

The 2023 Alaska Synod Assembly

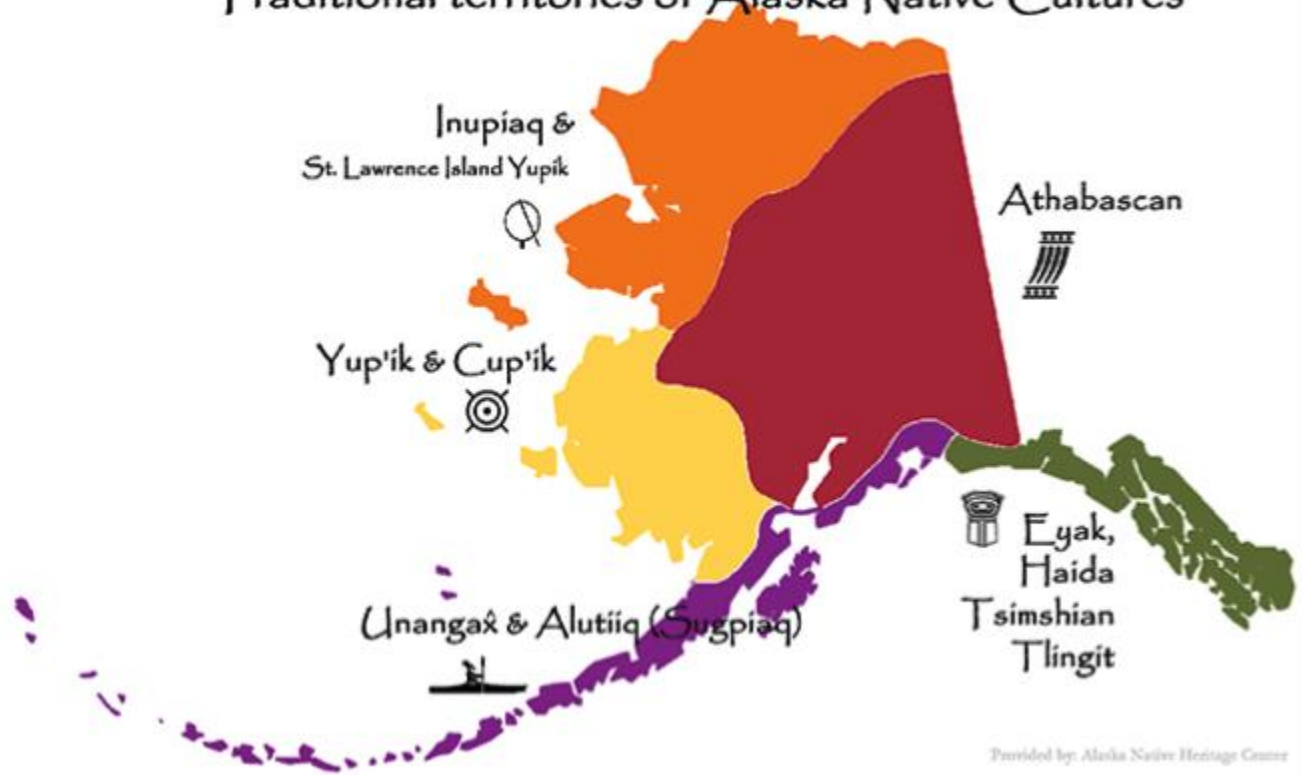


April 28 – 30

Christ Lutheran Church
Soldotna, AK



Traditional territories of Alaska Native Cultures



The 2023 Alaska Synod Assembly

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2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Agenda

Overflow with Hope

Alaska Synod Assembly

April 28 – 30, 2023

Friday, April 28

Unless otherwise noted, we meet at Christ Lutheran Church (CLC), 128 Soldotna Ave., Soldotna

12:00 – 7:00 pm	Registration at CLC
2:00 – 4:45 pm	Pre-Assembly Workshop The Alaska Blanket Exercise Baha'i Center, 44830 Knight Dr, Soldotna
5:30 pm	Dinner at CLC
6:15 pm	Hymn Sing
6:30 pm	Plenary I Opening Litany and Land Acknowledgement Faith Story: Sue Stein Credentials Report 2022 Minutes 2023 Agenda AK Child & Family Lutheran Disaster Response/Lutheran Social Services of AK TEAM Grant Recipient Reports Alaska Synodical Women's Organization Presentation of 2024 Spending Plan Orientation to Values Discernment Process
8:00 pm	Evening Prayer

Saturday, April 29

- 8:15 am Registration and Continental Breakfast at CLC
- 8:20 am Youth Gathering Conversation over breakfast in CLC Ed Room
- 8:45 am Hymn Sing
- 9:00 am Bible Study – Pastor Jeff Thiemann
- 9:30 am Plenary II
Faith Story: Terry Lindeman
Credentials Report
Presentation of Nominees and Voting
Churchwide Report
- ~ Morning Break ~
- 10:45 am Election Report
Faith Story: Chris Stuive
- 10:55 - 11:30 am Resolution 2023-1 Payday Lending
Resolution 2023-2 Regarding Anti-LGBTQ Resolution
- 11:45 am - 1:30 pm Cluster meetings over lunch with Values Discernment Exercise
Interior: Food Bank Community Room, 33955 Community College Dr.
Knik: United Methodist Church Conf Room, 158 S Binkley
Seward Peninsula: United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 158 S. Binkley
Southcentral: Food Bank Dining Room, 33955 Community College Dr.
Southeast: CLC + non-cluster people
- 1:45 - 2:45 pm Workshops
All Creation Sings – John Weit, CLC Sanctuary – also on Facebook
Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Tour, 33955 Community College Dr.
Hope Flows at the Kenai River Soldotna Creek Park, 251 States Ave
Centering Prayer, United Methodist Church Conference Room,
158 S Binkley St. - also on Zoom
Church Response to Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault, Food Bank
Community Room, 33955 Community College Dr.
- 3:00 - 4:00 pm Workshops
Choir – Sue Biggs CLC Sanctuary
Our Whole Lives - Food Bank, 33955 Community College Dr.
Transformative Power of Generosity, United Methodist Church Conference,
Room 158, S. Binkley St.
Cold Water Survival/Boating Safety, UMC Fellowship Hall, 158 S Binkley St.
Youth Ministry Curriculum writing, CLC Fellowship Hall - also on Zoom

4:15 pm	Intertribal Heartbeat of Mother Earth Drum
4:45 pm	Plenary III Adoption of 2024 Spending Plan Anniversary Recognition Resolution 2023-3 Resolution 2023-4
5:45 pm	Dinner, CLC
6:30 pm	Hymn Sing
6:45 pm	Holden Prayer, CLC Sanctuary Games! - Fellowship Hall

Sunday, April 30

8:15 am Continental Breakfast, CLC

9:00 am Bible Study - Marlene and Roger Pearson

10:00 am Worship
Lunch fixings for the road home available

(Synod Council Meeting at CLC)

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Pre-Assembly Workshop

Friday, April 28

2:00 – 4:45 pm



Truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation

Baha'i Center, 44830 Knight Dr, Soldotna

The Alaska Blanket Exercise program is a participatory history lesson – developed in collaboration with Alaska Native Elders, knowledge keepers and educators – that fosters truth, understanding, respect and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Through an experiential learning activity, participants will walk on blankets representing the land and into the role of Alaska Native people by reading scrolls and carrying cards which ultimately determine their outcome as they literally 'walk' through situations that include pre-contact, colonization and resistance. This exercise was adapted from a best practice exercise use by indigenous people in Canada.

Learning Objectives

- Participants will gain knowledge and understanding of Alaska Native history, since time immemorial.
- Participants will develop an understanding of the impacts of intergenerational trauma on Alaska Native people.
- Participants will develop awareness of and gain an understanding of what they can do in their own lives and communities to break cycles of intergenerational trauma.

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Workshops

Saturday, April 29

1:45 – 2:45 pm

All Creation Sings: An Introduction

Deacon John Weit

CLC Sanctuary

Also: <https://www.facebook.com/christlutheranchurchsoldotna>

This workshop will explore the new worship and song supplement to Evangelical Lutheran Worship. All Creation Sings brings together a wide range of cultural, ethnic, generational, and theological perspectives in its liturgical settings and two hundred hymns and songs. Several of these hymns fall under the headings of creation, lament, justice and society, and healing and wholeness, areas determined to be especially worthy of additional hymns and songs after research within the ELCA. Whether you already use ACS in your context or are curious about its contents, come and learn about the development of this resource and sing together some of the liturgical music and assembly song.

Hope Flows

Deb Nyquist

Kenai River Soldotna Creek Park, 251 States Ave.

Ecological Justice is a term that recognizes that humans, all species on the Earth, and natural systems are intricately interlinked. These “beings” are in relationship with one another. This experiential workshop offers an exploration of the meaning of ecological justice in our individual lives and what it means to be in good relationship with our planet and all of the beings that inhabit it. As we walk together to the edge of the river, we will respond to various discussion prompts, share our viewpoints, and develop ideas of how to share the hope of God’s plan for humanity and the natural world.

Participants will meet at the Soldotna Creek Park, 251 States Ave, Soldotna, at the Iron Mike memorial statue. The walk to the river is accessible. Folks who are walking need to be able to walk at least ½ mile and should prepare for rain or shine.

Centering Prayer

Meg Zerbinos

Centering Prayer, United Methodist Church Conference Room,
158 S Binkley St.

Also: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89001507727?pwd=Znd1a0RLQjdTYTYzOERxL0xTZHgvdz09>

Meeting ID: 890 0150 7727

Code: 063557

This introduction to Centering Prayer will cover a short history of the development of the prayer, the method of the prayer, and a short practice of the prayer. The goal of Centering Prayer is to extend the fruits of the Centering Prayer practice into daily life and to deepen one's relationship with God.

Church Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Barbara Waters and Ashley Blatchford

Food Bank Community Room, 33955 Community College Dr.

The LeeShore Center is pleased to present on the topic of church response to domestic violence/sexual assault within the body: trauma response and resiliency; prevention and next steps.

Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Tour

33955 Community College Dr.

We feed people, because no one deserves to be hungry!

The Kenai Peninsula Food Bank, Inc.'s stated mission is to promote public awareness of hunger issues.

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Our Whole Lives: A Holistic Approach to Sexuality

Pastor Tari Stage-Harvey

Our Whole Lives helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their relationships, health and behavior in the context of their faith. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. It provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills and understand the social, emotional and spiritual aspects of sexuality.

The Transformative Power of Generosity

The Alaska Synod Generosity Team:

Pr. Ollie Bergh, Pr. Lisa Smith Fiegel, Macey Freudenberg, Amanda Lindquist

Also:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81244483308?pwd=ZWtvRHpwMndpR0d6Sk85Rm1SOWFudz09>

Meeting ID: 812 4448 3308

What does generosity look like in your life? What does it look like in your congregation? How can you create a culture of generosity? This workshop will explore the relationship between faith and generosity and offer practical tools for growing generosity in your congregation and your own life.

Choir

Sue Biggs

CLC Sanctuary

Sue Biggs, composer and choral director at Christ Lutheran Church, will be leading a Saturday choir workshop, bringing a simple but powerful choral piece based on Psalm 46. All who love to sing are welcome to come! Those who are at the Sunday worship service in Soldotna will get a chance to sing the piece together in the worship service.

Please see workshop materials here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16y4uXzA0CygZLKpg57rsNMLi3o_USMtD

Cold Water Survival/Boating Safety

UMC Fellowship Hall, 158 S Binkley St.

Boating in cold weather can be exhilarating, but it also puts you at risk of falling into dangerously cold waters. Even boating in warm weather can be dangerous if the water is much colder than the air. Be prepared!

Youth Ministry Curriculum writing

CLC Fellowship Hall

Also:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82074101495?pwd=UkJCYXRCVS94eWtQTzJUQW5CTjRBQT09>

Meeting ID: 820 7410 1495

Code: 449762

Discuss practical and helpful tips for creating curriculum that will really teach your students in a way they will process and learn.

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Presenter Information

Sue Biggs

Music and Tech Coordinator, Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna



Sue Biggs is a retired elementary school teacher. She has a BA in music from Western Washington University in both choral and strings and an M Ed in Art Integration and Curriculum from Lesley University in Boston. Sue is a multi-disciplinary artist: lens artist, musician, composer, song writer, poet and dancer. She and her husband, Jack, play much music for the local Kenai Peninsula communities and currently lead worship Sunday evenings from their home porch in Soldotna.

Ashley Blatchford

Education and Training Assistant, The LeeShore Center



Ashley Blatchford has been with The LeeShore Center for more than 8 years. She assists with Violence Prevention Program and works with Community Partners and Volunteers for the agency and assists in the Youth Outreach in the schools and at events.

She's an indoor enthusiast that enjoys spending time with her husband and pets, working on various craft projects and board games with friends.

Alan Budahl

Executive Director, Lutheran Social Services of Alaska



Alan Budahl has been the Executive Director of Lutheran Social Services of Alaska since 2009.

Prior to this position, he worked as a general manager at hotels in Anchorage, including the Marriot, Hilton, and the Hotel Captain Cook.

Alan is a graduate of the University of South Dakota.

Amanda Lindquist

Deacon, Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, Anchorage



Deacon Amanda Lindquist has been working alongside Amazing Grace Lutheran Church since November 2013. She is recently ordained as a Deacon in the ELCA, specializing in Children, Youth, and Family Ministry. Amanda loves listening, learning, and walking alongside her Alaska Synod partners through helping to organize youth trips and communicating about the ELCA Youth Gathering.

She is excited to talk with you this Synod Assembly about Generosity and about the summer trips available for youth THIS summer and NEXT summer. See you at the table!

Deb Nyquist

Member, Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna



Deborah Nyquist completed the Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith in May 2022 offered through Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. Since resigning from her 17-year position as Wellness Director for a Tribal Health Organization in Alaska, Deb has aligned her volunteerism and professional consulting work with her holistic and healing values she honed in her previous position.

Deb's advocacy of living as a good relative to all beings and honoring creation in the time of climate crisis integrates sharing a message of action and hope with others. Deb wants a healthy planet for her granddaughter, Babaamaadizi, and for all of our future children.

The Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel

Director for Evangelical Mission, Alaska Synod



Lisa is currently on the board of AK Child & Family and has served for several years. She is the chair of the board's Spiritual Life committee and has a passion for trauma-informed care.

Lisa lives with her husband and three young children in Anchorage.

The Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey

Pastor, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Juneau



I'm a member and pastor at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in Juneau since 2009. I went to seminary at Trinity Lutheran in Ohio and was ordained on August 8, 1999. I got to participate in starting an ecumenical non-profit in Michigan where we opened a resale shop and emergency hotline.

I also got to help start Family Promise of Juneau, where congregations walk with families who are experiencing homelessness by sharing church facilities and volunteers. I've served on multiple boards and my daughter is graduating from Pacific Lutheran University this May.

The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann

President and CEO, Portico Benefit Services



The Rev. Jeffrey Thiemann became President and CEO of Portico Benefit Services in 2011. A ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Portico helps those who serve to live well – financially, emotionally, and physically. Jeff was drawn to Portico, because it resonates with his passion for pursuing solutions to the complex challenges of health care and retirement planning, applying a values-based approach with a caring and talented team.

Outside of Portico, Jeff serves as Board Treasurer for the Lutheran Services in America, Board Chair for the Church Benefits Association, and is on the Steering Committees for the Church Alliance and Minnesota Braver Angels Alliance.

Previously, Jeff was Executive Pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Walnut Creek, CA. Prior to answering a call to ordained ministry, he worked in a variety of business settings. He was President and CEO of a Silicon Valley startup and spent nearly 20 years at Hewlett-Packard Co. in global assignments and management positions.

In addition to earning a bachelor's degree in computer science engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Jeff graduated from The General Manager Program at Harvard Business School and received a Master of Divinity degree from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Jeff and his wife, Pam, reside in Plymouth, MN and are members of Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Maple Grove, MN. They have four children and three grandsons.

Barbara Waters

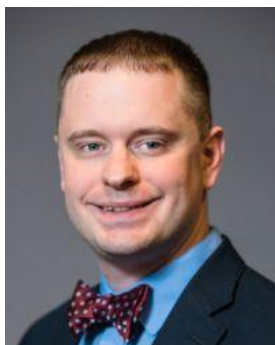
Education & Training Coordinator, The LeeShore Center



With the LeeShore Center, she works with others to promote healthy families and a violence free community while providing a safe haven for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Deacon John Weit

Executive for Worship, ELCA



John oversees the work of the worship team within the churchwide organization and provides leadership on behalf of the presiding bishop in matters related to worship. This includes developing and implementing strategies and resources that support worship in synods, congregations and other local worship assemblies across the ELCA as well as planning and worship leadership for churchwide events.

Prior to his call to the churchwide organization in 2016, John served as musician for congregations in Pennsylvania and most recently as cantor to Trinity Lutheran Church in Worcester, Mass. John earned a Master of Arts in religion with a concentration in liturgy and music from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, now United Lutheran Seminary. As part of his work with the ELCA, John works closely with the board of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians.

Kelli Williams

Director of Spiritual Life, AK Child & Family



Kelli joined AK Child & Family in 1999 as the interim Director of Spiritual Life while the acting Spiritual Life Director was on 10-month Sabbatical. Kelli stayed with the agency and was later hired into regular status for the Director of Spiritual Life position. Prior to her transition to AK Child & Family, Kelli was the Director of Youth Ministries at 1st United Methodist Church of Anchorage. Kelli is a Certified Chaplain through the International Fellowship of Chaplains and is a certified Veriditas Labyrinth facilitator. Kelli began her work in

human potential as the sole proprietor of Vital Capacity Wellness Consulting where she worked with individuals and organizations at reaching their God-given gifts and graces. She holds a Master’s Degree in Sport Research / Psychology from the United States Sports Academy and earned her bachelor’s degree in PE & Recreation from Seattle Pacific University. Kelli has been honored with the Church Women United – United Nations Office Human Rights Award. Through her work, the Spiritual Life Department has also won the Lutheran Services in America Award for Excellence.

As AK Child & Family’s Director of Spiritual Life Kelli is responsible for the delivery of spiritual life programming and services for children in psychiatric residential treatment at AK Child & Family. These services are voluntary, non-denominational, culturally sensitive, and age appropriate for the children we serve. Kelli supervises the Spiritual Life Minister and the Music and Special Ministries Coordinator.

Meg Zerbinos

Practitioner, Centering Prayer



I have been practicing Centering Prayer since 1995. I have attended a number of Centering Prayer Retreats over the years and helped with some of them. I was trained by Contemplative Outreach in 2015 to be a presenter of Centering Prayer workshops. I have offered workshops ever since. This prayer has made such a difference in my life that I am eager to share it with others.

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Meeting Guidelines

Common sense goes a long way toward making business sessions work well. If there is something you don't understand or if you don't understand what is before the body, ask the chair to clarify.

1. When addressing the chair, first state your name and the congregation you are representing. Address the chair as "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chair."
2. Making a motion: "I move ..."
 - a. Must be in writing – one copy to the chair and one to the secretary.
 - b. Keep the issue clear.
 - c. Avoid having several ideas in one motion.
 - d. If a motion with more than one part is before the body, you can move to have the motion in question divided so votes will be taken on each part. This is done so you don't pass everything because you agree with one part or defeat all of it because you don't agree with one part.
3. Amendments to motions: "I move to amend the motion to ..."
 - a. All discussions will focus on the amendment.
 - b. If it passes, then the whole motion as amended will be before you for discussion.
 - c. If it fails, the original motion along with any previously passed amendments will be before you.
4. The maker of the motion always has the right to speak first after the motion is seconded. The maker of the motion is also allowed to speak at the end of the discussion to clarify and answer questions.
5. In speaking to a motion, state first if you are speaking for or against the motion.
6. "Point of Order": This goes ahead of further speaking on the motion. The parliamentarian gives advice to the chair and the assembly, but the chair makes the final decision. If the assembly disagrees with the ruling, it can act to make its will known.
7. To limit debate: "I call for the previous question."
 - a. It takes a vote of 2/3 to pass.
 - b. Do not say "Question" to which the chair would respond "What is your question?"
8. Role of the Bishop at Synod Assembly: †S8.12.As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall be an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament who shall:
 - i.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
9. Role of the Parliamentarian: The Parliamentarian is a consultant, commonly a professional, who advises the president and other officers, committees, and members on matters of parliamentary procedure. The parliamentarian's role during a meeting is purely an advisory and consultative one – since parliamentary law gives to the chair alone the power to rule on questions of order or to answer parliamentary inquiries.

Standing Rules

- The governing documents of this organization are the primary authority of the assembly and take precedence over the Standing Rules and Roberts Rules of Order. The parliamentary authority for this assembly will be Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition.
- To address the assembly:
 - Go to one of the microphones
 - Identify yourself by name, congregation you represent, city Address the chair
 - Carry your red (against) or green (for) card if speaking on an issue
 - Clarify questions on what is before the assembly or points of order are appropriate at any time
- All substantive motions including spending plan revisions must be presented in writing to the secretary (with a copy to the chair) before any discussion takes place.
- A person who presents a motion to the assembly will have the privilege of addressing the assembly for three (3) minutes in support of the motion after the motion has been seconded. Other persons may speak for or against the motion for a period of three (3) minutes. No person will be allowed to address the motion a second time until all who wish to speak have had the opportunity to do so. After the debate the person who presented the motion will be given three (3) minutes to answer questions or clarify issues raised by the debate.
- Unless otherwise provided in the Alaska Synod Assembly Agenda or by the bishop or presiding officer, debate on any motion or resolution shall be limited to 30 minutes.
- Motions from the floor that revise the spending plan must include projected expenses and revenue sources so the spending plan remains balanced.
 - Reminder: increases in undesignated revenue have the additional impact on first fruits, mission and churchwide benevolence i.e. expense increase requires 1.53 revenue increase (2010).
- The following persons are granted "voice" (the right to speak) for the assembly: properly registered (1) retired or on leave from call ordained ministers or deacons on the roster of the synod; (2) the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; (3) official representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and (4) other persons granted "voice" by the bishop of the synod.
- The following persons are granted "voice" (the right to speak) and "vote" for the assembly: properly registered (1) ordained ministers or deacons under call and on the roster of the synod, retired ordained ministers on the roster of this synod who served one year prior to retirement (see S7.22.01); (2) lay voting members representing the congregations of the synod; (3) lay voting members representing synodically authorized worshipping communities; and (4) members of the synod council.

Amendments to Rules of Order for Assembly Voting Members

ELCA Secretary Chris Boerger has suggested that synods adopt an amendment to the rules. This requires a 2/3 vote to adopt rules since these normally are changes to or additions to Robert's Rules of Order.

Amendments to the rules may be offered to this motion and those require a majority to pass an amendment. It will still require 2/3 to adopt the amended rules.

Moving the Previous Question

A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s). A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.

Substitute Motions

When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE ... at a glance							
To do this:	Say this:	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Adjourn meeting	"I move we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Call an intermission	"I move we recess for ..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
**Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Suspend further consideration of an issue	"I move to table the motion."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No (1)
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until ..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (2)
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by ..."	No	Yes	Yes (3)	Yes	Majority	Yes
Introduce business	"I move that"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
The motions listed above are in order of precedence ... Below there is no order							
**Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote (4)	No
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority (5)	Yes
Suspend the rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 (6)	(7)
Verify a voice vote by standing	"I call for a division." or "Division"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
**Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Reconsider a hasty action	"I move to reconsider the vote on ..."	Yes	Yes	(8)	No	Majority	No
**You may go to the head of the line							(5) A majority negative vote needed to reverse ruling of the chair
(1) Unless vote on question is not yet taken							(6) 2/3 negative vote needed to prevent consideration of main motion
(2) Unless the committee has already addressed the subject							(7) Only if the main motion was not in fact considered
(3) Only if the motion to be amended is debatable							(8) Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable
(4) Except in doubtful cases							

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: 2022 Alaska Synod Assembly Minutes

Saturday, April, 23, 2022–Online

Welcome to the 2022 Synod Assembly and Opening Litany–Bishop Shelley Wickstrom.

SA.22.04.01 The 2022 Assembly of the Alaska Synod of the ELCA with the theme A Future with Hope! From Jeremiah 29 is declared open at 9:04 am by Bishop Shelley Wickstrom

SA.22.04.02 Land Acknowledgement: Lutheran Church of Hope and the Synod office are on the ancestral and unceded land of the Dena'ina People.

In the Sanctuary of Lutheran Church of Hope where the technical aspects are being hosted:

Producing the Assembly–Megan Bladow
Technical Support John Christiansen and Lisa Smith Fiegal.
Vice President, Leslie Swenson
Parliamentarian, Zach Manzella.

In the Synod office are

Office Manager, Christ Aquino
Treasurer Jan Dodds

Leslie Swenson–Vice President–Addressed the assembly to share our purposes for gathering and share how the business logistic items are to take place during the online assembly.

Bishop shared the logistics of the day and how voting will happen using reaction options and phone in.

Keynote Speaker: Bishop Mike Girlinghouse–Bishop Arkansas Oklahoma Synod: “A Future and a Hope”

Plenary Session 1 opened–10:34

Parliamentarian Zach Manzella gave a report on Roberts Rules of Order, which was designed to make a level playing field for meetings. The following are two amendments to the rules of order to keep the assembly focused on the topic at hand. These amendments require a 2/3 majority to be adopted by the assembly.

1st Amendment–“ Moving the Previous Question” read by Parliamentarian and explained.

Moving the Previous Question

A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s). A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.

2nd Amendment–“ Substitute Motions” read by Parliamentarian and explained.

Substitute Motions

When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the

original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected

Credentials Report at 10:45am

Total of 39 lay voting members of the assembly.

29 rostered voting members of the assembly.

6 guests.

SA22.04.03 Adoption of the 1st amendment as read. MSC.

SA22.04.04 Adoption of the 2nd Amendment as read. MSC.

Presentation of the 2021 Assembly Minutes—Dustin Lenz, Secretary

SA22.04.05 MSC to accept the 2021 Synod Assembly Minutes with the edit of changing “Leo Peters” to “Lou Peters”.

Nominations Committee Chair Marilyn Rosene addressed the assembly.

SA22.04.06 MSC to declare the nominees for the uncontested positions of Synod Council, Consultation Committee, Discipline Committee, and AK Child and Family elected.

SA22.04.07 Ballot of the PLU Corporation the contested position is opened. Joon Cross is declared to serve as the PLU Corporation Member for the next term.

Compensation Guidelines are being worked on by a group of three individuals who are not ready for new guidelines to be presented at this time. These will be updated in the fall. Guidelines help congregations to fairly compensate their pastors.

Synod treasurer Jan Dodds presented the spending plan on behalf of the Synod Council.

SA22.04.07 The Synod Council motioned that the 2023 spending plan be adopted by the assembly as presented. Carried.

SA22.04.08 Resolution 2022:1 was read to the assembly by Parliamentarian Zach Manzella. The resolution will be forwarded to the Synod Council who will forward it to the ELCA Church Council.

From the Church Council of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Wasilla, AK

Whereas recently a third party ‘preferred’ financial vendor to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shared Alaska congregational financial and benevolence records to promote their new products.

Whereas Each congregation is considered its own legal entity responsible for their financial records, keeping those records up to date, secure, and private in all regards to their member’s giving patterns and amounts.

Whereas Alaska Lutheran congregations' control and share who receives their financial records upon request; and if they wish to share their records. Such as, congregations sharing that information with the Alaska Synod and their own financial institutions. Even then individual congregational member's names and the amount of their benevolence is not shared.

Whereas it is wrong and unethical, that the financial culture of the United States at this time is that corporations buy and sell names, financial records, and the spending habits gleaned from multiple electronic sources. In short, it is an invasion of an American individual's privacy for corporations to exchange and deal in financial records for profit. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America should not sanction this abuse of privacy.

Be it resolved; that outside ELCA church third party vendors are not allowed to exchange any financial information with individuals, other business, ELCA synod offices or other congregations. That if an ELCA "preferred vendor" does exchange benevolence and financial information without prior written permission, they automatically lose their 'preferred vendor' status.

Be it further resolved that the Alaska Synod Assembly direct the Alaska Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for referral and disposition to the appropriate unit or office of the churchwide organization in accordance with the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

(End resolution.)

Pastor Rick Cavens of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Wasilla, AK addressed the resolution.

Discussion postponed till Plenary session 2. MSC.

Greeting from Victoria Flood, our ELCA churchwide partner who shared how we have been church together both as a synod and across the ELCA.

Director for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Lisa Smith Fiegel–shared updates on Trinity Lutheran Church in Palmer and River of Life in Chugiak. Pastor Lisa finished Plenary Session 1 in prayer.

Plenary session 2. Opened at 3:35pm.

SA22.04.08 (resumed) Discussion and vote on the resolution. Resolution 2022:1 Passed.

Vice President, Leslie Swenson, celebrated Ordination Anniversaries of those in the Alaska Synod.

Bishop Shelley closed the synod assembly with the closing litany.

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Letter from the Presiding Bishop



“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age’”
(Matthew 28:18-20).

Dear siblings in Christ,

We know the gospel changes lives and that God’s power and grace are real and at work today. Together we are called to bear God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world. What if we could make God known to more people? To the child who’s never heard of Jesus? To young adults who are trying to make sense of the world? To older adults who often feel lonely and isolated?

Our purpose – “to activate each of us so that more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love” – is an expression of our calling and our longing for others to know the love of God in Christ Jesus. We live out our purpose through worship and service, in our congregations and communities, through our individual vocations and our collective work as church together.

Many of you have wondered why we set a goal to reach one million new, young and diverse people. We believe that each of us is made in the image of God, redeemed by Jesus on the cross, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Our focus on young and diverse people is not exclusive but an acknowledgment that younger and more diverse people are disproportionately missing from our pews and gatherings. We are challenging one another to reach out across differences of all sorts to meet our neighbors.

Setting a goal to engage with one million is a way for us to know whether the work we are doing is, in fact, reaching new people. It encourages us to work together to be a church that cares about the world around us and is effective and faithful in responding to God’s call.

Join us on this future-focused journey to widen our welcome and break down the barriers that keep people from engaging with the church. Together, we can help people experience the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

In Christ,



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

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Alaska Synod Reports

The Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Overflow with Hope!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in God, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Overflowing is not an adjective that ordinarily brings comfort to Alaskans. We watch with concern when riverbanks threaten to overflow. Spring snowmelt shows us where the jammed culverts are by the where the water is not flowing. Plumbers make a living from such things. Overflows are beyond control, beyond the boundaries. We avoid anything overflowing, except when fishing or berry baskets are involved.

The Christians in Rome that Paul writes to are Jewish and Gentile in background: insiders and outsiders. Paul writes of hope and joy and peace not as rewards we've earned, but as the overflow of the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. Focusing on what God is doing, which is also beyond our control, loosens our grip on insisting that we alone are the standard for the rest of humankind.

The hope for every believer is that we'd continue to learn and grow in Christ. It is messy. The resurrected, wounded Jesus reminds us that God does "messy." Alleluia!

As I enter my last year as bishop of the Alaska Synod, I do so with gratitude and awe for you, and for your witness to Jesus Christ. We know the geographic grandeur of this place we call home. Less known, and even more to be celebrated is the stubborn love of God's people called the Alaska Synod. Thank you for your work, your play, your commitment to serve Christ in and through your congregation, this synod and this particular version of God's church called the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We are a diverse bunch who should never take each other for granted. I'm in awe of how we are being shaped to be the people God needs for the church God wants. The political extremes we hear about are moderated when ordinary people risk conversation over coffee about those same opinions. We can enter those conversations because you may not agree with "Joe" but you remember him mowing your lawn when your son broke his leg. Because you know more about Joe than a hot political opinion, you work to love him. Our weekly gathering for worship reminds us that in our daily lives, The Holy Spirit's gifts of joy and hope and love overflows in and through our ordinary lives. The work of love is ongoing and cannot be done without diversity.

We are willing to change when we understand how change is more aligned with our vision than previous practices. COVID has proven our ability to punt, to adapt and to get it done. Thank you. It is an honor and a joy to serve with you.

Bishop Shelley Wickstrom

Report of the Bishop to the Alaska Synod Assembly

Recovering from COVID

Congregations across the US and across denominations are still recovering from COVID. Attendance has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Yet the church remained open to serving in new ways and we are seeing the benefits of that. Congregations learned so much so quickly about online worship and studies and prayer. Continuing hybrid worship has allowed people from the Lower-48 to join Alaskans in worship, and families with house-bound elders to worship together. Sensory-sensitive adults and children have found online worship to be a welcome environment.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnerships

The Alaska Synod has a rich history of ecumenical partnership among our congregations and the judicatory leaders. The Presbytery of the Yukon is in a search process for their next Executive Elder. Serving as a reference for them means I am talking with their candidates about serving in Alaska as a judicatory leader with their candidates. Former Alaska UMC Conference Superintendent Carlo Rapanut was elected bishop in November 2022 by the Western Jurisdiction and was assigned to the Phoenix episcopal area.

Lutheran, United Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal judicatory leaders are in conversation about pastoral vacancies and our ability to provide nominees for consideration. Faith Lutheran and Delta Presbyterian worship and serve together in Delta Junction. They are served by ELCA Pastor Rich Mauer. Epiphany Lutheran Episcopal Church in Valdez is served by ELCA Pastor Nick Schoob. ELCA Pastor Sue Bahleda provides services to St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Wrangell.

Consultation Process

We are in partnership as synod staff and congregations. When a congregation or leaders feel unable to resolve issues, the bishop can convene a team of people to help the congregation hear itself and make decisions about their future. A Listening Team of three members of the Synod Consultation Committee was convened to meet with one of our congregations. Their summary, my assessment and recommendations were made available to the pastor, council and congregation in March. This process is laid out in each congregation's constitution and the synod constitution.

Constitution Updates

At every Churchwide Assembly, the voting members determine edits to our churchwide, synod and congregation constitutions. A model constitution with those updates is available on elca.org/Office of the Secretary. Download the model to your computer and save it. Fill in the blanks. Observe those items that are marked to show what every ELCA congregation's constitution includes. Email a draft to elcaalaska@gmail.com. We have a team of people who will review the draft and help you with incorporating bylaws. The reviewed draft is then sent back to you for a congregational vote to adopt it.

Keep in mind that most of our congregations have an annual meeting in January or February. Our team (Richard Clinch, Darla Siver, Wayne Mundy) needs enough time to review everyone's draft so please email your draft as soon as possible in the fall or plan on voting to adopt the changes at a later meeting.

2022 Churchwide Assembly, August 8-12, 2022

Gathering under the theme, Embody the Word, voting members participate in plenaries and worship while acting on key legislative business and hearing reports on the work of the church. Imran Siddiqui was elected to a six-year term as Vice President, the highest position a lay person can hold in the ELCA. Bishop Eaton led the assembly in a public apology to Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria Peregrina, Stockton, California,

The assembly also received a presentation of the “Declaration of the ELCA to America Indian and Alaska Native People.” Voting members acted on memorials related to the restructuring of the governance of the church, called for reconsideration of the social statement, “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” and encouraged deeper engagement with Indigenous partners through the Land Back movement. You can find all actions of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly at elca.org.

Alaska Synod voting members included John Christensen (Amazing Grace, Anchorage), Pr. Meredith Harber (Christ Lutheran, Soldotna), Glenn Mitchell (Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau), Shannon Klescewski (Our Savior’s, Nome), Leslie Swenson (Christ Lutheran, Fairbanks), and Bishop Wickstrom.

Mobility and the Call Process

Over one-third of our congregations have been engaged in a stage of the call process these last six months. The work involved is often a mix of new energy and exhaustion. For all, it is a time of discernment and prayer as they prepare for their next chapter of ministry. Increasingly, the lay leaders of our congregations are picking up the duties ordinarily done by an interim pastor.

Two years ago, Wartburg Seminary had the largest class enter in their history. Luther Seminary has run three cohorts of MDivX students who complete the curriculum in twenty-four months. Those programs are producing more pastors but during the pandemic, many pastors who could retire, did retire. Many younger pastors not yet rooted in a community, ended those calls earlier than intended to move closer to family. The new assignment process of seminary graduates preferences their home synod and region.

The bottom line for the Alaska Synod is that we need to raise up more pastors in Alaska to serve in Alaska.

Candidacy

Candidacy is the process by which individuals are raised up, prepared, certified, and placed as public leaders in the ELCA. This process is meant to be a welcoming and joyful time for people discerning how to serve through the church. It is a partnership among the applicant/candidate, congregation, synod, candidacy committee, seminary, and the Leadership Unit of the ELCA.

Prior to applying, a person has discerned a sense of call and readiness for candidacy. That person has had conversation with a pastor, elders to hear their wisdom. If you are feeling called to serve as a pastor or deacon and are active in an Alaska Synod congregation or in a campus ministry, please contact our synod office.

Growth and development are expected as candidates seek to become equipped for rostered leadership. A candidate is expected to be a mature, healthy, and trustworthy partner in the

process of preparation, formation, and evaluation for rostered leadership.

Upon completion of the candidacy process, it is expected that candidates are willing to serve in response to the needs of the church.

Our ELCA seminaries offer a variety of ways to access an education. There are many programs that allow a student to study online from home, and the residential option remains. A new development in seminary preparation is a TEEM Program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) with Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and leadership from the American Indian Alaska Native Association.

Committee members include: Kathleen Brandt (Sitka Lutheran), Rev. Carol George (St Mark), Dr. Mike Swenson (Christ-Fairbanks), Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka (Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary), ELCA Candidacy and Leadership Manager Rev. Dr. Matta Ghaly and the bishop.

Alaska Synod candidates include:

- Linda Bender, Word and Service Candidate, studying through Wartburg Seminary
- Dena Luchsinger, Word and Sacrament Candidate, studying through Luther Seminary, Interning with Trinity Lutheran Church-Palmer
- Zach Manzella, Word and Sacrament Candidate, studying through Wartburg Seminary, Interning with Central Lutheran-Anchorage and Table of Grace-Bethel.

Synodically Authorized Ministers

SAMs are lay people who have completed a course of study that introduces them to scripture, history, theology and pastoral care. They are commissioned to serve within a local congregation at the request of the congregational council. Many also are trained as coaches and use that skill in community ministries. This synod is grateful for their dedication and ministry. Currently four people are preparing to serve as Synodically Authorized Ministers.

Active Synodically Authorized Ministers:

Central: Linda Bender

Epiphany: Kim Michaud

Island of Faith: Bill Bahleda, Shirley Wimberly

Lord of Life: Darlene Matz

Resurrection-Juneau: Randy Sutak

Shepherd of the Valley: Becky Corson, Virgil Fredenberg, Teresa Kissel,
Mark Kissel, Glenn Mitchell

Trinity: Richard Clinch

Changes in the Alaska Synod Roster (May 1, 2022- April 30, 2023)

Ordinations:

- Pastor Oliver Bergh 7/16/22 ordained at Central Lutheran and installed at Fairbanks Lutheran Church on 9/18/22
- Pastor Amanda Van Vliet Snyder 12/4/22 ordained and installed at Our Savior's Lutheran Church.
- Pastor Deborah Gelerter 2/12/23 ordained at St. Timothy, Tarpon Springs, FL and will be installed May 7 at Petersburg Lutheran Church.
- Pastor Nicholas Schoob 2/26/23 ordained at Trinity, West Bend, WI and will be installed at Epiphany Lutheran Episcopal Church on May 21.

- Deacon Amanda Lindquist 4/23/23 ordained and installed at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church.

Changes in Call Status

- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church called Pastor Aaron Silco, from Shishmaref Lutheran Church, who was installed February 5.
- Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church called Pastor Anna Silco, from Shishmaref Lutheran Church, who was installed March 5.
- Petersburg Lutheran Church called Pastor Tim Bernard, from Trinity Lutheran Church in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, who will be installed on May 7.

Pastor Erika Bergh continues on-leave from call which started July 1, 2022

Pastor Mark Orf continues on-leave from call which started October, 2019.

Pastor Randy Young continues on medical leave.

Congregations Currently in A Stage of the Call Process:

- First-Ketchikan is in discernment about the call process and working with short-term pastors.
- Lord of Life will be a Collaborative Learning Site for a Wartburg Seminary student starting this July.
- Shishmaref was served by Pastor Tom Knoll February – April. They will now enter the call process.
- River of Life and Trinity will begin preparation for the call process in June.

Retirement

- Pr. Bill Ottum will retire May 31, 2023 from River of Life Lutheran Church in Chugiak.
- Alaska Synod retired clergy include Deacon Greg Meyer, Sister Annette Janka, Pastors Keith Anderson, Dan Bollerud, Tim Christensen, Ted Conter, Duane Hanson, Luisa Hanson, Diane Krauszer, Curt Matz, Ron Rucker, Randy Parshall, George Sonray, Karen Sonray.

Anniversaries

- Ronald C. Rucker 8/4/2018
- Dustin W. Lenz 10/26/2008
- Suellen Jo Bahleda 1/27/2008
- Luisa E. Hanson 11/20/1993
- George Sonray 1/26/1978
- Duane J. Hanson 1/1/1978
- William A. Ottum 3/12/1978

Congregations Celebrating Anniversaries

- 50+ years Thornton Memorial Lutheran Church in Wales
- 75 years Resurrection Lutheran Church in Seward

Transfers from the Alaska Synod Roster

- Pastor Keith Muschinske, retired, to the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Deaths

- Lay Pastor Gilbert Oxereok, died November 10, 2022 in Wales, Alaska. Gilbert served with the people of Thornton Memorial Lutheran Church.

Looking Ahead (See elcaalaska.net)

- Trauma-Informed Church: for clergy on Zoom 6/6, 8, 13, 15, 20
- Alaska Youth Camping Trip, June 27-30.
- Grief Coaching, July 11-12, at Shepherd of the Valley in Juneau
- Our Whole Lives Training, July 13-15 at Shepherd of the Valley in Juneau
- Glacier Bible Camp, July 18-23
- Salmon Lake Bible Camp, July 17-21, 24-28
- Leaderwise Clergy Boundary Training: August 22-23 or October 11-12
- Synod Council Meetings: October 20-21, November 18, March 15-16
- Synod Assembly and Bishop Election, April 26-28 in Anchorage

“The proof that God raised Jesus from the dead is not the empty tomb, but the full hearts of his transformed disciples. The crowning evidence that he lives is not a vacant grave, but a spirit-filled fellowship. Not a rolled-away stone, but a carried-away church.”

Clarence Jordan



Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) Report to the Alaska Synod Assembly April 2023 Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel

The director for evangelical mission (DEM) is an ELCA churchwide deployed position to the Alaska Synod. This half-time position works with stewardship, new starts and congregational mission planning/vitality. Partnerships and projects with the three expressions of ELCA – churchwide, synod and congregations – are highlighted in this report.

Churchwide

For FY 2022, Alaska Synod congregations and ministries will receive a total of \$166,000 in **Congregational Vitality grants** from our churchwide partners. These funds support ministry on the Seward Peninsula and the Alaska Synod's newer ministries: Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWC) Trapper Creek Fellowship and Table of Grace-Bethel. A third SAWC, Our Neighbors Children's Music and Theatre-Anchorage, is on pause. As DEM, I provide ongoing consultation and connection with congregations receiving churchwide grant support.

As a synod we have 14 lay and rostered leaders trained as coaches, thanks to ELCA coach training. Several coaches have additional training and specialization in discipleship and/or stewardship. Coaching is a ministry that comes alongside folks feeling stuck in ministry or life and/or wants to work toward a goal. Synod coaches are available for lay and rostered leaders. I am serving as the synod coaching coordinator. Thank you to Pastor Dustin Lenz (Christ-Fairbanks) and Pastor Tari Stage-Harvey (Shepherd of the Valley-Juneau) who is serve as the synod coaching ministry team to promote and educate about coaching.

Synod

The **synod finance team** has been re-established over the last 12-18 months, thanks to synod treasurer Jan Dodds, Pastor Meredith Harber (Christ-Soldotna) and Sue Delgado (Alaska Native-Anchorage). I also serve on this team. This year the team worked on statements of intent, the synod spending plan, a synod narrative budget, thank yous for mission support, and overseeing the first fruits grant process. We had many new applicants this year for synod first fruits giving – so many that we had to update our evaluation process and criteria. **Five new ministries/non-profits from across the state will receive grants** this year, along with our "regular" first fruits recipients (please see spending plan for list).

A new **synod generosity team has formed this year**; there have been other iterations in the past. Thanks to Macey Fredenburg (Shepherd of the Valley-Juneau), Pastor Ollie Bergh (Fairbanks Lutheran) and Deacon Amanda Lindquist (Amazing Grace-Anchorage) for serving on this committee. Their first act is a generosity workshop here at assembly; there will be more offerings in the future!

In late 2022, four Alaskan congregations participated in the **"Building a Culture of Generosity" cohort**, offered by GSB financial consultants. The program included monthly Zoom last fall and focused on how to do an excellent annual appeal, with other general stewardship principles included. The two of the four congregations completed successful fall stewardship appeals and one did so in early 2023.

Synod writers from across the state contributed to a **synod-wide Advent devotional in December**. Electronic copies were utilized across the state, and print editions were sent to communities with limited internet access. Several rural communities made the devotional available to those who weren't part of a congregation – an outreach tool!

Congregations and Synodically Authorized Ministries

Pastor Ron Rucker retired in August 2022 , from serving **Table of Grace- Bethel and Trapper Creek Fellowship** (both part time). Thank you, Ron! Table of Grace is now served part-time by seminarian Zach Manzella, who is also serving Central-Anchorage part-time as a two-year internship. Zach also supports the congregation's grief group, feeding ministries and helped bring an MLK Day free legal assistance day event to Bethel this year.

Trapper Creek Fellowship is being served by pulpit supply and a new pastor-in-residence program. Pastor Rick Cavens (Good Shepherd-Wasilla) and Rich Stouff (Good Shepherd) are providing some pulpit supply; Good Shepherd is also supporting Trapper Creek's monthly spaghetti feed. A pastor-in-residence was onsite last fall for 2 months; another will come this June-August.

Scheduling and Upcoming

As the director for evangelical mission, I am available to do **mission planning and visioning with your congregation**, as well as stewardship education, whether with the congregational council, such as council retreat, or with a small group of leaders. Some places I have been these past 12 months: Christ our Savior-Anchorage; River of Life-Chugiak; Central-Anchorage; Joy-Eagle River; Christ-Soldotna; Trapper Creek Fellowship; Amazing Grace-Anchorage; Fairbanks Lutheran; Good Shepherd-Wasilla; Trinity-Palmer; Gloria Dei-Anchorage and Brevig Memorial-Brevig Mission.

Together Emphasizing Alaska's Mission (TEAM)

TEAM grants help fund new and vital ministries across the Alaska Synod. Congregations can follow the work of the Holy Spirit into new and vital ministries, projects and collaborations with help from the TEAM program to do projects beyond their budget. This fund was created in 1997 to support new initiatives that make a difference for the sake of God and the neighbor. Through the generosity of individuals and congregations, two grant categories are available: Firestarter Grants are \$3000 and smaller, and Large Grants are funded as the funds allow.

Nearly 20 congregations in the Alaska Synod have received a TEAM grant. Your donation multiplied with others to equip a congregation to do more than it could alone. Grants have also been awarded to 7 ministry partners. As of February 2023, more than \$312,600 has been awarded.

Recent recipients of TEAM Grants have included:

- Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church to assist in purchasing raised beds for their new community garden.
- Central Lutheran to purchase shelving for their new clothing closet.
- St Mark Lutheran Church to help fund the remodeling of restrooms to be ADA compliant.
- Shishmaref Lutheran Church to assist the congregation in purchasing guitars, offering guitar lessons and bringing a piano teacher in to offer piano lessons.
- Sitka Lutheran Church to help them launch the Manna Meal Lunch Program.
- Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church to assist in the development of a Day Shelter for Family Promise of Juneau.
- Good Shepherd Lutheran to help them fund a kitchen manager for their newly Two Fish Five Loaves Kitchen Ministry.
- Joy Lutheran Church to help them build a raised bed garden for their local food pantry.
- Lutheran Church of Hope to help them build their Garden of Hope.
- Table of Grace to help with confirmation retreats for their youth with Trinity Lutheran in Palmer. Instruction was provided online.
- Trinity Lutheran Church to assist them with their garden for the food pantry.
- Central Lutheran Church to assist them with building an urban garden.

See our website, elcaalaska.net for the TEAM application. Email it to the synod office for our TEAM Committee's review. Submit your application as part of your planning process. The grants are dependent upon the gifts of individuals and congregations and the funding fluctuates.

Thank you for your gifts that have multiplied funding and ministry.

Those congregations who've supported this fund in 2022-2023 include:

Brevig Memorial
Christ, Soldotna
Faith, Delta Junction
Good Shepherd, Wasilla

Resurrection, Juneau
Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau
Sitka Lutheran

TEAM Committee members review applications and award Firestarter Grants. Large Grants are recommended with review to the Alaska Synod Council. Members include:

Brooke Andrews, Resurrection, Seward
Roger Birk, Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau
Pat Kilman, Trinity Lutheran, Palmer

Steve Newcomer, Epiphany, Valdez
Bishop Wickstrom

Treasurer's Report Alaska Synod Narrative Budget, 2023

Financial documents are more than spreadsheets – they tell stories about what we value by showing where we spend the gifts entrusted to us. Sometimes those stories are hard to see in line-item budgets. A narrative budget tells the story of our values and our impact by dividing all expenditures into categories that describe our priorities, the meaning of the work we do and who we are as people of God. **For fiscal year 2023, we as the Alaska Synod will live our mission by using financial resources in four areas: developing disciples; partnering for mission; supporting ministries; and connecting and organizing.** The figures below are our projections, based on statements of intent from congregations—thank you! You'll also see “story moments” that give examples of how resources in these categories have been and are being used for God's work in the world. We do this work together, because of the support you give through your congregations. Thank you for making possible this ministry we share.



Developing disciples \$18,273 4% of spending plan

Together as the Alaska Synod, we identify and support rostered leaders for God's church through the candidacy process. We also provide training and resourcing for current leaders, as well as scholarships and seminary tuition reimbursement. Lay leaders grow in faith and leadership through Synodically Authorized Minister training, synod evangelism and discipleship workshops and other resources. The Synod coaching ministry comes alongside leaders working on next steps. **Story moment:** Deacon Amanda Lindquist was ordained as an ELCA deacon on April 23, 2023, the synod's only actively serving deacon. She serves at Amazing Grace-Anchorage as Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry. Since 2020, deacons in the ELCA are part of the Word and Service roster (pastors are Word and Sacrament) and are ordained. We're grateful for ALL the ways that leaders serve in our synod!

Photo: Amanda Lindquist at Amazing Grace; Amanda preaches regularly in addition to other duties.

Partnering for mission \$203,932 50% of spending plan

Together as the Alaska Synod, we partner with other ministries and organizations to do God's work in the world. We support the work of new synod ministries, Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministry congregations and offer First Fruit grants to ministry partners across Alaska. We share mission support with ELCA churchwide so that together we make a greater impact on hunger, leadership development and global outreach. We collaborate with other ELCA leaders, Lutheran ministries, ecumenical and interfaith partners. **Story moment:** When Typhoon Merbok brought storm and flood damage to Western Alaska last fall, synod partner Lutheran Social Services of Alaska stepped up. LSSA, in collaboration with Lutheran Disaster Response and other entities, facilitated shipments of tarps, food, water and personal care items to villages impacted by the storm. The work continues: LSSA is working with AK VOAD (Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters) to bring work teams from the Lower 48 to do storm-related repairs in villages. LSSA receives the largest share of the synod's annual First Fruits grants.

Connecting and organizing

\$70,517

17% of spending plan



Together as the Alaska Synod, we network and connect with followers of Jesus across the ELCA Region 1 and ELCA churchwide. We help people find others doing similar work for the sake of God's mission. We maintain synod communication channels to keep us connected and informed. The Synod office provides a physical location for administrative work and to house synod documentation. **Story moment:** Synod gatherings resumed in person! Alaska Lutherans have gathered for the first time since the pandemic began for in-person synod council, clergy collegium, Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministry conference and this synod

assembly. In-person events take planning, time, effort and money, but the rewards are immeasurable in fellowship, shared worship and time to talk together about what God is up to in our lives and congregations.

Photo: The Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministry Association Conference in Brevig Mission, April 2023.

Supporting ministries

\$116,727

29% of spending plan

Together as the Alaska Synod, we work with congregations as they call pastors and deacons to serve. Congregations get help with governance, conflict resolution, stewardship, vision and mission planning through synod leadership and referral to resources. Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities receive support as they reach new and/or historically marginalized communities. Leaders with ideas for new ministries are supported and mentored. **Story moment:** Alaska Synod congregations have great new ideas to share the good news and support their neighbors. Christ our Savior-Anchorage received a TEAM grant for their community garden; Central-Anchorage received one for a clothes closet. Shepherd of the Valley-Juneau built a columbarium on the church grounds and is in the midst of a master facility project to create a more welcoming space – plus a new playground for neighborhood use.

Spending Plan

	Spending Plans 2022	YTD Actual 2022	Approved Spending Plan 2023	Revised Proposed 2023	2024 Proposed Spending Plan	
	Approved Spending Plan	2022 Revised Spending Plan	YTD Actual 2022	Approved at Assembly 2022	Approved at SC meeting March 2023	Needs approval at Assembly 2023
Synod Income						
Partnerships						
Congregation Giving (For Mission/New Ministry) (A)	7,700	4,320	4,434	4,620	4,500	4,560
Congregation Giving (For First Fruits)	38,500	21,600	22,168	23,100	22,500	22,800
Congregation Giving	338,800	334,080	342,859	357,280	348,000	352,640
Total Congregation Giving	385,000	360,000	369,461	385,000	375,000	380,000
EOCM DEM Grant	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	1,000	1,000
Churchwide Support - Synodical Relations	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000
Total Churchwide Support	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000	29,000	29,000
Other Income						
Gifts	200	5,000	7,653	200	200	200
Misc Income	300	250	-	250	250	250
Interest Income	650	200	111	200	200	200
Total Other Income	1,150	5,450	7,764	650	650	650
Total Income	424,150	403,450	415,225	423,650	404,650	409,650
Synod Administration						
-Salaries & Benefits						
Bishop's Salary	48,934	53,131	53,131	53,131	53,131	53,000
Bishop's Housing	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Bishop's SECA	6,950	7,297	7,297	7,297	7,297	7,297
Bishop's Pension/Disability/Medical	27,000	25,500	24,531	18,000	24,500	24,500
Bishop's Workers Compensation	1,200	1,000	652	1,000	750	1,000
Bishop's Continuing Education	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bishop's Auto Reimbursement	1,200	-	245	-	-	-
Professional Expenses	500	500	500	500	500	500
Bishop's Salary & Benefits	121,794	123,428	121,857	115,928	122,178	122,297
Administrative Assistant's Salary	35,350	37,118	32,399	37,118	35,500	36,000
Administrative Assistant's FICA Tax	2,704	2,839	2,478	2,839	2,716	2,754
Administrative Assistant's Pension/Medical	-	400	280	400	400	300
Administrative Assistant's Continuing Education	300	300	300	300	300	300
Administrative Assistant's Salary & Benefits	38,904	40,657	35,457	40,657	38,916	39,354

	Spending Plans 2022	YTD Actual 2022	Approved Spending Plan 2023	Revised Proposed 2023	2024 Proposed Spending Plan	
	Approved Spending Plan	2022 Revised Spending Plan	YTD Actual 2022	Approved at Assembly 2022	Approved at SC meeting March 2023	Needs approval at Assembly 2023
Administrative Expenses						
Staff Travel	10,000	10,000	7,394	10,000	10,000	10,000
Staff Travel Per Diem	400					
Other Administrative Travel	100					
Other Administrative Per Diem	50					
Total Travel	10,550	10,000	7,394	10,000	10,000	10,000
DEMI Expenses	-	9,000	9,000	9,000	500	500
Professional Meeting Expenses	700	500	461	500	400	400
Shipping and Mailing	250	250	381	250	2,000	2,000
Supplies & Materials	1,500	1,500	1,756	1,000	5,000	5,000
Telephone / Internet	4,800	4,800	4,924	4,800	450	450
Website	450	450	548	450	2,200	2,200
Insurance	2,300	2,131	2,131	2,200	600	600
Resource Materials and Services	600	600	509	600	2,000	2,000
Sm. Equip. Purchase and Equip. Maintenance.	200	2,000	1,315	2,000	3,925	3,925
Occupancy - Utilities	3,925	3,925	3,923	3,925	500	500
Candidacy	1,000	1,000	186	1,000	500	500
Synodical Transition Reserve	500	500	500	500	500	500
Bishop's Sabbatical Reserve	200		-	-	500	500
Major Equipment Reserve		5,000	5,000	500	500	500
Miscellaneous	500	500	420	500	-	500
Reimbursable Expenses	-	3,000	149	-	3,000	3,000
Synod Council Travel	3,000			3,000		
Synod Council Travel Per Diem	-			-		
Council Meeting Expenses	300	300	-	300	300	300
Total Administrative	29,225	35,456	31,204	30,525	22,375	22,375
Partnerships						
Churchwide Support						
	154,000	144,000	147,784	154,000	150,000	152,000
Region 1						
Archives (At PLU)	700	700	700	700	700	700
Region 1 Center Shared Mission	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,681	14,000
Cost Sharing	400	400	347	400	400	400
Consultation to Clergy	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700
Total Region 1	21,800	21,800	21,747	21,800	22,481	22,800

	Spending Plans 2022	YTD Actual 2022	Approved Spending Plan 2023	Revised Proposed 2023	2024 Proposed Spending Plan	
	Approved Spending Plan	2022 Revised Spending Plan	YTD Actual 2022	Approved at Assembly 2022	Approved at SC meeting March 2023	Needs approval at Assembly 2023
Partnership Support Grants						
Mission and Ministry @	2,700	2,500		2,500		
Our Neighbors SAWC	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Trapper Creek Ministry SAWC	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Table of Grace	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Seward Penn. Ministry	22,700	22,500	20,000	22,500	20,000	20,000
Total Mission/Ministry	38,500	21,600	22,168	23,100	22,500	22,800
First Fruits Giving - (Benevolence)						
First Fruits Giving		2,592	2,660	23,100	2,565	22,800
AK Child & Family		10,800	11,084		10,688	
LSSA		648	665		-	
Love Inc ER		2,592	2,660		2,565	
Support of PLTS		2,592	2,660		2,565	
Luther Seminary		1,188	1,219		1,177	
Support of PLU		1,188	1,219		1,177	
Support of CLU		1,188	1,219		1,177	
SUMC Soldotna Food Pantry					511	
Valdez Senior Center					405	
St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal Church					405	
Brave Hearts Volunteers					324	
Young Lives Alaska					119	
Total	38,500	21,600	22,168	23,100	22,500	22,800
Synod Programs:						
Youth Program	1,000	1,000	500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Multicultural Program	-	1,000	500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total Programs	1,000	1,000	500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Designated funds released to General Fund						
Designated funds released to General Fund		3,180	566	2,880	500	440
		3,400	3,400		-	Tr
Total Transfers	424,150	410,030	419,191	426,530	405,150	410,090
Total Income	438,463	420,441	408,110	419,510	409,450	412,626
Available/(Deficit)	(14,313)	(10,411)	11,082	7,020	(4,300)	(2,536)
non-cash entry to amortize prepaid rent	6,250.68	6,250.68	6,250.68	6,250.68	6,250.68	6,250.68
General Fund Balance impact	(20,564)	(16,662)	4,831	769	(10,550)	(8,787)

Notes:

(A) Beginning with the revised 2022 spending plan Mission/Ministry has been set at 2% of Total Mission Support AFTER the deduction for Churchwide. This amount will be used to pay Partnership Support Grants to Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWC).

(A) Beginning 2022 Any unspent amount at year-end will be transferred to temporarily restricted - Council Designated fund 02-341-04751- Mission/Ministry If the 2% of Mission Support is not enough to cover SAWC distributions the balance will be transferred from the temporarily restricted account

(B) Spending plan (deficit) or available will not tie to financial statement of the general fund because of a non-cash entry to amortize the prepaid rent. The spending plan only represents cash items.

2022 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Nominating Committee Report

Marilyn Rosene, Chair/Council Representative
Jeff Rud, Interior Cluster,
Dolly Kugzruk, Seward Peninsula Cluster
_____, Knik Cluster

Deborah Nyquist, Southcentral Cluster
Becky Corson, Southeast Cluster
Adam Bryant, At Large

Alaska Synod Council

One clergyperson and one layperson serve from each cluster, with an additional lay member from the Southcentral Cluster. There are four officers, one multicultural rep, and one youth/young adult; as a statewide group, the Alaska Synodical Women's Organization also has a member with voice and vote. The goal is balance in gender, at least one young adult, and multicultural representation. The members serve a four-year term; they may serve three terms.

Vote for one of the two (Southcentral clergy)

_____ Clergy Rev. Sandy Van Zyl (Southcentral) Amazing Grace
_____ Clergy Rev. Mark Orf, (Southcentral), On-leave-from call, (2015, 2019)

Vote for one

_____ Layperson Interior: _____

_____ Youth/Young Adult John Christiansen, (Southcentral) AGLC (2 yr term, elected '19, '21)

_____ Southeast Clergy Rev. Sandra Rudd, Sitka, (elected in 2019)

_____ Seward Peninsula Lay Member Joanne Keyes, Thornton Memorial-Wales (first term)

Continuing Members for Synod Council

- Shannon Miller Klescewski, (At Large), Our Savior's, Nome; 2025
- Mona Mitton (At Large) Joy Lutheran, Eagle River 2025
- Rev. Meredith Harber, (Multicultural) Christ Lutheran, Soldotna; 2025
- Rev. Rick Cavens, (Knik), Good Shepherd, Wasilla; 2025
- Johnny Copenhaver (Knik) River of Life, Chugiak 2026
- Rev. Lisa Hackler, (Seward Peninsula) AK Native; 2025 v
- Joanne Keys, (Seward Peninsula) Thornton Memorial, Wales 2026
- Ed Mjolsnes, (Southcentral) Central Lutheran, Anchorage, 2026
- Marilyn Rosene, (Southcentral) Dillingham Trinity; 2025
- Bradley Perkins, (Southeast), Resurrection Lutheran); 2024
- Leslie Swenson, V.P., (Interior) Christ Lutheran, Fbks; 2024
- Jan Dodds, Treas., (Southcentral); 2024
- Rev. Dustin Lenz, Secretary, (Interior), Christ Lutheran, Fbks; 2025
- Rev. Shelley Wickstrom, Bishop, 2024
- Meredith Rude, Alaska Synodical Women's Organization; 2024

- Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel, Director for Evangelical Mission, 2024
- Zach Manzella (St. Mark) serves as Synod Attorney and advisor to Synod Council

Alaska Synod Consultation Committee

One clergy and one layperson are elected each year for six (6) years without consecutive re-election. Geographic distribution is helpful but not necessary. Gender balance is desirable. Rev. Bill Ottum and Adam Bryant have completed their terms and are not eligible for re-election.

Nominees for Consultation Committee:

_____ Clergy: Pastor Erika Bergh (on leave from call, Interior)

_____ Layperson: Christina Stuve, (Christ Lutheran, Soldotna)

Continuing Members for Consultation Committee

- Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey - Southeast, Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau, 2024
- Noah Dressel, Knik, Good Shepherd, 2024
- Rev. George Sonray – retired, Southcentral, Gloria Dei, 2025
- Cindy Knutson - Knik, Good Shepherd, Wasilla, 2025
- Rev. Tim Christensen – retired, Southcentral, Amazing Grace, Anc., 2026
- Wanda Wahl - Southcentral, Dillingham Trinity, 2026
- Rev. Ron Rucker - Knik Table of Grace & Trapper Creek Fellowship, 2027
- Megan Bladow Addis - Southcentral, Lutheran Church of Hope, 2027
- Karen Voris – Southcentral, Central Lutheran, Anchorage, 2028
- Rev. Richard Mauer - Interior, Faith Lutheran/Delta Presbyterian, 2028

Alaska Synod Discipline Committee

One clergy and one layperson are elected each year for six (6) years without consecutive re-election. Geographic distribution is helpful but not necessary. Gender balance is desirable. *Ginny Robson and Rev. Richard Cavens have completed their terms and are not eligible for re-election.*

Nominees for Discipline Committee:

_____ Clergy: Pastor Amanda Van Vliet Snyder (Our Savior’s, Nome)

_____ Layperson: Malcolm Wright (Dillingham Trinity)

Continuing Members for Discipline Committee

- Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey - Southeast, Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau, 2024
- Don Bladow, Southcentral, Lutheran Church of Hope-Anc, 2024

- Rev. Mark Orf, Southcentral, 2025
- Twyla Mundy, SC, Christ Lutheran, Soldotna, 2025
- Rev. Meredith Harber, Southcentral, Christ Lutheran, Soldotna, 2026
- Tracey Buie, Seward Peninsula, Our Savior's, Nome, 2026
- Rev. Suellen Bahleda, Southeast, Island of Faith, Wrangell, 2027
- Richard Clinch, Knik, Trinity, Palmer, 2027
- Bev Higdon, Fairbanks Lutheran 2028
- Rev. Sean Avery, Joy Lutheran-Eagle River 2028

AK Child and Family Board

Members serve a three-year term: two lay people and one clergy. The board meets monthly in Anchorage. No travel funds. No term limits.

Incumbent for AK Child and Family Board:

_____ Clergy Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel, (Amazing Grace, Anchorage)

Continuing Members for the AK Child and Family Board

- Barb Belluomini, Christ Lutheran, Soldotna, 2024
- Pam Birch, Amazing Grace, Anchorage, 2025

Pacific Lutheran University Corporation

The role of the PLU Corporation voting member is to attend the annual PLU Corporation meeting held every September on campus; to represent the church to PLU and PLU to the church, serving as an advocate for the university at the cluster and synod level; to assist in the recruitment of students; to share ideas with the PLU Office of Church Relations regarding ways PLU can maintain a strong relationship with and be of service to the Lutheran congregations in the Pacific Northwest; to offer prayer and financial support for the university.

The Alaska Synod has five (5) voting members, elected to three-year terms, up to two terms (6 years total.) There is no requirement for lay or ordained or gender or cluster distribution. Transportation is covered.

Nominees for PLU Corporation:

_____ Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey – SOV Juneau (1st term)
 _____ Jennifer Barge - Trinity, Palmer (1st term) (incumbent)
 _____ Elizabeth Roll – Table of Grace, Bethel

Continuing Members for the PLU Corporation Board

- Adam Bryant, Lutheran Church of Hope, Anchorage (1st term) 2024
- Rev. Curtis Matz,(retired) Lord of Life, North Pole (2nd term). 2024
- Joon Cross, Christ Lutheran, Soldotna 2025

Nominee Biographies

- **Joanne Keyes** born in Wales, and raised at Wales/Nome. My Mother moved back home with her 3 younger children. Soon I left for Shishmaref High School graduated in 1978, stayed in Shishmaref for 13 years until moving back home. I have 4 children, 3 Son's and 1 Daughter, and 15 grandchildren and many her in Wales who calls me Grandma. I have been active with the Wales Church since moving back in 1998. I love working with children. I also served as Seward Peninsula Church Conference Officer for about 6 years, and my term has been up for a couple years now. God's blessings!!
- **Elizabeth Roll** - I am a physician living with my family (husband Eric and two daughters) in Bethel, Alaska. As a founding member of Table of Grace, who has one daughter attending PLU as a sophomore, I am committed to excellence in higher education with a strong grounding in the faith traditions of the ELCA. If elected to this position, I would be honored to represent the Alaska Synod in supporting the mission of PLU so that other students can benefit from an ELCA higher education like my daughter Greta is receiving.
- This year, I (Pastor **Sandra S. Rudd**) celebrate my fourteenth year of being an ordained pastor. It has been my pleasure to serve Sitka Lutheran Church all those years. I enjoy being a part of the related groups that come with being a member of the Body of Christ as an ordained pastor. These groups include a small ecumenical gathering of fellow clergy, the Sitka Ministerial Association, the Southeast Cluster of the ELCA, and the Alaska Synod. I contribute to those groups with thought, action, and a sense of humor. I would be pleased to continue serving on the Synod Council as we are constantly evolving and moving forward.
- Rev. **Lisa Smith Fiegel** serves as the Director for Evangelical Mission for the Alaska Synod. She is currently on the board of AK Child & Family and has served for several years. Lisa is the chair of the board's Spiritual Life committee and has a passion for trauma-informed care. Lisa lives with her husband and three young children in Anchorage. Jennie Barge is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Palmer, Alaska. She graduated from Pacific Lutheran University with a Bachelor of Music Arts in 2007 and from Louisiana State University with a Master of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders in 2014. She is a speech language pathologist for the Mat-Su Borough School district. Jennie maintains strong relationships with friends made at PLU and visits campus as often as she can. She would be proud to continue as a Member Representative of the PLU Corporation for the Alaska Synod of the ELCA.
- **Tari Stage-Harvey** - I'm a member and pastor at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in Juneau since 2009. I went to seminary at Trinity Lutheran in Ohio and was ordained on August 8, 1999. I got to participate in starting an ecumenical non-profit in Michigan where we opened a resale shop and emergency hotline. I also got to help start Family Promise of Juneau, where congregations walk with families who are experiencing homelessness by sharing church facilities and volunteers. I've served on multiple boards and my daughter is graduating from Pacific Lutheran University this May.
- **Sandy Van Zyl** began serving Amazing Grace Lutheran Church in Anchorage in August 2018. She received her Masters of Divinity from Luther Northwestern Seminary in St Paul, Minnesota in 1988 and was ordained in the ELCA in 1992. Pastor Van Zyl served

several Lutheran congregations in Montana during her 26 years of ministry there, as well as a call to special service to a United Church of Christ congregation and as a hospice chaplain. During those years, she also served on Synod Council, as Cluster Dean, and created the curriculum for and taught the Worship unit for the Montana Synod's Lay Pastoral Associate program for over 20 years. Sandy grew up on the East Coast and now loves living "north-er and west-er" than she ever imagined in Alaska! She is married to Tim Christensen, who recently retired from pastoral ministry. Their son John, is currently serving as a YAGM (Young Adults in Global Mission) volunteer in the UK. Outside of work, Sandy is passionate about going to see live music, watching San Francisco Giants baseball, and eating Vietnamese food.

- **Malcolm Wright** - I have lived and worked in Dillingham, Alaska, since 1984, and I attend Dillingham Trinity Lutheran Church. I was born and grew up in New York City with one sister. I attended Episcopal private schools through eighth grade, graduated from public high school (the Bronx High School of Science) in 1978, and Dartmouth College in 1982. After college, I headed west and ended up commercial fishing in western Alaska. I settled in Dillingham, became a newspaper reporter, continued to fish commercially, became a volunteer EMT, firefighter, and, eventually, a husband and father. Amy Ruby (my wife) is a first-grade teacher and daughter of a founding member of Dillingham Trinity Lutheran. We have two grown sons. I am employed by Kakanak Hospital as an EMT-III in the ER, medevacking patients into the hospital from area villages and teaching EMS-related classes. I continue to volunteer with Dillingham Fire and Rescue as a responder and officer, and I have served on the church council here for several years.

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Resolutions

Eric Law's "Respectful Communication Guidelines"

R – take Responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others

E – use Empathetic listening

S – be Sensitive to differences in communication/cultural styles

P – Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak

E – Examine your own assumptions and perceptions

C – keep Confidentiality

T – Tolerate ambiguity because there are no “winners” or “losers”

Adapted from the [Kaleidoscope Institute](#) (slightly modified)

Resolution 2023-1: Payday Lending

WHEREAS, payday lending loans (also known as “deferred deposit advances”) are defined as a cash loan of usually \$500 or less, due within two weeks or the next payday, and serve as a short-term credit option for people to cover basic living expenses; and

WHEREAS, interest rates including fees charged by payday lenders should be considered highly unethical, averaging 435% APR; and

WHEREAS, small-dollar loans through Alaska banks and credit unions are already capped at 36% APR, but payday lenders in Alaska are exempt by statute and regulation; and

WHEREAS, nearly 70% of payday loans in Alaska are accessed online with storefronts only located in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau; and

WHEREAS, payday lenders have extracted an average of 29 million dollars from Alaskans each year over the last ten years ; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 2023 the Alaska House of Representatives introduced House Bill 145 “An Act relating to loans in the amount of \$25,000 or less; related to deferred deposit advances; and providing for an effective date.” and was referred to committee to begin the legislative process ; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 145 if passed as submitted, will impose the same interest rate requirements on payday loans as currently imposed on the Alaska banks and credit unions; and

WHEREAS, the books of Exodus (22:21-27), Leviticus (25:36-37), and Deuteronomy (23:20-21) all command God’s people not to charge interest in the land in which they reside, and payday lenders are egregiously out of step with Biblical wisdom; and

WHEREAS, as followers of Christ, we are called to live by the greatest commandment: to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-39). Allowing interest rates at nearly 500% is the opposite of Christ-like love to our neighbors; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s (ELCA) 1999 social statement Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All commits the church to “address creatively and courageously the complex causes of poverty” as well as calls for “scrutiny of how specific policies and practices affect people and nations that are the poorest, and changes to make policies of economic growth, trade, and investment more beneficial to those who are poor;” therefore, be it ...

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod Assembly of the ELCA, in Assembly, request the Synod Council of the Alaska Synod of the ELCA sign the letter of support through the Mutual Aid Network of Anchorage (MANA) urging the Alaska Legislature to cap the interest rate for payday lenders at the same rate as the banks; and so be it further...

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod Assembly, in Assembly, encourage member congregations of the Alaska Synod of the ELCA to contact their Alaska state legislators directly through letters, emails, telephone calls, and in-person visits, beginning with the 2023 legislative session until

said change is achieved.

Contact:

The Rev. Meredith Harber, meredith.harber@gmail.com, 724-541-0138

The Rev. Ollie Bergh, flcpastor@gci.net, 503-347-8403

Island of Faith Lutheran Church Council, April 2023

Submitted: 3/21/2023

Reviewed: 4/12/2023

Recommended for action to 2023 Alaska Synod Assembly: 4/21/2023

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- 1 Alaska Division of Banking and Securities Deferred Deposit Advances Annual Report (12/31/2021).
 - 2 Historical Annual Payday Lender Report Spreadsheet (12/31/2021).

3 <https://legiscan.com/AK/text/HB145/id/2763932/Alaska-2023-HB145-Introduced.pdf>

Resolution 2023-2: Regarding Anti-LGBTQ Legislation

WHEREAS, Alaska Public Media and the Anchorage Daily News has reported on March 6, 2023 and March 4, 2023 respectively that the current administration holding the office of Governor of Alaska has removed its policy protecting LGBTQ Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, the ACLU website reports over 400 different anti-LGBTQ bills in the United States as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the grace of Christ blurs any distinctions we may make between the sexes when the Apostle Paul writes, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28); and

WHEREAS, the Bible witnesses to God's generous grace to sexual "others" as seen in God's love for Eunuchs (cf. Isa 56:3; Acts 8); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) 2009 social statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust speaks of the "The necessity of mercy, always" when understanding Human Sexuality, teaching that we cannot support political actions that cause harm to LGBTQ neighbors; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 ELCA social statement Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call To Action reminds us that, due to the intersectional nature of sexism, anti-LGTBTQ policies hurt cisgendered men and women as well; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 ELCA social message Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy draws on traditional Lutheran theology pertaining to Luther's Two Kingdoms, reminding us that "[t]he church teaches that civic engagement is a vital aspect of discipleship for baptized Christians;" and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2023, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA Elizabeth Eaton issued a statement saying that, despite differences of opinion on matters related to sexual orientation and gender identity, we must "recognize and affirm the humanity of our transgender and nonbinary siblings" and "advocate for their dignity;" therefore, be it...

RESOLVED, the Alaska Synod of the ELCA, in Assembly, recognizes and affirms the humanity of LGBTQ people, recognizing that many of our congregations are spiritual homes of LGBTQ Christians; and be it further. . .

RESOLVED, the Alaska Synod, in Assembly, denounces any anti-LGBTQ actions and policies witnessed in Alaska state and national politics; and be it further. . .

RESOLVED, the Alaska Synod, in Assembly, encourages members of the Assembly and member congregations who feel called by the Holy Spirit to contact their representatives to encourage them to support LGBTQ Alaskans, requesting the Governor of Alaska to reinstate protections for LGTBTQ Alaskans in its policies.

Contact:

Rev. Ollie Bergh, flcpastor@gci.net, 503-347-8403

Rev. Erika Bergh, rev.erikabergh@gmail.com, 907-717-5015

Fairbanks Lutheran Church Council, March 23, 2023

Dillingham Trinity Lutheran Church Council, April 1, 2023

Island of Faith Lutheran Church Council, April 2023

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- 1 Early, "Report Finds That Dunleavy Administration Quietly Removed Policy Protecting LGBTQ Alaskans from Discrimination"; Alaska Public Media cites the article by Hopkins, "Alaska Drops Policy Banning Discrimination against LGBTQ Individuals."
 - 2 American Civil Liberties Union, "Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. Legislatures"; the ACLU website is largely a catalog of legislation. For more narrative reporting on the subject, see Ceron, "2023 Is Already a Record Year for Anti-LGBTQ Bills in the US."
 - 3 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust."
 - 4 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action."
 - 5 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy."
 - 6 Eaton, "Bishop Eaton Issues Statement on Anti-Transgender Legislation." The Presiding Bishop likely refers to the ACLU's number of anti-LGBTQ legislation in her statement as well (see above).

Bibliography for Resolution 2023-2

- American Civil Liberties Union. "Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. Legislatures," n.d. <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights>.
- Ceron, Ella. "2023 Is Already a Record Year for Anti-LGBTQ Bills in the US." Bloomberg, March 8, 2023, Equality edition. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-03-08/2023-is-already-a-record-year-for-anti-lgbtq-bills-in-the-us?leadSource=uverify%20wall>.
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- Eaton, Elizabeth. "Bishop Eaton Issues Statement on Anti-Transgender Legislation." ELCA.Org (blog), March 20, 2023. <https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8191>.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action," August 9, 2019. <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Sexism>.
- . "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy." Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, June 2020. <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Government>.
- . "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust." Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2009. <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Human-Sexuality>.
- Hopkins, Kyle. "Alaska Drops Policy Banning Discrimination against LGBTQ Individuals." Anchorage Daily News, March 4, 2023. <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2023/03/04/alaska-says-its-now-legal-in-some-instances-to-discriminate-against-lgbtq-individuals/>.



The Alaska Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's Work. Our Hands.

**A Resolution of Gratitude to
Christ Lutheran Church**
Resolution 2023-3

WHEREAS the congregation of Christ Lutheran Church generously offered the use of their facility, staff, and members for the 2020 and 2023 Synod Assembly meetings; and

WHEREAS the Synod Assembly voted to accept such an offering during the 2019 Synod Assembly; and

WHEREAS the Synod Assembly met online for the 2020, 2021, and 2022 assemblies; and

WHEREAS the voting members represent each Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation of the Alaska Synod and their respective pastoral and support staff understand and recognize the effort and coordination involved in such a large and complicated undertaking;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the congregations of the Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America extend their most heartfelt thanks to the staff and members of Christ Lutheran Church for their planning, hard work, enthusiasm, and faithful support of the 2023 Synod Assembly.

Overflow with Hope



The Alaska Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's Work. Our Hands.

**A Resolution of Gratitude to
Lutheran Church of Hope**
Resolution 2023-4

WHEREAS the congregation of Lutheran Church of Hope generously offered the use of their facility, staff, and members for the 2021 and 2022 Synod Assemblies; and

WHEREAS the voting members of the synod assembly represent each Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation of the Alaska Synod, and their respective pastoral and support staff understand and recognize the effort and coordination involved in such a large and complicated undertaking, especially during the COVID Pandemic;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the congregations of the Alaska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America extend their most heartfelt thanks to the staff and members of Christ Lutheran Church for their sharing of their facility, staff and their faithful support of the 2021 and 2022 Synod Assemblies.

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Ministry Partner Reports



A MESSAGE FROM ALLAN BELTON, 14TH PRESIDENT OF PLU

Greetings to the Alaska Synod from Pacific Lutheran University! As we continue to recover from the pandemic, I have taken some time to reflect on where we've been, what we've learned over the past few years, and where we are headed in the years to come.

Throughout my time at PLU, I have been drawn to the many ways the PLU community offers care: to ourselves, each other, and the world around us. One of the distinguishing attributes of a PLU education is our faithful commitment to transformative care. This year we continue to lean into this commitment. This is what grounds our pedagogy and student experience. We also feel called to extend this care beyond our classrooms and across our campus.

At PLU, we have a long history of transformative care and community impact inspired by our faculty, staff, students and alumni. This commitment to care continues to motivate us to question paradigms and explore new connections.

We encourage our students to embrace the complexity of the world's most difficult challenges. Together we ask tough questions, and together we listen closely for unexpected answers.

We are making bold commitments to expanding access to a PLU education, providing new channels to wellness, nurturing creativity, and reimagining our systems and practices to better reflect our commitment to diversity, justice and sustainability.

I am grateful for our committed and engaged alumni and friends who continue to join us in building networks of care, offering opportunities for experiential learning and mentorship, and joining in the advancement of our mission through their gifts and actions.

I am proud of our campus community for continuing to persist through the uncertainty of the pandemic, managing individual and community health alongside the rigors of academic coursework. Our faculty continue to show up in innovative and creative ways for our students. Our staff continue to invest in the

transformative PLU experience. Our students continue to draw on their collective resilience to thrive in their studies, at work, and within their various communities.

PLU continues to be a university that lives, learns, and serves from the heart. We continue to lean into our commitment to transformative care. It truly is fundamental to how we approach everything we do. PLU will continue to be a place where students are challenged and stretched academically, where they grow and mature personally, and where they are supported and looked after by a tight-knit community that cares for them deeply.

Thank you for your prayerful support and partnership in our shared mission.



**Office of Congregational
Engagement**
plu.edu/congregations



ELCA Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Updates from the ELCA Foundation

Synod Assemblies 2023

The vision of the ELCA Foundation is to be a thriving ministry that develops a culture of intentional generosity and financial stewardship to expand the work of the ELCA. Our mission is to support and sustain ELCA ministries by enhancing gifting capacity and stewarding resources.

As a ministry of the ELCA, we serve individuals, congregations and worship communities; synods; the churchwide organization; and institutions, agencies and other related ELCA organizations.

The ELCA Foundation exists to:

- Provide gift planning, administration and processing.
- Manage endowment funds and offer investment management services as an acknowledged fiduciary.
- Engage individuals and organizations in thoughtful planning to pass on philanthropic values and support ministry passions.

In 2022 the ELCA Foundation's gift planning network walked alongside 200 donors/families in developing their gift plans, which resulted in \$76.5 million in future planned-gift commitments. Nearly \$26 million of this will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations. The network generated \$116.1 million in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned-gift commitments, \$10.3 million in current gifts, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and \$29.3 million in new assets invested in the Ministry Growth Fund (previously known as Fund A). Thank you for the opportunity to work in your synod, for trusting your endowment dollars to the ELCA Foundation and for allowing us to work alongside your ministries.

The ELCA Foundation and your regional gift planner are here to support your ministry through shared expertise with endowments, gift acceptance policies and practices to promote planned giving. We also work with individual donors to ease the complexity of estate plans, planned gifts, trusts and noncash gifts. Our services are free of charge to your congregation and its members. A local representative from our network of regional gift planners is available to work with you. Learn more about the ELCA Foundation by watching "[ELCA Foundation: Make a Plan. Change the World.](#)," visiting our updated website at foundation.elca.org or contacting your regional gift planner to help your congregation grow its culture of giving today.

Contact your regional gift planner:

Beth Adams
beth.adams@elca.org
(360) 953-4401
foundation.elca.org



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Partners in Ministry,

For many of us, 2022 represented a moment of hope. After the darkness and isolation of the pandemic, life has begun to return to normal —offering new opportunities for connection and renewed commitment to serving our neighbor.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has embraced this moment; in the past year, we have grown exponentially in both size and scale, expanding our capacity to welcome immigrants and refugees.

With the help of people of faith and communities like yours, we were able to...

help 16,690 children reunify with their families or find safe, loving foster homes
resettle nearly 12,000 Afghans forced to flee after Afghanistan fell under Taliban control
welcome 3,169 refugees from countries across the world
assist 18,262 people seeking safety from Central America and beyond

We continue to expand our slate of innovative programming to move beyond traditional resettlement into an empowered living experience that promotes not just surviving, but thriving.

That work reaches, too, into our media and advocacy footprint. You may have seen LIRS President and CEO Krish O'Mara Vignarajah on national news programs like PBS Newshour, MSNBC, NPR, the BBC, and others, advocating on behalf of our immigrant and refugee neighbors from Ukraine to Venezuela.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

It remains a priority of ours in 2023 to combat the divisive, xenophobic rhetoric surrounding immigration and instead promote kindness, compassion, and inherent human dignity.

We invite you to join us in that work! This year, we will continue to offer opportunities to get involved in the work of welcome, including:

advocating alongside LIRS and our newest neighbors in celebration of World Refugee Day on June 20th, sharing notes of welcome with children and families impacted by immigration detention through LIRS' Hope for the Holidays™ program each fall,
and equipping leaders and faith communities to create more just and welcoming communities through the LIRS Ambassador Network and EMMAUS Network for Congregations throughout the year.

Together, we can realize Jesus's ministry of compassion and welcome. We're so grateful for your support and look forward to working alongside you in the coming year.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chelsey Johnson".

Chelsey Johnson, LIRS Mobilization and Faith Relations



ELCA Federal Credit Union

***Providing a full complement of financial services
to ELCA members, congregations and ministries***



The ELCA Federal Credit Union, founded in 2016, provides a full suite of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. **We are the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals.**

The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs ... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. And now, we provide home mortgage loans for new homes or remodeling, along with home equity lines of credit.

We serve ministries with deposit accounts, a flexible credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 for small projects such as building repair and purchases. Our new CU@Work program presents the opportunity for ministry organizations to offer our Credit Union products and services to their employees.

In 2022, we ushered in the fourth cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those funds up to an established amount. Together, we already have served **657 rostered ministers** who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect today.

Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

- **The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship.** We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.
- **Our mission is to offer competitively priced products and services.** We can often offer better rates and lower fees than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our borrowers.
- **With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values.**

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, elcafcu.org or call us at toll free at 877-715-1111.



The Mission Investment Fund: Your financial partner

The Mission Investment Fund, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals. MIF offers a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and partner ministries, including outdoor camps, senior housing and social service agencies.



The result? Impact investments, with a transformative impact on our communities: Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.

Why is MIF the right choice?

- **MIF has demonstrated expertise** in church and ministry financing. With longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects, we're unique among lending institutions.
- **We consistently offer competitive rates and terms.**
- **We offer a full suite of financial services.** MIF offers congregations, ministries and individuals a host of investment options. We work in deep partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union to offer a wide range of financial products and services.
- **The faithful stewardship of Lutheran congregations and their members funds our loans.** The money invested in MIF finances hundreds of capital projects across the church.

MIF has a longstanding tradition of strength and stability. At year-end 2022, MIF had 812 loans outstanding, totaling \$582.7 million. Investment obligations totaled \$559.4 million. With total assets of \$776.3 million and net assets of \$202.9 million at year-end 2022, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 26.14 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you minister to a world in need. We are honored to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

MIF at work in the Alaska Synod (as of December 31, 2022):

- 5 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$1,350,615
- \$2,316,133 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager Joel S. Wudel: 773-682-1765 joel.wudel@elca.org

This spring more than 50 students are studying at PLTS to be capable, equipped leaders in the modern church. Of those students, 33 students are in a Master of Divinity pathway, four students are working on their Certificate of Advanced Theological Studies, and three are earning a common MA with the Graduate Theological Union.

THE CENTER FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE & FAITH

The PLTS Center for Climate Justice and Faith (CCJF) launched their Spanish-language Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith this February. The inaugural cohort of this program includes 24 students from 14 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Spain. The course was developed with Seminario Luterano Augsburg (SEMLA) in Mexico, Universidad Luterana Salvadorena, Instituto para la Pastoral Contextual of the Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida of Argentina and Uruguay, and the ELCA.

A total of 60 students representing 26 different countries are currently enrolled in the CCJF's programs, which also include Community Organizing for Climate Justice as Love in Action. These programs were developed in collaboration with Lutheran World Federation and ELCA World Hunger. CCJF also held a hybrid screening of the film *The Ants and the Grasshopper* in February. More than 200 people tuned into the program which included a Q&A with the film's director, Raj Patel. Visit the QR code to get updates on upcoming application deadlines and other educational opportunities.



Pr. Shede Habila (left) leads a tree planting activity as part of a three-day seminar on Climate Justice he organized in Yola, Nigeria. Pastor Habila is a 2022 graduate of the Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith.

MASTER OF ARTS IN SPIRITUALITY & SOCIAL CHANGE

The 2022-2023 Academic Year is the first time that PLTS has offered a Master of Arts in Spirituality and Social Change. The curriculum is designed to prepare students to serve in a wide variety of faith-based leadership roles in diverse contexts, including rostered deacons, chaplains, community organizers, non-profit leaders, and much more. Use the QR code on the left to learn more about the Master of Arts in Spirituality and Social Change.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR EMERGING MINISTRIES

The PLTS TEEM cohort gathered in person in Berkeley this winter for a week of instruction, worship, and community. There are 31 TEEM students in the 2022-23 academic year; these are students training as pastors in their local contexts and congregations. In May, four students are expected to graduate with a TEEM certificate and continue in ministry. The summer session for the PLTS cohort will be June 5th-9th at Luther Seminary. You can learn more about TEEM by scanning the QR code at the left.



TEEM students in the Berkeley cohort studying with Dr. Dan Peterson.

California Lutheran University

As your partner in education as the ELCA university within Region Two, we educate leaders for a global society who are strong in character and judgment, confident in their identity and vocation, and committed to service and justice.



Forward Thinking

A future-focused university is purposely planned by the hands, hearts, and heads of many. We are implementing year-one initiatives of the [Strategic Plan](#), readying a [Campus Plan](#), and launching a [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Plan](#).



University Pastor

Rev. Scott Hamilton Adams and the [Campus Ministry](#) staff are committed to making Beloved Community a reality for the university, this space where we come together in an interdependent relationship of care grounded in the love of God.



Rooted Values

Lutheran educational values emerge from our identity and ground the campus culture and ethos: Grace, Generosity, Inclusion, and Service to neighbor so that all may flourish.



All of Us

We are committed to an inclusive environment for [all of us](#) that values individual differences and respects each person's dignity.



Lutheran Student Scholarships

In addition to the Congregational Partners in Education (CPE) Award, ELCA Partners in Ministry Award, and the Convocators Scholarships, many [scholarships](#) are available to make a Cal Lutheran education affordable.

- 2401 Undergraduates
- 41 Majors
- 43 Minors
- 1102 Graduates
- 32 Graduate programs
- 1 Lutheran Seminary
- 38 Faith backgrounds
- 59 Countries represented
- 39 States represented
- 22 Athletic teams
- 7 Performing + Visual Arts programs
- 15 Average class size
- 4 Years to graduate
- 98% Grads employed or in school within 9 months
- 500+ Student internships
- 95 Clubs + Organizations
- 8 Religious clubs
- 15 Suite-style residences
- 33 Study Abroad programs
- 98% Receive Financial Aid
- \$39k Average financial aid package

Thank you for praying for, supporting, and telling others about Cal Lutheran. We welcome you to learn more about Cal Lutheran at CalLutheran.edu.

Helping Members Refill Their Cup with Responsive Benefits

In 2022, Portico invited plan members to use their full range of benefits to care for themselves following the challenges and stress of the last few pandemic years. We continually seek cost-effective and nimble ways to support ELCA leaders, congregations, and organizations with high-quality, innovative, and stable benefits that promote holistic well-being.

- ELCA-Primary health benefits provided both in-person and virtual access to health care and wellness resources.
- Portico's Financial Planners and LSS of Minnesota helped ELCA Retirement Plan members navigate the weight of rising interest rates and market downturns through no- or low-cost financial planning, coaching services, and financial education.

In recent years, we've added several eligible ELCA- and full-communion-partner organizations to the Portico community. Growing the number of members we serve helps us manage costs and offer innovative benefits not typically available to smaller groups, affirming the importance of church together.



The Rev. Jeff Thiemann
President & CEO

Meeting the Need in 2022

232

Podcast Plays

Of the "Creative Approaches to Innovative Ministry" episode of Being Here last year.

16,002

Total Pounds Lost

Through the Omada prevention program since it launched in 2018, with 2,643 pounds lost in 2022.

591

Retired

With Portico's bundled benefits program — Congratulations to these faithful servants!

1,132

Webinar Views

Of the annual Retirement Readiness Series (live and on-demand).

3,080

Medical Visits via Text Based Care

Through 98point6®, our virtual primary health care service.

9.75%

Increase in Net Membership

Over the past 5 years.

3,952

Health & Fitness Classes Completed

On Portico's online Bernalong platform.

Over \$2M

Debt Paid Off

By plan members working with LSS of Minnesota financial counseling since the partnership began.

86%

Very Satisfied

With our Customer Care Center, certified for excellence since 2015.

Data as of Dec. 31, 2022; sources available upon request. Availability of and eligibility for benefits will vary.



Lutheran Social Services of Alaska

Providing hope by responding to human need
through services that sustain and transform lives

1303 W 33rd Ave Anchorage AK 99503 907-272-0643

We wish to thank the Alaska Synod of the ELCA for your continued support of our ministry. Here is a brief report of our assistance to our neighbors in need for 2022.

Emergency Food Program – our Food Pantry distributed 730,816 pounds of food to over 16,650 households or 54,578 individuals. Our Mobile Food Pantry distributed an additional 233,494 pounds of food to 6,682 families.

Emergency Housing Program – our Transitional Living Program served 8 single homeless men and our Roosevelt House housed 6 residents who have long term behavioral health issues. We also assisted 81 households with rental and/or utility assistance.

Direct Assistance Program – 1,310 individuals received one or more emergency vouchers to assist those looking for work or newly employed with state ID's or driver's license, birth certificates, bus passes, or clothing.

Medical Transportation Program – we assisted 352 clients with more than 675 rides to or from their medical/therapy appointments.

Association for Stranded Rural Alaskans – provides emergency shelter, food and transportation for rural Alaskans who are stranded in Anchorage after being medivaced for medical treatment. We helped 29 Alaskans with transportation home. We are also helping with a diversion program for people with long-term health issues that are or will become homeless. Instead of having to go to a homeless shelter for recuperation we are now sending them to live with family members outside of Anchorage who can assist them with their on-going care.

Listening Post – Volunteers are starting to meet in person at the Loussac and Mountain View Libraries while still going strong at the Brother Francis Shelter.

Disaster Preparedness - Responded to Typhoon Merbok with food, water, diapers and formula, clothing, muck-out tools and tarps. In total the AKVOAD with the help of many Lutherans we were able to ship 155,200 pounds of much needed supplies to eight villages in western Alaska. Most of the rebuilding work will begin in May 2023 and if you are interested in helping with the rebuild, please let me know.

Alan Budahl – Executive Director

10 Things to Know about 1517 Media Spring 2023

1. The *All Creation Sings* family of resources continues to expand, including the *Assembly Song Companion to All Creation Sings*, the *Ensemble Setting of Holy Communion (Setting 12)*, and the soon-to-be-released braille edition. We continue to add online resources that can help you use this liturgy and song supplement to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* to enliven your congregation's worship. augsburgfortress.org/allcreationsings
2. Kids will find new ways to explore and learn about Lutheran worship with the newly updated *Kids Celebrate* series, featuring topics like Worship, Creation, the Trinity, and Hymns and Songs. *A Time to Say Goodbye: A Booklet for Kids about Funerals* helps kids understand what happens during a Lutheran funeral. augsburgfortress.org/for-kids
3. This summer we invite kids to learn what it means to become members in God's world with *Operation Restoration*, a new Vacation Bible School based on Daniel Erlander's timeless works. This flexible VBS complements other Erlander resources: *A Place for You* (Holy Communion), *Come to the Water* (Holy Baptism), *Baptized, We Live* (introduction to Lutheranism), and *Manna and Mercy* (the biblical narrative). augsburgfortress.org/operationrestoration
4. Fortress Press continues its legacy of publishing compelling theological, biblical, and ethical books for the church and the world in which it lives. Recent and upcoming releases include *The Everyday Advocate: Living Out Your Calling to Social Justice* by Deacon Ross Murray, *Blessing and Beseeking: Seventy Prayers Inspired by the Scriptures* by Gail Ramshaw, and *So That All May Flourish: The Aims of Lutheran Higher Education* by a veritable "who's who" of Lutheran higher education, a must read for everyone concerned about the work being done on Lutheran campuses. fortresspress.com
5. Our Broadleaf Books imprint explores the expanse of human experience—seeking to deepen faith and understanding and bring wholeness to readers and society. Recent releases include *Ordinary Blessings for Parents: Prayers, Poems and Meditations for Family Life* by Rev. Meta Herrick Carlson, *Red State Christians: A Journey into White Christian Nationalism and the Wreckage It Leaves Behind* by Rev. Angela Denker, and *What Makes You Come Alive: A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman* by Dr. Lerita Coleman Brown. broadleafbooks.com
6. For a low annual fee, Sparkhouse provides access through *Sparkhouse Digital* to a wide range of regularly refreshed resources for early childhood, children, and youth. Subscribers can access new digital activity kits that help congregations provide resources for use in the home or as a supplement to in-person faith formation activities. sparkhousedigital.com
7. Congregations looking to bridge connections with families during the summer will find, *Families Celebrate Summer* an excellent resource. This colorful deck of 56 cards is full of faith-based activities, rituals, reflections, and other ideas for families to try at home and on the go. augsburgfortress.org/familiescelebrate
8. This spring Sparkhouse released *Remind Me Again: Poems and Practices for Remembering Who We Are*, a collection of 41 poems by Joe Davis that will inspire, challenge, and affirm readers from all stages of life. This fall, a facilitator guide by Rev. Jia Starr Brown will help youth and adults engage with the poetry and encourage meaningful discussions and connections to your own community. augsburgfortress.org/remind-me-again
9. Beaming Books continues its mission to publish high-quality children's books that help kids thrive in every part of who they are—emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Recent and upcoming releases include *I Am Not Afraid: Psalm 23 for Bedtime, Wherever You Are*, and *Pause, Breathe, Be: A Kid's 30-Day Guide to Peace and Presence*. beamingbooks.com
10. Frolic Preschool, Frolic Nursery, and Frolic Family introduce little ones to faith concepts in age-appropriate ways. The award-winning Frolic Storybooks are now available in affordable paperback bundles that make great gifts for kids in your communities. wearesparkhouse.org/frolic

Want to learn more? Follow us on social media. Sign up for our free eNewsletters at augsburgfortress.org | wearesparkhouse.org | fortresspress.com | beamingbooks.com | broadleafbooks.com



Alaska Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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907-272-8899. elcaalaska@gmail.com www.elcaalaska.net

April 12, 2023

Alaska Synod Congregations,

The selection of a new bishop will be done by Ecclesiastical Ballot at the April 2024 Alaska Synod Assembly (as outlined by the Alaska Synod Constitution, section S9.04.). Bishop Wickstrom is now completing her second term and is not eligible for re-election. In order to facilitate the process by which the synod will elect the new bishop, a process we trust God will direct through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Synod Council has appointed a team from across the synod to guide our preparation.

This preparation starts with looking at ourselves: as a synod of the ELCA, who are we and what do we value? When are we at our best? Over the next six months, the congregations and ministries in our synod will work on answering those important questions as we take part in a process to discern and articulate our key values. These values will give us a shared core from which to discern who the next bishop should be. These will envision what the synod looks like when we are at our best and call us to embody that, not at some time in the future, but now, in the present.

At our Synod Assembly meeting (**Soldotna, April 28-30, 2023**), voting members will begin the work of drafting these values using an exercise developed by our consultant, Dave Daubert, of Day8Ministries.

After the Synod Assembly meeting, voting members will introduce the process in their congregations. Our goal is that every congregation engage this work by **November 8, 2024**. Your participation and prayerful consideration will produce a list of core values/defining principles which are recognizable as a true reflection of our Synod. The team will finalize the list and forward it to the Synod Council for review, discussion and adoption.

These guiding principles will then be shared across the synod. These will be incorporated into the questions asked of our nominees for bishop. A more detailed timeline of events about the election process will be shared next fall. For now, we ask that each of you be in prayer and reflection on these questions:

What do we look like when we as a Synod are at our very best?
What is God calling us to be as a Synod?

Finally, we ask for your prayers for our whole synod as we do this important work in preparation for electing a new Alaska Synod Bishop in 2024. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the synod office or the team directly at: alaskavisionelca@gmail.com

Thank you,

Leslie Swenson, Co-Chair, Alaska Synod Council
William Bahleda, Southeast Cluster
Tracey Buie, Seward Peninsula Cluster
Angie Wohlford, Interior Cluster

Rev. Rick Cavens, Co-Chair, Knik Cluster
Adam Bryant, Southcentral Cluster
Marge Stoneking, Southcentral Cluster



AN EXERCISE FOR THINKING ABOUT VISION AND VALUES IN THE ALASKA SYNOD

Rev. Dave Daubert, DMin, PhD

Day 8 Strategies

Please find instructions on the accompanying page.

Start with prayer

L: Good and gracious God, you are the author of life and it is your image that guides and shapes who we are as people. So, speak to us through the power of your Holy Spirit so that we hear you speak in ways that help us better remember and envision who you call us to be at our best. As we read from scripture and reflect on our life together, help us to discern those things that will shape us and mold us in ways that give us insights about what is most important as we do ministry together and prepare to elect a new bishop in the coming year. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

SOME KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Galatians 5:22-26 – “The Fruits of the Spirit”

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

John 20:19-23 – “Continuing the Ministry of Jesus”

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 – “Ambassadors of Reconciliation for Christ”

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; [a] even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Luke 4:16-22 – “Life for the hurting”

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

Romans 10:14-17 – “The call to tell about Jesus”

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all have obeyed the good news, for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Assign small groups of no more than 4-5 people to each one of the texts above. Have them discuss the text and the following questions in the group and then present back to the larger group.

1. As you look at the lessons above, what are some key values that you see your lesson emphasize?
2. When you think about core values you want your synod to embody, what values would you list as most essential in addition to those listed in the lessons above?
Note: It can help to have individuals write their own thoughts on this first for a few minutes and then use those to share – more creativity and less competition for floor time!
3. When you think about these and how you want your synod to function, as a group, which values would you want to emphasize – **make a list of 5-7 values that your small group wants to share.**

ASSIGNMENT FOR YOUR LARGER GROUP

Have each small group report and share their list of 5-7 values. Then work together to combine your all the lists and make a final composite list of no more than 7 values that you think should be in place as we do our ministry and discern who should be our next bishop. Write them on a piece of paper/easel paper and prepare them to present and turn in. Prepare this as best as you can to share with the synod.

Instructions for Alaska Synod Core Values Exercise

Rev. Dave Daubert, DMin, PhD

Day 8 Strategies

1. Gather your group and get them centered with a moment of silence and opening prayer.
2. Divide people into small groups (no more than 5 people in a group).
3. Give each group a scripture text.
4. Instructions for each group:
 - A. Read your text together out loud.
 - B. Have each person write their answers on a slip of paper to the following:
 - a. As you look at the lessons above, what are some key values that you see your lesson emphasize?
 - b. When you think about core values you want your synod to embody, what values would you list as most essential in addition to those listed in the lessons above?
 - C. When everyone has written some things down, have each person share their lists. Don't discuss anyone's lists until everyone has shared their list.
 - D. As a group, when you think about these and how you want your synod to function, which values would you want to emphasize – **make a list of 5-7 values that your small group wants to share**. Bring them to the larger group by writing them on an easel paper
5. Back in the large group. Have each small group share its group's final list of 5-7 values. Discuss and see if you can refine the list to a single list of 5-7 values.
6. Turn in your lists, as well as the lists from each small group to the larger working group. If there is time at the synod assembly to have groups come back together and share their work with the large group and then turn in all the work to the leadership so it can be saved for a base for the process. Thanks!

Timeline for Alaska Synod Core Values Exercises

Rev. Dave Daubert, DMin, PhD

Day 8 Strategies

February 2023 – Dave Daubert from Day 8 Strategies is contracted to work with the Alaska Synod’s Bishop Election Committee as a consultant to help the synod develop vision and values using a participatory and ground up approach.

March 2023 – Design process in dialog with the Bishop Election Committee and present to synod council’s March 2023 meeting.

April 2023 – Do initial exercise at synod assembly. Dave Daubert will record a video with introduction and instructions for everyone to see at assembly. Then people break into clusters to do the exercise the first time (see additional sheets for scripture texts and directions)

May – November 8, 2023 congregations do the same basic exercise at that was done in the clusters at the synod assembly. Instructions and texts remain the same and every ministry will have had people at the assembly who have already done it – so they just replicate what they already experienced. Results are sent in to the Bishop Election Committee for their use with pastor Dave Daubert’s guidance. Dave Daubert will record a second video with the audience intended to be congregational groups as they do this work in their home congregations.

November 2023 – Dave Daubert uses the results to draft an initial set of vision and value statements that have arisen from the ground up through the process. The Bishop Election Team will reflect and modify so the final draft feels like it reflects Alaska Synod’s culture and vocabulary well. That draft will be sent to the Synod Council for its October meeting.

December 2023 – Synod Council reflects and determines their satisfaction with the vision and values draft. They can modify and comment and either adopt at that point. Or they can send back for added work and adopt sometime later at an additional Zoom meeting called for that purpose – as they select.

January – April 2024: Bishop Election Committee begins more focused work on the bishop election at synod assembly and uses the vision and values in partnership with other synod parties to frame points of discussion, questions for bishop candidates, etc.



In every country, gender-based violence is a tragic reality. This violence is frequently hidden, and victims are often silent, fearing stigma and further violence.

We all have a responsibility to speak out against violence, to ensure that women and men, boys and girls, including people who are transgender, and people who are gender non-conforming, are safe from rape and violence in homes and schools, at work and in society, and in our churches.

#ThursdaysinBlack is a global ecumenical campaign of the World Council of Churches. In 2019, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a [social policy resolution](#) calling upon all people across all expressions of the church to join by wearing black on Thursdays, and actively participating in various reflection and action items. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and National Bishop Susan Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada both serve as Ambassadors for the #ThursdaysinBlack campaign.

The campaign is simple but profound. Wear black on Thursdays. Wear a pin to declare you are part of a global movement. Advocate for attitudes, policies, and practices that promote a no-tolerance culture against gender-based violence. Work for the safety, protection, and healing of those in harm's way. Encourage others to join you.

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Acronyms

AFACT	Anchorage Faith and Action – Congregations Together
ASWO	Alaska Synodical Women’s Organization
COB	Conference of Bishops
CLU	California Lutheran University
CTC	Consultation to Clergy
CIP	Common Indexing Protocol – Refers to the cost of living/consumer price index in the Alaska Synod Clergy Compensation Guidelines
CW	Churchwide – usually refers to ELCA offices in Chicago
CWA	Churchwide Assembly
DEM	Director for Evangelical Mission
DM	Domestic Mission
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
FICA	Federal Insurance Contributions Act – payroll payments for social security
LCMC	Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ
LCMS	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
LDR	Lutheran Disaster Relief
LIRS	Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
LMM	Lutheran Men in Mission
LSSA	Lutheran Social Services of Alaska
LTS	Luther Theological Seminary
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LWR	Lutheran World Relief
MIF	Mission Investment Fund
MSF	Moved; Seconded; Failed
MSC	Moved; Seconded; Carried
NALC	North American Lutheran Church
PLTS	Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University
PLU	Pacific Lutheran University
PLUME	Ecumenical projects involving Protestant, Lutheran, United Methodist and Episcopal (Churches in Alaska)
SAM	Synodically Authorized Minister
SAWC	Synodically Authorized Worship Community
SECA	Self-Employment Contributions Act; cover their own Social Security, Medicare, and Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance costs
SP	Spending Plan
SPLMA	Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministries Association – includes Our Savior’s Lutheran, Nome; Shishmaref
SPLM Endowment	Lutheran, Shishmaref; Brevig Memorial Lutheran, Brevig; Teller Lutheran, Teller; Thornton Memorial Lutheran, Wales; Alaska Native Lutheran, Anchorage This refers to the fund set up to assist in the ministry on the Seward Peninsula.
TEAM	Together Emphasizing Alaska’s Mission
TEEM	Theological Education for Emerging Ministries
TRP	Theological Review Panel
VIA	Valley Interfaith Action
WELCA	Women of the ELCA

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY:
Locations and Themes of Alaska Synod Assemblies

Year	Congregation	City	Theme Verse
2023	Christ Lutheran Church	Soldotna	Overflow with Hope
2022	Online	Online	Jeremiah 29:11
2020/2021	Online	Online	Behold! I Make All Things New! Rev. 21:4-5
2019	Lutheran Church of Hope	Anchorage	Romans 8:38-39
2018	Central Lutheran Church	Anchorage	Worthy to Be Praised Psalm 145:3-4
2017	Shepherd of the Valley	Juneau	Come to the Table Luke 13:29
2016	St. Mark	Anchorage	Rooted and Growing in Christ Colossians 2:6-7
2015	Good Shepherd	Wasilla	The Fast that I Choose Isaiah 58:6-7
2014	Fairbanks	Fairbanks	A Living Hope 1 Peter 1:3-9
2013	Amazing Grace	Anchorage	Always Being Made New 2 Corinthians 5:17
2012	Joy	Eagle River	Here I am, for you called me 1 Samuel 3:5
2011	First	Ketchikan	Luke 1:17
2010	Gloria Dei	Anchorage	John 1:16
2009	Christ	Soldotna	Acts 1:8
2008	Hope	Anchorage	Revelation 21:1
2007	Good Shepherd	Wasilla	Ephesians 4:12
2006	Shepherd of the Valley	Juneau	Matthew 25:40
2005	Central	Anchorage	Galatians 3:28
2004	St. Mark	Anchorage	Claimed, Gathered and Sent
2003	Fairbanks	Fairbanks	For the Healing of the World
2002	Amazing Grace	Anchorage	Luke 1:78-79
2001	Joy	Eagle River	1 Peter 4:10
2000	Petersburg	Petersburg	1 Corinthians 3:9
1999	Gloria Dei	Anchorage	1 John 1:1-4
1998	Central	Anchorage	1 Peter 2:9
1997	Christ	Soldotna	Joel 2:28-29
1996	Hope	Anchorage	Isaiah 49:6b
1995	Amazing Grace	Anchorage	John 21:17

1994	First	Ketchikan	John 3:16
1993	Good Shepherd	Wasilla	Acts 2:26
1992	Gloria Dei	Anchorage	Galatians 3:26-28
1991	Christ	Fairbanks	Ministry in Daily Life
1990	Central	Anchorage	See Grow Serve
1989	APU	Anchorage	Many Voices One Song
1988	Sitka	Sitka	
1987	Central	Anchorage	Come Share the Spirit

2023 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Doxology

"Quyakluu God, igayuutaagun"



Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise him, all crea-tures here be - low;
Qu-yak - luu God, i-ga - yuu - taa - gun, qu-yak - luu uu - ma-zru-at maa - ni;



praise him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.
qu-yak - luu pak - ma-ni nu-na- mi it-tu - aq; qu-yak - luu A-taa-taan qi-lun-gaa il-it - qu-ziq.