

My name is Adam DeHoek. I serve as the Senior Director for Research and Evaluation at the ELCA churchwide organization. And I am so pleased that I was asked to be with you here today. It is a real honor.

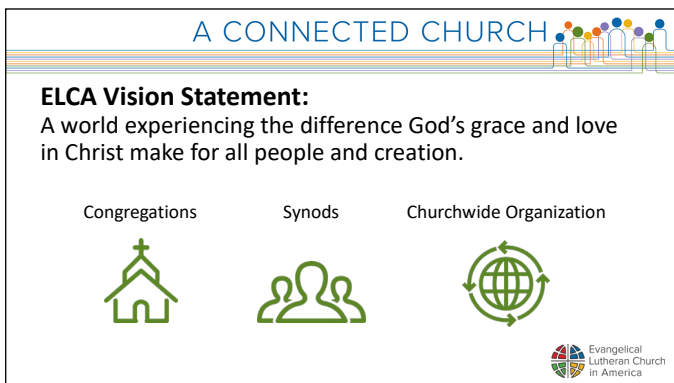
A bit of background on me and my team. At Research and Evaluation, our primary responsibility is to

conduct high-quality research that offers leaders actionable information to use in making decisions about policy and practice in the ELCA.

Our work centers on strong collaboration and is rooted in respect for the knowledge and perspectives of others. We bring informed viewpoints to the table, yet we remain eager to listen and learn from the experiences of colleagues. We consider our colleagues to be partners throughout each project we conduct.

When we are operating at our best, our team approaches every relationship with the belief that all people bring expertise worth sharing and that everyone, including us, always has something to learn.

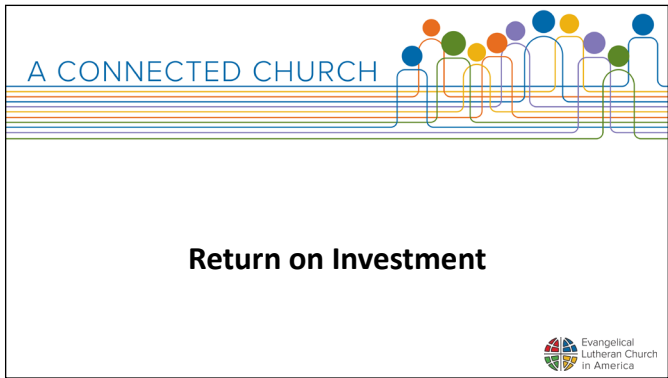
Again, I'm very glad to be with you today, with some things to share and lots to learn.



The ELCA is a connected church. We are a church of 2.7 million members in nearly 8,300 congregations and worshipping communities across the U.S. and in the Caribbean region. We are a church with three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. In each expression, we are called to boldly live out our mission in God's world

and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Together as one church, we are working toward the ELCA's vision of a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. No single expression or part of the church can realize this vision alone. We are stronger together, as one church. Though moments of division may arise through politics or external factors that can distract us from the word of God and the teachings of Christ, we must never forget that we are connected and called to love one another, to love our neighbors as ourselves.



By being a member of this church and by giving in the offering plate or donating directly to Where Needed Most or a specific program like ELCA World Hunger, you support so many people - our neighbors - who need our support now more than ever.

I would like to share with you a story that demonstrates a powerful return on your investment.

Across the ELCA, children’s ministries are finding new ways to welcome, nurture, and care for young people — often with limited resources. Through the ELCA Ministry with Children grants program, those dreams are becoming a reality.

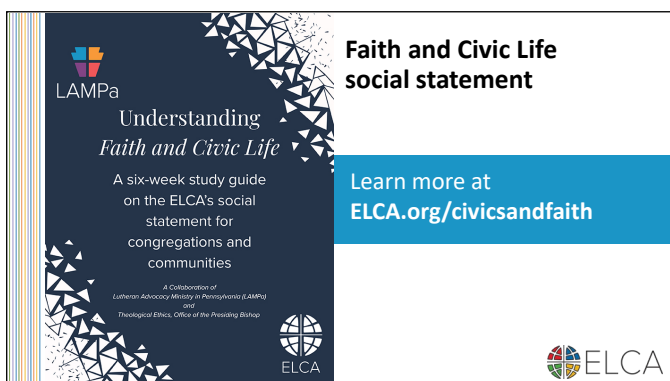


In communities like central Wisconsin and Colorado, small grants have helped congregations create safe, joyful spaces where children can play, learn, and experience God’s love. An old school building was transformed into a vibrant community center. A simple play area became a place of belonging for toddlers and families. A weekly family night expanded

to include boys from a nearby foster home, offering consistency, care, and connection.

These ministries aren’t about growth for growth’s sake. They’re about showing up for children who need stability, encouragement, and a place where they feel welcome, especially those who are most vulnerable.

These grants reflect the long reach of generosity and the power of shared commitment. When you give to the ELCA, your support helps congregations live out their call to serve beyond their walls — creating places where children are seen, valued, and surrounded by love.



The 2025 ELCA Churchwide assembly adopted the social statement *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All*. This was the result of a five-year deliberative process that involved hearing from members across the ELCA. This new social teaching sets forth broad theological, ethical, political, and

social insights that address questions about, and obstacles to, the flourishing of civic life today.

Sections of the social statement explore the nature of power, religious liberty, Christian vocation, law and gospel in relation to society, and the U.S. constitutional form of government. It affirms the biblical insight that civic engagement is a way to participate in God's work of fostering well-being and offers a constructive proposal for the relationship between religious organizations and government. We invite you to consider using the accompanying study guide with your congregation or small group. The social statement and study guide can be found at ELCA.org/CivicsAndFaith.

ELCA World Hunger

Last year, ELCA World Hunger worked in **58 countries**, including the United States, addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty.



We know many individuals and congregations give and serve our communities. We are especially grateful for how you choose to join us in the work of ELCA World Hunger, which is our church's coordinated response to hunger and poverty.

Last year, your synod gave \$370,570 to ELCA World Hunger. Thank you.

Grace Lutheran Church in Fairmont, Minnesota has multiple feeding ministries supported by ELCA World Hunger, including a food pantry and community meals. But teenagers Jenna and Georgia wanted to do more. An ELCA World Hunger Daily Bread Grant helped them buy seeds and tools to plant a community garden, so they can provide even more food and connection to their neighbors in need.

Last year, a record 664 Daily Bread grants were awarded — covering all 65 synods — thanks to your gifts.

Lutheran Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response is our church's way of walking with communities impacted by disasters. In 2025, we served neighbors in **51 countries** including the United States.
Thank you!



Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is known for its long-term approach to working with communities. I want to share a story of how we continue to work in Maui, three years after the devastating 2023 wildfires.

LDR has accompanied Kihei Lutheran Church and other partners in Hawaii since the immediate

aftermath of the fires. LDR helped the Kelaweia Mauka Community Hub — a community-led program that offers fresh food such as fruits, vegetables, milk, and eggs — buy a new van for deliveries. Thanks to your support, neighbors in need who are rebuilding from the fires can get fresh food delivered. LDR is also responding to the recent floods in Hawaii.

Strong community connections and collaboration are important in times of disaster. Working together, we can be there to support disaster survivors for as long as needed. Once again, thank you for your synod's support of LDR, giving \$224,480 last year.



The graphic features the ELCA logo in the top left corner, which consists of a colorful cross-like symbol and the text "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America". To the right of the logo, the words "MISSION SUPPORT" are written in large, bold, orange capital letters. Below the title, there are four small rectangular photographs: the first shows a group of people in a church setting with a sign that says "S M O S"; the second shows a group of people looking at a document; the third shows a group of people standing outdoors in front of a building; and the fourth shows a group of people in red and white vestments, likely during a church service.

Connected, we're doing more than any one person, congregation or synod could do alone, making an impact and supporting ministry all around the world. **Thank you!**

One way to love and serve your neighbors is to turn faith into action by making a financial gift — an offering — to your congregation. Each year, ELCA congregations share a portion of their offerings to fund ELCA ministries in their synods and beyond. This type of sharing is called “Mission Support.”

Through your generosity, churchwide ministries received \$666,549 in Mission Support from this synod.

Mission Support fuels the ministry of this church and empowers people like Mary. Mary had set her sights on the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program since she was in confirmation.

The YAGM program, as it's known, invites adults ages 21-35 into a transformative year of international service. As they walk alongside global companions, volunteers are shaped by the witness of neighbors.

With an interest in immigration and Spanish skills, Mary was assigned to Mexico City to serve in a long-term immigration shelter. Through her YAGM year, Mary's passion to work for justice and give dignity to all God's children grew. She returned to the U.S. to serve as a recruiter for YAGM, giving back to a program that gave her so much.

Mission Support made it possible for Mary to have this experience.



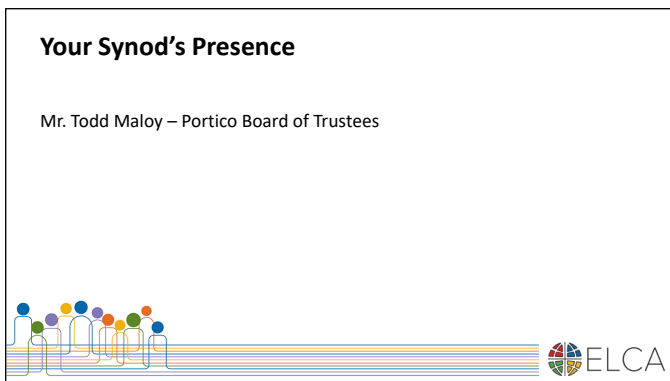
The Church Property Resource Hub is an online platform that connects congregations and synod leaders with information, organizations, and guidance for faithful and effective stewardship of church property.

A new initiative of the ELCA, the Church Property Resource Hub was developed in response to requests

from synod and congregation leaders for support in navigating the challenges and opportunities that buildings and land present for congregational vitality and the wider mission of the church.

Through the hub, you can:

- Explore courses and resources that address many aspects of property stewardship, including space sharing, mission exploration, community engagement, and more.
- Connect with a network of colleagues and professionals who can answer questions and partner with you.
- Be inspired by stories of congregations that are creatively responding to property challenges.
- Learn more at ELCA.org/CPRH.



This church benefits from the gifts of time and talent offered by faithful volunteers throughout the ELCA who serve on committees and engage in special efforts with and for the churchwide organization. We offer special thanks for the people from this synod who work with us and foster this important connection across the three expressions of our church.



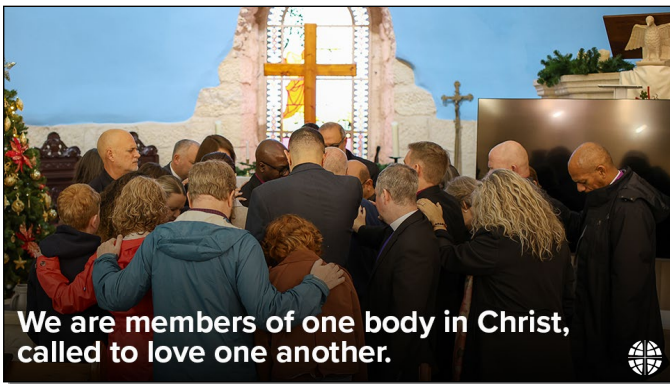
Leaders from across the ELCA are invited to gather for renewal, learning, and connection at the Rostered Ministers Gathering July 6-9 in Indianapolis. This gathering is for all ELCA deacons, pastors, bishops, and candidates approved for call, offering them a rare opportunity to step away from daily demands and reconnect with one another and with God.

The 2026 theme, “Woven Together,” centers on the ties that bind us as leaders in Christ’s church. Each day focuses on a different thread of our shared calling: woven together with God, for creation, as community, and as rostered ministers.

Planned programming includes daily worship, keynote speakers, workshops, small groups, and affinity groups designed to equip, connect, and renew leaders for ministry today.

Visit [ELCA.org/rmg](https://elca.org/rmg) to learn more, view the event schedule and full slate of presenters, and register.

ELCA congregations, **thank you** for supporting your ministers’ efforts to grow in faith and leadership, so they can continue serving the call God has placed in front of them.



Before we continue, let us pause and acknowledge that we are living in times of divisiveness, anger, and fear. Nearly two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul wrote that we are members of one body in Christ and that “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it.” This follows the commandment Jesus gave us during his ministry on earth: “Love one another.”

Today, it seems difficult to love one another when we struggle to even communicate. How can we love when we harbor so much animosity toward others? How can we love those who appear to hate us for our worldview? How can we love those who are most vulnerable and are suffering more than anyone realizes?

Jesus said that what is impossible for humans is possible for God. Let us pray then for God’s guidance.

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams.

All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

And now, I would like to introduce our presiding bishop, Yehiel Curry, and share his first synod assembly video with you. From the West Coast to the East Coast of the United States to the Holy Land, Bishop Curry explores the importance of being a connected church in God's kingdom, knowing that we are stronger together than alone.

I hope you enjoy the video.

[\[View Video\]](#)



Your generosity helps us share God's love right here at home and throughout the world. You are not only a part of your congregation and synod — you are also part of a national church that works across the country, in the Caribbean, and around the world in the service of our neighbors.

Together as the ELCA, we envision a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. This is the ELCA's vision, and I invite you to connect with Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike as we work toward this vision together.

Thank you.