

The 2024 Alaska Synod Assembly

The Alaska Synod's Guiding Principles



When we are at our best, you will find us:

- Listening to the Spirit and following Jesus
- Engaging each other with humility, honesty, respect, courage and grace
- Celebrating our diversity through full participation, decision-making and leadership
- Sharing our resources across the Alaska Synod so that ministries thrive
- Taking risks and being open to working in new ways for the sake of the Gospel
- Equipping and supporting resilient, creative lay and ordained leaders
- Working for justice and serving God's creation across the Alaska Synod and beyond
- Living out and sharing the love of Jesus wherever we are

The 2024 Alaska Synod Assembly

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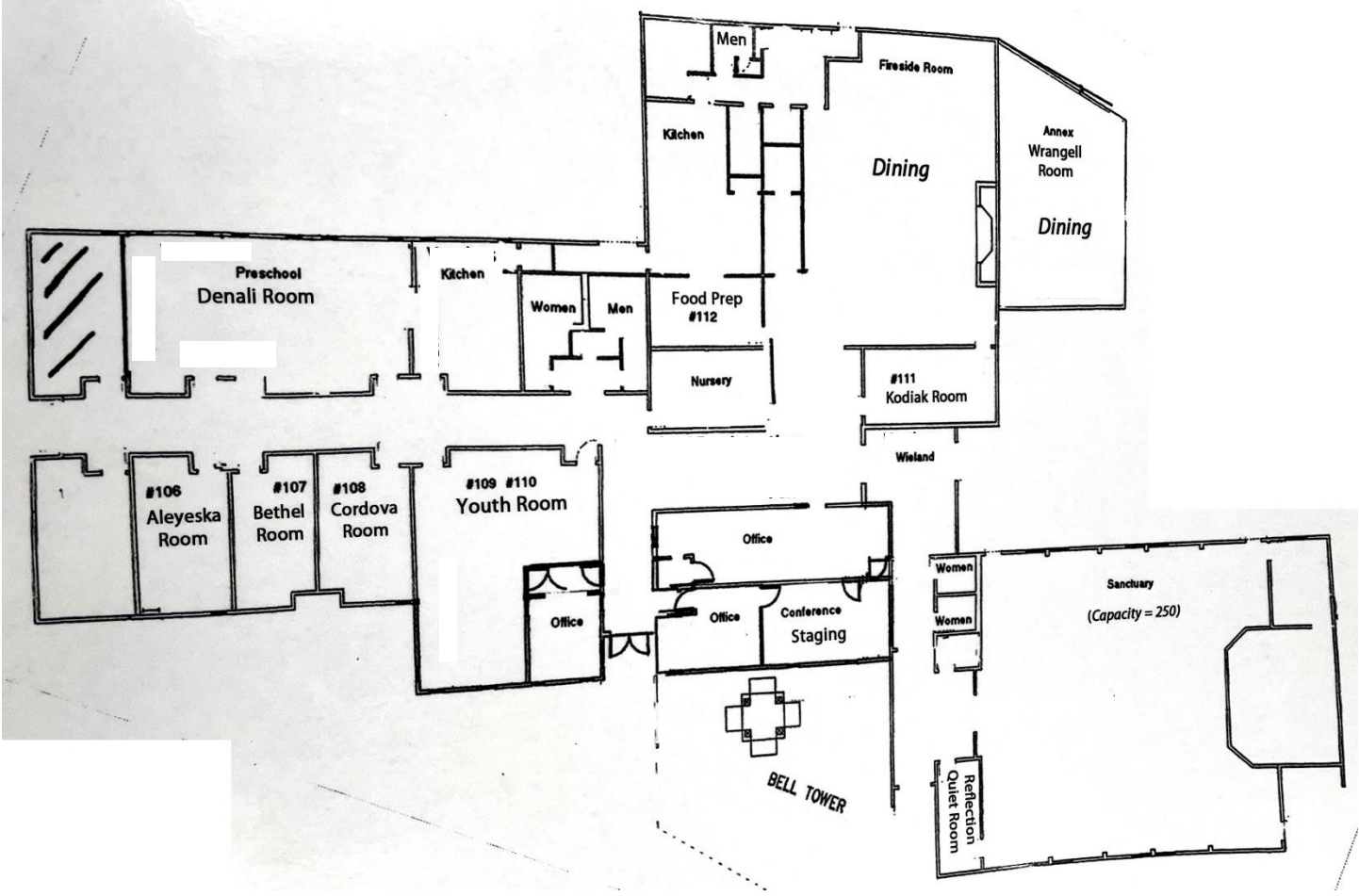
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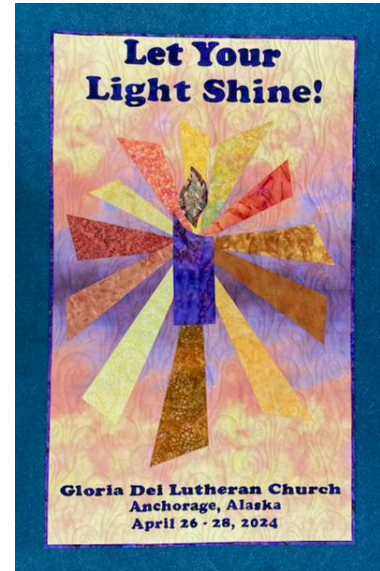
2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Floor Plan and Agenda

Let Your Light Shine!
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Anchorage



Friday, April 26

- 10:00 am Pre-Assembly Workshop: Alaska Blanket Exercise
Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova
- 12:00 pm Registration Table and Displays Open at Gloria Dei
Light lunch available
- 1:15 pm Hymn Sing
- 1:30 pm** **Opening Litany**
Welcome and Introductions
Announcements and Procedures
Report of the Credentials Committee
Adoption of Agenda and Standing Rules
Presentation of 2023 Assembly Minutes
Adoption of Synod Constitution
- 2:10 pm** **Bishop Eaton on the Election of a Bishop**
- 2:30 pm** **Prayer and Bishop Nominating Ballot #1**
~ Break ~
- 3:00 pm Faith Story
Lutheran Social Services of Alaska, Lutheran Disaster Response
TEAM Grant Recipient Reports
- 3:30 pm Introduction and Vote for Synod Committees, Council and Church
Council Nominees
- 3:45 pm Treasurer's Report / Intro of the 2025 Proposed Spending Plan
~ Break ~
- 4:15 pm Churchwide Report
- 4:30 pm** **Report of Bishop Nominating Ballot #1**
Synod Elections Report
Resolution 2024 #1 and #2
- 5:30 pm Supper served in the Fireside Hall and Denali Room
- 7:00 pm Holden Prayer in Sanctuary
- 8:00 pm Deadline, at the Registration Table:
 - to withdraw from Bishop Ballot
 - to submit a resolution
 - to submit changes to the 2025 Spending Plan
- 8:30 pm Bishop Nominee biographies posted, as available,
at <https://www.elcaalaska.net/2024-bishop-election.html>



Sunday, April 28

8:15 - 9:20 am	Breakfast in Fireside Hall
9:00 am	Choir Practice
9:30 am	Assembly Worship at Gloria Dei, Commissioning of SAMs

(Synod Council Meeting at Gloria Dei)

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: The Alaska Synod Guiding Principles

When we are at our best, you will find us:

- **Listening to the Spirit and following Jesus**
- **Engaging each other with humility, honesty, respect, courage and grace**
- **Celebrating our diversity through full participation, decision-making and leadership**
- **Sharing our resources across the Alaska Synod so that ministries thrive**
- **Taking risks and being open to working in new ways for the sake of the Gospel**
- **Equipping and supporting resilient, creative lay and ordained leaders**
- **Working for justice and serving God’s creation across the Alaska Synod and beyond**
- **Living out and sharing the love of Jesus wherever we are**

- Approved by the Alaska Synod Council on 11-18-23

At their October 2022 meeting, the Alaska Synod Council formed the Synod’s Bishop Election Committee (BEC) to curate the process of the Bishop Election, to be held at the 2024 Synod Assembly. The first task assigned to the BEC was to develop a process by which all members of the synod could identify who we are, as a synod.

To help with this work, the BEC engaged Rev. Dr. David Daubert, of Day-8 Strategies. Pastor Daubert (an ELCA pastor), has had experience within the Alaska Synod and throughout the ELCA helping congregations and institutions identify their core values and craft statements, called “Guiding Principles”, about themselves. The BEC and Pastor Daubert spent 6 months developing an exercise to gain insight into what the Alaska Synod sees as it’s Guiding Principles.

At the 2023 Synod Assembly, each of the synod’s clusters worked through this exercise and shared their statements with the whole Assembly. Those who had taken part were then asked to conduct guiding principle exercises in their own clusters and congregations. Over the next 6 months these exercises were worked on throughout the Alaska Synod. Ultimately over 70% of the synod’s 30 diverse congregations, including multiple congregations from every cluster, shared their responses to the questions:

- What is God calling us to be as a Synod?
- What are the values and guiding principles of the Alaska Synod?
- What does the Alaska Synod look like when we are working at our very best?

At a special meeting on November 18, 2023, the Synod Council received a proposed draft of Guiding Principles from the Bishop Election Committee. The Alaska Synod Council refined and then approved the Alaska Synod’s Guiding Principles as an authentic view of how we, as a synod, see ourselves as people of God at this time and in this place.

2024 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 worshiping 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							

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: 2023 Alaska Synod Assembly Minutes

Welcome to the 2023 Alaska Synod Assembly and Opening Litany—Bishop Shelley Wickstrom

SA.23.04.01 The 2023 Assembly of the Alaska Synod of the ELCA with the theme “Overflow with Hope” based on Romans 15:13. Is declared open at 6:31pm by Bishop Shelley Wickstrom. Official greeting from the host congregation, by Sally Nielson the chair of the Christ Lutheran Church of Soldotna Host Committee.

SA.23.04.02 Land Acknowledgement by Pastor Meredith Harbor, Christ Lutheran Church Soldotna:

As we gather as the Alaska Synod Assembly in 2023, we wish to acknowledge and honor the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina people upon whose ancestral homelands we gather for Assembly this weekend, as well as our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place—this land—and call it their home. We understand the importance and necessity of acknowledging the land and the original, Indigenous peoples whose creation stories are rooted in these places and who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.

We know that Indigenous peoples are not historical subjects but part of our communities, churches, schools and leadership, and that they offer invaluable wisdom for how we exist, today and into the future, in relationship with Mother Earth and our human and nonhuman neighbors

We understand the importance and necessity of acknowledging the land and its original, Indigenous peoples, and doing so consistently, whenever and wherever we might gather, virtually or in person. Also, we understand that this protocol is only a first step and that, as we venture into the world, we must learn more, do more and realize healing and justice for the Indigenous peoples whose lands we now occupy.

Let us begin this work for healing and justice by entering into a place of peace as the gathered body of the Alaska Synod.

Remembered other synods in assembly on this same weekend.

Credentials Report—
43 Lay voting Members
21 Rostered Leaders (Active)
2 Rostered Retired
9 Registered visitors
total 66 voting members

Faith Story—Sue Stein

Leslie Swenson, Synod Vice President—Introduction of the synod council, synod staff and churchwide partners visiting the assembly.

SA.23.04.03 Approve Assembly Agenda—MSC
Zach Manzella, Parliamentarian—presented and explained the proposed standing 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 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 substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected. Explained by the Parliamentarian.

SA.23.04.04 Adoption of the amended standing rules as presented. MSC.

SA.23.04.05 Approve 2022 Assembly meeting Minutes with one spelling correction, Christiansen to Christensen. MSC

Point of order: Add line numbers in the future.

Updates from shared ministry partners
Kelli Williams—Director of Spiritual Life for AK Child and Family.
Alan Budahl—Executive director of Lutheran Social Services of Alaska.

TEAM Grant Recipient Reports
Central Lutheran used a TEAM grant to expand the Helping Hands Coat Closet. The purchased items and the work they do were shown in a PowerPoint.
Pastor Anna Soco of Christ Our Savior shared about the expansion of their community garden. 450-gallon water tank, 30 raised beds and picnic tables.

Alaska Synodical Women’s Organization report—Karen Voris VP—Representing Meredith Rude.

Presentation of 2024 Spending Plan and other budgetary matters—Jan Dodds, Synod Treasurer

Presented on the spending plan for 2024 that is in the packet as well as the plans from 2022 to show where the synod has been in the prior year and where the synod hopes to be in the current year.

The revised spending plan for 2022 had lower expenses than anticipated due to restricted travel and zoom meetings among other items. This coupled with more than anticipated financial generosity from congregations allowed the synod to end the year in the positive by \$11,000.

The 2023 spending plan was revised by the finance committee and executive committee and approved by the synod council at their March 2023 meeting and was presented to the assembly. The revisions will be in better alignment with the Statements of Intent received for 2023 and actual 2022 mission support. Other details of the revised spending plan were shared as informational and do not require further action by the Assembly.

The 2024 spending plan has been reviewed by the Finance Committee, the Executive

Committee and the Synod Council and is now being presented to the assembly for review and approval. There are no major differences in expenses between the Revised 2023 and the projected 2024 spending plans. Mission support is a historical estimate and will be adjusted in 2024 when new statements of intent are filed.

Leslie Swenson, Synod Vice President—Orientation to Values Discernment Process

Due to the Bishop's election process at the 2024 Synod Assembly, the Synod is engaging in a discernment process to define our values. A consultant with Day 8 Strategies, Dave Daubert, has guided this process along with the Values Discernment Committee. Through a recorded video Dave Daubert introduced the process and defined what a core value is—ideals to show who we are. This video introduced what clusters will be working on during the cluster gatherings.

The Values Discernment Committee was introduced.

Evening Prayer and adjournment for the evening.

Bible Study—Jeff Thiemann, Executive Director of Portico

Plenary session II started at 9:30

Faith Story—Terry Lindeman

Credentials Report—
48 Lay voting Members
22 Rostered Leaders (Active)
1 Rostered Retired
7 Registered visitors
total 71 voting members

Marilyn Rosene presented the nominees for elections.
No New Nominees for Synod Council—nominations closed.
Synod Consultation Committee—Committee Description given by Marilyn Rosene.
No New Nominees for Consultation Committee—nominations closed.
Discipline Committee Nominees and description given.
No New Nominees for the Discipline Committee—nominations closed.
AK Child and Family description given.
No New Nominees for the AK Child and Family Board—nominations closed.
Pacific Lutheran University Corporation Board—Clarified that Pastor Tari Stage-Harvey is an incumbent.
No New Nominees for the Pacific Lutheran University Corporation Board—nominations closed.

SA.23.04.06 All singular nominees (those who are the only ones nominated for a position) be declared elected - MSC.

ELCA Churchwide Report—Deacon John Weit

Election Report of the contested elections

Total Ballots: 74

SA.23.04.07 South Central Cluster Rostered Synod Council--Sandy Van Zyle declared elected to Synod Council

SA.23.04.08 PLU Corporation--Pastor Tari Stage-Harvey and Elizabeth Roll declared elected to the Pacific Lutheran University Corporation Board.

Faith Story--Christ Stuive

SA.23.04.09 Resolution 2023-1 Payday Lending--See copy--MSC

Resolution 2023-2 Regarding Anti-LGBTQ Resolution--See copy--Motion and Second.

Discussion:

Motion to add the following amendment--Resolved that the Alaska Synod, in assembly, charges the synod council with the creation of an accessible set of educational tools and a memorandum with talking points for congregations to use for the purposes of engaging in discussion surrounding and advocacy for LGBTQ+ Alaskans and that these resources be made available before the 2024 synod assembly and be updated at least every 3 years. Further, we charge the synod council with the development of a response to the legislature and executive of Alaska, before their next session, which highlights our stance against the use of administrative power to strip LGBTQ+ Alaskans of their protections as well as our call to stand for the respect, dignity, freedom and sacredness of LGBTQ+ Alaskans. Second.

SA.23.04.10 Amend the motion to change "creation" to "curation". MSC

SA.23.04.11 Amendment carried.

Tabled at 11:37am as per the orders of the day.

Cluster meetings and workshops.

Workshops

The Intertribal Heartbeat of Mother Earth Drum was played for the assembly and the group was prayed over.

Plenary III 4:51pm Assembly called to order

Prayer by Pastor Amanda Snyder of Our Saviors Lutheran Church in Nome.

Adoption of the 2024 Spending Plan--Jan Dodds

Discussion:

The 2024 spending plan has a line item for the youth is \$1,000. This does not include other designated funds that are held for the youth, nor the funds acquired through grants and Thrivent Action Team dollars.

SA.23.04.12 Accept the 2024 proposed Budget. MSC.

Anniversary Recognition–Leslie Swenson Vice President

SA.23.04.13 Resolution 2023-3–Gratitude to Christ Lutheran Church. MSC

SA.23.04.14 Resolution 2023-4–Gratitude to Lutheran Church of Hope. MSC

SA.23.04.15 Motion to replace the final Resolved, which was just passed by the assembly, with the following:

Resolved, the Alaska Synod, in Assembly, charges the synod council with curation of resources for education and advocacy for LGBTQ+ Alaskans, to be revised every 3 years, as the council deems feasible. Further, the Assembly charges the synod council, or an appointee of the council to draft a letter in response to the legislature and executive of the state of Alaska requesting protections of the LGBTQ+ Alaskans be reinstated. Second and carried.

SA.23.04.16 Resolution 2023-2 as amended was carried by the assembly.

Thanks to all the participants for attending.

Pastor Tim Bernard Prayed.

SA.23.04.17 5:45pm Adjourned till worship in the morning.

SA.23.04.18 Assembly closed concluding the Worship Service at 11:30am.

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Pre-Assembly Workshop

Friday, April 26

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Please be on time - doors will open by 9:45am.



Truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation

Central Lutheran Church
1420 Cordova Street, Anchorage

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.

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Workshops

Saturday, April 27

AED (Automated Exterior Defibrillator) Training

Holly Karjala
Youth Room

AED's are touted as "anyone can use because the machine talks to you" and "there's no training needed." However, it does help to know what to expect. The whole idea behind an AED is that the average person - you and me - can help someone in distress until paramedics arrive. It is truly a life-saving device! At this workshop, you'll become familiar with the steps of using an AED and learn how to apply for an AED from Mended Hearts of Alaska.

An Invitation to *Godly Play*

Stefanie Kramer, Kelli Mullin
Denali Room

Experience *Godly Play*, an alternate approach to Sunday School curriculum. Find out by doing! Enter a story circle, learn about wondering, responding, and feasting. *Godly Play* materials have a Montessori foundation and invite children into the story.

ELCA Foundation

Josh Kerney, Lisa Higginbotham
Fireside Room

You may have heard that "leaving a legacy" is important to nonprofits like the ELCA Foundation. But what makes legacy giving so different from writing a check or donating online?

Legacy gifts:

- Focus on the future. The support we receive from annual gifts each year is critical. But a legacy gift is like a support system we can count on to help us continue our mission for generations to come.
- Do not affect your current finances. You can take care of your top priorities – yourself and your loved ones – now while providing for the ELCA Foundation in the future.
- Help you recognize the role of the ELCA Foundation in your life. If the ELCA Foundation has had a significant impact on your life or the life of someone you love, a legacy gift is a heartfelt way to honor that relationship.

Faith Community Nursing

Rev. Beverly R. Bateman, MSN, RN, BCMMH
Cordova Room

Faith community nursing is recognized as a nursing specialty by the American Nurses Association and is guided by its own scope and standards of practice. The faith community nurse is an Alaska licensed registered nurse who has obtained advanced education in the specialty of faith community nursing. This workshop will provide basic knowledge and skills about the faith community nursing ministry.

Key Pivots

The Rev. Dr. Robin Steinke
Alyeska Room

Luther Seminary is called to help the churches we serve engage some key pivots in order to deepen their identity in Christ and witness faithfully to the Gospel in a rapidly changing world. These pivots are tied to larger cultural shifts taking place. Christianity in America has been primarily organized for the last two centuries around a particular institutional model– the voluntary association–that is rapidly breaking down. People are disembedding from voluntary institutions of all sorts in pursuit of individual self-expression. This interactive workshop will invite you to examine your context through the lens of four key pivots: pivot in posture, focus, structure, and leadership.

Soul Care

Kelli Williams
Bethel Room

Be prepared to be an active participant in a trauma-informed ministry format. We will be praying and praising using all our senses, entering into a time of soul care that might stir new practices that bring us closer to our Maker. Join Kelli Williams, Spiritual Life Director of AK Child & Family in a time of awakening ourselves to the Divine in and around us All.

Sunday Worship Choir Rehearsal

Sanctuary

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Workshop Presenters

Rev. Beverly R. Bateman, MSN, RN, BCMMH



A registered nurse for over 30 years, and an ordained elder and pastor for more than, Bev's education and experience bring a broad view of persons as whole beings. Her formal education includes a Master of Nursing with a specialty in Nursing Informatics and a course of study for ministers. From the pediatric bedside to corporate-level regulatory management oversight, she has effectively combined faith and vocation. After years of dreaming and much prayer, Bev was blessed to arrive in Alaska in July of 2022 to serve as the Program Coordinator for the Alaska Faith Community Nurse Resource Center at Providence Alaska Medical Center. Utilizing her training as a Faith Community Nurse, Coordinator, and Educator, she is striving to support and grow the Alaska network of faith community nurses and health ministers.

Also, Bev founded Faith Community Health Ministries to increase awareness and presence of trauma-informed, whole-person wellness in Church of the Nazarene congregations across Alaska. Practicing at the top of her nursing license with additional training in mental health, trauma-informed care, and resilience, she is a Certified Trauma Professional ready to serve individuals and churches who want or need help along the way.

Bev is married to Keith, also an ordained elder who has pastored for over 30 years. They have five children in their blended family with nine grandchildren spread across the lower 48. Sophie, their eight-year-old Papillon, keeps them from experiencing a truly empty nest!

Lisa Higginbotham Regional Gift Planner ELCA Foundation



She serves congregations, ministry organizations and individuals in Southern California, Arizona, and Hawaii, providing planned giving expertise as well as resources, financial education, and endowment management services to help clients joyfully answer the call to love and serve our neighbors. Lisa has a passion for providing sustainability in ministry funding through legacy planning and in helping donors to be intentional in their decisions to be generous.

She and colleague Josh Kerney partner with the Grand Canyon Synod on donor relationship development, gift policy implementation, stewardship of planned gifts, endowment, legacy gifts and Holy Closure/Merger.

Lisa and husband Ron, reside in California. When not on a church campus, you can find her community gardening, cooking for family, or raising Monarch butterflies.

Holly Karjala



As a second-generation Alaskan, I love exploring the beauty of our great state with my husband Chuck and our dog Ellie. You can also find me gardening, camping, or playing piano as the accompanist at Gloria Dei Lutheran where I've been a member for over 20 years.

Even though I retired in 2019 after teaching middle school for 28 years, I find my love of learning continues. I am currently in my second year of the SAM (Synodically Authorized Minister) program sponsored by the Alaska Synod. I'm looking forward to working with everyone at our Synod Assembly!

Josh Kerney

Interim Director of Gift Planning
ELCA Foundation



Josh has a passion for providing clarity in philanthropic legacy planning and in helping donors to be intentional in decisions about their generosity. He and colleague Lisa Higginbotham partner to enhance donor relationship development, gift policy implementation, stewardship of planned gifts, endowment, legacy gifts and more.

Josh lives in Paradise, CA with his wife, Renee, and their two amazing children, Eleanor and Fischer. Through God's grace and abundance, they continue their journey of rebuilding and restoration following the wildfires of 2018.

Stefanie Kramer



Stefanie is a member of Christ Lutheran Church in Fairbanks, AK. She has been involved with leading Sunday School programs and Vacation Bible School. Stefanie is currently on her church's council and heads up the Education committee. She has also been on the ASWO board for 5 years.

Kelli Mullin

Kelli is a member of Joy Lutheran Church in Eagle River. She has been involved with youth ministry professionally and as a volunteer. Kelli leads her congregation's *Godly Play* ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Robin Steinke

President and Professor of Systematic Theology
Luther Seminary



The Rev. Dr. Robin Steinke joined Luther Seminary as president in June 2014. She is the first woman in the seminary's more than 150-year history to be named to the position.

Prior to joining Luther Seminary, Steinke was the dean of the seminary and professor of theological ethics and public life at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary). She is a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; previously served as a training manager and financial planner at American Express Financial Advisors; and was a middle school band director in Marietta, Georgia. Steinke is a graduate of Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She holds a Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Sacred Theology degree from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in England.

Steinke is known for her strategic leadership and passion for sharing the gospel. She is involved in important church and academic initiatives and has served on a number of church and academic committees. She recently completed 10 years of service as the ELCA representative to the Lutheran World Federation as chair of the endowment fund. Steinke serves on the executive committee and is chair of the committee on ecumenical relations. She also recently served as a member of the ELCA Ecclesiology Task Force and co-chaired the national ELCA Theological Education Advisory Council that presented recommendations for the future of theological education. She previously served a six-year term as a commissioner for the Association of Theological Schools' Commission on Accrediting.

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.

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Letter from the Presiding Bishop



April 8, 2024

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

Dear friends in Christ,

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

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

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

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

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

In Christ,



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

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton was reelected to serve a second six-year term as ELCA presiding bishop at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Eaton is the ELCA's fourth presiding bishop and was first elected at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Eaton earned a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School and a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the College of Wooster.

Eaton was ordained in 1981 and served three different congregations in Ohio before being elected bishop of the ELCA Northeastern Ohio Synod in 2006. She was reelected synod bishop in May 2013, shortly before her election as ELCA presiding bishop.

Eaton's four emphases for the ELCA are: We are church; We are Lutheran; We are church together; We are church for the sake of the world. These four emphases are fundamental to identifying who the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is.

In 2015, under Eaton's leadership, the ELCA underwent an extensive vision process to help this church journey faithfully and effectively together in the years ahead. The process resulted in Future Directions 2025, a strategic framework that helps shared leadership across the ELCA realize common aspirations and better face the challenges of this church.

In addition, with Eaton's guidance, the ELCA launched Bishop Eaton's Leadership Initiative, which encourages all ELCA members to seek out and inspire gifted people in our congregations and communities to consider a call to the ministry of the gospel.

As chief ecumenical officer of the ELCA, she represents this church in a wide range of ecumenical and interfaith settings. She is vice president for North America on the Council of the Lutheran World Federation and serves on the governing board and development committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA and on the Religions for Peace USA Council of Presidents.

As presiding bishop, Eaton travels extensively, representing the ELCA in a variety of capacities. This has included a visit to a Syrian refugee camp; commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with Lutherans from around the world in Namibia; participating in an ecumenical service to commemorate the Reformation in the Lund, Sweden, cathedral with Pope Francis; visiting with migrants in Honduras; and attending the fifth consultation of women pastors and theologians in Tanzania.

Eaton's husband is the Rev. T. Conrad Selnick, an Episcopal priest. They are parents of two adult children, Rebeckah and Susannah.

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Alaska Synod Reports

Report of the Synod Bishop to the 2024 Alaska Synod Assembly



“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:13-16

Y'all are these things, all of us. No one individual embodies salt or light or a city alone. Through the community of believers, salt and light is shared. Salt alone is deadly and overwhelming. Add a bit to a dish and the other flavors pop. Want to kill off weeds? Salt them and watch them wilt from the salt absorbing the moisture that the plant needs. Balance matters with salt.

Too much light, or focus on light in an eclipse, is damaging to eyes. In proper balance, light illumines what is difficult to see otherwise, as long as the light is pointed away from oneself. Salt and light distributed allows each to do what it does best. A city on a hill becomes a bearing so that the journey can be recalibrated, so that we make it home.

Let your light shine before others was chosen as our theme by our Gloria Dei Lutheran Church hosts. We are to be like that city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Our collective mercy, righteousness, generosity do not exist for the sake of ourselves, but for this world that God loves. Faith is not meant to be a private possession. God is the source of this *saltiness*, this *light*, this *city*. These are not our own creation.

Our congregations have weathered storms, broken pipes, landslides and earthquakes. Trinity Lutheran had disasters back to back and they continue to serve their community and Lord with gusto, without a pastor. Some of our congregations now have had hard conversations that were avoided two decades ago about human sexuality. We have done hard things. We grew tired of learning something new every day in the early days of the COVID lockdown, but we did. I am so proud of how our congregations found ways to care and profess and continue when it was so difficult. The technical and creative gifts of lay people burst forth in online formats.

All of us are still finding a new normal after COVID. Commitments shifted for many people. And, congregations have expanded their worshipping community because they continue to offer worship through an online format. Now, weather is not an excuse to cancel a meeting because we know how to Zoom.

Serving as your bishop has been a gift that will take much longer to unwrap. Thank you for allowing me to stand with you in the hard times and the joyful ones. Thank you for your patience in understanding the layers of complexity in any human system.

One of my favorite experiences has been when formerly grumpy people take me aside to tell me how they would never have believed how much they could love a new pastor. Isn't it amazing how God provides in and through such organized chaos like the church... Thanks be to God. Thanks be to you, God's beloved people.

The Alaska Synod is thirty congregations in partnership with each other, the synod and Churchwide. Together we are the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and we therefore are in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches.

Four of our thirty congregations have had the same pastor for over twelve years. As a synod, we have had thirty-four installations of a new pastor and two deacons. Of those, ten congregations contracted with fulltime intentional interim/transition pastors in preparation for calling a new pastor; four worked with part-time intentional interim pastors. That means that most of our congregations have relied on lay leaders and available pastors for pulpit supply, pastoral care, education and administration during a pastoral vacancy. A congregation's resilience is often stretched during such interims, and, people report that their faith also grows during such times. Folks step into new roles and make "it" happen out of commitment to their congregation and to Christ.

By order of when the pastor left, these congregations are currently seeking a new pastor:

First, Ketchikan: A series of short-term pastors and lay leaders have provided leadership.

Shishmaref: MSP circulating. Worship leadership is currently by lay leaders and Pastors Snyder and Crockett for pastoral acts.

Kingigin, Wales: Worship leadership is provided by lay leaders. Pastor Brian Crockett has been providing pastoral care for funerals. Over the last forty years, the pastor of Shishmaref Lutheran has also served with the people of Wales.

Lord of Life, North Pole: They are a Collaborative Learning Site through Wartburg Seminary with seminarian David Ingram.

River of Life, Chugiak: Pulpit Supply by clergy and lay leaders. They are interviewing a candidate for this part-time call.

Trinity: Pulpit Supply by clergy and lay leaders Richard Clinch and Sr. Kelly Marciales. Their profile is circulating for a part-time call.

Alaska Native, Anchorage: Pastor Lisa Hackler has moved to Arizona. Pulpit supply has been scheduled with area pastors. A part-time interim will start in May.

Central, Anchorage: Pastor Jeff Hackler accepted a new call in Phoenix, Arizona and left mid-February. The council has interviewed a possible interim after the first interim cancelled.

St. Mark, Anchorage: Pastor Carol George accepted a new call in Arizona. Pastor Sandra Rudd will serve as their interim starting May 5.

Sitka: Pastor Rudd has accepted a contract for transition ministry with St Mark starting May 5. They have coverage through June and are seeking an interim.

Christ, Fairbanks: Pastor Dustin Lenz will leave May 20 to go on-leave from call to bike from Alaska to Argentina with his wife Patricia.

Good Shepherd, Wasilla: Pastor Cavens is retiring May 1. The council has interviewed an interim pastor.

Table of Grace, Bethel: Intern Zach Manzella will conclude his internship with them in May. Deliberation is underway for the next pastoral leader.

Trapper Creek: Currently served by Pastor Cavens and SAM candidates of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Of our current rostered leaders, nineteen pastors and three deacons have been ordained and called to serve in Alaska these past twelve years; one was ordained in Alaska called to serve outside. Two went through candidacy in Alaska and were called to Lower-48 congregations.

Two active military chaplains are on our roster (Rev. Lt Christina Mauntel, USN, and Rev. Cpt Melissa Vesco, USAF),

Two pastors serve in specialized ministry (Rev. Susan Halvor, Providence Medical Center-Anchorage, Manager of Spiritual Care, and Rev. Erika Bergh, serving University Community Presbyterian Church in Fairbanks.

Ten retired pastors and two retired deacons are on our roster:

Keith Anderson, Dan Bollerud, Tim Christensen, Ted Conter, Duane Hanson, Sister Annette Janka, Diane Krauszer, Greg Meyer, Bill Ottum, Randy Parshall, George Sonray, Karen Sonray

Our active pastors and deacon's ages range from 29-84. Six pastors have additional graduate degrees besides their Master of Divinity. We currently have five clergy couples on our rosters.

When a pastor or deacon retires and moves outside of the synod, or accepts a call, that person transfers to the new home synod. Rostered leaders who've transferred out of the synod this past year: Carol George, Jeff Hackler, Lisa Hackler.

Preparing to serve as a pastor or deacon now includes multiple options. A student can still move outside for a residential experience of seminary. Our current seminarians include Zach Manzella (St Mark), Linda Bender (Central) and David Ingram (Fairbanks).

- Luther, Wartburg and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary offer online classes with a week spent each semester on campus. There are eight ELCA seminaries in total.
- Collaborative Learning through Wartburg Seminary is a program for fulltime students who serve a congregation part-time, earning a part-time income.
- TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) focuses on preparing pastors for underserved congregations. TEEM has provided Lutheran Year courses to students who come to us from other denominations. This program also has students serving within a congregation as they study.
- TEIL (Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders) is new this past year with two Alaskans participating. This theological education is available without a commitment to serve as a pastor.

Thank you to our Candidacy Committee members Dr. Mike Swenson (Christ-Fairbanks), Tara Wreyford (Good Shepherd-Wasilla), The Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka (PLTS), The Rev. Maria Paiva (Candidacy and Leadership Manager) and myself as synod staff. Former members have included Pastor Carol George (St Mark), Pastor Bill Ottum (River of Life) and Kathleen Brandt (Sitka).

Synodically Authorized Ministry is one way that lay people train and serve in their congregation. Study in scripture, theology, church history, understanding context, worship, preaching, and pastoral care prepare lay people for roles of leadership in their congregation. Launching this fall, the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology Lay Pastoral Education Program will be available to our SAM students for online courses. Practical education (preaching) will be taught locally. The SAM application is on elcaalaska.net Candidates begin with a letter of endorsement from their congregation's council.

The Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministry Association, has made funds available over the next three years to offer in-person training on the Seward Peninsula for their SAM candidates.

We have five people enrolled from Good Shepherd, Resurrection-Seward, and St. Mark. Holly Karjala and Padi Wallace will be commissioned during Sunday worship of the assembly.

Active Synodically Authorized Ministers:

Central: Linda Bender	Epiphany: Kim Michaud
Island of Faith: Bill Bahleda, Shirley Wimberly	Resurrection-J: Randy Sutak
Shepherd of the Valley: Becky Corson, Virgil Fredenberg, Teresa Kissel, Mark Kissel, Glenn Mitchell	
Trinity: Richard Clinch	
Presbytery of the Yukon: Darlene Matz who died April 2023	

Youth and Family Ministry in two congregations is led by paid staff. Salmon Lake Bible Camp and Glacier Bible Camp happen because we have volunteers that want our youth to have a camp experience. Two road trips and a backpacking trip were offered to synod youth because we had volunteers who wanted to our youth to have those experiences. We've sent youth and adults to the youth leadership events and to the National Youth Gathering, which is no small thing for any congregation or synod. The leaders who've planned, recruited and managed major logistics for all of these events deserve our thanks and applause.

- **Glacier Bible Camp near Juneau** Grades 5-12, from around the synod, July 29-August 3. A grant will help with air travel. Register at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church/Events.
- **Salmon Lake Bible Camp** Seward Peninsula youth 5-12 will be at camp the last weeks of July.
- **ELCA Youth Gathering: *Created to Be*** will be in New Orleans July 16-20, 2024. The Multicultural Youth Leadership Event and tAble will be 7/13-16/24. Deacon Sister Amanda Lindquist is our coordinator.

Constitution updates are needed after every Churchwide Assembly, which next occurs in 2025. Download the model constitution from elca.org and fill in your local specifics. A team of people is ready to help you update your constitution and bylaws. Send your draft to the synod office before the congregation votes. (Thank you to our team of Richard Clinch, Clarke Hemphill, Wayne Mundy, Carol Norquist, and Darla Siver.)

Too often congregations and councils get sideways when they forget that their publically recognized ways of doing their work and providing accountability are outlined in their constitution. Every member should have access to the congregation's constitution.

At this synod assembly, the voting members will be asked up approve the synod's updated constitution incorporating the 2022 changes from the Churchwide Assembly.

Policies have been adopted or updated by our synod council to facilitate our work in congregations and the synod. Those include policies for Clergy Sexual Misconduct, a Negotiated Termination of Call, Computer Use, Gift Policy, and Council Ethics. Congregations and pastors now receive a letter about boundaries that keep a pastor from serving (baptizing, doing weddings and funerals) at the congregation they have left.

Communication across synods has become electronic. We have been using an e-news format that you can subscribe to for free on our website. Over the twelve years, our four office managers have continued to develop our network to provide organizational and mission resources. Thank you to office manager Chris Aquino.

Congregation Council Training was offered over four years. For any board member, it takes a while to figure out how and who and when things are done. Congregations across the five clusters participated in this basic orientation to council responsibilities and best practices. Pastor Lisa Smith Fiegel has been available to follow that training with a vision and planning workshop for any congregation.

A Consultation Committee and a Discipline Committee is required of every ELCA synod. The Consultation Committee was requested twice and used once in a congregation. A sub-committee interviews members of the congregation and writes a report for the bishop who then makes recommendations to the congregation. Consultation to Clergy, a ministry funded by the North Pacific District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and five ELCA synods of Region 1, offers consultation as well. The Discipline Committee has not been used.

Conversations with our ecumenical partners about communities where we have congregations or seek mission development have been ongoing. Your new bishop will join a new Executive Elder of the Presbytery of the Yukon, a new superintendent of the Alaska Conference of the United Methodist Church along with the bishop of the Alaska Episcopal Diocese in exploring our common call.

The Rev. Shelley Wickstrom



Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) Report to the Alaska Synod Assembly April 2024 The 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 2024, Alaska Synod congregations and ministries will receive nearly \$150,000 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. As DEM, I provide ongoing consultation and connection with congregations receiving churchwide grant support.

Thanks to Bishop Shelley Wickstrom, Vicar Zach Manzella (Table of Grace-Bethel and Central-Anchorage), Shannon Klescewski (Our Savior's Nome) and Rev. Amanda Van Vilet Snyder (Our Savior's-Nome) who traveled to **Wales in July to lead Camp Noah, a program of LSS of Minnesota for children who have experienced trauma**. About 27 children participated (ages 3-19). Four local volunteers also helped. The camp was made possible by a grant from Lutheran Disaster Response.

Synod

The **synod finance team meets monthly** and consists of Jan Dodds (synod treasurer), 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, updating the mission support remittance form and overseeing the first fruits grant process.

The **synod generosity team** hosted a Zoom about children and generosity in October and then stewarded synod stewardship micro grants to three congregations. One congregation hosted a successful an intergenerational generosity-themed fellowship night and two purchased stewardship books for a council study and/or retreat use. 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 along with me.

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.

Congregations and Synodically Authorized Ministries

Seminarian Zach Manzella completes his two-year internship at **Table of Grace-Bethel** in May. Zach also supported 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 pastor-in-residence program. Pastor Rick Cavens (Good Shepherd-Wasilla) and Rich Stouff (Good Shepherd) provided pulpit supply; Good Shepherd is also supported Trapper Creek's regular spaghetti feed. A California-based pastor-in-residence and spouse were onsite last summer for three months and will return for four months in 2024.

Congregational visits and sabbatical

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: First-Ketchikan; Trinity-Palmer; River of Life-Chugiak; Trapper Creek Fellowship; Table of Grace-Bethel; SPLM Fall Conference in Teller; Amazing Grace-Anchorage; Lutheran Church of Hope-Anchorage; Resurrection-Seward; Christ our Savior-Anchorage and SPLM Spring Conference in Shishmaref.

Thank you to ELCA churchwide (my employer) and Bishop Shelley for support for sabbatical November 27-January 21. My focus for the sabbatical was transitions. I completed a transitional ministry class. I have also been asked to edit the synodical call manual and work on a churchwide DEM transition document (still in progress). I enjoyed time with family, especially having my mom here for Christmas.

Together Emphasizing Alaska's Mission (TEAM) 2024 Report to the Synod Assembly

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.

Over 22 congregations in the Alaska Synod have received a TEAM grant. Your donation multiplies 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 2024, more than \$320,600 has been awarded.

Recent recipients of TEAM Grants have included:

- Our Savior's Lutheran Church to purchase cultural items from across Alaska for use in the Alaska Blanket Exercise.
- Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church toward the purchase of new playground equipment.
- 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 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 fund 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 have supported this fund in 2023-24 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 Shelley Wickstrom

Invitation from Multicultural Representatives of Synod Council Synod Assembly, 2024

We invite people of the Alaska Synod to join us on a team of folks responsible for not only multicultural work, but also anti-racism work and anti-discrimination work around sexual and gender identity. This team could function with a lens towards all justice and equity work in the Synod that is presented as we grow and shift as a Synod.

We propose that this team, which could include folks from all parts of the state and a wide range of identity markers, would work together to equip leaders in our Synod. This would include gathering and creating worship materials for Indigenous Day, Every Child Matters, Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, and more. This would include equipping individuals and congregations to do work around anti-racism book studies, Bible studies, the Alaska Blanket Exercise, Inclusivity Trainings, and more. This would include handling Synod Assembly Resolutions that relate to these topics to help put them into action.

We propose that this team, and the work of the individuals and congregations, would be able to align more closely with the larger values within the ELCA for a more just world. As Alaskans, we know that there are varying degrees of culture and identity, represented in so many different ways. This is an opportunity to elevate the work that is already happening and serve to connect people hungry for this time of community.

If you or someone you know is interested in helping us to shape what this team will look like and how we can support the work of our communities and across the state, please contact us. We hope to gather for our initial conversation via Zoom before June 1st, 2024.

We propose that this position is held by two co-chairs—one being from a dominant/European descent culture and one being from a non-dominant/BIPOC culture. This would ensure that the pieces that are “white people’s work” are handled by non-BIPOC folks and that the BIPOC person does not become tokenized for the sake of institutional Church. Shannon and Meredith have great respect and care for each other, and this would honor both of their hopes for the Alaska Synod, while holding their time and energy sacred.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Klescewski (stopkok1@hotmail.com)
The Rev. Meredith Harber (meredith.harber@gmail.com)

**Treasurer’s Report
Alaska Synod Narrative Budget, 2024**

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 2024, 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

\$18,579

5% 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: Seminary felt out of reach for David Ingram, Fairbanks, until he discovered Wartburg Seminary’s Collaborative Learning Program. “I didn’t answer the call from God until I was 40,” Ingram said. He didn’t want to uproot his family from Fairbanks and now doesn’t have to. Students in Warburg’s program attend seminary online with two one-

week in person sessions per year and work part-time in a congregation. Ingram is the pastoral leader at Lord of Life in North Pole and was also a recipient of an Alaska Synod Seminary Scholarship.

Partnering for mission

\$181,014

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: The village of Wales experienced grief and trauma after a fatal polar bear attack in early 2023. To come alongside, Alaska Synod leaders in July facilitated Camp Noah there – a program to help children process trauma and continue to heal.

Leaders, including those from Wales, led games, crafts, talking sessions and Bible study with the youth in a week-long day camp. The program was made possible with a grant from Lutheran Disaster Response and support from other Alaska Synod congregations. During the week, the ELCA congregation there also voted to change their name from Thornton Memorial (a White missionary) to Kingigin (Inupiat for “high place”) Lutheran Church.



Connecting and organizing**\$72,056****18% of spending plan**

Together as the Alaska Synod, we network and connect with followers of Jesus across the synod, 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 leaders collaborated across the state to ask, “Who are we?” as a synod in preparation for the bishop election. More than 70% of congregations participated in a synod vision and values exercise, held at congregations across Alaska. These responses were collated and shaped by the synod council into 8 guiding principles, including “listening to the Spirit and following Jesus” and “celebrating our diversity through full participation, decision-making and leadership.”

Supporting ministries**\$118,716****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.

Congregations are supported in collaborations.

Story moment: Alaska-grown Lutheran summer Bible camps are flourishing in the Southeast and on the Seward Peninsula. Campers gathered for one-week at Glacier Bible Camp (pictured) in Juneau this past summer and two weeks at Salmon Lake Bible Camp in Nome. Youth participate in Bible study, music, games, crafts and outdoor activities. “Camp is about figuring out who you are and your relationship to God, creation and people around you,” said Tari Stage-Harvey, who has spent many summers helping at camp. Salmon Lake also provides cultural awareness and preservation opportunities.



Spending Plan

	2023		2024		2025	
	Revised Proposed 2023	2023 ACTUAL	2024 Proposed Spending Plan	Revised 2024 Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan	
	Approved at SC meeting March 2023	Unaudited financials from Region 1	Approved at 2024 Assembly	needs SC approval March 2024	Needs review/recommend at March SC meeting and approval at Assembly 2024	
Synod Income						
Partnerships						
01-501-30001	4,500	4544	4,560	5,236	5,236	5,236
01-501-20001	22,500	22719	22,800	26,180	26,180	26,180
01-501-00001	348,000	351391	352,640	353,584	353,584	353,584
	375,000	378,654	380,000	385,000	385,000	385,000
EOCM DEM Grant						
01-515-10001	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
01-515-00001	28,000	28,000	28,000	-	-	-
	29,000	29,000	29,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Other Income						
01-512-00001	200	103	200	200	200	150
01-530-00001	250		250	250	250	
01-521-00001	200	255	200	200	200	250
	650	358	650	650	650	400
	404,650	408,013	409,650	386,650	386,650	386,400
Total Income						
Synod Administration						
-Salaries & Benefits						
01-652-00011	53,131	55,334	53,000	54,000	54,000	
01-654-00011	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	
01-661-00011	7,297	7,479	7,297	7,497	7,497	
01-656-00011	24,500	21,524	24,500	24,500	24,500	
01-659-00041	750	587	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
01-657-00011	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
01-664-00011	-					
01-660-00011	500		500	500	500	500
	122,178	120,924	122,297	123,497	123,497	122,500
Bishop's Salary & Benefits						
01-652-00041	35,500	36,469	36,000	36,500	37,000	37,000
01-655-00041	2,716	2,790	2,754	2,792	2,831	2,831
01-659-00041	400	263	300	300	300	300
01-657-00041	300	300	300	300	300	300
	38,916	39,822	39,354	39,892	40,431	40,431
Administrative Assistant's Salary & Benefits						
Administrative Expenses:						
01-671-00001	10,000	10,882	10,000	11,000	12,000	12,000
01-671-01001						
01-673-00001						
01-673-01001						
	10,000	10,882	10,000	11,000	12,000	12,000

	2023		2024		2025	
	Revised Proposed 2023	2023 ACTUAL	2024 Proposed Spending Plan	Revised 2024 Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan	
	Approved at SC meeting March 2023	Unaudited financials from Region 1	Approved at 2024 Assembly	needs SC approval March 2024	Needs review/recommend at March SC meeting and approval at Assembly 2024	
01-671-10001						
01-674-00001	500	283	500	500	500	500
01-700-00001	400	355	400	400	400	400
01-720-00001	2,000	1,924	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
01-747-00001	5,000	5,211	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
01-747-50001	450	754	450	450	450	800
01-751-00001	2,200	2,115	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200
01-771-00001	600	288	600	600	600	500
01-800-00001	2,000	654	2,000	2,000	1,000	1,500
01-830-00001	3,925	3,923	3,925	3,925	3,925	3,925
01-781-00001	500	180	500	500	500	180
01-786-00001	500	500	500	500	500	500
01-782-00001	500	500	500	500	500	500
01-801-00001	500	666	500	500	500	500
01-775-00001	-	121	-	-	-	-
01-778-00001	3,000	2,836	3,000	3,000	4,000	4,000
01-672-01001	300	545	300	300	300	350
01-672-10001	22,375	20,856	22,375	22,375	22,375	23,355
Total Administrative						
Partnerships						
Churchwide Support	150,000	151,462	152,000	123,200	123,200	123,200
Region 1:						
Archives (At PLU)	700	700	700	700	700	700
Region 1 Center Shared Mission	13,681	13,681	14,000	14,422	14,422	14,422
Cost Sharing	400		400	400	400	400
Consultation to Clergy	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700
Total Region 1	22,481	22,081	22,800	23,222	23,222	23,222
Partnership Support Grants:						
Mission and Ministry ©						
Our Neighbors SAWC						
Trapper Creek Ministry SAWC	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Table of Grace	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Seward Penn. Ministry	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Total Mission/Ministry	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000

	2023		2024		2025	
	Revised Proposed 2023	2023 ACTUAL	2024 Proposed Spending Plan	Revised 2024 Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan	
	Approved at SC meeting March 2023	Unaudited financials from Region 1	Approved at 2024 Assembly	needs SC approval March 2024	Needs review/recommend at March SC meeting and approval at Assembly 2024	
01-601-00001	First Fruits Giving - (Benevolence):					
	2,565	2590	22,800	26,180	26,180	
AK Child & Family	10,688	10792		3,430		
LSSA	#REF!			12,500		
Love Inc ER	2,565	2590		3,000		
Support of PLTS	2,565	2590		3,000		
Luther Seminary	1,177	1188		1,500		
Support of PLU	1,177	1188		1,500		
Support of CLU	511	511				
SUMC Soldotna Food Pantry	405	405				
Valdez Senior Center	405	405				
St. Peter's by the Sea Episcopal Church	324	324		500		
Brave Hearts Vounteers	119	119		750		
Sitka Homeless						
Total	22,501	22,703	22,800	26,180	26,180	
01-608-02181	Synod Programs:					
Youth Program	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Multicultural Program						
Total Programs	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Designated funds released to General Fund	500	456	440	450	450	
Designated funds released to General Fund	-					
Total Transfers	500	456	440	450	450	
	405,150	408,469	410,090	387,100	386,850	
	409,451	408,729	412,626	390,366	391,888	
	(4,301)	(260)	(2,536)	(3,266)	(5,038)	
non-cash entry to amortize prepaid rent	6,250.68	6,251	6,250.68	6,250.68	1,042	
General Fund Balance impact	(10,551)	(6,511)	(8,787)	(9,517)	(6,080)	
(B)	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					
(A)	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.					

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Nominating Committee Report

Marilyn Rosene, Chair/Council Representative,
Jeff Rud, Interior Cluster
Adam Bryant, At Large

Deborah Nyquist, Southcentral Cluster
Sue Trivette, Southeast Cluster
Unrepresented Seward Peninsula Cluster
Unrepresented, Knik Cluster

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.

Vice-President

_____ Leslie Swenson, Christ Lutheran, Fairbanks; 1 term

_____ Adam Bryant (Hope, Anchorage)

Treasurer:

_____ Jan Dodds, Hope Lutheran, Anchorage 1 term

Secretary: (Replacing The Rev. Dustin Lenz through 2025)

_____ The Rev. Amanda Van Vliet Snyder, Our Savior's Lutheran Nome

Knik Cluster Clergy: (Replacing The Rev. Rick Cavens through 2025)

_____ The Rev. Sean Avery, Joy Lutheran, Eagle River

Southeast Cluster Clergy: (Replacing The Rev. Sandra Rudd, through 2027)

Southeast Cluster, lay representative:

_____ Bradley Perkins, Resurrection Lutheran; 1 term

Continuing Synod Council members:

- At Large Shannon Miller Klescewski, Our Savior's, Nome; 2025
- At Large Mona Mitton, Joy Lutheran, Eagle River 2025
- Multicultural Rev. Meredith Harber, Christ Lutheran, Soldotna; 2025
- Interior: Sue Camasi, Fairbanks Lutheran; 2027
- Interior: Rev. Ollie Bergh, Fairbanks Lutheran; 2027
- Knik Johnny Copenhaver: River of Life, Chugiak; 2026
- Seward Peninsula: Rev. Amanda Van Vliet Snyder; 2025
- Seward Peninsula: Joanne Keyes, (Seward Peninsula), Kingigin; 2027
- Southcentral: Ed Mjolsnes, Central Lutheran, Anchorage; 2026
- Southcentral: Marilyn Rosene, Dillingham Trinity; 2025
- Southcentral: Rev. Sandy VanZyl, Amazing Grace; 2027
- Young Adult: John Christiansen AGLC; 2-year term, elected; '19, '21, '23 '25,
- Alaska Synodical Women's Organization: Karen Voris
- *Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel, Director for Evangelical Mission, non-voting.
- *Zach Manzella (St. Mark) Synod Attorney, advisor to Synod Council, non-voting.

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. AK Child & Family brings hope to troubled young lives through a broad range of mental health services. Our residential psychiatric treatment, community based programs and treatment foster homes offer the structure, care and expertise to help young people build strong, positive, healthy lives.

Lay Person

_____ Barb Belluomini, Christ Lutheran-Soldotna, 1 term

Clergy: (Replacing Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel through 2026)

_____ Deacon Sister Amanda Lindquist

Continuing Members:

Pam Birch, Amazing Grace, Anchorage, 2025

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. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. The Synod Consultation Committee can be called upon to provide this forum. S.17 and C.20

Nominees for Consultation Committee: 2 needed: 1 pastor, 1 lay person

Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey and Noah Dressel are completing terms and are not eligible for re-election.

Clergy: Vote for one

_____ The Rev. Anna Silco, (Christ our Savior, Anchorage)

_____ The Rev. Deborah Gelerter (Petersburg Lutheran)

_____ _____

Lay person: Vote for one

_____ Jeff Rud (Fairbanks Lutheran)

_____ _____

Continuing Members:

Rev. George Sonray, retired, Gloria Dei, 2025

Cindy Knutson, Good Shepherd, Wasilla, 2025

Rev. Tim Christensen, retired, Amazing Grace, 2026

Wanda Wahl, Dillingham Trinity, 2026

Rev. Ron Rucker, retired, 2027

Megan Bladow Addis, Lutheran Church of Hope, 2027

Karen Voris, Central Lutheran, Anchorage, 2028

Rev. Richard Mauer, Faith Lutheran/Delta Presbyterian, 2028

Rev. Erika Bergh, specialized ministry, 2029

Christina Stuve, Christ Lutheran, Soldotna, 2029

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. There shall be set forth in the bylaws a process of discipline governing officers, ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, congregations, and members of congregations. Except as provided in 20.18. or 20.19., such process shall assure due process and due protection for the accused, other parties, and this church. Since synods have responsibility for admittance of persons into the rostered ministries of this church and have oversight of pastoral and congregational relationships, the disciplinary process shall be a responsibility of the synod on behalf of this church. S.17 and C.20

Nominees for Discipline Committee: 2 needed: 1 pastor, 1 lay person

Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey and Don Bladow are completing terms and are not eligible for re-election.

Clergy: Vote for one

_____ The Rev. Ben Bohart (Resurrection Lutheran, Seward)

_____ The Rev. Tim Bernard (Petersburg Lutheran)

_____ _____

Layperson: Vote for one

Continuing Members:

- Rev. Mark Orf, St Mark-Anchorage, 2025
- Twyla Mundy, SC, Christ Lutheran-Soldotna, 2025
- Rev. Meredith Harber, Christ Lutheran-Soldotna, 2026
- Tracey Buie, Our Savior’s, Nome, 2026
- Rev. Suellen Bahleda, Island of Faith-Wrangell, 2027
- Richard Clinch, Trinity-Palmer, 2027
- Bev Higdon, Fairbanks Lutheran 2028
- Rev. Sean Avery, Joy Lutheran-Eagle River 2028
- Rev. Amanda Van Vliet Snyder, Our Savior’s-Nome 2029
- Malcolm Wright, Dillingham Trinity, 2029

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.

The Rev. Curtis Matz,(retired) Lord of Life, North Pole has completed his terms and is not eligible for re-election.

Nominees for PLU Corporation: Two needed

_____ Adam Bryant (Lutheran Church of Hope, Anchorage) 1 term

_____ Jennie Barge (Trinity-Palmer)

_____ Jeff Rud (Fairbanks Lutheran)

Continuing Members:

- The Rev. Tari Stage-Harvey - Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau 2026, (2nd term)
- Dr. Elizabeth Roll – Table of Grace, Bethel 2026 (1st term)
- Joon Cross, Christ Lutheran, Soldotna 2025 (1st term)

Voting Members to Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix, AZ July 28-August 2, 2025

The bishop and vice-president attend because of their offices. We have 4 other voting members and we need to cover several different demographics. We need one clergy besides the bishop. Of the three lay people, we need at least one youth or young adult under 30 years old, and at least one person of color or primary language other than English.

The Churchwide Assembly shall be the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization and shall deal with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church. Voting Members are members of ELCA congregations elected by their synod assembly (or serve as alternates.) C. 12.

Pastor: Vote for one

_____ Pastor Meredith Harber, (Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna)

_____ Pastor Sandra Rudd (St. Mark, Anchorage)

_____ _____

_____ _____

Vote for three. Those elected will include at least one person under 30, and at least one person of non-dominant culture.

_____ Paloma Booth (Our Savior’s Lutheran, Nome) Under 30

_____ Xandor-Beck (Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau) Under 30

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ Christine Stuive (Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna) non-dominant culture

_____ Janalynn Doteen-Ferguson (Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau) non dominant culture

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ Jan Rud, (Fairbanks Lutheran)

_____ Rich Stasenko, (Shishmaref Lutheran)

_____ _____

CHURCHWIDE COUNCIL Nominees: Vote for two *lay women of color/native descent*

This six-year term starting August, 2025 Two nominees will be elected by Alaska Synod Assembly, May 2024. One nominee will be elected by Churchwide Assembly in August 2025.

14.11. The Church Council shall exercise interim legislative authority and shall serve as the board of directors of the churchwide organization. 14.12. The Church Council shall meet at least two times each year.

_____ Deb Nyquist (Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna)

_____ Katie Bourdon, (Our Savior's, Nome)

Nominee Biographies

The Rev. Sean Avery

Greetings in Christ! I am Sean Avery and I serve as pastor at Joy Lutheran Church in Eagle River, Alaska. I hold a Master of Divinity from Wartburg Theological Seminary. I was awarded an ELCA Fund for Leaders Scholarship in 2017 and subsequently served on the Fund for Leaders Leadership Table from 2018-2023. Currently, I serve on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). Prior to ordained ministry, I earned a Master of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership from Gonzaga University with an emphasis in Servant Leadership. I worked in law enforcement for ten years as a Dispatcher and Reserve Sheriff's Deputy in western Washington. I'm passionate about creativity in worship, building community, and faith formation for young people. In my spare time, I enjoy nature walks, camping and salmon fishing with my wife, Rebecca, and our two dogs.

I am willing to serve the remainder of Pr. Rick Caven's term on Synod Council because I believe the work of the synod is vitally important. Working together from across the synod helps uplift the unique life and ministry of each congregation. Simply put, we're better together.

Barbara J. Belluomini

Barbara retired (in December 2020) from Reliant, LLC in Commercial Real Estate Appraising. She is certified by the State of Alaska as a General Real Estate Appraiser. Barbara holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from the University of Alaska Anchorage. In addition to serving as a Director on the AK Child & Family board, she chairs the Kenai Peninsula Borough's Board of Equalization and the City of Soldotna's Employee Relations Board. She is also actively involved with the League of Women Voters. She believes more strongly than ever in AK Child & Family's mission and thinks she can continue help them achieve it. Barbara and her husband reside in Soldotna, where they raised their two daughters. She was actively involved in PTSA and Site Council as the girls were growing up. They are members of Christ Lutheran Church and enjoy church and family activities, as well as recreating outdoors with their dogs Rolly and Chancey.

The Rev. Tim Bernard

Petersburg Lutheran Church

While only having been in the Alaska Synod for a little over a year, I have been a pastor for 29 years and have served on various committees in other synods throughout the years. I have yet to serve, however, on the Discipline Committee in any of them. I would be honored to use my God-given gifts, skills, and experience to serve in this capacity.

The Rev. Ben Bohart

On May 5th of 1983, Ben finished his first trip up the Alcan to begin his Alaskan residency. He has subsequently made the trip another 16 times and hopes to do it many more. He has lived in Fairbanks, Palmer, Valdez, and Anchorage. June first will mark 8 years that he has lived in Seward. He is the 4th of five children to his parents who still reside in Fairbanks. Last August he and his wife, Rhonda, celebrated their twentieth anniversary. Both grew up in pastors' homes, and they have been part of many different Christian faith expressions. However, they have found Lutheran to be the best fit. They have two boys, Justus (9) and Pax (7). Ben is the Pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church. In his free time he loves traditional archery hunting, and hiking. He also has a passion for reading scriptures in the original languages. Ben has seen the awe inspiring beauty of the church as well as the gut wrenching. He desires to lead a safe healthy worshipping community and to assist others to do the same. Although serving on the discipline committee is not an easy task it aligns with his core values.

Katie Bourdon

I am Inupiaq, Norwegian and German. My father was Franklin Okleasik from Teller, and my mother was LaVonne Okleasik from Rake, Iowa. I was blessed with a mother who sent us to school each morning with a devotion, a song, and a prayer. My faith has started as a mustard seed, was lovingly watered through both positive and negative experiences, and is continuing to blossom within me. I was born in Nome and continue to live in Nome. I have been a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church since my birth. I was confirmed and married, all my children baptized and confirmed, and my two grandchildren baptized at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. I have been part of the church council, the women's group, the youth group as a member and now as a leader, Sunday School teacher, volunteer pianist, and church choir member. I love our church! I am a graduate of California Lutheran

University and earned my master's degree in early childhood education from Walden University. I love learning and growing my faith. I would love to be a part of our Alaska Synod's Council and serve our larger church community with faith, humility, grace, and an open heart.

Thank you for your consideration, support, and prayers.

Adam Bryant

I was born and raised in Anchorage, AK. I am a baptized member of Lutheran Church of Hope. I graduated from Pacific Lutheran University in 2010 with a degree in History and Scandinavian Area Studies. After working at UAA for just shy of 11 years, I recently became a paralegal at a local law firm and am enjoying the challenges of learning a new job. Over the years I have found numerous ways to be involved with my church - in high school I attended Leadership Training School a number of times, was a youth leader for various camps in Alaska, was vice president, then president of my youth group and then the president of the Alaska Lutheran Youth Organization. I have attended the ELCA National Youth Gathering twice, once as a youth and once as a chaperone. I have served on council at Hope in various roles, including ad-hoc, Vice President, and two years as President. I was a chair for Hope's Call Committee in 2019, where we were successful in calling a new pastor. I have also served in various positions with the Alaska Synod, including attending the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as a delegate, served as a member of the Consultation Committee, Nominating Committee, the PLU Corporation Board, and am serving on the Bishop Election Committee. In my free time I enjoy reading, video games, and "bar" trivia with my friends.

Jan Dodds

I am currently serving my first term as synod treasurer. Prior to being elected to the treasurer position, I served on synod council as an at large member for a term and a half. I am currently a member of Lutheran Church of Hope and reside in Anchorage. However, since I am married to a retired pastor, who often does supply through the synod, I have attended worship with him at a number of Lutheran Churches in the Anchorage/Fairbanks/ MatSu Valley/North Pole/Soldotna/ and Peters Creek areas. It has been a fun opportunity to enjoy the diversity and unity of the people of the AK Synod.

For over 25 years I worked for a non- profit organization in Anchorage as a financial/budget analyst, retiring from that organization in 2019.

I was born and raised in Fairbanks and still spend a great deal of the summer there at a family cabin on Harding Lake. As a third generation Alaskan, my family is still centered in Alaska which keeps us centered here, although we enjoy opportunities to visit extended family in the lower 48 and Europe.

The Rev. Deborah Gelerter

Petersburg Lutheran Church

I was invited by the Nomination Committee to put forth my name to serve on the Consultation Committee. As a second career pastor, I bring various gifts, skills, and experience from working in the corporate world as well as being a former small business owner. Through these experiences and in my personal life, I have learned what healthy behavior is for people. I am a good listener and ask thoughtful, probing questions, which can help in understanding people's positions and what is best for the organization.

The Rev. Meredith Harber

Meredith has served as pastor to the awesome folks of Christ Lutheran Church in Soldotna, on the Kenai Peninsula, since 2017. Prior to CLC, she served as pastor to Eben Ezer Lutheran Church and Oaks Indian Mission in the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma. A graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), she added an emphasis in American Indian and Alaska Native Ministry and an emphasis in Biblical Studies to her MDiv degree. Her year-long internship in seminary was on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation where she assisted with cultural education programming, children's ministries and eating as much frybread as she could. Prior to seminary, she spent a year with the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program of the ELCA, where she volunteered at Dar al-Kalima Lutheran School in Bethlehem, Palestine. She can tell you where to get the best falafel!

She believes that we are all beloved children of God and that our job is to love the other, not to decide who God loves. You'll find her working to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable.

In her spare time, Meredith enjoys camping, hiking, watching *The Office* on repeat, French press coffee, hitting people during rugby games, *Settlers of Catan*, and cuddling with her beloved pups, Jimmy and Ruthie.

Deacon Amanda Lindquist

Born and raised about an hour north of the Twin Cities, Amanda enjoyed the outdoors in Minnesota at lake homes and as a camp counselor for 2 summers during her college years. After graduating from Augsburg College (now University) with a degree in Youth & Family Ministry, Amanda lived in England for a year with Young Adults in Global Missions (YAGM). Her placement was at an outdoor retreat center where groups of school children and young adults came to learn rock climbing, high & low ropes course, and how to navigate in the woods. Returning stateside to a job as a Youth Director to a Lutheran Church in Scandia, MN for 5 years.

Amanda then married her spouse, Scott, and they moved to Alaska for her job at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church in Anchorage (2013). Amanda has grown in her role there as she attended seminary for her master's degree in Children, Youth, and Family (2021), became ordained as a Deacon in the ELCA (2023), and was welcomed as a Sister in the ELCA Deaconess Community (2023). Amanda continues to love the outdoors, spending time with her daughter and spouse, and taking youth on trips all around Alaska and the Lower 48!

Deb Nyquist

I am honored to be nominated for a position with the Churchwide Council.

As a lineal descendent of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, I was born and raised in Duluth, MN, and I spent my childhood learning lessons in the forest around my grandparents' home. My husband and I are blessed to have raised our three children on Dena'ina land in Kenai, AK; we have lived here for 30 years. As a family we enjoyed hiking, fishing, and wild harvesting. We are the proud grandparents to our 2-year-old granddaughter Babaamaadizi, and we appreciate video calling technology

as she lives in Portland with her momma. I am full of hope when Baabi enthusiastically joins me in identifying flowers and picking berries.

Upon resigning from my 17-year position as the Wellness Director with Kenaitze Indian Tribe incorporating traditional indigenous values and integrated, holistic care into the health system, I started my consulting company Thrive Consulting. I am a passionate advocate for the wellness of all my relatives including human, plant and animal relations, our water, air and land.

I participated in the inaugural Climate Justice and Faith cohort completing the certificate program through Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. I am currently enrolled in the Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders (TEIL) program supported in partnership with PLTS and the ELCA. Ordination is one intended outcome, and I am discerning my path as I learn from our wisdom keepers.

I am a long-standing member of Christ Lutheran Church in Soldotna, play in the bell choir and support our congregational mission through direct involvement and financial contribution. I recently had the honor of facilitating our Council Retreat. I am committed to learning, serving where I am able, strengthening social action to promote the wellness of all, and bridging gaps creating injustice.

Miigwech (thank you) for your consideration.

Bradley Perkins

For the past three years, Brad has led the synod's ad hoc clergy compensation committee, ensuring fairness and support for clergy members. Brad's educational journey has been one of continual growth, with degrees in both law and engineering, accompanied by licenses to practice law in California, Hawaii, and before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. This diverse background has equipped him with a breadth of knowledge and experience in corporate, non-profit, and IP law, allowing him to excel in various roles, from startup environments to leadership positions within publicly traded companies. At Resurrection Lutheran Church, Brad has made assorted, ranging from producing RLC's Juneau Live! television studio to managing crucial community spaces like RLC's Safe Space for Schooling and the city's Cold Weather Emergency Shelter.

His commitment to serving others extends beyond the congregation, as evidenced by his active participation on the boards of impactful organizations such as JAMHI Health and Wellness and as founder of the TBI Resource Foundation. His previous roles on the Pacifica Synod Council including serving on the Executive Committee, as well as his involvement as legal counsel and parliamentarian, highlight his commitment to the governance and stewardship of the church. Additionally, his service as Deputy Vice Chancellor of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii underscores his passion for serving the broader faith community.

The Rev. Sandra S. Rudd

I was ordained in 2009. I have served in my first call for nearly 14 ½ years at Sitka Lutheran Church. Currently I am transitioning to a new call as an Intentional Transitional Minister here in the Alaska Synod. I love being a congregational pastor and being called into people's lives in sadness and celebration, worry and wonder. There is a saying, "may you live in interesting times". Nobody is sure if that is a blessing or a curse. I choose "blessing". In all my time in ministry it has been interesting. The church is changing as it always has and we as followers of Jesus are just trying to hang on as God guides into new adventures. I believe my curiosity, my willingness to ask questions, and my ability to think outside the box will be assets in representing the Alaska Synod and the 2025 church-wide Assembly.

The Rev. Anna Silco

I grew up in Indiana, graduated from Indiana University with Religious Studies, and went to Seminary at the Lutheran school of Theology at Chicago. I was a part of the young adult in global mission program in Southern Africa, and also spent a year teaching English in Thailand. My husband is also clergy, and we served in Shishmaref, Alaska for our first call. I now serve at a Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Anchorage, Alaska. My husband and I love to be outside hiking, camping, skiing, kayaking, and biking. We have a 1.5-year-old son who tags along with us too on many adventures!

Rich Stasenko

I have been a member of the Shishmaref Lutheran Church since August 1976. I taught Sunday school there for 24 years and served on church council from 199 to the present.

I was a member of the Alaska Synod Council and served as President of the Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministry Association for six years. I am currently the President of the Shishmaref Lutheran Church council.

I have been married to Rachel (nee Sinnok) of Shishmaref for 47 years, and together, we have six children, 22 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

I retired from teaching secondary English and Math after 31½ years, then worked for Kawerak, Inc., tutoring GED students for another 18½ years, as well as substitute teaching, until COVID hit.

Christina Stuve (SooNa)

I am a transracial international Korean Adoptee who grew up outside Grand Rapids, Michigan. I currently reside on the ancestral land of the Dena'ina people, also recognized as Kenai, AK, alongside my husband and our four children, aged 5, 9, 16, and 18. Over the span of 24 years, I have dedicated my career to the field of mental health counseling, extending assistance to individuals grappling with the adversities wrought by our imperfect world. My professional journey has been underscored by a steadfast commitment to advocating for historically marginalized populations and addressing issues of social justice.

I have been an active member of CLC, contributing to its mission and activities, most recently I have served diligently as the Secretary for Christ Lutheran Church in Soldotna. My belief in the vitality of church community and the embodiment of Christ's teachings in everyday life fuels my passion for service.

I aspire to offer my dedication and expertise to the churchwide assembly, recognizing the pivotal role that policies and actions can play in advancing social justice. I am fervently committed to ensuring that the principles we espouse are manifested in tangible, impactful ways, echoing the compassionate spirit of our faith.

Leslie Swenson

I am a member of Christ Lutheran Church of Fairbanks, AK.

I was raised, primarily, in central Minnesota and first arrived in Alaska in 1991 when my husband, Mike, accepted a position as a physician in Nome, AK. There, our family were members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, and I served the congregation (Choir, Education, Bible Camp and Call Committees) and community (Board of the local Pre-School and Charter School) for 13 years.

I am currently a member of Christ Lutheran Church in Fairbanks, AK and have served here for 20 years (Church Council, Women of Christ Lutheran, Choir, and Hospitality & Outreach, Sunday School/VBS, Social Ministry, and Mutual Ministry Committees). During this time, I have also served as Vice President of the Alaska Synod (2021-2024) and as a member of the Synod Council from the Interior Cluster (2019-2021). I

was a member of the ELCA Church Council (2013-2019), including service as a Church Council liaison to the Women and Justice Task Force (responsible for the Social Statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”). I am currently a volunteer with my local Hospice and also a volunteer docent with the UAF Museum of the North leading tours for elementary school students.

The Rev. Amanda Van Vliet-Snyder

I serve as the pastor of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Nome, Alaska. I was born and raised in Sacramento, California where I received an M. Ed in Cross Cultural Teaching from the Sacramento Campus of National University in 2006 and an MA in Theology and Biblical Studies from the Sacramento Campus of Fuller Theological Seminary in 2015. I moved to Alaska in 2014 where I served for four years as the campus pastor and an adjunct professor in theology at Alaska Christian College in Soldotna. After getting married to Jordan Snyder from Noorvik, AK, we moved to Nome in 2018. I have 10 years experience as a classroom teacher in both Sacramento and Nome. I have been serving as the full-time pastor at OSLC since January 2023. My husband and I enjoy spending time with our two dogs, Yaz and Lucy, and love to watch baseball. We often spend our vacation time traveling to the various MLB ballparks to cheer on our favorite team.

2024 Alaska Synod Assembly: Sample Ballot

ALASKA SYNOD COUNCIL

Knik Cluster Pastor: Vote for one (Replace Pr. Cavens, one year term remains)

_____ Pastor Sean Avery (Joy Lutheran, Eagle River)

Southeast Cluster clergy: Vote for one

_____ Pastor Deborah Gelerter (Petersburg Lutheran)

Southeast Cluster layperson: Vote for one

_____ Brad Perkins (Resurrection, Juneau)

Secretary: Vote for one Replace Pr Lenz, One year of term remains)

_____ Pastor Amanda VanVliet Snyder (Our Savior's, Nome)

Treasurer: Vote for one

_____ Jan Dodds (Lutheran Church of Hope-Anchorage)

Vice President: Vote for one

_____ Leslie Swenson (Christ-Fairbanks)

_____ Adam Bryant (Hope, Anchorage)

Alaska Synod Consultation Committee

Clergy: Vote for one

_____ Pastor Anna Silco, (Christ our Savior, Anchorage)

_____ Pastor Deborah Gelerter (Petersburg Lutheran)

Lay person: Vote for one

_____ Jeff Rud (Fairbanks Lutheran)

Alaska Synod Discipline Committee

Clergy: Vote for one

_____ Pastor Ben Bohart (Resurrection Lutheran, Seward)

_____ Pastor Tim Bernard (Petersburg Lutheran)

Layperson: Vote for one

AK Child and Family Board

Clergy: (Replace Pr Lisa Smith Fiegel, two years of term remain)

_____ Sister Amanda Lindquist (Amazing Grace, Anchorage)

Lay:

_____ Barb Belluomini, (Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna)

Pacific Lutheran University Corporation

Vote for two

- _____ Adam Bryant (Lutheran Church of Hope, Anchorage)
- _____ Jennie Barge (Trinity-Palmer)
- _____ Jeff Rud (Fairbanks Lutheran)
- _____

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY July 28 - August 2 in Phoenix, AZ 2025

Besides the **bishop** and **vice president**, we will send **four** other Alaskan delegates. Multiple nominees are needed to serve as alternates, if needed.

Pastor: Vote for one

- _____ Pastor Meredith Harber, (Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna)
- _____ Pastor Sandra Rudd (St. Mark, Anchorage)
- _____
- _____

Vote for three. At least one person under 30 will be elected, at least one person of non-dominant culture will be elected

- _____ Xandor Beck (Shepherd of the Valley, Juneau) under 30
- _____ Paloma Booth (Our Savior's Lutheran, Nome) under 30
- _____ Janalynn Doteen-Ferguson (Shepherd of the Valley) non-dominant culture
- _____ Jan Rud, (Fairbanks Lutheran)
- _____ Rich Stasenکو, (Shishmaref Lutheran)
- _____ Christine Stuiवे (Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna) non-dominant culture
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

CHURCHWIDE COUNCIL

One will be elected by the Churchwide Assembly in 2025

Vote for two lay women of color/native descent

____ Katie Bourdon (Our Savior's, Nome)

____ Deb Nyquist (Christ Lutheran Church, Soldotna)

____ _____

____ _____

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Resolutions

Resolution 2024-1: Civil Legal Services Fund

WHEREAS, access to justice should not depend on how much money you have; and

WHEREAS, civil legal aid ensures fairness for all in the justice system by providing access to legal help for people who cannot otherwise afford it, to protect their livelihood, health, home, or family; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 6 Alaskans – 128,850 individuals – live below 125% of the federal poverty ceiling for whom access to the civil justice system is possible only with the help of Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC); and

WHEREAS, Alaska has a “justice gap,” which is the difference between the level of legal assistance available and the level that is necessary to meet the needs of low-income individuals; and

WHEREAS, since 1984, the number of Alaskans eligible for free legal services has more than doubled, from 41,000 to over 128,850, yet the state’s contribution to ALSC is only a fraction of what it was 30 years ago; and

WHEREAS, ALSC must turn away one eligible family for each one they can assist due to a lack of funding; and

WHEREAS, by amending AS 37.05.590 so that 25% of Court system filing fees can be appropriated into the Civil Legal Services Fund instead of the current 10%, additional revenue will be generated to address justice gap; 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); 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 of the ELCA memorialize the 2024 Alaska Synod Assembly to urge passage of Alaska Legislation to increase civil legal services funding from 10% to 25% of court filing fees, and through contacting Alaskan legislators through letters, emails, telephone calls, and in-person visits, beginning with the 2024 legislative session.

Contact:

Marge Stoneking, stonekingmarge@gmail.com, 907-575-7116

Resolution 2024-2: Food Stamp Eligibility

WHEREAS, families on food stamps must earn less than 130% of the federal poverty line, or \$3,125 per month (net) for a family of four. Families making just \$1 more per month lose their benefits; and

WHEREAS, households on food stamps cannot have assets (including money in the bank) exceeding \$2,750, or \$4,250 for households with at least one elderly or disabled family member; and

WHEREAS, Alaska has had more than a year of extreme delays in food stamp distribution across the state leaving thousands of vulnerable Alaskans without food assistance for months at a time, driving many Alaskans into debt and increasing the burden on food pantries to serve additional food insecure families; and

WHEREAS, Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE), a state option under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that most states use, is proven to increase efficiency of application processing and is effective at supporting working Alaskans and seniors on fixed incomes; and

WHEREAS, removing the asset test and raising the income limit with BBCE will allow SNAP participants to climb their way to financial security by allowing them to accept pay raises, gradually reduce benefits, and set aside savings for the future; and

WHEREAS, BBCE eliminates the “benefits cliff” by allowing states to phase down benefits for working families as their income rises instead of losing eligibility due to slight earning increases; and

WHEREAS, BBCE eliminates the asset test, helping seniors and working families accumulate and retain assets, address emergencies, and ensure they are not living paycheck-to-paycheck, but accumulating and being able to pass assets on to the next generation is a key strategy for families to escape the cycle of poverty; and

WHEREAS, BBCE reduces the complexity of the SNAP application processes for states and households, increasing administrative efficiency, reducing the risk of errors in eligibility determination, and helping the state improve their ability to distribute assistance benefits;

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).

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 of the ELCA memorialize the 2024 Alaska Synod Assembly to urge Alaska Legislation to implement Broad Based Categorical Eligibility for SNAP benefits, and through contacting Alaskan legislators through letters, emails, telephone calls, and in-person visits, beginning with the 2024 legislative session.

Contact:

Marge Stoneking, stonekingmarge@gmail.com, 907-575-7116

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Ministry Partner Reports

2024 Alaska Synod Assembly Report AK Child & Family

We give thanks for our connection to the Alaska Synod! We could not do this work without your generosity and support and are so grateful for all who uphold and sustain our mission which is: Based on the spirit of Christ's love, AK Child & Family provides quality care and treatment for children and families who need special assistance to develop self-esteem and the ability to live in harmony with others. Thank you for being our partners in ministry!

Now more than ever amongst changes in the church, our Spiritual Life Department relies on your support. Thank you for all the ways you faithfully share in our ministry! We could not do this work without you! Thanks to all who pray for our students, for the congregations and individuals who financially support our Spiritual Life ministry, and for Pr Lisa Smith Fiegel, Pam Birch and Barb Belluomini who serve as members of our board of directors to insure your ELCA voice is upheld. Your contributions make you a part of the great cloud of witnesses here at AK Child & Family.

We are continuing to recruit for our Therapeutic Foster Homes so we can work to serve this growing need in our Alaskans communities. You can help with this effort by asking yourself: "Who do I know that would be an amazing Therapeutic Foster Parent?!" Now ask yourself- is it I Lord? We know that some of our best Therapeutic Foster Parents come from our faith partners. Because it is a calling not a job. Go to our website at akchild.org or call 792-4111 for more info if your heart is curious.

Always striving to provide the best care possible, we are searching for new and creative ways to serve community needs. We are beginning a program teaching independent life skills to students transitioning from our higher levels of care into a more independent setting. And in our Community Programs we've worked with the National Center for Innovation & Excellence to adapt and deliver the evidence-based CARES (Coordination Advocacy Resources Education Support) program which increasing its census in our agency. We also received our 3-year Sanctuary re-certification. Sanctuary certification symbolizes an organization's commitment to providing a higher level of care, a trauma-informed environment for the people served and a better work environment for employees. Sanctuary certification is designed to promote, sustain and strengthen an organization's commitment to the maintenance of a trauma informed culture for all of its shareholders.

As a Sanctuary Certified agency, one of the commitments we keep is growth and change. As we and many other missions such as ours examine the historical traumas of our past we are committed to walking alongside all who seek healing. We are working to better understand, reconcile any trauma committed in our name or in the name of God so that moving forward we do no harm.

Keep praying for our shared ministry! We're so grateful for AK Child & Family's connection to the Alaska Synod. We look forward to another fruitful year of mission together, providing healing and hope to young Alaskan lives.

In Gratitude & Service,
Anne Dennis-Choi, President & CEO
Kelli Williams, Director of Spiritual Life

Augsburg Fortress develops engaging resources for Lutheran congregations.



In our ministry as the publishing house of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we create substantive and innovative materials to support the ministries of faith communities in communicating the good news of God's liberating grace.

To meet the evolving needs of Lutheran communities, we continually invest in the development of new ministry resources, seeking ongoing input from theologians, educators, church leaders, and church members.

In addition to the resources we develop, our website presents a wide array of resources from our publishing partners that are well suited to serve the needs of Lutheran faith communities.



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



The ELCA Federal Credit Union, chartered in 2015, 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 federally insured 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 along with other exclusive perks to their employees.

In 2023, we ushered in the fifth 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 deposits up to an established amount. Together, we have served **722 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.

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.** As a **not-for-profit financial cooperative**, we can often offer better rates and lower fees than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our members.
- **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 toll free at 877-715-1111.



PLANNED-GIVING STRATEGIES

at your fingertips

The ELCA Foundation is here to help you incorporate planned giving into your ministry's overall fundraising strategy. Whether you are jump-starting or fine-tuning your program, we can help you put the pieces together.

Visit our planned-giving resource hub to access:

- Step-by-step action plans.
- Gift planning education.
- Marketing best practices.
- Templates, resources, content and more.



Foundation.ELCA.org/PGhub



ELCA Foundation

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- Marketing best practices.
- Templates, resources, content and more.

Foundation.ELCA.org/plan

ELCA Foundation

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Grace and peace to you this synod assembly season. As you may know, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has embraced a new name: Global Refuge. Grounded in Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," we hope to enter our next 85 years with openness, building a bigger table to meet a growing need. Global Refuge was forged in faith. Our Lutheran heritage has always shaped our work of welcome and will continue to do so in years to come.

With the support of partners and Lutheran communities like yours, in 2023 we were able to...

- Help 17,000+ children reunify with their families or find loving foster homes
- Welcome 11,200+ refugees from countries across the world
- Assist 11,700+ people seeking safety from Central America and beyond

In a political season rife with anti-immigrant rhetoric and messages that villainize newcomers, we have a unique opportunity to change this narrative and refocus on all the gifts newcomers bring to community. We invite you to join us in this work!

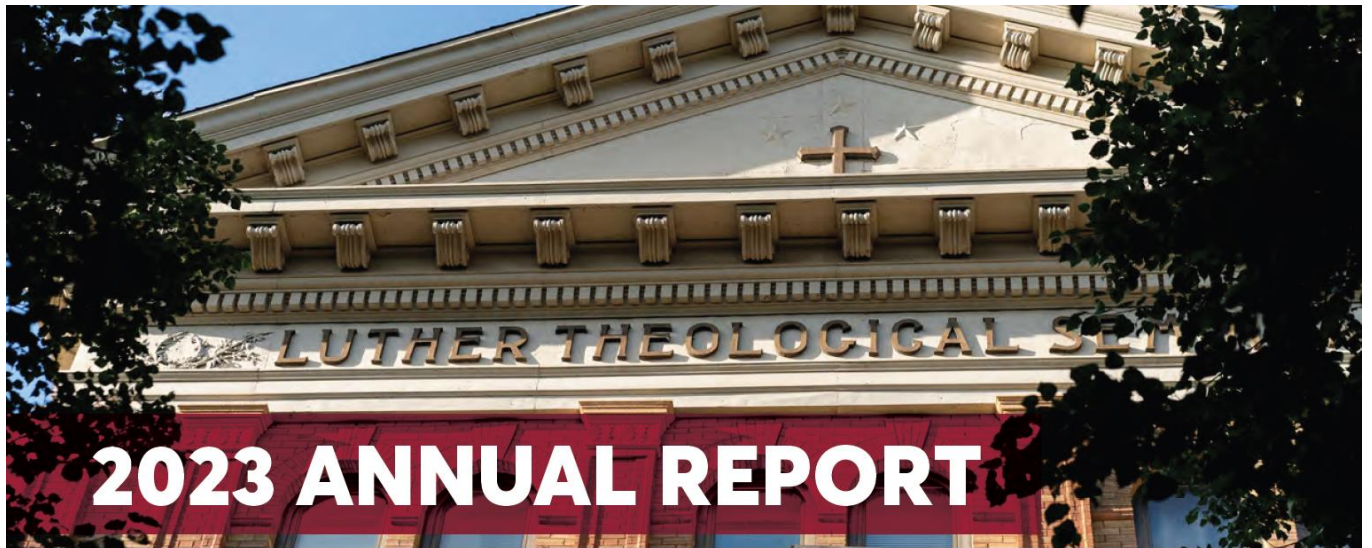
- Share about Global Refuge in your church or [invite our team](#) to join you.
- Include Global Refuge [bulletin inserts](#) about our work in your bulletin.
- Start a [Circle of Welcome](#) to support newcomers in your community.
- Pack [Fresh Change](#) bags, a partnership with Border Servant Corps, to welcome our neighbors at the border with care and dignity.
- Sign up for our monthly e-newsletters for faith leaders and explore a [webpage specifically for congregations](#) which has the latest faith community resources.

Thank you for your continued support. The many ways Lutheran communities embody Jesus' ministry through the work of welcome is truly inspiring.

Go in peace. Welcome the stranger.



Deacon Sarah Kretschmann | Congregational Engagement Specialist
outreach@globalrefuge.org



For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.
—Ephesians 2:10

Fiscal 2022–23 was a year of transition and transformation at Luther Seminary.

Transition: Across our educational programs, we are working to create sustainable new models so that learners can afford not just theological education, but life in Christian leadership.

Transformation: We continue to witness how the Jubilee Scholarship creates a path for students from all walks of life to answer God's call to ministry. Since implementing this full-tuition scholarship model in 2018, student borrowing has dropped to its lowest level at the seminary in nearly 25 years. A remarkable 67% of our 2023 class graduated with zero student debt.

At the same time, we continue to expand the accessibility of theological education beyond our degree programs through Faith+Lead and digital media like Working Preacher, Enter the Bible, and God Pause. Combined visits to our digital properties and podcast downloads topped 5 million unique visitors in 2022–23, a 20% increase over the previous year.

Transition: With the close of the MDivX pilot program this spring, we are pivoting toward a permanent option for an accelerated M.Div. pathway.

Transformation: MDivX was a resounding success, demonstrating the effectiveness and appeal of a two-year model with simultaneous contextual learning. Retention in the pilot program was extraordinarily high, with 96% of participants graduating. Out of the 51 graduates from the first two cohorts, 47 are actively serving in ministry contexts at the time of this writing, with one in the process of becoming ordained.

The lessons from MDivX helped shape a larger curriculum refresh that reflects our students' and the church's needs. The

faculty applied insights from MDivX, deep listening to the church, and assessment data in redesigning the curriculum last year for a Fall 2023 implementation. This curricular "refresh" strengthens course sequencing to support learning outcomes, creates natural cohorts through three defined pathways (full-time, part-time, and, in the future, accelerated), and reduces requirements without sacrificing depth or rigor.

Transition: We are in the midst of two budget years designed to support investments in our strategic plan priorities and key financial goals, including increasing Faith+Lead revenue and restructuring the academic programs for efficiency. Modest operating deficits planned for these two years are supported by the seminary's strong cash position and robust \$120 million endowment valuation as of June 30, 2023.

Transformation: I'm grateful to share with you this snapshot of the "good works" for which God has equipped Luther Seminary. And yet, we know that the true outcomes of the Holy Spirit's action with and through us ripple out far beyond what can be quantified in any financial report.

Thank you for your prayerful support as we seek to faithfully steward the gifts and mission of this community for the future of Christ's church.



Peace and blessings,

Robin J. Steinke
President



100% COVERED SEMINARY TUITION

A scholarship for developing leaders

Going to seminary doesn't have to mean going into debt.

When Christian leaders graduate from seminary, they shouldn't be constrained in the kind of roles they can take on because a mountain of debt stands in the way. They should be free to focus their time and full attention on ministry wherever they are called to serve.

Thanks to generous donors, Luther Seminary is pleased to offer the Jubilee Scholarship, which **covers all tuition costs** for admitted M.A., M.Div., and qualified Graduate Certificate students nominated by their judicatory bodies.

For more information about scholarships, visit luthersem.edu/jubilee.

 LUTHER SEMINARY.



67%

of students graduated
without seminary debt
in 2023, compared to
47% in 2017–18.



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 2023, MIF had 811 loans outstanding, totaling \$578.3 million. Investment obligations totaled \$547.7 million. With total assets of \$774.4 million and net assets of \$208.2 million at year-end 2023, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 26.88 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, 2023):

- 6 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$1,319,938
- \$2,552,358 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager LuAnn Ferguson: 651-900-3575 luann.ferguson@elca.org



Dear PLTS Community,

The mission of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) is to develop leaders in the Lutheran tradition for a complex and changing world by equipping them to put their faith into action as the church and culture face dramatic change; because people who follow their purpose can transform a community – and the world.

A major challenge for the ELCA and across theological education has been a significant decline in the number of candidates pursuing traditional paths to pastoral ministry. PLTS has responded to this challenge by developing degrees for diaconal leaders and programs for people of faith who may not be interested in professional ministry but are eager to learn and live out their faith in ways that make a difference in the world. PLTS now offers an MA in Spirituality and Social Change and has developed certificate programs in Climate Justice and Faith, and Racial Justice and Faith as well as a program of Theological Education for Indigenous Leaders.

As the seminary discerns what the Spirit is doing in the world, we believe the future of the seminary and a key to the renewal of the church is theological education for all people. Theological education has become accessible to more people through online degrees and programs. Most of the growth in enrollment at PLTS and most seminaries has been in online learning. Since there are fewer residential students coming to seminary, it is increasingly difficult to sustain a residential learning community. Therefore, PLTS has decided that 2024-2025 will be the last year that we will admit new residential students.

PLTS is fully committed to our existing students, as well as our incoming 2024-2025 students in both residential and online modalities. The seminary will remain rooted in our campus in Berkeley and continue to bring distance learning students to campus for intensives. The PLTS faculty is already at work developing a new curriculum that incorporates a certificate program that will be accessible to a wider constituency of learners and support a high-quality online learning experience with more online community engagement.

While we are excited about these innovations and the future of PLTS, we recognize that many of us are grieving the loss of what has been. Residential community has been a cornerstone of the seminary experience for many, and we lament that we will no longer be able to provide a fully residential experience for future students. This decision, however, does not come from a place of worry or fear, but rather confidence that this evolution of PLTS offerings has the potential to serve a wider diversity of faithful leaders and contribute to the ongoing transformation of our church.

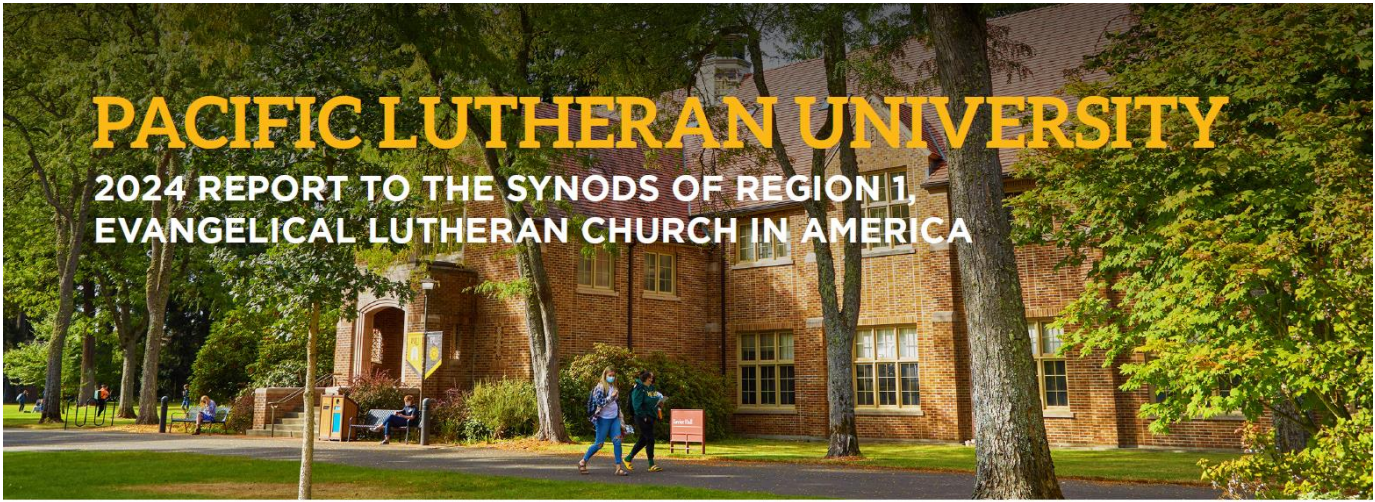
We are excited about this expansive vision for theological education that reclaims core Lutheran ideas of the priesthood of all believers and the vocation of all followers of Jesus to live out their faith in the world. PLTS has an exceptionally creative and collaborative faculty who have a passion for teaching and are committed to a quality learning experience for students. We will be sharing more details about the curriculum they are developing as it unfolds. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Raymond Pickett, Ph.D.

Rector

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

<https://www.plts.edu/>



**A MESSAGE FROM
ALLAN BELTON,
14TH PRESIDENT OF PLU**

Greetings to the Alaska Synod, from Pacific Lutheran University!

I'm glad to have the opportunity to share some news with you.

Our vocation as a university calls us to expand well-being, opportunity, and justice. As you know, this commitment derives from our Lutheran identity, in which education is inextricably linked to promoting health and wholeness for others, their communities, and the natural world.

The Lutheran reformers taught that education is for something: not only the advancement of knowledge but also a commitment to the alleviation of suffering. Students choose PLU because they want to pursue an unconventional education that prepares them to become impactful leaders and changemakers in their communities and all over the world.

That's why we continue to create new and innovative programs that are responsive to the challenges of our changing world. In the past year, we've launched new engineering and pre-law minors; new data

science and criminal justice majors; a new masters in social work program; and a new doctoral program in educational leadership. It's also why PLU as intentionally sought out to co-create a new Partnership for Health Innovation. With the creation of this innovative, one-of-a-kind partnership, PLU becomes home to a new health education and care district, right here in Parkland - powered by PLU, MultiCare and WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

From South Sound to statewide, the Partnership for Health Innovation will ensure that the next generation of health leaders learn here. As part of this partnership, MultiCare is building a new medical center on PLU's campus that will provide high-quality, culturally appropriate outpatient services to the almost 200,000 people in and around Central Pierce County, an area in dire need of this care. PLU students will benefit from the expansion of internships, clinical placements, and other experiential learning opportunities — right on campus.

At PLU, we believe that the space and guidance necessary to explore one's vocation should not be a privilege available to some, but inaccessible to others. Our steadfast commitment to

accessibility and financial aid is a big reason why PLU is proud to serve a higher percentage of first-generation students and Pell Grant-eligible students than public institutions like the University of Washington and Washington State.

PLU continues to be a university that lives, learns, and serves from the heart. We continue to lean into our commitment to transformative care. These values are fundamental to how we approach everything we do. PLU continues 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.

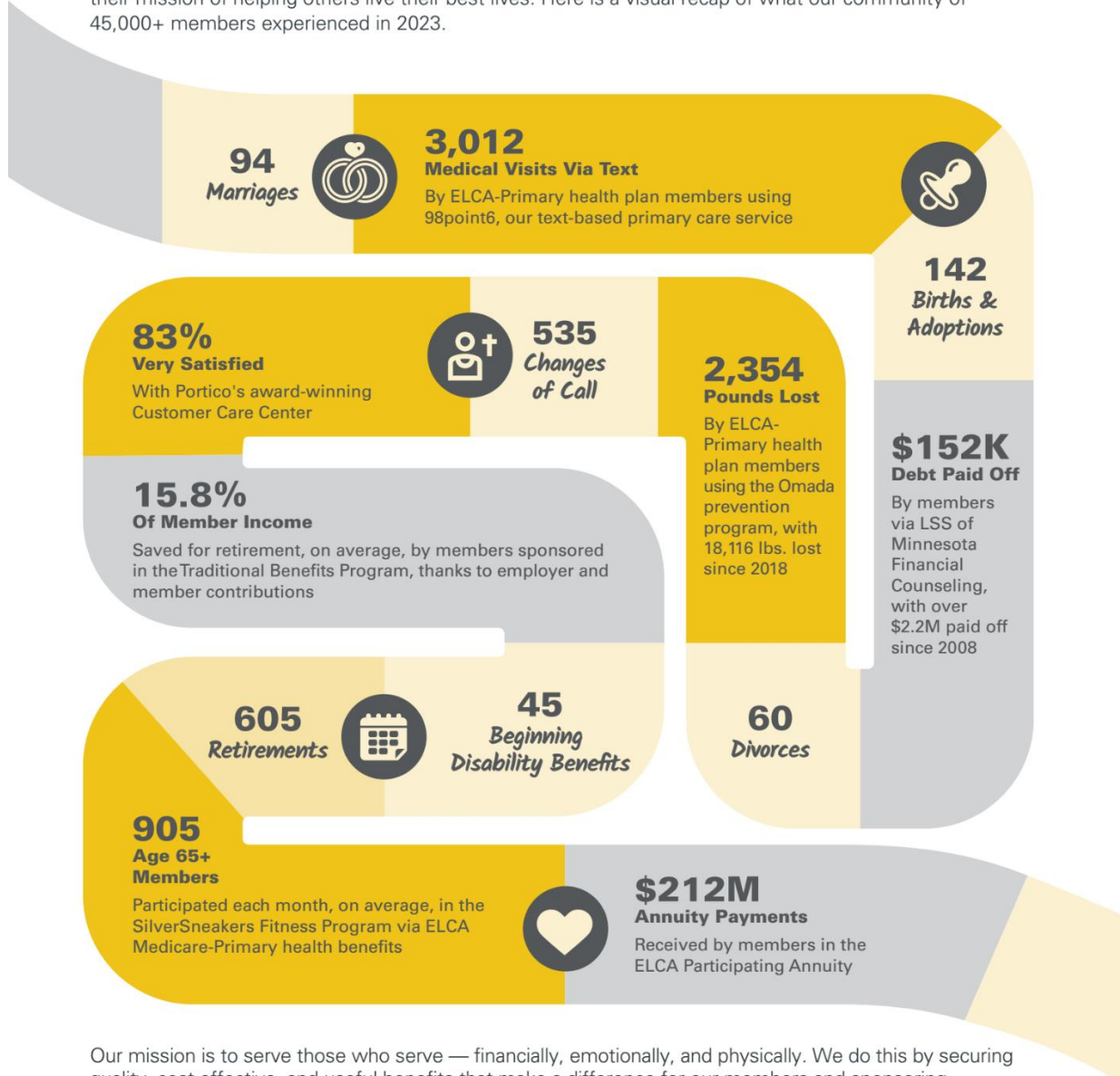
Thank you for your prayerful support and partnership in our shared mission.



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

Benefits Making a Difference

At Portico we strive to offer benefits that make our plan members' lives better, so that they can fulfill their mission of helping others live their best lives. Here is a visual recap of what our community of 45,000+ members experienced in 2023.



Our mission is to serve those who serve — financially, emotionally, and physically. We do this by securing quality, cost-effective, and useful benefits that make a difference for our members and sponsoring organizations. With each new year we continue to grow our pool and affirm the value and importance of church together.

Note: Unless a specific benefit program is mentioned, these numbers and percentages were drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.

60-302 (02/24)

Faith Community Health Ministries

Healthcare continues to grow more complex. Coupled with decreasing support systems and increasing cost, the importance of finding new ways to meet the needs of our community is evident.

Explore the opportunity of a local health ministry led by a faith community nurse (FCN). An FCN is a licensed, registered nurse who practices holistic care for self, individuals, and their faith community using nursing knowledge combined with an intentional focus on the care of the spirit.

Mission

Connecting faith communities with healthcare resources through training, support, consultation and continuing education throughout Alaska and beyond.

Goal

Increasing focus on whole-person health.



Contact

Rev. Beverly Bateman, MSN, RN
Faith Community Nurse Coordinator | Educator
907-212-5053 | afcncr@providence.org



2024 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

2024 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY:
Locations and Themes of Alaska Synod Assemblies

Year	Congregation	City	Theme Verse
2024	Gloria Dei	Anchorage	Let Your Light Shine!
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

2024 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.