn Rural High School and work with students on volunteer projects including the school wide Blood Drive.
YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Nominations

Position: Border Conference

Name: Ms. Joyce Uber

Congregation membership: Hosanna! Lutheran, Liberty, MO

Congregational Activities: Council secretary, council liaison for WELCA, social ministry. Member of church choir, serve on altar guild, Lector, communion assistant, prayer team and prayer weavers.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Central States WELCA convention 2023

Community Activities: Deliver food collected to InAsMuch Ministry

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: Central Kansas Conference

Name: Mr. Carol Swenson

Congregation membership: Trinity Lutheran, McPherson, KS

Congregational Activities: Trinity-McPherson member for 50+ years; Congregation Treasurer; Council member; Finance committee chair for \$1 million organ expansion & sanctuary renovation Finance Committee; Stewardship Committee; Pastoral Call Committee (multiple times); Handbell Choir; Confirmation mentor; Cross-Generational Ministry; Vacation Bible School; Usher; Greeter; Lector; Communion Server; Sunday morning coffee maker

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Synod Assembly delegate (multiple times); CSS Lutheran Campus Ministry Team

Community Activities: Retired - Teacher (Jr High, High School), Assistant Principal, Activities Director; College Sports Information Director; Development campaigns for McPherson Community Food Bank, McPherson Museum, campaign coordinator for USD 418 Community Field (stadium & track complex); Optimists Club; Announcer - KSHSAA State track & field meet (47 years), Big-12 track & field; KCAC cross country & track; Editor - histories of KSHSAA State Basketball, Cross County, & Track & Field; KSHSAA Classification Committee; USATF Press Officer - USA National U-20 T&F teams to 3 World Championships & Team USA pre-competition Olympic training camps; Regional Manager - Nike High School Cross-Country Nationals; Member of KSHSAA, McPherson College & McPherson High School Halls of Fame

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Nominations

Position: Western Kansas Conference

Name: Rev. Robert (Lee) Bennight

Congregation membership: Emmanuel Lutheran, Stuttgart, KS

Congregational Activities: I serve as co-pastor with my wife, Rev. Kathryn Whitney, of Disciples of the Plains Lutheran Ministry, which is a four-congregation parish located in Smith and Phillips Counties in Kansas. I have been in this call for almost 9 years. Before this, I served as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Durand, Illinois, for just under 10 years. Prior to seminary, I was an active member of Christ Lutheran Church in Sedona, Az, Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Tucson, Arizona, where I was involved in college ministry and activities, and Faith Lutheran Church in Yuma, Arizona, where I was baptized, confirmed, and ordained.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: I am co-dean of the Western Kansas Conference along with Rev. Adam Wutka. I am part of the committee helping the Central States Synod in its discernment for what is needed for the upcoming 2025 Synod Bishop Election. I was a part of the Faithful Innovations team. While in Northern Illinois Synod, I wrote and eventually cosponsored a combined resolution to support those ministering alongside undocumented immigrants.

Community Activities: I served as a member of the Phillips County Ministerial Alliance as president, vice-president, treasurer, and acting secretary. I monitored the Ministerial Alliance Care Phone for emergency financial needs in the community. I volunteer with the Phillips County Food Pantry. I regularly lead Bible study and Holy Communion worship services for our local assisted living and nursing home. I have worked with the local LGBTQ community to find safe places for support group meetings. While our child was in middle school and high school, both Kathy and I volunteered to support various school activities.

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Position: At Large POC Female

Name: Rev. Kaylie Ines

Congregation membership: Walsburg Lutheran, Walsburg, KS

Congregational Activities:

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Lutherans Restoring Creation Board and Mission Table, Kansas Interfaith Action Network Board Member, Kansas State Lutheran Campus Ministry Board Member

Community Activities:

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** Yes **POC/LOE:** Yes

Position: At Large POC Male

Name: Mr. Terrence Freeman

Congregation membership: St. Philip's Evangelical Lutheran, St. Louis, MO

Congregational Activities: President Church Council (5 years)

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Synod Council, Executive Committee

Community Activities: Great Rivers Collaborative (Small ELCA Congregations); National Society of Black Engineers Pre-College Initiative; One Hundred Black Men of America Youth Director; Empowerment Network Cancer Support

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** Yes

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Nominations

Position: At Large Youth/YA

Name: Ms. Brianna Dehn

Congregation membership: Good Shepherd Lutheran, St. Louis, MO

Congregational Activities: I tried to get a play going for the seniors at my church but that fell through and I'm joining a small group. I've only been a member since October 2023 but am looking to get more involved.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities:

Community Activities: I write a lot of plays for schools and sometimes direct them.

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** Yes **POC/LOE:** No

Position: At Large Youth/YA

Name: Ms. Megan Mong

Congregation membership: Immanuel Lutheran, Salina, KS

Congregational Activities: guest preacher, Sunday school and adult ed teacher, extra office help/support, youth chaperone

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Seminarian at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Mass Gathering Team for ELCA Youth Gathering 2024, Churchwide Voting Member 2019/2017, Property manager for ELCA Youth Gathering 2022, YAGM Volunteer Jerusalem/West Bank program 2019-2020, Becoming Conference 2022 attendee, Peace Not Walls/Sumud

Community Activities: Seminars for Justice, LSTC Master's Student Association finance committee

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** Yes **POC/LOE:** No

Position: Central Kansas Conference

Name: Mr. Samuel Neff

Congregation membership: Redeemer Lutheran Church, Salina, KS

Congregational Activities: Choir, bell choir, lector, cantor, VBS, sound

Synodical/Churchwide Activities:

Community Activities: D&I Chair at work

YOUTH: No **YOUNG ADULT:** No **POC/LOE:** No

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2024 Nomination Biographical Information

Anyone accepting nomination for a Synod Council position must have a background check and therefore fill out a disclosure form. This does not apply to nominees for the Consultation and Discipline Committees or Churchwide voting members.

Conference _____

Position Nominated for: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Congregational membership (include city/state): _____

Congregational activities: _____

Synodical/churchwide activities: _____

Community activities: _____

Person of color/language other than English? ___ yes ___ no
Youth (younger than 18 years old) ___ yes ___ no (DOB _____)
Young Adult (between 18 & 30 years old) ___ yes ___ no (DOB _____)

Nominated by: _____

*Please return this form no later than **April 15, 2024** to Central States Synod, 420 W. 14th St., Suite 101, Kansas City, MO 64105 or Tim Anderson at tanderson@css-elca.org*

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Disclosure Form

As part of the election process, the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, requires, by continuing resolution S9.12.A08, that a background check be obtained for all nominees for synod officers and synod council members, **except for youth** Please return this form directly to Tim Anderson at the synod office or by e-mail to tanderson@css-elca.org.

AUTHORIZATION

During the 2023 nominating and election process and at any time during the tenure of any position as a synod officer or Synod Council member to which I may be elected, I hereby authorize First Advantage Background Services, Corporation, P.O. Box 105292, Atlanta, GA 30348, 1-800-845-6004, on behalf of the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to verify my social security number and do a check of the national criminal data base for any convictions. An additional credit history check will be done for the nominees for the position of the synod treasurer. I understand that I may request a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of the background verification.

Nominee Name (Please print and include middle name)

Address (Complete address with city/state/zip)

Nominee Signature

Date

_____-_____-_____
Social Security Number *

Date of Birth

*For Identification Purposes Only

Budget/Finance Treasurer's Report

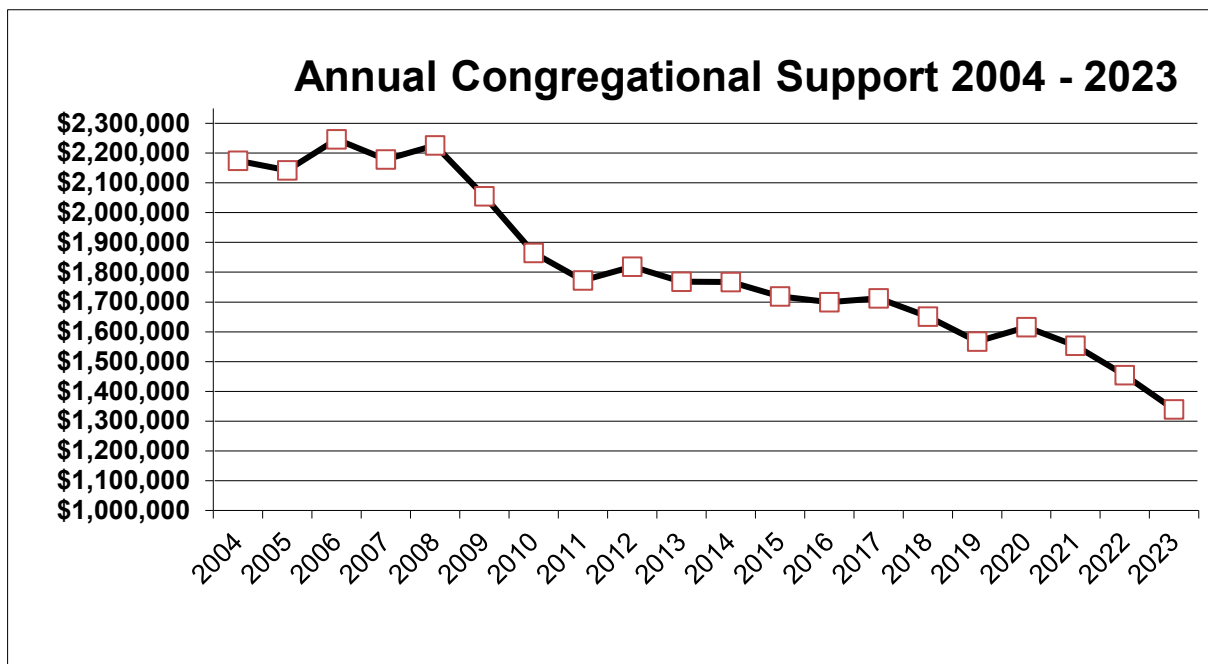
The Treasurer's Report provides commentary on three different budget years in varying levels of detail. I'll start with detailed comments about the 2023 fiscal year and follow that with a quick summary of any revisions that have been made for the 2024 fiscal year budget. I'll conclude my report with details about the budget proposal for the 2025 fiscal year. This is the budget that will be presented to the assembly for approval. It has been reviewed and recommended by the Synod Council.

There are two versions of the budget for the 2025 fiscal year contained in the material immediately following my written report. The first version is the traditional worksheet style budget with rows and columns of numbers. This version provides a detailed breakout of each budget category for those that like to see the details. The second version is a narrative budget that provides a high-level textual description of the ministries of the synod and the funding required to support them. There are way fewer numbers in this version.

Financial status at the close of the recently completed fiscal year

Summary

In 2023, the synod continued to experience the same trends in support and spending that we have generally seen over the past 5-6 years. Unfortunately, that means a relatively steep decline in congregation support that is mostly offset by decreases (planned and unplanned) in spending.



Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

As you can see in the graph above, the slope of the decline in support has increased over the last six years, with the unexpected exception of an increase in support we experienced in 2020. Of course, the synod spending has declined as well to keep pace with the decrease in support. This year we had to adjust the spending budget twice to control the size of the deficit. As a result, we ended the year with a deficit of \$9,191, before withdrawing that amount from temporarily restricted funds to balance the budget.

We were blessed with a robust response to the annual appeal at the end of the year, receiving almost twice as much as we had expected. Thank you!

Income vs. Expenditures

Total Expenditures for 2023 were \$1,470,252. Total Revenue & Support was the same, with the release of temporarily restricted funds as mentioned above. The amount spent was \$81,443 less than anticipated and \$139,681 less than the previous year. Our Total Income & Support equaled our expenditures and was comprised of support from the congregations, the Annual Appeal, reimbursements & grants, and temporarily restricted funds.

As I mentioned, synod spending was lower than budgeted. The lower expenses were due to the elimination of a part-time staff position and the Planned Giving Partnership grant in the second half of the year. We also experienced unplanned reductions in Candidacy, travel, synod staff benefits, and Campus Ministry.

A detailed listing of the actual income and expenditures for 2023 is included in the attached budget spreadsheet. Refer to the "FYE 1/31/2024 Actual" column.

Congregational Support

The synod experienced an 8.6% decrease of \$115,138 in congregational support from the previous year, decreasing from \$1,454,148 to \$1,339,010. This also means that we received \$110,990 less than what we had expected in our revised budget. The congregational giving started the year very slowly, which forced us to revise the budget in June to avoid a larger budget deficit; however, we did finish the year with some of the strongest months of giving.

A report detailing the support received in the 2023 fiscal year from each congregation of the synod is attached as a part of this report.

ELCA Churchwide

In 2023, the synod continued to contribute to the Churchwide organization at a 50% rate. This means that half of the donations received from our congregations are shared with the larger church. The total contributed was \$669,505, which was a decrease of \$57,569 or 8.6% from the previous year.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Current fiscal year budget, calendar year 2024

The Synod Council revised the approved budget for the current fiscal year to create a “spending budget” that considers additional or revised information received since last year’s assembly. This spending budget is included in the attached detailed budget spreadsheet as the “Revised” column for 2024 (FYE 1/31/2025).

The major theme for the changes made to the 2024 budget is to curtail synod spending in preparation for a continued decrease in the amount of support received from our congregations. The objective was to establish a good foundation not only for the 2024 budget but the 2025 budget as well. This required some hard choices to be made for some of the grants that we have regularly funded up to now. Our focus was on providing funding for those areas where it would yield the greatest benefit or have the biggest impact.

To create the 2024 spending budget, the following key changes were made:

- a. Reduced the anticipated support from our congregations by \$200,000. This is a large one-year reduction but is based on recent history and our intention to be proactive in managing synod spending.
- b. Increased the amount of temporarily restricted funds to be released to supplement our income.
- c. Reduced the amount shared with the Churchwide organization as a result of decreasing our anticipated congregation giving.
- d. Reduced the grant for Camp Tomah Shinga
- e. Adjusted Synod Salaries & Benefits by departing from synod guidelines and reducing the salary increase for the bishop and the assistant to the bishop.
- f. Reduced Campus Ministry support based on pastoral vacancy at KU
- g. Eliminated funding in the budget for the Fall Theological Conference
- h. Eliminated the grants for the seminaries, Bethany College, and the Planned Giving Partnership
- i. Increased the rent amount for office space based on new rental agreement
- j. Operating costs were reduced through the elimination of software subscriptions for tools that were no longer needed

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Proposed budget for calendar year 2025, Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2026

The proposed budget for the fiscal year ending on January 31, 2026, is shown in the attached detailed budget spreadsheet for your consideration. This is shown in the "Proposed" column for the year 2025 (FYE 1/31/2026). The attached narrative budget explains this proposed budget as well. This budget will be presented at the synod assembly for approval.

The budget presented is targeting congregational giving of \$1,200,000, which represents a decrease of \$50,000 from the budget for 2024. In this budget, our Total Support & Revenue will support our anticipated Total Expenses of \$1,291,575. This is a decrease of \$72,513 from the amount budgeted for 2024.

As mentioned in the previous section, we took several substantive actions in the budget for 2024 to position ourselves to support synod expenses in 2025 without additional major changes. With that in mind, there are just a few key changes from the 2024 budget that require explanation. These changes are:

- a) Reduced the anticipated congregation giving by \$50,000
- b) Decreased the amount for Reimbursement/Other Income by \$20,000 in anticipation of the elimination of the grant from Churchwide to support Campus Ministry
- c) Continued the 50% contribution rate for Churchwide ministries, but automatically reduced it due to the reduction of anticipated congregation support
- d) Reduced the amount for Synod Salaries & Benefits by freezing the salaries of the bishop and the bishop's assistant for one year and scaling back the compensation for the Director of Lay Ministry position. The other positions will receive a 3% increase
- e) Reduced the amount for support of Campus Ministry Salaries & Benefits to reflect the elimination of the grant from Churchwide

In closing, I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Mission Budget Team for their good work throughout the year. The team consists of the synod officers plus our bookkeeper, Barbara Beedle. It is an honor and privilege for me to serve the synod and I am blessed to be able to work with each of these good and faithful servants.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Schulte,
Treasurer

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

2025 Budget Worksheet

	2025 FYE 1/31/2026 Proposed	2024 FYE 1/31/2025		2023 FYE 1/31/2024		
		Revised	Approved	Actual	Revised	Approved
SUPPORT AND REVENUE						
1 Congregations	1,200,000.00	1,250,000.00	1,450,000.00	1,339,009.52	1,450,000.00	1,550,000.00
2 Annual Appeal	18,400.00	18,400.00	15,000.00	30,053.18	15,000.00	15,000.00
3 Shared Mission	0.00	263.00	0.00	436.19	0.00	0.00
4 Interest	175.00	175.00	175.00	61.69	200.00	200.00
5 Temp. Restricted Funds Released	53,000.00	55,000.00	40,000.00	9,191.12	50,000.00	33,579.00
6 Reimbursement/Other Income	20,000.00	40,250.00	50,000.00	91,500.27	50,000.00	50,000.00
Total Support & Revenue	1,291,575.00	1,364,088.00	1,555,175.00	1,470,251.97	1,565,200.00	1,648,779.00
EXPENDITURES						
7 ELCA CHURCHWIDE MINISTRY	600,000.00	625,000.00	725,000.00	669,504.76	725,000.00	775,000.00
SYNOD MINISTRY						
A Agencies & Institutions						
8 Camp Tomah Shinga	5,000.00	5,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
9 Hollis Center-Outdoor Ministry	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
10 Kansas Interfaith Action Coalition	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
11 Missouri Voices of Faith	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	1,250.00	625.00	2,500.00
Total Agencies/Institutions	12,500.00	12,500.00	20,000.00	18,750.00	18,125.00	20,000.00
B Teams and Task Forces						
29 Candidacy	2,000.00	3,000.00	5,000.00	1,284.70	5,000.00	7,000.00
31 Parish Ministry Associates	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
35 Leadership Training	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
39 Teams & TF Expenses (Shared)	530.00	1,500.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total Teams and Task Forces	2,530.00	4,500.00	6,500.00	1,284.70	6,000.00	13,500.00
C Oversight & Pastoral Care						
41 Synod Salaries & Benefits	486,913.00	488,838.00	487,264.00	515,123.90	492,036.00	505,454.00
42 Campus Ministry Salaries & Ben	75,000.00	118,000.00	138,000.00	122,847.25	145,000.00	145,000.00
43 Fall Theological Conference	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00
48 Travel (Synod Staff)	35,000.00	35,000.00	38,000.00	36,137.52	38,000.00	42,500.00
55 Call Process Ministries	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
59 Legal Fees (Discipline)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Oversight/Pastoral Care	596,913.00	641,838.00	667,264.00	674,108.67	675,036.00	697,954.00
D ELCA Partnerships						
61 Region IV	500.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	1,200.00
62 Bethany College	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	10,000.00
63 Seminaries (LSTC & Wartburg)	0.00	0.00	20,000.00	16,000.00	16,000.00	20,000.00
64 Planned Giving Partnership	0.00	0.00	22,625.00	11,312.50	11,312.00	22,625.00
Total ELCA Partnerships	500.00	500.00	53,125.00	35,312.50	35,812.00	53,825.00

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

	2025 FYE 1/31/2026 Proposed	2024 FYE 1/31/2025		2023 FYE 1/31/2024		
		Revised	Approved	Actual	Revised	Approved
E Office						
65 Rent & Occupancy	26,400.00	26,400.00	24,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00
67 Depreciation	2,000.00	2,000.00	4,000.00	474.84	4,000.00	4,000.00
68 Operations - Total	43,332.00	43,300.00	46,000.00	36,310.90	52,422.00	46,000.00
Total Office	71,732.00	71,700.00	74,000.00	60,785.74	80,422.00	74,000.00
F Synod Council						
70 Meetings	650.00	1,300.00	1,300.00	505.60	1,300.00	2,000.00
Total Synod Council	650.00	1,300.00	1,300.00	505.60	1,300.00	2,000.00
G Conferences Support						
71 Dean's Meetings	750.00	750.00	986.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00
75 Total Conferences Support	750.00	750.00	986.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00
H Contingency	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
78 I Bishop Transition Set Aside	6,000.00	6,000.00	7,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
TOTAL SYNOD MINISTRY	691,575.00	739,088.00	830,175.00	800,747.21	826,695.00	873,779.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,291,575.00	1,364,088.00	1,555,175.00	1,470,251.97	1,551,695.00	1,648,779.00
NET REVENUE OVER OR (UNDER) EXPENSES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	13,505.00	0.00

2025 Narrative Budget

Continuing with our practice of recent years, we are presenting this narrative budget as a supplement to the usual spreadsheet style budget also included in the assembly binder material. This approach helps relate the dollar figures in the budget to the synod's ministry plans for the coming year. Through this narrative budget, we hope to make it clear that each budgeted expense affects ministry and that each ministry helps to carry out the overall mission of the synod and the larger church.

Since we all walk together to carry out God's mission, let's walk through how we will spend our money in 2025!

We are Church Together (\$600,000)

Half of all contributions received by the Central States Synod are shared with the Churchwide organization of the ELCA. This amount enables mission and ministry to happen beyond our borders (although some of these funds do indeed come back to us in terms of grants for new ministries and campus ministries.)

The Ministry Entrusted to the Synod. (\$15,030)

Walking together does not always mean seeing exactly where the other person goes. Different interests and responsibilities exist even among those who walk together.

This area of the budget supports the work of Camp Tomah Shinga and Hollis Renewal Center. These ministries provide outdoor ministry space, so our kids and congregations have places to go for retreat and to get in touch with God's creation. **(\$10,000)**

We will support an advocacy agency in Kansas to work ecumenically to voice our concerns on matters important to all the corners of the synod. We will look to find a more effective partner in Missouri to act as our advocate. **(\$2,500)**

Do you enjoy having a pastor to lead you? That's due to the work of the Candidacy Committee, who has shepherded those interested in the ministry along the way. **(\$2,000)**

Various ministries that help develop giving and the stewardship of resources through teams and committees such as Lutherans Restoring Creation, the Stewardship Team, and the Companion Synod Team occasionally incur expenses to facilitate the work that they do. **(\$530)**

The Ministry of Oversight and Pastoral Care (\$596,913)

When you walk together, you need someone to lean on from time to time.

The ministry of Oversight and Pastoral Care includes the salaries for Synod Staff, who work tirelessly to "be there" when called upon. They lend support and encouragement to congregations and to leaders, in all the "highs" and "lows" of life together. They sometimes take the brunt of anger and frustration as the powers and principalities of this present age cause friction in human community. These are leaders committed to "being there" in whatever the circumstances. **(\$486,913)**

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

This area of the budget also supports the salaries of Campus Ministers, who greet new students at Campus ministry sites in both states. **(\$75,000)**

To enable the synod staff to be physically present with congregations and pastoral leaders this area includes travel expenses to support their work “on the road”. **(\$35,000)**

The Ministry of ELCA Partnership (\$500)

A good walk sometimes calls for some specific guidance or expertise. No one goes off on a mountain hike without first investing in a good geographic contour map. It helps you plan the route, know about twists, turn and inclines, and can prepare you for the unexpected.

In the same way, our ELCA Partnership Ministries through Region IV help us anticipate and navigate through a changing landscape in the world. It’s not a large portion of the budget, but it’s an important one. Region IV helps give us a “bird’s eye” view of things changing and affecting a wider area of adjacent Synods, coordinating ministry.

The Ministry of Place and Property (\$71,732)

“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to rest his head...” Jesus says, but then Jesus didn’t have to keep files to satisfy legal obligations and didn’t have a photocopier. There are some necessary things about administering a synod, and part of that is having a place to gather for meetings, to “hang one’s hat” when one is not out visiting congregations and leaders.

The Central States Synod offices are strategically located in Kansas City, right in the middle of our two-state footprint. In 2019, we decided to share office space with the local diocese of the Episcopal Church. They have been great partners with us and the space we have fulfills the needs of the staff and provides for good meeting space, when needed, for various teams and committees. You are encouraged to stop by and see your offices anytime. **(\$26,400)**

There are also the usual costs for running an office for any kind of an organization: a copier, paper, phone services, financial audits, and computers. All those things that the staff needs to conduct the “business” of the synod. **(\$45,332)**

The Ministry of Leadership and Outreach (\$7,400)

As we walk together, we need to support those that lead us by helping them communicate and providing them with the tools that they need. The same is true for enabling our congregations to reach outward to those in need of hearing the good news. We also need to look ahead to ensure a smooth change of leadership.

There are funds for Synod Council Meetings, Conference and Deans’ gatherings, and a set aside for bishop transitions, so that we anticipate the turnover of staff in election years.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

How are these ministries funded?

Our mission relies primarily on congregations forwarding a portion of their regular offerings to our synod office as undesignated Mission Support (some call this “regular benevolence to synod”). When these offerings increase or decrease from year to year, the work of the church is strengthened or weakened and this has an impact not only synodically, but nationally and globally. **(\$1,200,000)**

Individuals, families, and congregations may designate gifts for the Synod Assembly offering and in response to the Annual Appeals or other special project needs. **(\$18,400)**

We will once again use some of the surplus that we realized in 2020 to help support the work of the synod if we don't receive the offerings or donations needed. **(\$53,000)**

In addition, the synod receives grants from the Churchwide organization for specific synod missions and reimbursements from a variety of agencies. **(\$20,000)**

To support all of these ministries, as a synod we will spend a total of \$1,291,575 in 2025!

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly
June 6-8, 2024

Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Data Provided for Informational Purposes Only to Detail the Budget Line Item
for Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2025

Synod Salaries & Benefits detail for the year ending 1/31/25 is:

Description	Bishop	Clergy Staff	Non-Clergy Staff	Total Compensation
Base Salary	95,469.15	153,026.05	162,225.31	410,720.51
Employer's Social Security (1)	0.00	0.00	8,359.90	8,359.90
Retirement (2)	13,365.68	15,051.85	10,927.98	39,345.51
Basic Medical	5,700.00	19,026.00	30,232.92	54,958.92
Plan Administration & Disability	954.69	1,254.32	1,092.80	3,301.81
Continuing Education	1,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
DEM Purchase of Services	0.00	(50,848.50)	0.00	(50,848.50)
Anticipated Portico Increases for January 2024	1,883.00	7,915.00	10,202.00	20,000.00
Total Compensation Prior to Reimbursements	118,372.52	147,424.72	223,040.91	488,838.15

Notes and Comments:

- (1) Employer's Social Security paid totally by clergy.
- (2) Retirement funding rates for clergy are at the maximum contribution rate of 12%. The bishop receives an additional 2% for a total of 14%. Others are 10%. Medical plan costs vary depending on the employee's age and if their spouse and/or children are covered. The 2024 Portico custom comparison was used to get the above amounts.
- (3) Number of FTE (full-time equivalents)

Bishop	1.00
Clergy Staff	2.25
Non-clergy Staff	<u>2.50</u>
Total	<u>5.75</u>

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

**Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Data Provided for Informational Purposes Only to Detail the Budget Line Item
for Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2026**

Synod Salaries & Benefits detail for the year ending 1/31/26 is:

Description	Bishop	Clergy Staff	Non-Clergy Staff	Total Compensation
Base Salary	95,469.15	146,505.91	167,092.07	409,067.13
Employer's Social Security (1)	0.00	0.00	8,610.70	8,610.70
Retirement (2)	13,365.68	15,180.71	11,255.81	39,802.20
Basic Medical	5,700.00	16,458.00	31,777.80	53,935.80
Plan Administration & Disability	954.69	1,265.06	1,125.58	3,345.33
Continuing Education	1,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
DEM Purchase of Services	0.00	(50,848.50)	0.00	(50,848.50)
Anticipated Portico Increases for January 2024	1,883.00	7,915.00	10,202.00	20,000.00
Total Compensation Prior to Reimbursements	118,372.52	138,476.18	230,063.96	486,912.66

Notes and Comments:

- (1) Employer's Social Security paid totally by clergy.
- (2) Retirement funding rates for clergy are at the maximum contribution rates of 12%. The Bishop receives an additional 2% for a total of 14%. Others are 10%. Medical plan costs are vary depending on the employee's age and if their spouse and/or children are covered. The 2024 Portico custom comparison adjusted for 1 year older was used to get the above amounts.
- (3) Number of FTE (full-time equivalents)

Bishop	1.00
Clergy Staff	2.25
Non-clergy Staff	<u>2.50</u>
Total	<u>5.75</u>

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Congregational Giving FYE 1/31/2024

This report does not reflect any congregational gifts to local ministries that do not pass through the Central States Synod. If you believe there are discrepancies between this report and your congregational giving, please contact the synod office, admin@css-elca.org.

BORDER CONFERENCE

NAME	CITY	ST	MISSION SUPPORT
Advent Lutheran Church	Olathe	KS	\$ 41,100.00
All Saints Lutheran Church	Blue Springs	MO	\$ 1,200.00
Atonement Lutheran Church	Overland Park	KS	\$ 57,265.00
First Lutheran Church	Mission Hills	KS	\$ 5,000.00
First Lutheran Church	Saint Joseph	MO	\$ 3,000.00
First Lutheran Church	Topeka	KS	\$ 35,527.28
Gathering Table S A W C	Kansas City	MO	\$ -
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Kansas City	MO	\$ 22,000.00
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Lawrence	KS	\$ 8,000.67
Grace Lutheran Church	Osage City	KS	\$ 3,685.00
Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Overland Park	KS	\$ 18,750.00
Hosanna! Lutheran Church	Liberty	MO	\$ 4,000.00
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Kansas City	MO	\$ 19,944.00
Kaw Prairie Community Church	Lenexa	KS	\$ 1,000.00
Lord Of Love Lutheran Church	Belton	MO	\$ 2,550.00
Lutheran Church Of The Resurrection	Prairie Village	KS	\$ 18,000.00
Martin Luther Lutheran Church	Lees Summit	MO	\$ 6,000.00
Our Saviors Lutheran Church	Topeka	KS	\$ 20,576.45
Overland Park Lutheran Church	Overland Park	KS	\$ 1,763.50
Salem Lutheran Church	Shawnee	KS	\$ 13,162.00
South Sudanese Worshipping Community	Saint Joseph	MO	\$ -
St James Lutheran Church	Kansas City	MO	\$ 7,054.43
St John Lutheran Church	Bendena	KS	\$ 4,785.00
St John Lutheran Church	Lancaster	KS	\$ 8,375.18
St Mark Hope and Peace Lutheran Church	Kansas City	MO	\$ 3,900.00
St Mark Lutheran Church	Atchison	KS	\$ 498.57
St Mark Lutheran Church	Emporia	KS	\$ 15,771.00
St Mark Lutheran Church	Olathe	KS	\$ 19,162.00
St Martin Lutheran Church	Kansas City	KS	\$ 1,000.00
St Paul Lutheran Church	Valley Falls	KS	\$ 900.00
Trinity Lutheran Church	Lawrence	KS	\$ 19,560.70
Trinity Lutheran Church	Topeka	KS	\$ 8,100.00
Upper Wolf Lutheran Church	Robinson	KS	\$ 1,640.00

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

CENTRAL KANSAS CONFERENCE

NAME	CITY	ST	MISSION SUPPORT
Ada Lutheran Church	Courtland	KS	\$ -
Amana Lutheran Church	Scandia	KS	\$ 200.00
American Lutheran Church	Belleville	KS	\$ 5,000.00
Andover Lutheran Church	Windom	KS	\$ 6,000.00
Assaria Lutheran Church	Assaria	KS	\$ 12,000.00
Bethany Lutheran Church	Lindsborg	KS	\$ 20,499.96
Christ Lutheran Church	Eureka	KS	\$ 200.00
Christ Lutheran Church	Wichita	KS	\$ 16,296.82
Concordia Lutheran Church	Concordia	KS	\$ 14,293.77
Cross Of Glory Lutheran Church	Derby	KS	\$ 1,980.00
Elim Lutheran Church	Marquette	KS	\$ 5,000.00
Emanuel Lutheran Church	Hutchinson	KS	\$ 30,000.00
Faith Lutheran Church	Junction City	KS	\$ 3,840.00
Falun Lutheran Church	Falun	KS	\$ 4,000.00
First Lutheran Church	Manhattan	KS	\$ 40,188.24
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Wichita	KS	\$ 18,624.78
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Washington	KS	\$ 2,000.00
Hebron Lutheran Church	Burdick	KS	\$ 3,000.00
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Salina	KS	\$ 3,000.00
Marion Hill Lutheran Church	White City	KS	\$ 2,400.00
Messiah Lutheran Church	Lindsborg	KS	\$ 4,898.59
Mision San Juan de Dios	Wichita	KS	\$ -
New Gottland Lutheran Church	McPherson	KS	\$ 6,600.00
New Hope Lutheran Church	Onaga	KS	\$ 1,500.00
Olsburg Lutheran Church	Olsburg	KS	\$ 2,650.00
Peace Lutheran Church	Manhattan	KS	\$ 7,500.00
Peace Lutheran Church	New Cambria	KS	\$ -
Redeemer Lutheran Church	Salina	KS	\$ 12,050.00
Reformation Lutheran Church	Wichita	KS	\$ 33,150.02
Resurrection Lutheran Church	Haysville	KS	\$ 4,850.00
Salemsborg Lutheran Church	Smolan	KS	\$ 1,352.00
St John Lutheran Church	Hanover	KS	\$ 1,600.00
St John Lutheran Church	Salina	KS	\$ 21,000.00
St John Lutheran Church	Wellington	KS	\$ -
St Mark Lutheran Church	Waterville	KS	\$ 5,000.00
St Paul Lutheran Church	Glasco	KS	\$ 6,000.00
St Paul Lutheran Church	Herington	KS	\$ 6,773.18

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

CENTRAL KANSAS CONFERENCE (Cont.)

NAME	CITY	ST	MISSION SUPPORT
St Paul Lutheran Church	Peabody	KS	\$ 1,200.00
St Paul Lutheran Church	Tescott	KS	\$ 1,001.00
St Paul Lutheran Church	Wichita	KS	\$ 2,700.00
Trinity Lutheran Church	Greenleaf	KS	\$ -
Trinity Lutheran Church	McPherson	KS	\$ 32,770.00
Walsburg Lutheran Church	Leonardville	KS	\$ 3,556.00
Zion Lutheran Church	Beloit	KS	\$ 600.00
Zion Lutheran Church	Hanover	KS	\$ 2,000.00

EASTERN MISSOURI CONFERENCE

NAME	CITY	ST	MISSION SUPPORT
Bethel Lutheran Church	Saint Louis	MO	\$ 29,004.00
Christ Lutheran Church	Webster Groves	MO	\$ 25,000.00
Family of Christ Lutheran Church	Imperial	MO	\$ 800.00
Gethsemane Lutheran Church	Saint Louis	MO	\$ 23,250.00
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Manchester	MO	\$ 74,321.00
Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Creve Coeur	MO	\$ 18,337.00
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Saint Louis	MO	\$ 3,500.00
Hope Lutheran Church	Saint Charles	MO	\$ 14,864.38
Living Lord Lutheran Church	Lake St Louis	MO	\$ 30,805.00
Lutheran Church Of The Atonement	Florissant	MO	\$ 2,275.00
Lutheran Church Of The Good Shepherd	Hazelwood	MO	\$ 9,205.00
Lutheran Church Of The Living Christ	Florissant	MO	\$ 10,461.00
Peace Lutheran Church	Washington	MO	\$ 11,541.63
Redeemer Lutheran Church	De Soto	MO	\$ 12,035.21
Sargents Chapel Lutheran Church	Sedgewickville	MO	\$ 5,000.00
Sedgewickville Lutheran Church	Sedgewickville	MO	\$ 200.00
Shepherd Of The Hills Lutheran Church	Saint Ann	MO	\$ 2,130.00
St Andrew Lutheran Church	Poplar Bluff	MO	\$ -
St Mark Lutheran Church	Cape Girardeau	MO	\$ 1,200.00
St Mark Lutheran Church	Saint Louis	MO	\$ 13,475.00
St Philip's Evangelical Lutheran Church	Saint Louis	MO	\$ 500.00
St Thomas-Holy Spirit Lutheran Church	Saint Louis	MO	\$ 10,000.10
Trinity Lutheran Church	Chesterfield	MO	\$ 28,944.00
Trinity Lutheran Church	Kirkwood	MO	\$ 2,400.00
Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church	Saint Louis	MO	\$ 11,682.00
Zion Lutheran Church	Ferguson	MO	\$ 11,992.00

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

OSAGE CONFERENCE

NAME	CITY	ST	MISSION SUPPORT
Christ & Trinity Lutheran Church	Sedalia	MO	\$ 395.00
Community Lutheran Church	Eagle Rock	MO	\$ -
Hope Lutheran Church	Rolla	MO	\$ 2,603.90
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Cole Camp	MO	\$ 1,400.00
Kent Memorial Lutheran Church	Sunrise Beach	MO	\$ 24,577.00
Messiah Lutheran Church	Springfield	MO	\$ 38,029.44
Our Savior Lutheran Church	Camdenton	MO	\$ 1,250.01
Our Savior Lutheran Church	Salem	MO	\$ 450.00
Our Savior's Lutheran Church	Jefferson City	MO	\$ 10,200.00
Peace Lutheran Church	Hollister	MO	\$ -
Peace Lutheran Church	Joplin	MO	\$ 3,819.00
Peace Lutheran Church	Salisbury	MO	\$ 400.00
Prince Of Peace Lutheran Church	Springfield	MO	\$ 8,260.25
Pymont Trinity Lutheran Church	Stover	MO	\$ 800.00
St Andrew Lutheran Church	Columbia	MO	\$ 30,000.00
St John Lutheran Church	Pittsburg	KS	\$ 6,000.00
St Matthew American Lutheran Church	Butler	MO	\$ 3,349.84
St Paul Lutheran Church	Cole Camp	MO	\$ 7,107.00
St Paul Lutheran Church	Lohman	MO	\$ 16,612.04
St Paul Lutheran Church	Nevada	MO	\$ 4,710.50
St Paul Lutheran Church	West Plains	MO	\$ 1,320.00
Trinity Lutheran Church	Russellville	MO	\$ 5,500.00

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

WESTERN KANSAS CONFERENCE

NAME	CITY	ST	MISSION SUPPORT
American Lutheran Church	Smith Center	KS	\$ 6,000.00
Bethesda Lutheran Church	Winona	KS	\$ -
Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Wakeeney	KS	\$ 3,000.00
Denmark Lutheran Church	Lincoln	KS	\$ 300.00
Emanuel Lutheran Church	WaKeeney	KS	\$ -
Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church	Stuttgart	KS	\$ 7,481.24
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	Hoisington	KS	\$ 650.00
Excelsior Lutheran Church	Wilson	KS	\$ 1,200.00
Faith Lutheran Church	Oberlin	KS	\$ 2,100.00
First Lutheran Church	Dorrance	KS	\$ 3,438.00
Garfield Lutheran Church	Garfield	KS	\$ 150.00
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Lucas	KS	\$ 2,900.00
Hope Lutheran Church	Rush Center	KS	\$ 2,500.00
Sagrado Corazon De Jesus	Garden City	KS	\$ 900.00
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Wilson	KS	\$ 4,303.60
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church	Ness City	KS	\$ 600.00
Our Saviors Lutheran Church	Brewster	KS	\$ 3,000.00
Peace Lutheran Church	Albert	KS	\$ 2,200.00
Salem Lutheran Church	Saint Francis	KS	\$ -
Sharon Lutheran Church	Sharon Springs	KS	\$ 2,100.00
St James Evangelical Lutheran Church	Garden City	KS	\$ 1,200.00
St John Lutheran Church	Bird City	KS	\$ -
St John Lutheran Church	Ellis	KS	\$ 2,400.00
St John Lutheran Church	Kensington	KS	\$ 9,000.00
St John Lutheran Church	Russell	KS	\$ 9,166.63
St Mark Lutheran Church	Great Bend	KS	\$ 2,710.00
St Paul Lutheran Church	Galatia	KS	\$ 598.00
Trinity Lutheran Church	Hays	KS	\$ 5,000.04
Zion Lutheran Church	Phillipsburg	KS	\$ 6,497.92

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR 2025

*Compensation & Benefits for Rostered Ministers
Pastors and Deacons*



CENTRAL STATES SYNOD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES TASK FORCE:

Pr. Chris Deines, Lindsborg, KS
Pr. Mike Kern, Liberty, MO
Dennis Kemper, Bel-Nor, MO
David Stock, Holts Summit, MO
Jennifer Leclair, Lake St. Louis, MO

SYNOD STAFF:

The Rev. Dave Whetter, Bishop's Associate

GUIDELINES FOR 2025 PROPOSED

to the Central States Synod Assembly, June 6-8, 2024

Explanation of Changes for 2025 Compensation Guidelines and Compensation Worksheet:

Changes to the Compensation Guidelines for 2025:

Pulpit Supply Rates (Page 12):

- The Committee is recommending an increase to the pulpit supply rate from \$170 to \$180 for one worship service plus \$60 for each additional service.

No other changes have been made to the Compensation Guidelines for 2025

Changes made to the CSS Minister Recommended Compensation Worksheet – 2025

Line 10, Baseline:

- The baseline figure is adjusted each year using the US Inflation Calculator, (<https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/>). To stay consistent with our commitment to follow the US Inflation Calculator for all compensation recommendations, therefore, the Compensation Committee is recommending an increase of 4.1% which is based on the 2023 Inflation Index.

Payroll + W-2 Worksheet:

- Added a line (Line 19) to the “Payroll+ W-2” tab for those individuals who elect to upgrade their health plan (for example from Silver to Gold). This line allows for that cost to be calculated into their W-2, it has no effect on the compensation formula.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF THE SYNOD

Dear Ministry Partners,

Each year a team works on compensation guidelines for rostered ministers (and synod-authorized ministers) to assist congregations as they seek to determine appropriate compensation for their pastors, deacons, and synod-authorized ministers. Determining appropriate compensation is challenging balancing congregations' budgets and the desire to provide just, fair, and adequate compensation for ministers. It is important not only for the well-being of the rostered minister but also for the health and ministry of the congregation and ministry setting.

Because this is a difficult but important task, it needs to be done **in conversation** that is open, honest, direct, grace-filled, and respectful. The worksheet is a tool that gives a starting place, factoring in different variables, including years of experience as well as additional responsibilities and degrees. Once the worksheet is complete, the conversation begins.

In addition to having a conversation about compensation in terms of salary and benefits, it is also important to have a conversation about expectations, goals, and priorities. Every year each rostered minister and synod-authorized minister should have a **performance review**, not simply to reflect on how things have been going in the partnership between the rostered ministry and congregation, but also to be clear about goals and expectations for the coming year. My experience is that a lack of clarity around expectations can often lead to conflict.

Thank you for taking the time to carefully read through the new guidelines. I understand that changes can be challenging and appreciate your willingness to work together for the sake of the ministry of the whole church.



*The Rev. Susan Candea, Bishop
Central States Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: Compensation	Page 4
A: Appropriate Compensation	Page 4
B: Housing Allowance for Pastors	Page 5
C: Ministry Provided Housing (Parsonage)	page 6
D: Social Security Allowance for Pastors	Page 6
Section 2: Benefits	Page 7
A: ELCA Benefits Plan (Portico)	Page 7
B: Automobile Expense Reimbursement	Page 8
C: Professional Expense Reimbursement	page 9
D: Vacation	Page 9
E: Days Off	Page 9
F: Holidays	Page 9
G: Continuing Education	Page 10
H: Sabbatical	Page 10
Section 3: Disability and Leave	Page 11
A: Temporary Disability	Page 11
B: Family and Medical Leave Policy	Page 11
Section 4: Other Matters	Page 12
A: Additional Compensation	Page 12
B: Interim and Part-Time Ministries	Page 12
C: Pulpit Supply	Page 12
Appendix A – Extended Leave (Sabbatical Guidelines)	Page 13
Appendix B – Sample Family and Medical Leave Policy	Page 15

Link to:

[**2025 Compensation Worksheet**](#)

SECTION 1: COMPENSATION

A. APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION

Determining appropriate compensation is difficult! Rostered ministers (pastors and deacons) are not always paid what they should be paid. By virtue of their educational requirements and congregational/ministry site expectations, rostered ministers are professionals. They bring to their congregations or ministry sites many gifts, and should be compensated according to their education, ability, and responsibility, and in line with the incomes of professionals in comparable positions. Some synods define this as high school principals; others compare it with rostered leaders of other denominations. Based on their compensation, rostered ministers should be able to provide for their own economic needs as well as those of their spouse and/or children.

The Central States Synod cannot provide specific tax or legal advice to rostered ministers, congregations, or specialized ministries. If you have questions about tax matters or legal issues, contact a qualified tax adviser or attorney. Information provided by the IRS specifically for churches and religious organizations can be found at:

<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1828.pdf>

Just as the rostered minister ought to be paid a livable wage, compensation should not exceed the community's ability to give according to their own needs. The contributions of individuals and families in a congregation come from their own hard work, labor and time spent away from loved ones. All in the congregation need to find the appropriate balance in compensating rostered ministers and church professionals. Mission, ministry, and expectations must be clearly articulated if rostered ministers are to be held accountable for their service. A Congregation Council or specialized ministry governing board is expected to annually review the joint ministry expectations of the congregation or ministry and its professional ministers. Constructive adjustments in expectations and/or direction can be made at this time. For the financial health of the community, compensation packages ought to be annually reviewed as well. Realistic expectations and adequate compensation are critical to the future well-being of the whole community.

Everyone must remember that the process for determining compensation must be open, honest, and gracious conversation. Both professional ministers and ministry representatives, (whether the Congregation Council, a staff support committee, or personnel committee), should articulate their expectations clearly and develop a regular ministry evaluation process to note changes as program directions shift or as the rostered minister's skills or needs change. Honest assessment leads to healthy ministry. Not even carefully crafted guidelines can give congregations or specialized ministries automatic, concise and simple answers to what are inherently complex issues. Following the criteria set forth in the Rostered Minister Recommended Salary Worksheet will be helpful in ministry assessment and compensation discussions.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

While the focus of these guidelines applies only to rostered ministers, the principles apply to other church workers. Youth directors, secretaries, custodians, choir directors, organists, teachers and others also deserve fair compensation, and the responsibility of the congregation to these persons is no less than to the rostered minister.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Housing and Social Security allowances (Parts B, C, and D below) are provided for pastors only. All other recommended guidelines in this document apply to all rostered ministers (pastors and deacons).

If current compensation is below a level agreed to be fair, moving to a level of adequate compensation may involve patience on the part of rostered ministers as a ministry works to achieve that goal. It will also involve a ministry's determined effort in stewardship and education to reach that level. For example, if the compensation is 10% below the guideline, the ministry might make the commitment to increase the rostered minister's salary by 6% - 8% per year for three years to reach the appropriate compensation guideline three years hence. Finally, adequate and fair compensation encourages good morale on the part of professional ministers and the congregation or specialized ministry as they work together to do ministry and mission in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. See Section 4. Part A. for a list of non-cash compensation options.

If the congregation or specialized ministry is already ABOVE the appropriate compensation guideline, a cost of living increase equivalent to the CPI-U for the Midwest should be considered (<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t04.htm>), since the failure to provide a cost of living salary increase is, in effect, a salary cut. In addition, merit increases should be considered for all rostered ministers.

B. HOUSING ALLOWANCE FOR PASTORS

Pastors called to congregational or specialized ministries may designate a portion of their compensation as a "housing allowance." This is a significant tax advantage giving pastors the ability to exclude from federally taxable income that part of compensation that is used to provide a home (Internal Revenue Code section 107). Please remember that this designation does not change the total defined compensation paid to a pastor. This is also not an exclusion for income used in determining Social Security or SECA tax obligations.

Portico Benefit Services provides helpful information on housing allowance. Please contact them for more information.

Congregations that pay their pastors a housing allowance must approve a resolution prior to the beginning of each calendar year. Both pastor and congregation should keep a copy for their files. The original should be in the records of the congregation. See page two of the worksheet for a sample resolution.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

The following kinds of expenses can be used when calculating the housing allowance.

- Mortgage or rent payments
- Real estate taxes
- Property Insurance
- Down Payment on a home
- Utilities
- Furnishings & Appliances (purchase & repair)
- Remodeling & repairs
- Yard maintenance & improvements

Only the lowest of the following can be used when a pastor files their federal income tax return:

- The fair rental value of the home (including all expenses listed above)
- The amount actually spent to provide a home
- The amount officially designated as the housing allowance

The housing allowance amount is always excluded from federal income. This means that the congregation or specialized ministry excludes this amount from Box 1 of the W-2. The amount will, however, be entered in Box 14 of the W-2, which is merely an information item. A pastor should always check with her or his own tax advisor for personal questions or concerns about the housing allowance or other tax issues.

C. MINISTRY-PROVIDED HOUSING (PARSONAGES)

Where a congregation provides a parsonage, the congregation should assume all costs for maintenance and utilities. The congregation may pay these costs directly or give an allowance to the pastor sufficient to cover the expenses. In addition to these costs, the congregation should provide and maintain major appliances in the parsonage. While living in a parsonage has many advantages, it does not build home equity for retirement. If a parsonage is provided, the congregation is encouraged to provide the pastor a Housing Equity Allowance. It is helpful for the congregation to pay directly to a tax deferred plan which delays the income tax due until the funds are actually withdrawn for use; this can be done by making additional employer contributions with Portico Benefit Services. It is recommended that these contributions total at least 3% of the defined compensation (Salary & Cash Value of Parsonage). When housing is provided for a pastor couple, a 30% housing allowance for *each* spouse must be included when calculating defined compensation for Portico Benefit Services.

D. SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE FOR PASTORS

While most pastors are employees for federal income tax reporting purposes, they all are self-employed for social security purposes. This means that pastors are not subject to "FICA" taxes, even though they report their income taxes as employees and receive a W-2 from their church. Rather, they pay the "self-employment tax" (SECA – Self-Employed Contributions Act) of 15.30% of their salary and housing allowance. Since congregations are required to pay 7.65% of a lay employee's salary for social security benefits, it is fair and recommended to pay this amount as a Social Security allowance to the pastor. Many

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

congregations provide an allowance for all or part of this expense. This allowance, if provided, is part of the taxable income for the pastor. Deacons and lay ministers are considered to be employees of the congregation and congregations are required to pay Social Security taxes and file federal tax W-2 or 1099 forms, as appropriate.

SECTION 2: BENEFITS

A. ELCA BENEFITS PLAN (PORTICO)

The congregation shall budget for and participate in the ELCA Retirement, Medical, Disability, and Life Insurance benefits (Portico). Medical insurance shall be provided for the rostered minister and their family, unless their spouse has separate medical insurance that covers the family, and the rostered minister waives the coverage. Rates are based on geographic location and rate class, defined compensation, plan member age, health benefit option, and household coverage level. To determine the amount to be contributed go to Employerlink.PorticoBenefits.org and use the calculator tools provided on the website and see the four health plan options.

Each year in the fall, all employers (congregations) and plan members must go through open enrollment on the Portico website to choose the health plan they are going to provide and participate in. The health plan chosen cannot be changed during the next year, even if there is a transition in the call. For consistency across the synod, we recommend congregations in conversations with their rostered ministers offer the best possible health care plan. We recognize the importance of having healthy leaders.

The synod recommends a minimum 12% retirement contribution, regardless of the age of the rostered minister. Retirement contributions can be modified during the year. Congregations in consultation with their rostered ministers have the option of reallocating 2% of the recommended retirement contribution to help those rostered ministers reduce their student loan principal. Other options also include extra contributions to their continuing education and professional expenses.

Portico Benefit Services, the nonprofit benefit ministry of the ELCA, provides the benefit program for rostered ministers, lay employees, and their families. Portico provides health, dental, prescription drug, retirement, disability, and group life insurance benefits in one bundled program.* This program is designed to address the needs of rostered ministers and provide seamless benefits during change of call, leave from call, and other events unique to ministry. A bundled approach helps ensure rostered ministers and lay employees are protected against significant financial loss from a variety of risks. Through Portico, congregations** in this synod and across the country pool their collective purchasing power to provide benefits in a cost-effective manner. For more information, see the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits at <https://porticobenefits.org/elca-together/philosophy-of-benefits/>.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Congregations and plan members share the cost of benefits. Congregations are expected to support the well-being of their covered plan members by paying all or a significant portion of the contributions for benefits. Plan members are expected to participate in the cost of utilizing the benefits (e.g., deductibles, coinsurance, and copays).

The ELCA Church Council has approved a balance of cost-sharing between congregations and plan members. Portico offers a choice of ELCA-Primary health benefit options that fit this approved balance. Each fall, congregations in this synod should select one of these approved options to offer their sponsored plan members for the following year. During annual enrollment, Portico will notify congregations which options fit within the range that the ELCA Church Council has approved. Congregations should engage in conversation with their rostered minister to determine the option that best fits their needs. Current contribution rates are available on at EmployerLink/PorticoBenefits.org or by calling Portico at 800.352.2876.

* A plan member may waive health coverage if they have access to valid medical insurance coverage through their spouse or another employer.

** "Congregations" may also refer to multi-point parishes or other non-parish ministry agencies such as Bible camps, long-term care facilities, hospitals, campus ministries, etc.

B. AUTOMOBILE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Automobile expense and other work-related travel are business expenses of the congregation and should not be considered by the congregation as part of the rostered minister's compensation. Automobile reimbursements should be sufficient to cover all congregation-related activities. Car expenses include actual expense plus depreciation. The Internal Revenue Service requires accurate records to support automobile expenses. The rostered minister is responsible for maintaining adequate records for every vehicle used for work-related travel. Because new tax laws no longer allow non-reimbursed business expenses, including mileage, to be claimed on tax returns, we recommend congregations use one of the options below rather than providing an automobile allowance:

- The congregation purchases or leases a vehicle and assumes the total expense.
- The congregation reimburses for actual miles driven at a specific rate per mile. The rate might vary depending on where the vehicle is driven and how many miles are driven each year. The current IRS reimbursement rate can be found on <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>. The "business" rate shall be used.
- The Central States Synod does not recommend that congregations provide an automobile allowance.

C. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

It is recommended that the congregation share professional expenses such as books, clerical apparel, periodicals, professional dues, software, entertaining, and hospitality costs incurred in the performance of the duties of the ministry as well as technology tools such as phones and tablets which are essential and necessary for the minister's calling. The Central States Synod recommends that this be set as a line item in a budget.

D. VACATION

Because a rostered minister is "on call" day and night and carries heavy responsibilities daily, the recommended minimum annual vacation time is four weeks, which includes four Sundays. The congregation should consider granting additional vacation time based on length of service in ministry. The length of vacation time, including the number of Sundays off and when vacation time is to be taken, are all matters which need to be discussed openly with your rostered minister and are an important part of their compensation. Vacation time should be used within the calendar year and not accumulated, except by special agreement with the congregation council. Vacation time is available during the first year of any call. Vacation time is a good investment in the health and well-being of the rostered minister and his/her family. Time spent in outdoor ministries and retreats with congregation youth and adults, or work on area ministry, synod, or ELCA committees should not be considered vacation time or educational leave.

E. DAYS OFF

At least one, and preferably two, full days off should be granted each week. It is understood that congregation emergencies may require a change in schedule from time to time. Days off due to illness shall not be subtracted from vacation time.

F. HOLIDAYS

It should be noted that the rostered minister is seldom able to take advantage of three-day weekends and other holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Consideration is to be given and the rostered minister encouraged to take days off another time during the week to compensate for these and national holidays. Compensation time is not to be counted as vacation time.

G. CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Lutheran Church has a history of an educated and well-trained leadership. The congregation should expect its rostered ministers to be involved in continuing education programs which will provide opportunity for personal development, enrichment of devotional life, and growth in effectiveness and competency. Continuing education is regarded as an essential ongoing process that assists the leader in maintaining and sharpening the professional skills required for congregation rostered leader in a rapidly changing world. The ELCA expects each rostered minister to participate in an average of 50 contact hours of annually. Congregation and synod staff should consider a rostered minister's continuing education record when granting compensation increases and in the call process.

Continuing education is understood to be "professional growth" and "self-renewal," as distinguished from program development, vacation, or a theological convocation. Both the rostered minister and the congregation will benefit from the minister's involvement in continuing education. It is therefore suggested that any continuing education program be mutually studied and agreed upon by the leader and the congregation council. Continuing education may include courses, seminary classes, workshops, or independent study when directed toward a goal.

Conferences and events provided by this synod (such as the annual Bishop's Convocation) are not to be considered as part of continuing education.

The recommended continuing education time is two weeks (fourteen full days which include Sundays), plus the recommendation of \$1,000 per year to fund the continuing education. It is also recommended that this amount accumulate in a separate fund so that the equivalent of three years funds is available and that the rostered minister use at least one week per year. Unless a congregation has an explicit written policy relating to the use of continuing education funds, upon beginning a new call within the ELCA, those funds will transfer to the new congregation.

H. SABBATICAL

When a rostered minister has served longer than five years and has served for at least three years in their current call, the congregation is encouraged to grant sabbatical leave of three to six months. Further sabbaticals shall be granted every five years. Compensation during sabbatical leave shall remain unchanged for the pastor or deacon. The congregation is responsible for the costs of pulpit supply and emergency coverage, or the salary of an interim pastor, during a sabbatical leave. The purpose of sabbatical leave is for rest and renewal of rostered minister. *See Appendix A.*

SECTION 3: DISABILITY AND LEAVE

A. TEMPORARY DISABILITY

In the case of disability due to injury, or physical or mental health condition, the congregation shall continue to pay the full compensation and housing for the first sixty days of disability, until the temporary disability benefits of Portico Benefit Services go into effect. Disability benefits under the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan provide monthly income, health and survivor coverage, and contributions to the ELCA Retirement Plan. These benefits are designed to help rostered ministers adapt and recover from disabling illness and injury until they can return to work, if possible. The congregation council and rostered minister should contact the synod office and Portico prior to taking actions related to disability.

B. FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE POLICY

The Central States Synod and the ELCA seek to provide compensation and benefit policies that meet the needs of all rostered ministers. As such, this synod recommends that all congregations create a Family and Medical Leave policy that supports the needs and health of the rostered minister.

Family and Medical Leave shall be granted for the following:

- To provide care for a family member during physical or mental illness, injury, or other needs. Covered family members should, at minimum, include spouse, domestic partner, parents, siblings, children, foster children, in-laws, grandparents, and grandchildren.
- Adding a family member by birth, adoption, or foster care.

Since each family's situation is unique, congregations are encouraged to be flexible and understanding in granting the necessary time for the rostered minister to meet the needs of their family situation. Family and Medical Leave is a good investment in the health and well-being of the rostered minister and their family as well as a positive way to lift up and model healthy familial commitments to the whole congregation. Any weeks on leave are minimal relative to the length of a rostered leader's time in the congregation and the health that leader requires to care for congregations. Paid Family and Medical Leave shall not reduce allotted vacation time.

A minimum of eight weeks paid Family and Medical Leave shall be granted to a rostered leader, with the option to extend that leave without repercussion an additional four weeks by use of vacation time and/or unpaid leave.

A sample Family and Medical Leave Policy is included in Appendix B.

SECTION 4: OTHER MATTERS

A. ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION

Congregations who are unable to meet compensation guidelines or would like to reward faithful ministers for their service might consider a variety of means of additional compensation. They should ask their rostered minister what other types of compensation would be beneficial to them. Congregations are invited to think creatively about this.

Examples vary by congregation, but some have provided:

- Additional vacation and/or continuing education time
- Additional continuing education funds
- Services from congregation members: licensed daycare, haircuts, car service, dry cleaning, lawn care, snow blowing, etc.
- Additional retirement contributions (above 12%)

B. INTERIM AND PART-TIME MINISTRIES

Because situations vary greatly with interim and part-time ministries, guidance for structuring and compensating these ministries will be provided by the synod office staff as needed.

C. PULPIT SUPPLY

Pulpit supply is to be arranged and paid for by the congregation. \$180 for one worship service, plus \$60 for each additional service is a recommended minimum. If additional responsibilities are requested, such as service planning, visitation, faith formation, etc., additional compensation should be considered. Mileage reimbursement should be provided, based on the current IRS business rate (<https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>).

APPENDIX A - Extended Leave (Sabbatical Guidelines)

PREFACE

The Biblical witness is the story of God's continuing faithfulness to invest the Gospel into human hands and lives. The Apostle Paul speaks of it as pouring God's love into earthen vessels: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us." (2 Cor. 4:7). Earthen vessels are meant to be filled and emptied, again and again. But care must be taken that, once emptied, the vessels can be filled once again.

St. Paul cautions us that spiritual strength essential to effective ministry comes from God and does not come from ourselves. Both in the strength and in the filling, it is a transcendent power given to us, poured into us as God's people. This is true for all the baptized. It is equally true, perhaps even to a greater degree, of those we look to for filling and spiritual nurture, the rostered ministers who serve among us: pastors and deacons.

The concept of wholeness and wellness in ministry is an important principle in the life of the Church. Healthy congregations and healthy rostered ministers are essential to a healthy community of faithful people. It is our belief that sabbatical leave for rostered ministers is an expression of mutual care for one another.

Sabbatical Leave should be considered by both clergy and congregation as an integral feature of clergy's life and ministry. The clergy and congregation should plan together a definite sabbatical schedule which provides benefits in ministry for both. Sabbatical leave is a privilege granted by a congregation to its leader. It is an opportunity the congregation provides its leader to experience a renewal of oneself and of one's mission. It is a time for reflection, spiritual re-encounter, renewal, and community.

The distinct benefits of a sabbatical leave are twofold:

- a) The mission of the congregation benefits from the opportunity to be re-empowered through caring for the ministry of the congregation in the absence of a rostered leader in addition to the presence following sabbatical leave of rostered leaders whose skills and creativity have been renewed or enhanced through a time for reflection, spiritual re-encounter, renewal, and community.
- b) The ministry of rostered leaders benefits from the personal renewal that comes from an extended time for reflection, spiritual re-encounter, renewal, and community.

The Central States Synod has developed the following guidelines for congregations, institutions, and agencies of the church to make a sabbatical leave possible for the rostered persons who serve among us. An extended sabbatical leave provides an opportunity for rostered ministers to reflect on their call to ministry and relationship with God. An extended sabbatical leave should be holistic, including time for prayer, reflection, relaxation, and refreshment of body and spirit.

EXTENDED SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES

1. An extended sabbatical leave of three to six months be granted to rostered ministers. To be eligible for sabbatical leave, leaders shall have been (a) in rostered ministry for five years and (b) at least three years in their current call. Following their first sabbatical, rostered leaders shall be eligible for sabbatical leave every five years.
2. The rostered minister is normally expected to serve the congregation, agency, or institution for at least one year following completion of the sabbatical leave.
3. The congregation, institution, or agency shall maintain the defined compensation (base salary, housing, and Social Security allowance), and ELCA Retirement and Benefits program be maintained at the current budget level. Rostered leaders and congregations are encouraged to apply for outside funding support when available.
4. Extended sabbatical leave shall be presented to the congregation council or governing body of the agency or institution not less than twelve (12) months prior to the beginning of the proposed leave.
5. Expenses incurred by the rostered leader during the sabbatical leave will be borne by that leader. Continuing education funds would normally be used to cover some of the expenses.
6. Realizing the congregation, agency, or institution will be without the services of its regularly called person, it should consult with the synodical bishop regarding possible options for continuing coverage during the period of the sabbatical leave.
7. It is understood that the extended sabbatical leave is a mutually negotiated agreement between the rostered person and the congregation, agency, or institution. The extended sabbatical leave agreement will be filed with the synod office ordinarily at least three months prior to the beginning date of the sabbatical leave.

The above extended Sabbatical Leave Guidelines were amended by the Synod Council Executive Committee Meeting on May 13, 2022.

APPENDIX B: Sample Family and Medical Leave Policy

[Name of Congregation/Ministry] is committed to a culture that helps our rostered leaders and employees meet the demands of family and employment responsibilities. Offering our rostered leaders and employees the option of taking paid time off when they or a family member is sick is not just good for our leaders and their families, it's good for our faith community.

Therefore, it is our policy to provide up to 8 weeks of paid family and medical leave, with the option to extend that leave without repercussion an additional four weeks by use of vacation time and/or unpaid leave, in a 12-month period to eligible rostered leaders as defined below.

Eligibility

To be eligible for paid Family and Medical leave (PFML), a rostered leader or employee must qualify for leave from work for a reason covered by the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act:

- For the employee's own serious health condition.
- For the birth of the employee's child, and to care for the newborn child.
- For the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; or
- To care for the employee's spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent who has a serious health condition.

This leave will also be extended for siblings, children, foster children, in-laws, grandparents, and grandchildren.

Use of Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML), Rate of Pay and Benefits While on Leave

PFML will be subject to the following general requirements:

1. Generally, employees are entitled to take up to 8 weeks of paid leave in a single 12-month period for the reasons specified above. For the purposes of this policy, [Name of Congregation/Ministry] will calculate the amount of PFML available to an employee using a "rolling" 12-month period.
2. Employees are entitled to extend their leave without repercussion an additional four weeks by use of vacation time and/or unpaid leave.
3. Any PFML taken for the birth/adoption/foster care placement of a child must be completed within one year after the date of birth or placement.
4. Full-time rostered leader(s)/employees will be compensated at the regular, base weekly rate of pay. The compensation rate of those who are part-time will be pro-rated based on an average number of hours worked in the 6 months before leave begins.
5. If the reason for PFML also is covered by the [Name of Congregation's/Ministry's] short-term benefits policy (or other policies), benefits will run concurrently. However, [Name of Congregation/Ministry] will supplement the employee's pay so that the employee receives 100 percent compensation during the period of leave.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

6. To the extent applicable, PFML will run concurrently with federal FMLA and any leave provided under state or local law.
7. If a rostered leader/employee is enrolled in group health insurance or other insurance benefits, these benefits will continue as if the employee had not taken leave.

How to Request PFML?

If a rostered leader/employee requests leave for a reason that the employee believes qualifies under this policy, the employee must comply with [Name of Congregation/Ministry] notification policy [include reference to handbook page here if congregation has one]. Failure to comply with [Name of Congregation's/Ministry's] notification policies and procedures or to provide documentation or information requested may result in delay or denial of requested time off.

Reinstatement

When the rostered leader/employee timely returns from PFML and used the leave for the stated purpose, the rostered leader/employee will be reinstated to the same position held when leave began.

Before returning to work from PFML for the employee's own serious health condition, the employee may be required to submit certification from a health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

Compliance with State and Local law

[Name of Congregation/Ministry] recognizes the co-existence of state and/or local laws regarding family and medical leave. Where such laws apply and provide greater family and medical leave rights than this policy, [Name of Congregation/Ministry] will comply with those laws.

Notes on this Sample Policy

The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act covers private sector employers who employ 50 or more employees for at least 20 workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year.

Although this Act does not apply to many congregations, we seek to provide benefits in line with the spirit of this Act, taking into consideration the unique structure and number of employees in most of our congregations.

Please note that the information provided, while research-based, is not guaranteed for accuracy and legality. Please seek legal assistance, or assistance from state or federal governmental resources, to make certain your legal interpretation and decisions are correct. This information is for guidance, ideas, and assistance.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2023 Central States Synod Assembly Actions

Number	Subject	Action
SA 23.01	Resolution to Encourage Development of Mission Partnership Support “One Body Together in Mission”	Congregations were encouraged to learn more about Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities through mission trips, inviting a speaker to their worship service and to support SAWCs through financial support and prayer.
SA 23.02	A Season of Global Awareness: Remembering our Companion Synods and ELCA ministries around the world	Communication was shared with the synod encouraging congregations to remember and pray for our companion synods.
SA. 23.03	Creation of a Synod Campus Ministry Team	A team has been formed, comprised of campus pastors and other supportive individuals.
SA.23.04	Bethany Village Chaplaincy Endowment Support	The synod shared information and encouraged congregations to collect offering support the endowment funds of Bethany Village on the second Sunday in November.
SA.23.05	Thanksgiving for Ministry	The assembly joined together in prayer.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

2024 Central States Synod Assembly Proposed Resolutions

Number	Name	Summary
SA 24.01	A Season of Global Awareness; Remembering our Companion Synods and ELCA ministries around the world.	The season of Epiphany be designated as a “Season of Global Awareness.” October 6, 2024, be designated to celebrate our relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Urals, Siberia and Far East. February 23, 2025 be designated to celebrate our relationship with the Kote District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea.
SA 24.02	Bethany College	Synod staff, clergy, and congregations of the CS encourage students to consider attending a Lutheran institution of higher learning. Designate the Sunday nearest October 15 th each year as Bethany College Sunday.
SA. 24.03	Resolution to Become a Reconciling in Christ Synod	The Central States Synod will become a Reconciling in Christ Synod and adopt the statement of welcome, “Traveling the way of Jesus, who commanded his followers to love one another as Christ has loved, and believing that all persons are created in the image of God, this synod welcomes people of every race, background, age, political affiliation, economic and social status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and mental and physical ability. As a synod we strive to enable all people to participate fully in the life and work of the church in the ministry of Jesus Christ.”
SA.24.04	2024 Resolution on Peace and Climate Justice	The Central States Synod commits itself to worship, educate, and advocate for peace and justice for all the Earth. Including prayers for peace in communal worship services and individual prayers. Utilize resources to learn more about our call as earth keepers and peacemakers. Advocate for peace and climate justice through ELCA Advocacy , Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA), and your designated legislators. Highlight peace-making during Advent 2024 and the month of December. Work to end all wars through the above efforts as one way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
SA.24.05	Pastoral Leadership Transitions in the Central States Synod	The Central States Synod will - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give thanks for the work of transition teams, leaders, seminaries and interim pastors - Encourage the identification and development of new leaders - Call on congregations to note the changing circumstances of the pastoral call process. - Share this resolution with congregations entering transition - Engage with the ELCA to offer and learn from shared experiences
SA.24.06	Thanksgiving for Ministry	The Assembly recognizes and gives thanks for ministers and congregations no longer with the ELCA

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Resolution SA24.01

A SEASON OF GLOBAL AWARENESS

Remembering our Companion Synods and ELCA ministries around the world

Whereas it is important for the people, the congregations, and the leadership of the Central States Synod to be aware that we are part of a world-wide community of faith, the Companion Synod Team calls upon the Voting members of the Central States Synod Assembly to adopt the following resolution.

Be it resolved that the Epiphany Season be designated as a “Season of Global Awareness” for congregations within the Central States Synod and that congregations intentionally lift up the church around the world through prayer, song, educational events and in any way appropriate to the context of the congregation. The focus would be not only on our Companion Synods in Papua New Guinea and Russia, but also the Global Ministry we share in through the Global Mission Arm of the ELCA such as Missionary Sponsorship and Young Adults in Global Mission as we continue to promote the witness of the Gospel, works of compassion and justice ministry around the world.

Be it also resolved that **Sunday, October 6th, 2024** shall be designated as the Sunday to remember, lift up and celebrate our companion church relationship with the “Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Urals, Siberia and Far East” (ELCUSFE) with a special focus on the Far Eastern Deanery. *(This date was chosen because the first Sunday in October is widely observed by the churches in Russia as a harvest Sunday when they give thanks and celebrate the completion of the fall harvest).*

Be it also resolved that **Sunday, February 23rd, 2025** be designated as the Sunday to remember, lift up and celebrate our companion church relationship with the Kote District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG). This would be an appropriate way to conclude the Epiphany Season which is our season of Global Awareness.

The Central States Synod Companion Synod Team will provide resources for mission education and worship for the Epiphany Season, and additionally, prayer requests, recent news and communications from our Companion Churches prior to the two Companion Synod Sundays to help us to “accompany one another” in our journey as followers, servants and witnesses to Jesus Christ in our respective parts of God’s world.

The Companion Synod Team of the Central States Synod – ELCA

Rebecca Blocksome
Jon Brudvig
Jim Cooper
Keith Holste
Peggy Schaefer
Emily Greble

Penny Holste
Gary Kallansrud
Daniel Lilienkamp
Doug Reed.
Gary Teske
Andrew Beers

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Resolution SA24.02

BETHANY COLLEGE

Whereas Bethany College, established October 15, 1881, is an institution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Central States Synod.

Be it resolved that the synod staff, clergy, and congregations of the CSS recognize and encourage our youth to consider attending a Lutheran institution of higher learning such as Bethany College which may enhance the future of the ELCA.

Be it further resolved that the Central States Synod and its member congregations will recognize the Sunday nearest October 15th each year as Bethany College Sunday.

Submitted by Rev. David Carlson

Resolution SA24.03

RESOLUTION TO BECOME A RECONCILING IN CHRIST SYNOD

In 2009, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly approved Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust which addressed the question: How do we understand human sexuality, “a wondrous gift,” within the context of Jesus’ invitation to love God and love our neighbor? And while the statement at that time recognized that this church “holds various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues . . . to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection.”

Since then, the ELCA has grown and continues to welcome and affirm of LGBTQIA+ equality in the church. LGBTQIA+ pastors and deacons have been called and ordained for ministry. Many of our lifelong members have had their marriage vows affirmed in their local churches. We have called LGBTQIA+ rostered ministers to serve as bishops and more than half of the 65 Synods of the ELCA have become Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Synods.

In the Central States Synod, our mission statement declares that we are “united with Christ in baptism, traveling the way of Jesus, joining God’s reign of justice and radical love for the world.” We are becoming a more diverse community of faith through the movement of our congregations and faith leaders. We have 18 congregations and 3 campus ministries have been designated or are going through the process of becoming Reconciling in Christ (RIC). And both of our seminary partners, LSTC and Wartburg, have joined as RIC communities.

Despite this progress, our LGBTQIA+ siblings continue to experience exclusion and harm from people who believe they are acting in the name of Christianity. Many churches who declare “All are welcome” often demonstrate to LGBTQIA+ individuals and families that “All” does not include them.

Since 1983, the RIC program has been a public way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the Lutheran church. Its purpose is to ensure the welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; and to work for racial equity and commit to anti-racist work and support the national program. The welcoming invitation of RIC is explicit, recognizing the injustices that have occurred in the name of faith.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

The Central States Synod, stepping into its role as a RIC synod, would continue to travel the way of Jesus, welcoming, including, and celebrating all sexual orientations, gender identities, racial, ethnic, and indigenous backgrounds. We would work toward the full welcome, inclusion, celebration, and advocacy of all. While not mandating any particular action by individual congregations, the Central States Synod will continue to:

- Provide resources relevant to welcoming LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families on the synod's website.
- Emphasize the synod's commitment to welcome all at synod and conference events.
- Promote annual "RIC Sunday" worship services and celebrations in the synod newsletter and other media.
- Advocate (together with the bishop and other synod leaders) for public policies that protect LGBTQIA + individuals and their families.
- Make a meaningful financial contribution to support the national RIC program in an amount determined by the synod council.
- Continue our work for racial justice in partnership with the Synod's Racial Justice Team.
- Encourage individual congregations, when requested, to develop their own welcome statements, recognizing and respecting the importance of each congregation to discern its way to live out Christ's welcome.

While the RIC program is focused on the welcome and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and working for racial justice, the Central States Synod recognizes that the gospel of Jesus and the welcome of the church extends to all people. It does not draw a distinction based upon racial, ethnic or indigenous background; age; political affiliations; economic or social status; or mental or physical ability. This calls us to be intentional about the ways we extend Christ's welcome to ALL.

Be it resolved that the Central States Synod in assembly become a Reconciling in Christ Synod.

Be it further resolved that the Central States Synod adopt the following statement of welcome: Traveling the way of Jesus, who commanded his followers to love one another as Christ has loved, and believing that all persons are created in the image of God, this synod welcomes people of every race, background, age, political affiliation, economic and social status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and mental and physical ability. As a synod we strive to enable all people to participate fully in the life and work of the church in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Submitted by the Central States Synod Council

Resolution SA24.04

2024 RESOLUTION ON PEACE AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Stories and images of war around the globe continue to demand our attention and action for peace. The loss of human life in Gaza, Ukraine, Syria, and other nations climbs each day.

The ELCA Conference of Bishops has issued statements urging legislators and leaders to work for a cease-fire in Gaza, and ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has publicly called for peace in the Holy Land. (1)

Our ELCA Social Statement, **“For Peace in God's World,”** adopted in 1995, outlines biblical and theological teaching on war and peace, and our call to be peacemakers. (2)

In addition to the loss of human life, the environmental costs of war are deep and long-lasting. Damage to water sources and water infrastructure, air pollution, and contamination of soil harm both human and other-than-human creatures. (3)

Active warfare multiplies the already significant output of greenhouse gas emissions from militaries, exacerbating climate change. Bombings devastate land, biodiversity, and natural habitats. (4)

Intersecting issues of hunger, poverty, war, climate change, and injustice plague those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged and imperil the future for generations to come.

Therefore, be it resolved that faith communities and individuals in the Central States Synod commit themselves to worship, educate, and advocate for peace and justice for all the Earth by:

- 1) Including prayers for peace in every communal worship service and in our individual prayers.
- 2) Utilizing the resources of the ELCA and other appropriate sources to learn more about our call as earth keepers and peacemakers. (5)
- 3) Advocating for peace and climate justice through [ELCA Advocacy](#), Kansas Interfaith Action ([KIFA](#)), and your designated legislators. (6)
- 4) Highlighting peace-making during Advent 2024 and the month of December, utilizing the resources of the 2024 Creation Care Plan. (7)
- 5) Working to end all wars through the above efforts as one way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as part of the ELCA efforts to reach net-zero by 2050. (8)

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Let us pray. We pray for the end of all wars and for peace forevermore. We pray for grace, forgiveness, generosity, and peace among all nations. Give us faith to go forward caring for all people, knowing that you are leading us, and your love is supporting us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Submitted by CSS Lutherans Restoring Creation Mission Table

Larry Erickson, First Lutheran, Manhattan, KS

Jane Meyerkord, Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO

Cindy Gross, Bethel Lutheran, University City, MO

Sheryl Mehrhoff, St. Andrew's Lutheran, Columbia, MO

Keith Mundy, Atonement Lutheran, Overland Park, KS

Rev. Noni Strand, Overland Park Lutheran, Overland Park, KS

Rev. Janice Hawley, Holy Cross Lutheran, Creve Coeur, MO

Don Arney, Immanuel Lutheran, Kansas City, MO

Rev. Melissa Woepfel, Bethany College, Lindsborg, KS

Rev. Kaylie Ines, Olsburg and Walsburg Lutheran, Olsburg and Leonardville, KS

Rev. Christyn Koschmann, Martin Luther Lutheran and St. Luke's East Hospital, Lee's Summit, MO

Gary and Jeani Anderson, First Lutheran, Topeka, KS

- (1) <https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/Recent-News-Stories?page=0https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/Recent-News-Stories?page=0>
- (2) <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace>
- (3) The multiple impacts of war. *Nat Sustain* 6, 479–480 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-023-01146-0>
- (4) <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/how-war-impacts-the-environment-and-climate-change/>
- (5) Resources include:
 - a. ELCA Social Statement, “For Peace in God’s World,” with its accompanying study guide
 - b. ELCA Social Message, “Earth’s Climate Crisis,” with its accompanying study guide
 - c. The Earth Charter (<https://earthcharter.org/read-the-earth-charter/>)
 - d. Books, such as The Planet You Inherit: Letters to My Grandchildren When Uncertainty’s a Sure Thing, by Larry Rasmussen, and Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World, by Katharine Hayhoe.
 - e. Additional resources to be offered by the CSS Lutherans Restoring Creation Mission Table <https://lrc-css.square.site/>
- (6) Find out who your legislators are at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>
- (7) Download the CSS Creation Care Plan at <https://lrc-css.square.site/css-creation-care-plan> to see the resources for the month of December with suggestions.
- (8) The 2022 CSS Assembly and 2022 Churchwide Assembly adopted measures calling for a reduction in GHG emissions by 50% in 2030 with a goal of reaching net zero by 2050.

Resolution SA24.05

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS IN THE CENTRAL STATES SYNOD

Congregational leadership transitions are the work of the whole church. They involve bishops and synod staff members, who help guide the process and who work with pastors who might be appropriate candidates for ministry in that particular congregation. But pastors do not simply drop out of heaven, but are raised up from the pews of congregations. Thus, these transitions also involve Sunday school teachers, confirmation class leaders, synod candidacy committees, seminaries, and seminary field work and internship sites, as they all work to prepare candidates for ordination and service across the church.

When the ELCA was formed in 1988, the call process was shaped very differently from what it is today. In 1988, it assumed a lot of homogeneity of both congregations and pastors. There was a basic assumption that pastors were interchangeable, and the skill sets required in one setting could easily transfer to any congregation. Today, we recognize that both those assumptions are misplaced, and more care is needed to get a good fit of pastor and ministry site in order for ministry to flourish.

At the same time, technology has reshaped the process. Instead of paper files held in the synod office, electronic documents in a churchwide database makes all that information available across the ELCA at the same time.

For both these reasons, the call process documents have become longer and more detailed. Instead of check marks to answer multiple choice questions, we now ask rostered ministers and congregations in transition to reflect on themselves as they answer questions with a paragraph or two of concise, well thought-out sentences. Their answers describe the unique gifts, challenges, and opportunities, so that the transition results in better matches between congregations and rostered ministers. This kind of reflection takes time, but the experience of many call processes across the ELCA, has taught us that this is time well spent.

When congregations reflect more on their identity, community, mission, gifts, and leadership needs *before* looking at specific candidates, and when candidates reflect more on their vision for ministry, their gifts and talents, and the settings where they feel called to serve *before* looking at specific congregations, the more likely it is that the call process will result in a good “fit” between the congregation and the candidate. In addition, the time spent in reflection has proven to help pastors and congregations get off to a better start together when a call is extended and accepted.

At the same time, the ELCA is facing an imbalance between rostered leaders seeking calls and congregations seeking rostered leaders. Over the last several decades, the ELCA has seen large numbers of pastors retire or leave the ministry each year, while smaller numbers of new pastors have entered the ministry to take their places. Making matters worse, the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic led more pastors to retire or leave the ministry in recent years than would be expected in an ordinary year. A surplus of clergy 40 years ago has become a clergy shortage today.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Different parts of the ELCA are hit in different ways by this imbalance. Some synods have plenty of pastors to serve their congregations, while other synods – including our Central States Synod – feel the shortage of pastors much more acutely. Simply identifying pastors and candidates who are willing to look at calls in our synod stretches out the length of the process. In addition, candidates also have to balance other considerations such as a spouse's employment, special needs for their children, and the adaptability of congregations to be receptive to their particular gifts and life situations.

Instead of getting five or six candidates to consider, a call committee might receive three or two or only one – and those candidates are likely to be looking at other congregations at the same time. For some congregations, even identifying one candidate for them to consider can take quite a while.

The ELCA as a whole and our synod in particular are involved in the same kinds of leadership transition conversations as congregations seeking new pastors. The 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly authorized the establishment of the Commission on a Renewed Lutheran Church. Candidacy committees are reexamining how candidates are prepared and certified. Seminaries are reexamining their curricula, their facilities, their structures, and their teaching methods for preparing leaders for the church. The overall result is a changing pattern for rostered leader deployment and service.

The long-term solution to this leadership imbalance is to increase the number of pastoral leaders, as well as other items arising from all these transitional conversations across the ELCA. But meanwhile, congregations, rostered ministers, bishops, and other leaders cannot stop and wait for the long-term solutions to bear fruit.

Here in our synod, we have been working to address this shortage of pastors by practicing healthy habits for dealing with change. We have become especially curious about our communities, encouraging healthy self-assessment of our own gifts and needs, engaging in playful experimentation with alternative arrangements for ministry, and developing an entrepreneurial spirit that seeks out new gifts as well as new uses of old gifts. We have worked to raise up and support deacons, Parish Ministry Associates, and Synod Authorized Ministers, adding to the pool of possible leaders to serve our congregations. We have also changed how the synod supports congregations with transitional leadership, expanding the forms that support may take.

And while those efforts continue, the work of congregational transitions goes on.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Be it resolved that the 2024 Synod Assembly of the Central States Synod:

1. gives thanks for the work of
 - a. call committee members and congregation council members as they faithfully reflect on their congregation's mission and ministry during leadership transitions;
 - b. pastors, deacons, candidates for the ministries of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service, PMAs, and other pastoral leaders as they faithfully reflect on their gifts for ministry and how God is calling them to put them to use;
 - c. seminaries, our synod candidacy committee, and others involved in leadership development, as they prepare leaders for service across this church;
 - d. intentional interim pastors, interim consultants, other transitional leaders, and synod staff as they support congregations and related organizations going through leadership transitions;
2. encourages the raising up of new leaders by asking
 - a. congregational leaders to seek out, invite, and support those in their midst who might be suitable candidates for ordination, for entering the Parish Ministry Associate program, or for preparing to serve in other leadership positions in the church;
 - b. pastors and those who work with youth to plant seeds that might lead them to consider pastoral or other leadership positions as they grow and mature;
3. calls on congregations and leaders across our Synod to take note of the changing circumstances of pastoral call processes, and ask that
 - a. all congregations entering a leadership transition recognize the increased length of time these transitions take, and ask that they be open to new and creative partnerships with transitional leaders throughout the entire transition;
 - b. as smaller congregations face the departure of their previous rostered minister, they look at the possibility of shared pastoral leadership through a parish relationship;
 - c. as larger congregations with multiple rostered leaders face the departure of one of their pastors, they look at the possibility of adding a lay staff member (or members) rather than automatically seeking to replace one pastor with another pastor, recognizing that calling multiple pastors in one congregation means some other congregation will go without any pastor at all;
4. directs the bishop and synod staff to share this resolution with congregations, parishes, and other organizations who are entering leadership transitions in their ministries; and
5. asks our bishop, synod staff, and synod council to engage with the ELCA Conference of Bishops, ELCA churchwide staff, ELCA Church Council, seminaries, and their counterparts in other synods to learn from their experience with leadership development and congregational leadership transitions, and to offer them our experience.

Submitted by:

Rev. Peter Rehwaldt

Rev. Merle L. Brockhoff

Rev. Keith Hohly

Rev. Cynthia Schnaath

Rev. Jealaine Marple

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

**Resolution SA24.06
THANKSGIVING FOR MINISTRY**

Baptized, we welcome one another as fellow members of the Body of Christ and workers with us in the reign of God. Our merciful God gives us particular companions to know and to love in our pilgrimage here on earth. Since the last assembly, the following rostered ministers, whom we remember with thanksgiving and reverence, have died:

The Rev. Gerry Leaf, retired, McPherson, KS (12/6/2023)

The Rev. Ray Otto, retired, St. Joseph, MO (1/12/2024)

The Rev. Len Dale, retired, Olathe, KS (1/22/2024)

The Rev. Roger Gieschen, retired, Lenexa, KS (1/23/2024)

The following persons have served the Church faithfully, using their gifts and abilities to build up the Body of Christ, and have now retired from active ministry on the roster of the Church since the last Central States Synod Assembly:

The Rev. Richard Mueller, from Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO (7/1/2023)

The Rev. Cynthia Schnaath, from Interim Ministry, Lenexa, KS (8/1/2023)

Cherri Jestmore, Deacon, Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS (8/1/2023)

The Rev. Mike Malone, from On Leave from Call, Jackson, MO (11/1/2023)

The Rev. Linda Bollenbach, from Disabled Roster, Springfield, MO (10/1/2023)

The Rev. Katherine Hayes, from On Leave from Call, Springfield, MO (10/1/2023)

The Rev. Barb Jones, from On Leave from Call, Shawnee, KS (3/1/2024)

The Rev. Merle Brockhoff, from Interim Ministry, Kansas City, MO (4/1/2024)

The Rev. Randy Chapman, from Specialized Ministry, Topeka, KS (4/1/2024)

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

The body of Christ gathers as congregations to proclaim the gospel, share the means of grace, and empowered to carry out God's mission in the world. The following congregation(s) disaffiliated from the ELCA, discerning that they were called to participate in God's mission through other denominations:

Zion Lutheran Church, Wakeeney, KS took their second vote to disaffiliate on 6/25/2023.

Zion Lutheran Church, Beloit, KS, took their second vote to disaffiliate on 8/27/2023.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Otis, KS took their second vote to disaffiliate on 12/3/2023.

After many years of faithful ministry, the following congregation(s) closed, trusting that in the midst of death, there is always resurrection, and the mission of the church continues:

Cross of Glory Lutheran Church, Derby KS, (10/15/23)

Therefore, be it resolved that this Assembly recognizes and gives thanks for the ministry of these ministers and these congregations.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS and CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

Central States Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Amended at Synod Assembly on June 3, 2023

With the required & recommended changes from the August 2022 Churchwide Assembly

Chapter 1

NAME AND INCORPORATION

- †S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying by-laws, the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as “this synod” or “the synod.”
- †S1.11. This synod shall be incorporated. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of this synod shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.
- †S1.21. The seal of this synod is a cross with three united flames emanating from the base of the cross and three entwined circles beside the cross. The name of this synod and the year of its constituting convention form the circular outer edge of the seal.

Chapter 2

STATUS

- †S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.
- †S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.
- †S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

Chapter 3

TERRITORY

- †S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the States of Missouri and Kansas.
- S3.01.01. The exceptions shall be those congregations which are assigned to an adjacent synod and including those congregations from an adjacent state which are assigned to this synod, all in

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

accordance with the constitution and bylaws and continuing resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- †3.02. “Determined by the Churchwide Assembly” as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01 and 10.01.03

Chapter 4

CONFESSION OF FAITH

- †S4.01. This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- †S4.02. This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
- Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- †S4.03. This synod accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- †S4.04. This synod accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this synod.
- †S4.05. This synod accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- †S4.06. This synod accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- †S4.07. This synod confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 5

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- †S5.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this synod are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- †S5.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- †S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- †S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in the Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Chapter 6

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- †S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- †S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
 - d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- †S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:
- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
 - b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

†S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
 - 1) approving candidates for rostered ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining rostered ministers on behalf of this church;
 - 3) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
 - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
 - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
 - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
 - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
 - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service: as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

†S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- e. providing resources for congregational life;
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

†S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions
- l. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

†S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
- b. participating in churchwide programs;
- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

†S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synod units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.

- †S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 7

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

- †S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- †S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.

- S7.11.01. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held annually. The time, place, and format of the Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council.

S7.11.B.18 TRAVEL EQUALIZATION

That the Central States Synod at its 1991 Synod Assembly approves the following plan for travel equalization among Congregations who send official voting members to Synod Assemblies beginning in 1992.

- a. All congregations shall be treated the same; any congregation further than 100 miles (one way) from the Assembly site is eligible to submit a voucher for travel equalization.
- b. An Equalization Fund be established for each Assembly by adding a specified amount to each congregational voting member's registration fee. This fee will vary, depending upon Assembly site.
- c. Reimbursement will be at the Synod Rate or (if the Fund does not permit) at a rate calculated by the total Fund divided by the total miles submitted.
- d. Reimbursement will be for travel by one car per congregation or by other public conveyance at the same rate as a car.
- e. The Travel Equalization sheet must be signed at the end of the Assembly's closing worship, and checks made out to congregations which qualified and signed for the equalization reimbursement will then be processed following the Assembly.

S7.11.H.18 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

That the Synod Council shall appoint a Resolutions Committee.

- a. The Committee shall consist of 6 persons.
 - 1) Members of the Committee need not be voting members of the corresponding Synod Assembly.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- 2) One person will be appointed from each Conference, in consultation with that Conference's leadership.
 - 3) One person, to serve as Committee Chair, shall be an at-large appointment
 - 4) Appointments shall be by the synod council for a term of three years, Members shall be limited to no more than two consecutive terms on the Committee.
 - 5) Members of the Committee who are not voting members of the Assembly shall have voice, but not vote.
- b. The functions of the Resolutions Committee are to:
- 1) Ensure that resolutions submitted for consideration to the Synod Assembly are in the proper form;
 - 2) Eliminate duplication when similar resolutions are offered;
 - 3) Present resolutions in a logical sequence to allow adequate consideration of each; and
- c. Resolutions for consideration by the Synod Assembly will be regarded as properly received when:
- 1) The resolution is submitted by a synod committee, team, or conference of the Central States Synod; by an individual who is a voting member of a congregation of this Synod; or by an agency or institution recognized by the Synod.
 - 2) The resolution is received in the Synod office:
 - a) No less than 45 days prior to the opening of the Assembly; or
 - b) No less than seven days prior to the opening of the Assembly if it directly relates to an item of business on the published proposed Assembly agenda; or
 - c) No less than seven days prior to the opening of the Assembly if it is of such an urgent nature that it clearly cannot be postponed until the next Assembly.
- d. Properly received resolutions will be considered by the Committee.
- 1) The Resolutions Committee will convene after the 45 day deadline to consider all properly received resolutions. The meeting will be scheduled to ensure that the resolutions will be available to Assembly voting members as part of the pre-Assembly material.
 - 2) The Resolutions Committee may meet prior to the beginning of the Assembly to consider resolutions that were properly received according to c.2).b). and c.2).c).
 - 3) The Resolutions Committee may meet during the Assembly to serve the Assembly as directed by the Assembly or the officers of the Synod.
 - 4) All those submitting resolutions will be contacted by a member of the resolutions committee to address any concerns or questions regarding the resolution.
- e. The Resolutions Committee will take action on every properly received resolution. The Committee may take the following actions:
- 1) The Committee may report the resolution to the Assembly as submitted.
 - 2) By a three-quarters majority vote of the Committee, the Committee may act to not report the resolution (withholding it from consideration by the Assembly). The properly received resolution will be made available to the Assembly members, and the Committee chair will announce that the resolution is not reported. The Assembly may direct the Committee to report the resolution according to the provisions of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- 3) Where more than one properly received resolution deals with the same concern, the Committee may consolidate the substance of the resolutions in one resolution. In doing so, the original resolutions will be included as background. By a majority vote, the Assembly may direct the Committee to present the originally submitted resolutions rather than considering the consolidated resolution.
- 4) The Committee may submit an alternative resolution or may choose to make substantive changes to the submitted resolution. In doing so, the original resolution(s) will be included as background. By a majority vote, the Assembly may direct the Committee to present the originally submitted resolution(s) rather than considering the alternative resolution.
- 5) The Committee Chair may present the resolution to the Assembly and move that the matter be referred by the Bishop to an appropriate synod committee, team, or task force, or that it be referred to legal counsel.
- 6) In fulfilling its role, the Committee may deem it necessary to present a resolution drafted by the Committee. The Assembly, Committees of the Assembly, or the Presiding Officer of the Assembly may direct the Committee to present a resolution drafted by the Committee.
- 7) Together with one of the other allowed actions, by a three-quarters majority vote of the Committee, the Committee chair may move to limit debate on a specific resolution.

S7.11.1.21 On those years when the assembly is held in person, planning for Synod Assemblies will provide opportunities for the youth voting members to get together for fellowship, be oriented to the purpose and procedures of the assembly, and be fully engaged in the assembly.

S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.

- a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
- b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the Synod Council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod.

S7.14. One-third of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, as defined by †S7.21., S7.24., S7.27., shall constitute a quorum.

†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:

- a. All rostered ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- b. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.

- c. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.

S7.21.01. Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until the opening of the next regular Synod Assembly.

†S7.21.02 If a special assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation through the Congregation Council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.

S7.21.03. The formula established by the Synod Council to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation shall be as follows:

- a. A minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation related to this synod, shall be voting members. Additional lay representation from congregations shall be on the basis of the number of baptized members as reported in the most recently published parochial reports. Congregations having 500-1500 baptized members shall have 4 voting members; 1501-2500 baptized members shall have 6 voting members; and over 2500 baptized members shall have 8 voting members. No more than 50 percent of the voting members from a congregation shall be of the same gender.
- b. In the event that a congregation is unable to adhere to S.7.21.03a at their annual meeting, the congregation may request a waiver to be filed with the Synod Office by March 1. Such a request for waiver must state in detail the process followed to elect the voting members and the reasons for requesting a waiver. The Synod Council shall rule upon the request at their spring meeting. The Synod Council in acting on these waiver requests shall seek to ensure that no more than 50 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be of the same gender. The Synod Council will report their decision back to the congregation in a timely manner.
- c. Any congregation may elect an additional lay voting member from its membership to the Synod Assembly provided that the person is a person of color or whose primary language is other than English.
- d. Any congregation may elect a youth from its voting membership as an additional lay voting member to the Synod Assembly provided that the person has not yet reached their 18th birthday at the time of election and otherwise meets the requirements to be a voting member.

S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired or those designated as disabled or on leave from call on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of †S7.21. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- S7.22.01.** All retired ministers, those designated as disabled on the rosters of this synod, and all rostered ministers who are on leave from call may serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21. All registration fees (not including housing and meals) will be waived for all retired ministers on the rosters of this synod. In the event at least 60 percent of the assembly membership is not lay, the retired ministers, those designated as disabled on the rosters of this synod, and the rostered ministers on leave from call will caucus together and elect the appropriate representation.
- †S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.
- S7.23.A18** A rostered minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church who is rostered in a synod other than the Central States Synod who is serving as interim pastor in a congregation of the Central States Synod, shall have the privilege of voice, but not vote, at the Central States Synod Assembly. This pastor shall have the privilege of sitting on the floor with the voting members of the congregation the pastor is serving.
- S7.24.** Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular Synod Assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special Synod Assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership.
- S7.24.A. 21** A Synod Authorized Minister serving under a covenant by authority of the Bishop of the Central States Synod shall have the privilege of voice and vote at assemblies of the Central States Synod.
- †S7.25.** Except as otherwise provided in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- †S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit lay representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.26.01.** Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities of the Synod, shall have one lay member as their representative and voting member at the Synod Assembly.
- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant an ordained minister from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ordained minister's service in a congregation of this church.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- S7.27.01.** Consistent with the language of 8.72.14 of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, an ordained minister 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 will be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ordained minister's service in a congregation of this synod, in accord with ELCA churchwide by-law 8.72.12.
- S7.28.** Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.21 shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- †S7.31.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.32.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.
- S7.33.** *"Ex officio"* as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 8 OFFICERS

- †S8.01.** The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

S8.10. Bishop

- †S8.11.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S8.12.** As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall I:
- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
 - b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament and its ministers of Word and Service.
 - c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
 - d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.
 - e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in this synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
 - f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
 - g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in doing:
 - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
 - 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
 - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
 - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
- h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
- 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
 - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
 - 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
 - 4) Be a member of the Conference of Bishops and Consult regularly with other synod bishops;
 - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
 - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod, and
 - 7) Be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
- 1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
 - 2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council and the council's Executive Committee;
 - 3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of this synod and the churchwide organization are duly observed within the synod, and that the actions of this synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
 - 4) Direct and guide the work of the other officers;
 - 5) Exercise supervision over the work of all synod staff members;
 - 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
 - 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of this synod, except as otherwise provided in the constitution;
 - 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which their retired or disability status took effect;
 - 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
 - 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church:
 - a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod,

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- b) the issuance of certificate of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
 - c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;
- 11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
- 12) Appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

†S8.13. The synod bishop may appoint an attorney, admitted to the bar within the territory of the synod or the state where the synod is located, to be Synod Attorney. The appointment must be approved by the Synod Council and reported to the Synod Assembly and to the secretary of this church. The appointment continues until resignation or until a successor is appointed. The Synod Attorney provides legal advice and counsel to the synod-officers and the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney is expected to be familiar with the governing documents and policies of the synod and, as necessary, to attend meetings of the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney serves without salary but may be retained and compensated for specific legal services requested by the synod.

S8.14. The bishop may have such assistants as this synod shall from time to time authorize.

†S8.15. The presiding bishop of this church, or the appointee of the presiding bishop, shall install into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, each newly elected synod bishop.

†S8.16. Conflicts of Interest

†S8.16.01. The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synodical bishops:

- a. Whenever a synod-bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in †S8.16.01.b. may require the bishop's determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in †S8.16.01.c., the synod bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synod bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.
- b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provisions 7.46 and 7.75. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (†S14.18. and †S14.43.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod-bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synod bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S8.20. Vice President

†**S8.21.** The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The vice-president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

S8.22. The vice president shall chair the Synod Council.

S8.22.01. The vice president shall chair the Executive Committee.

S8.22.02. The vice president is an ex officio member of synod teams, committees, and task forces. “Ex officio” as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

S8.22.A04. The vice president shall be a voting member of the Churchwide Assembly.

S8.30. Secretary

†**S8.31.** The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†**S8.32.** The secretary shall:

- a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.
- b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.
- c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.
- d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

S8.32.01. The secretary shall provide information to the Synod Council and the Nominations Committee regarding positions to be elected and goals for ensuring diversity in filling elected positions (cf. S9.03.02. and S10.07.05.).

S8.40. Treasurer

†**S8.41.** The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- S8.42.** The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:
- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
 - b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
 - c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.
 - d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
 - e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.

S8.50. General Provisions

- †S8.51.** The terms of office of the officers of this shall be as follows:
- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be reelected.
 - b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected. The officer shall serve until a successor takes office.
 - c. The treasurer of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.
- †S8.52.** The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third month following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.
- †S8.53.** Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.
- †S8.54.** Should the bishop die, resign, or be unable to serve, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the bishop until an election of a new bishop can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop is able to serve again. Such arrangements may include the appointment by the Synod Council of an interim bishop, who during the vacancy or period of disability shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop. The term of the successor bishop, elected by the next Synod Assembly or a special meeting of the Synod Assembly called for the purpose of election, shall be six years with the subsequent election to take place at the Synod Assembly closest to the expiration of such a term and with the starting date of a successor term to be governed by constitutional provision S8.52.
- S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years.

- †S8.56. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall determine whether an officer is unable to serve; the officer may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a hearing before the Synod Council. A meeting to determine the ability of an officer to serve shall be called upon the request of at least three members of the Executive Committee and prior written notice of the meeting shall be given to the officer in question at least ten calendar days prior to the meeting.
- †S8.57. The recall or dismissal of an officer and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister of a member of a congregation of this church.
- a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) The Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) The Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
 - 3) at least 10 synodical bishops; or
 - 4) the presiding bishop of this church.
 - b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synod-bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) The Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) The Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
 - 3) the synod bishop
 - c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
 - d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
 - e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56 shall be followed and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
 - 1) The Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals,
 - 2) The Committee on Appeals, exclusive of any members who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
 - f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaws 20.22.01 and as defined under the process described

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

in the ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21 and 20.22 as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.23.01 and as defined under the process described in the ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21 and 20.22 as grounds for discipline.

- g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal includes those set forth in the ELCA bylaws 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
- h. If the case of alleged and willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
 - 1) The petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in the ELCA bylaw 20.22.14 except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
 - 2) The members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.
- i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council and the office shall be vacated.

†S8.58. If the bishop is to be temporarily absent from the synod for an extended period not to exceed 90 days, the bishop, after consultation with the presiding bishop and with the consent of the Synod Council, may appoint as acting bishop for such period a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church. Except as limited by action of the Synod Council, an acting bishop shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop other than authority to ordain or to authorize the ordination of properly approved candidates for ordination.

Chapter 9

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

†S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of not less than five or more than fifteen members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.

S9.03.01. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members with one member from each conference. One of the members will serve as chair of the Nominating Committee.

S9.03.02. At the time of the appointment and acceptance of the members of the Nominating Committee, the Secretary of this Synod shall cause the following information to be published in the publication(s) of this Synod:

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- a. The names, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and conference of each member of the Nominating Committee;
- b. The positions open for nomination/election with the specific characteristics and term of office of each.

S9.03.03. At the first meeting of the Nominating Committee, the Secretary of this Synod shall provide the chairperson of the Nominating Committee with a list of all positions open for nomination/election and the specific category, conference and characteristics for each position.

S9.03.04. Every attempt shall be made by the Nominating Committee to obtain at least one nominee for each open position on the Synod Council and other elective positions. In no case where the plan for inclusive representation lists specific characteristics shall nominees with differing characteristics be placed in nomination for the same position in order to fill this requirement.

S9.03.05. Persons may be nominated from the floor of the Assembly for all positions on the ballot providing:

- a. The person nominated fulfills the specific characteristics for that position;
- b. The nominee has consented to nomination in writing and that written consent is submitted at the time of nomination.

S9.03.06. Should the Nominating Committee be unable to find a candidate for a position that meets all of the requirements for that position, the Nominating Committee shall:

- a. search for a person of the other gender to fill the position,
- b. search for a person of the same gender but with a differing racial characteristic.

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

- S9.09.** The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.
- †S9.10.** When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide assembly to the Church Council.
- †S9.12.** Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S9.12.A21.** The Synod Council Executive Committee shall provide for background checks for persons nominated, including nominations for an additional term, for positions as synod-officers and Synod Council members, with the exception of youth members or nominees who are still regarded as minors or juveniles according to prevailing law, prior to the Synod Assembly at which the election will take place or as soon as possible after the Synod Assembly for newly elected synod officers and Synod Council members nominated from the floor. The process shall be as follows:
- a. Prior to the Synod Assembly appropriate notice of the background check requirement and protocol will be provided to voting members, potential nominees, and others as directed by the Synod Council.
 - b. Nominees and newly elected synod officers and Synod Council members are required to provide written consent to a background check and all information necessary to complete a background check, which should be completed prior to the Synod Assembly with respect to nominees identified before the assembly and prior to installation for newly elected synod officers and Synod Council members and officers nominated from the floor, if possible.
 - c. All records regarding elected officers and Synod Council members shall be maintained for at least five years following the person's leaving office or no longer serving on the Synod Council. Records may be retained longer as determined by the Synod Council Executive Committee on an individual basis. One synod staff person may be designated to assist in obtaining and maintaining records as directed by the designated Synod Council Executive Committee member.
 - d. All background checks for nominees and newly elected synod officer and Synod Council members will entail a criminal background check. A financial background check will be completed for nominees for treasurer and newly elected bishops. The Executive Committee shall decide whether additional types of background checks are appropriate for each synod officer and Synod Council member position.
 - e. The background check results shall be provided to that nominee or elected synod officer or Synod Council member and to the Synod Council's Executive Committee. Further disclosure of the results may be determined by the Executive Committee but should ordinarily be restricted to matters of public record.
 - f. The Synod Council Executive Committee may adopt other procedures or protocols as are necessary to provide for background checks for nominees and newly elected synod officers and newly elected Synod Council members and shall report such actions to the Synod Council.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Chapter 10 Synod Council

- †S10.01. The Synod Council consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, and at least one youth and at least one young adult, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
 - b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth members, shall be three years.
- S10.01.01. For the purposes of this chapter, “youth” and “young adult” are defined as stated in †S6.04.02. One youth and one young adult shall be elected as members of the Synod Council.
- S10.01.02. The youth member shall be elected for a term of two years.
- †S10.02. The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of the synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions which are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or which are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S10.03. The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
- a. Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod.
 - b. Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.
 - c. Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.
 - d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ministers, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of ELCA, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
 - e. Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of ELCA.
 - f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of the synod.
 - g. Report its action to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
 - h. Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.
- S10.03.01. The Synod Council shall provide for review of constitutions and bylaws of congregations in accord with †C17.03 and †C17.04 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations* and for review of area ministry constitutions. Similar review of constitutions shall be made available to auxiliary organizations.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- S10.04.** Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.
- S10.05.** No elected member of the Synod Council shall receive compensation for such service.
- S10.06.** If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.
- S10.06.01.** When a Synod Council member has been absent without valid reason from two consecutive meetings of the Synod Council, a member of the Executive Committee shall contact that member. If it is determined that the Synod Council member is unable to carry out the term of office, a letter of resignation shall be requested. If a resignation is not submitted, the Executive Committee can, through vote, take action to dismiss the member. The Executive Committee shall, in writing, inform the individual of the formal action.
- S10.07.** The composition of the Synod Council, the number of its members, and the manner of their selection, as well as the organization of the Synod Council, its additional duties and responsibilities, and the number of meetings to be held each year shall be set forth in the bylaws.
- S10.07.01.** To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.
- S10.07.02.** Members of the Synod Council (other than the officers) shall begin their terms at the close of the Synod Assembly at which they are elected. Members of the Synod Council (other than the officers and youth) shall serve for three years or until their successors are elected, and may be re-elected for one consecutive term.
- S10.07.03.** Terms of two years or more shall be considered as a full term.
- S10.07.04.** One of the 10-24 members shall be a minister of word and service.
- S10.07.05.** The 10 to 24 members of the Synod Council who are not elected officers of the Synod and who are not elected to youth positions as provided in S10.01.02. shall be:
- a. One rostered minister or one layperson from each conference
 - b. An additional 5 to 7 members elected at large by the Synod Assembly will include one youth, one young adult, one minister of word and service, and two persons of color or primary language other than English.
 - c. At any given time, at least 60 percent of the members (other than officers) so elected shall be laity, at least 45 percent of the lay members shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men.
- S10.07.06.** The Secretary of this Synod, in consultation with the Synod Council, shall maintain a chart of the individual characteristics of each position on the Synod Council and shall instruct the Nominating Committee of the characteristics of each position open for nomination and election.
- S10.07.07.** The Synod Council shall meet at least twice a year.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- S10.07.08.** In the situation of a vacancy on the Synod Council, the Executive Committee is empowered to appoint a person to fill that vacancy using the guidelines set forth in †S6.04 and S11.11. At the Synod Council meeting following such an appointment, the Council shall vote to ratify the appointee to fill the unexpired term.
- S10.07.09.** The following procedures shall apply to appointment to vacated positions on the Synod Council:
- a. Where the person elected fits all of the characteristics of that position as detailed by the plan for inclusive representation:
 - 1) the person(s) on the original ballot shall be approached first;
 - 2) should a. 1) be ineffective, the appointed personnel shall have the same characteristics as the person vacating the position;
 - 3) should a. 1) and 2) prove impossible, any person may be appointed within the restrictions of rostered minister of word and sacrament or layperson as they apply to the position.
 - b. Where the person occupying the position does not fit the characteristics for that position as detailed by the plan for inclusive representation;
 - 1) the original characteristics for that position shall be in force;
 - 2) should b. 1) be ineffective, the procedure outlined in a. shall apply.
 - c. Following appointment and completion of a single term, a position shall revert to the original characteristics for that position in the nomination/election process.

Chapter 11 COMMITTEES

- †S11.01.** There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S.11.01.01.** The Executive Committee shall be composed of the four elected officers plus three others ratified by the Synod Council from its body.
- a. The Executive Committee shall serve as the interim authority for the Synod Council between meetings of the Synod Council. It may make decisions which are not in conflict with the actions taken by the Synod Council or by the Synod Assembly or which are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - b. The Executive Committee may act on other specific issues when given authority to do so by the Synod Council.
 - c. The Executive Committee shall execute its responsibilities as found elsewhere in this constitution, which are required by the ELCA Model Constitution. These are specified in the following paragraphs; †S6.03.e (8), S.8.22.02., S8.55, †S8.56, S10.06.01, S10.07.04, †S11.01, †S11.04, †S17.01, †S17.02, †S17.03, and †S17.04.
- S11.01.A18** The Synod Council shall establish and appoint such teams and committees as deemed necessary to carry out the mission and ministry of this synod.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- a. As much as possible, the composition of all teams or committees shall conform to †S6.04 of this constitution.
- b. The terms of office, normally 2 to 5 years, shall be determined by the Synod Council. Members of teams and committees may be re-appointed unless otherwise directed by this constitution.
- c. The Bishop shall assign staff responsibility for each team or committee to provide advice, support and counsel.
- d. Meetings of the teams and committees shall be public and ordinarily notice of each meeting shall be published in advance of the meeting date.
- e. Each team and committee shall report annually to the Synod Council.

†S11.02. The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of at least 6 persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be rostered ministers and half shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive reelection. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.

S11.02.01. The Consultation Committee shall consist of six persons.

†S11.03. The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of 12 persons of whom 6 shall be rostered ministers and 6 shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive reelection.

- a. The functions of the Committee on Discipline of this synod are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- b. The terms of committee members shall be staggered so that the terms of four committee members (2 clergy and 2 lay) expire every two years.
- c. The Synod Council shall fill vacancies on the Committee on Discipline for any unexpired term.

†S11.04. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

S11.04.01 The Executive Committee may act as the Mutual Ministry Committee.

†S11.05. The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.

†S11.11. This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ordained ministers on the roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

Chapter 12

CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, OR OTHER AREA SUBDIVISIONS

†S12.01. This synod may establish conferences, clusters, coalitions, area subdivisions, and networks as appropriate within its territory and in collaboration with other synods and entities, as specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions. The purpose of such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships for missional purposes among congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other affiliates.

S12.01.A.18 Beginning July 1, 2018 the synod shall be divided into five Conferences

a. The purposes of the Conference are to:

- 1) Strengthen each congregation's mission in its setting.
- 2) Encourage cooperation among congregations within each conference.
- 3) Strengthen the care and nurture of rostered persons and their families.
- 4) Connect congregations, synod ministries, and churchwide resources to one another in order to equip laity and rostered ministers for ministry.

b. All congregations, synod agencies and institutional ministries are encouraged to relate to any or all Conferences as best serves this church's mission. Rostered ministers serving a specialized ministry will associate with the Conference of the congregation where they hold membership.

The names of and congregations in the Conferences are:

1) Western Kansas

Albert, KS (Peace); Bird City, KS (St. John); Brewster, KS (Our Savior); Dodge City, KS (Parroquia El Divino Nino); Dorrance, KS (First); Ellis, KS (St. John); Galatia, KS (St. Paul); Garden City, KS (Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus); Garden City, KS (St. James); Garfield, KS (Garfield); Great Bend, KS (St. Mark); Hays, KS (Trinity); Hoisington, KS (Emmanuel); Kensington, KS (St. John); Lincoln, KS (Denmark); Lucas, KS (Gloria Dei); Ness City, KS (Our Redeemer); Oberlin, KS (Faith); Otis, KS (Trinity); Phillipsburg, KS (Zion); Rush Center, KS (Hope); Russell, KS (St. John); Saint Francis, KS (Salem); Sharon Springs, KS (Sharon); Smith Center, KS (American); Stuttgart, KS (Emmanuel); WaKeeney, KS (Bethlehem); WaKeeney, KS (Emanuel); WaKeeney, KS (Zion); Wilson, KS, (Excelsior); Wilson, KS (Immanuel); Winona, KS (Bethesda)

2) Central Kansas

Assaria, Ks (Assaria); Belleville, KS (American); Beloit, KS (Zion); Burdick, KS (Hebron); Concordia, KS, (Concordia); Courtland, KS (Ada); Derby, KS (Cross of Glory); Eureka, KS (Christ); Falun, KS (Falun); Glasco, KS (St. Paul), Greenleaf (Trinity); Hanover, KS (St. John); Hanover, KS (Zion); Haysville, KS (Resurrection); Herington, KS (St. Paul); Hutchinson, KS (Emanuel); Junction City, KS (Faith); Leonardville, KS (Walsburg); Lindsborg, KS (Bethany); Lindsborg, KS (Messiah); Manhattan, KS (First); Manhattan, KS (KSU Campus Ministry); Manhattan, KS (Peace); Marquette, KS (Elim); McPherson, KS (Trinity), McPherson, KS (New Gottland); New Cambria, KS (Peace); Olsburg, KS (Olsburg); Onaga, KS (New Hope); Peabody, KS (St. Paul); Salina, KS (Immanuel); Salina, KS (Redeemer);

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

Salina, KS (St. John); Scandia, KS (Amana); Smolan, KS (Salemsborg); Tescott, KS (St. Paul); Washington, KS (Good Shepherd); Waterville, KS (St. Mark); Wellington, KS, (St. John) White City, KS (Marion Hill); Wichita, KS (Christ); Wichita, KS (Gloria Dei); Wichita, KS (Partners); Wichita, KS (Reformation); Wichita, KS (St. Paul); Windom, KS (Andover);

3) Border

Atchison, KS (St. Mark); Belton, MO (Lord of Love); Bendena, KS (St. John); Blue Springs, MO (All Saints); Emporia, KS (St. Mark); Kansas City, KS (St. Martin); Kansas City, MO (The Gathering Table); Kansas City, MO (Gloria Dei); Kansas City, MO (Immanuel); Kansas City, MO (St. James); Kansas City, MO (St. Mark Hope and Peace); Lancaster, KS (St. John); Lawrence, KS (KU Campus Ministry); Lawrence, KS (Good Shepherd); Lawrence, KS (Trinity); Lee's Summit, MO (Martin Luther); Lenexa, KS (Kaw Prairie); Lenexa, KS (Salem); Liberty, MO (Hosanna!); Mission Hills, KS (First); Olathe, KS (Advent); Olathe, KS, (St. Mark); Osage City, KS (Grace); Overland Park, KS (Atonement); Overland Park, KS (Holy Cross); Overland Park, KS (Overland Park); Prairie Village, KS (Lutheran Church of Resurrection); Robinson, KS. (Upper Wolf); Saint Joseph, MO (First); Saint Joseph, MO (South Sudanese); Topeka, KS (First); Topeka, KS (Our Savior); Topeka, KS (Trinity); Valley Falls, (St. Paul).

4) Osage

Butler, MO (St. Matthew American); Camdenton, MO, (Our Savior); Cole Camp, MO (Immanuel Brauerville); Cole Camp, MO (St. Paul); Cole Camp, MO (United); Columbia, MO (St. Andrew); Eagle Rock, MO (Community); Hollister, MO (Peace); Jefferson City, MO (Our Savior); Joplin, MO (Peace); Lohman, MO (St. Paul); Nevada, MO (St. Paul); Pittsburg, KS (St. John); Rolla, MO (Hope); Russellville, MO (Trinity); Salem, MO (Our Savior); Salisbury, MO (Peace); Savonburg, KS (Friends Home); Sedalia, MO (Christ & Trinity); Springfield, MO (Messiah); Springfield, MO (Prince of Peace); Stover, MO (Pymont Trinity); Sunrise Beach, MO (Kent Memorial); West Plains, MO (St. Paul)

5) Eastern Missouri

Bel-Nor, MO (Unity); Cape Girardeau, MO (St. Mark); Chesterfield, MO (Trinity); Clayton, MO (St. Mark); Creve Coeur, MO (Holy Cross); Desoto, MO (Redeemer); Ferguson, MO (Zion); Florissant, MO (Lutheran Church of the Atonement); Florissant, MO (Lutheran Church of the Living Christ); Hazelwood, MO (Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd); Imperial, MO (Family of Christ); Kirkwood, MO (Trinity); Lake St. Louis, MO (Living Lord); Manchester, MO (Good Shepherd); Poplar Bluff, MO (St. Andrew); Saint Ann, MO (Shepherd of the Hills); St. Charles, MO (Hope); Saint Louis, MO (Bethel); Saint Louis, MO (Gethsemane); Saint Louis, MO (Holy Trinity); Saint Louis, MO (St. Louis Campus Ministry); Saint Louis, MO (St. Thomas-Holy Spirit); St. Louis, MO (St. Phillip) Sedgewickville, MO (Sargent's Chapel); Sedgewickville, MO (Sedgewickville); Sullivan, MO (Peace); Washington, MO (Peace); Webster Groves, MO (Christ)

c. Each Conference shall organize itself to plan and implement its mission purposes, and in consultation with the Bishop's office to develop a plan to strengthen pastoral care for rostered ministers and their families.

1) The Conference Deans shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament appointed by the Bishop.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

The Conference Deans shall:

- a) Communicate with the Bishop and/or synod staff regarding pastoral care needs and emergencies among rostered persons and their families.
 - b) Meet with the Bishop and other Deans at least once per year.
 - c) Communicate with Conference congregations, agency and institutional ministries and rostered ministers regarding synod and-Conference events and programs.
- 2) Conference Synod Council Member shall be a lay or a rostered Minister elected by the Synod Assembly and serve terms as specified in the Synod Constitution. The Conference Synod Council Member shall:
- a) Fulfill the responsibilities of a Synod Council member.
 - b) Communicate between the Synod Council and the Conference their respective mission needs and challenges.

Chapter 13

CONGREGATIONS

- †S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod, which is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.
- a. **New Congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
 - 1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the constitution and bylaws of this church.
 - 2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of this synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapter 16 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
 - 3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in *C6.01., *C6.02., and *C6.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
 - b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.
 - c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.

- †S13.02** It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod to elect from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, or coalition of which it is a member. Normatively, congregations should hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.
- S13.11.** When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.
- S13.12.** A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- †S13.20A** congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- †S13.21.** A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- †S13.22.** Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- †S13.23.** Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the missions and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.
- †S13.24.** The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:
- The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.
 - The congregation has abandoned its property.
 - The remaining members of the congregation decide that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
- e. The Synod Council determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation's property from waste and deterioration.

The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly.

S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence.

S13.30. Discipline

†S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The synod's involvement in and responsibility for such disciplinary processes shall be as set forth in that chapter.

S13.40. Synod-Authorized Worshiping Communities

S13.41. Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

Chapter 14

S14.10 MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

†S14.11 The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
- 2) administer the sacraments
- 3) conduct public worship;
- 5) provide pastoral care;
- 6) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel
- 7) Impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
- 8) Witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad, and
- 9) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) relate to all schools and organizations within the congregation;

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
- 4) with the council, administer discipline
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of this synod and
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

- S14.12.A23** This synod, in addition to the requirements of rostered ministers listed above, expects that each rostered minister will proclaim God's love for the world.
- S14.13.** The pastor shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod. The pastor shall be a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- S14.14.** Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.
- S14.15.** Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- †S14.16** When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:
- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.
 - b. For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or pastoral candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
 - c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective pastor, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of the synod for this bishop's signature.
- S14.17.** No minister of word and sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer to acceptance or declination to a letter of call within thirty days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional fifteen days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- †S14.18. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregarin shall be as follows,
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
 - b. mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - c. resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - d. inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - e. inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
 - 1) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 2) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ministers of Word and sacrament of this church;
 - 3) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 4) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 5) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

†S14.19 Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

†S14.21 The records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members transferred or dismissed, members who have become inactive, or members excluded from the congregation shall be kept accurately and permanently. They shall remain the property of each congregation. At the time of the closure of a congregation, such records shall be sent to the regional archives. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

- a. installation in another call, or
- b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.22 The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another call, or
- b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.23 During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the congregation records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

†S14.24. With the approval of the synod-bishop expressed in writing which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.18., a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term of years. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.18.

S14.25. All ministers of word and sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, or coalition, to which the congregation belongs.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

S14.30. Ministers of Word and Service

†S14.31. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every Ministers of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of the church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

S14.32.A23 This synod, in addition to the requirements of rostered ministers listed above, expects that each rostered minister will proclaim God's love for the world.

†S14.41 When a congregation of this church desires to call a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Service of this church:

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.71., a two-thirds vote shall be required of members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
- c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

†S14.43. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) Inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
 - 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months
 - 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
- 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the minister of Word and Service shall be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

†S14.44. Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.

†S14.45. The minister of Word and Service shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another call, or
- b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.46. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.43.

Chapter 15

FINANCIAL MATTERS

†S15.01. The fiscal year of this synod shall be February 1 to January 31.

†S15.11. Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organizations are interdependent expressions that share in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of ELCA are given to support all parts of this church; thus the unity of this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:

- a. The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation's annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining "proportionate share," and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
- b. This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage or amount of each congregation's mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.
- c. Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.

†S15.12. The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to supportive funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

- S15.13.** On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.
- †S15.31.** This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm recommended by the synod Audit Committee and approved by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod.
- †S15.32.** This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

Chapter 16

INDEMNIFICATION

- †S16.01.** Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization, regardless of its form or relationship to this synod, is subject to the provisions of †S16.02.
- a. The term "proceeding" means a threatened, pending, or completed lawsuit, whether civil or criminal, an administrative or investigative matter, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or any other similar legal or governmental action. Except as otherwise required by law, the term "proceeding" does not include (a) any action by this synod against the individual seeking indemnification, or (b) subject to †16.04., a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- b. The term "indemnification" includes reimbursement and advances of costs and expenses for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys' fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.
- †S16.02.** Whenever a person who, while a Synod Council member, officer, committee member, or employee of this synod, is or was serving at the request of this synod as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.
- †S16.03.** This synod may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this synod or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in †S16.01. or †S16.02.
- †S16.04.** When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made in disciplinary proceedings under Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* by the synod bishop or when written charges against a

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synod bishop, and the discipline hearing committee determines that no discipline shall be imposed, then if such determination is not reversed or set aside on appeal, indemnification shall be made by the synod to the accused for reasonable attorney's fees and other reasonable expenses related to the defense of the charges. The determination of the reasonableness of such fees and expenses shall be made by the Synod Council.

Chapter 17

ADJUDICATION

- †S17.01. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.
- †S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the vice-president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, the applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of an ordained minister or a person on the official roster of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- †S17.03. When there is disagreement between or among congregations of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for a consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- †S17.04. When conferences, clusters, coalitions, or area subdivisions of this synod have a disagreement on a substantive issue that they cannot resolve, the aggrieved party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.

S17.10. Adjudication in a Congregation

- †S17.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of the congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 18

AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTION

- †S18.10. Amendments to Constitution
- †S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein required provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. If such provisions are amended by the Churchwide Assembly, corresponding amendments shall be introduced at once into this constitution by the secretary of this synod upon receipt of formal certification thereof from the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.
- †S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:
- a. Introduced with the support of at least 15 voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be adopted unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
 - b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
 - c. All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.
- †S18.20. **Amendments to Bylaws**
- †S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.
- †S18.30. **Amendments to Continuing Resolutions**
- †S18.31. This synod may adopt continuing resolutions not in conflict with this constitution or its bylaws or the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the churchwide organization. Such continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.