



2025 ASSEMBLY BINDER

Central States Synod, ELCA

Section VI Resolutions

June 5-7, 2025
EMBASSY SUITES
10401 S. Ridgeview Rd., Olathe, KS 66061

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

2024 Central States Synod Assembly Actions

Number & Name	Summary	Actions needed/taken
SA 24.01 A Season of Global Awareness	Epiphany season designated as <i>Season of Global Awareness</i> October 6, 2024 – Sunday to remember ELCUSFE (Russia) February 23, 2025 – Sunday to remember Papua New Guinea	The Companion Synod team provided a devotional series for the Epiphany season. Before designated Sundays, materials were provided to congregations. An informational video was produced about the visitation to Papua New Guinea, followed by an online Q&A
SA 24.02 Bethany College	Synod staff, clergy, and congregations recognize and encourage youth to consider attending a Lutheran college, like Bethany. Designate Sunday nearest October 15 each year as Bethany College Sunday, October 13, 2024	Synod communications leading up to October 13, 2024, included information about Bethany College, resources, and a liturgy for congregations to utilize.
SA 24.03 Reconciling in Christ	Become Reconciling in Christ Synod Adopt welcome statement: <i>Traveling the way of Jesus, who commanded his followers to love one another as Christ has loved, and believing that all persons are created in the image of God, this synod welcomes people of every race, background, age, political affiliation, economic and social status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and mental and physical ability. As a synod we strive to enable all people to participate fully in the life and work of the church in the ministry of Jesus Christ.</i>	Registered with ReconcilingWorks as a Reconciling in Christ Synod. The welcome statement is published on the synod website and utilized during synod functions. Materials and resources were shared leading up to the annual RIC Sunday, and congregations were encouraged to participate. Bishop and synod staff have issued statements to advocate for public policies that protect LGBTQIA+ Encourage individual congregations to develop their own welcome statement. Materials and resources are available at www.css-elca.org/hath .
SA 24.04 Peace and Climate Justice	Commit to worship, educate, and advocate for peace and justice for all the earth by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including prayers for peace in every worship service • Utilizing resources of ELCA to learn more about call as earth keepers and peacemakers • Advocating for peace and climate justice through ELCA advocacy, KIFA, and designated legislators • Highlight peace making during Advent 2024 using resources of 2024 Creation Care Plan 	Frequent communication including newsletter announcements and materials. Synod partnered with the Lutherans Restoring Creation Mission Table to provide resources throughout the year.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to end all wars through above efforts as one way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 	
SA 24.05 Pastoral Leadership Transitions	<p>Give thanks for work of call committees, pastoral leaders, seminaries, candidacy committees, intentional interims</p> <p>Encourage raising up leaders by asking congregations to seek and out and invite individuals to consider candidacy or PMA program; pastors and youth workers to plant seeds in youth</p> <p>Call on congregations to take note of changing circumstances of call process, recognize longer time and to be open, smaller congregations share leadership, larger congregations replace pastors with lay professionals</p> <p>Bishop's staff share resolution with congregations entering transition</p> <p>Bishop, staff and synod council to engage with COB, churchwide staff, church council, seminaries, and counterparts to learn from their experience & offer ours</p>	<p>Synod staff regularly meets with call committees, pastoral leaders, seminary leadership, candidacy committees and intentional interims, as well as with congregational leadership to provide support and thanks for all ministry.</p> <p>Synod staff has worked with councils, rostered staff, individuals, and call committees identifying ways to help laity identify their call to ministry and the multitude of options available to them to enter into rostered and/or lay ministry.</p> <p>Synod staff continues to review the challenges and circumstances of the current environment. Congregations are constantly challenged to rethink how they are being the church and how they might be served with alternative options of rostered and lay leaders.</p> <p>Synod staff reviews the challenges noted in this resolution with all congregations (council, transition team) entering transition.</p> <p>Synod staff meets twice a month with transition leadership in Region 4. Currently working with Region 4 staff and Wartburg/Luther seminaries to identify a new education process of S.A.M.'s</p>
SA 24.06 Thanksgiving for Ministry	<p>Remembered and gave thanks for:</p> <p>Retried Ministers</p> <p>Ministers who have died</p> <p>Congregations that closed</p> <p>Congregations that disaffiliated</p>	<p>The assembly joined together in prayer.</p>

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Resolution SA25.01

COMMITMENT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW CONGREGATIONS

Whereas each year the Synod Assembly of the Central States Synod gives thanks for the ministries of congregations that have closed or disaffiliated from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “trusting that in the midst of death, there is always resurrection, and the mission of the church continues.” In the period 2015-2022, the number of organized congregations in the Central States Synod declined from 173 to 159.

With each disaffiliation or closure of a congregation, the missional footprint of the ELCA in Kansas and Missouri declines; contributing to a much larger crisis of decline across the ELCA. If current trends continue, our congregations will be few and far between. The ministries and institutions which the congregations of the Central States Synod have long supported – seminaries, outdoor ministries, campus ministries, disaster relief, justice ministries, etc. –will have to reimagine their roles or cease to exist altogether - contributing to the ongoing feedback loop of decline.

We are not without hope. Christ’s Church is empowered with the gift of the Holy Spirit and joined in God’s mission for the life of the world. The same Spirit that descended at Pentecost continues to call, equip, and commission the Church to proclaim the good news of God’s amazing grace in Jesus Christ.

The vision of the Central States Synod is that we would be a Synod that:

- Witnesses to the centrality of faith as individuals and communities embrace and actively live the way of Jesus.
- Empowers ministries and congregations to participate in God’s reign of justice, loving neighbor through acts of charity and the work of advocacy.
- Nurtures engagement in spiritual practices that deepened faith and courageous acts of love for the neighbor.
- Invites others into this transforming way of Jesus.

This vision is embodied in a variety of wonderful ministries throughout Kansas and Missouri; especially in local congregations where the Holy Spirit is at work in and through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Spirit-led congregations form faith and discipleship, transform lives with the Gospel, raise up leaders, impact their communities with ministries of service, and resource the work of the wider church for the proclamation of the Gospel in word and deed.

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2025 Synod Assembly of the Central States Synod:

1. Declares that the Central States Synod is committed to intentional evangelical witness through development of new congregational ministries of Word and Sacrament.
2. Directs the Synod Council of the Central States Synod to establish a temporarily restricted New Mission Start Fund (“the Fund”) for the development of new congregational ministries of Word and Sacrament in Kansas and Missouri.
3. Requests that the Synod Council seed “the Fund” with \$100,000 from the proceeds already received from the sale of property in which ownership had been passed to the Synod.
4. Requests that 51% of future proceeds from the sale of property in which ownership is passed to the Synod be placed in “the Fund.”

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

5. When a congregation chooses to close and sell its property, the Synod will present the New Mission Start Fund as an opportunity to participate in the development of new congregational ministries of Word and Sacrament by allocating proceeds from the sale of property to “the Fund.”
6. Directs the Synod Mission Table to:
 1. Identify communities of growth in Kansas and Missouri that offer viable opportunities for the development of new congregation starts. Research should include but not be limited to conducting density and population trends, researching local planned development, analyzing local demographics, assessing current ELCA congregational presence, and engaging and listening to community stakeholders.
 2. Formulate a strategic mission plan to be presented at the 2026 Synod Assembly of the Central States Synod. The mission plan will:
 - A. Identify viable opportunities for the development of new congregational ministries of Word and Sacrament in Kansas and Missouri.
 - B. Set forth a realistic goal for the number new starts in the next five years.
 - C. Present a comprehensive list of resource requirements for new congregation development.
 - D. Outline potential new missional opportunities and collaborative partnerships among established congregations in identified areas that will strengthen congregational mission and outreach.
 3. Present an annual progress report and mission plan update at the Synod Assembly.

Submitted by:

Michael Peck	Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS
Josh Brecht	Good Shepherd, Manchester, MO
Steve Cauley	Living Lord, Lake St. Louis, MO
Roy Christell	Retired, Lake St. Louis, MO
Zac Sturm	Atonement, Overland Park, KS
Chad Langdon	Christ, Wichita, KS
Andrew Beers	St. Paul's, Wichita, KS
Kris Dietzen	St. Mark's, Olathe, KS
Jon Wolf	Holy Cross, Overland Park, KS
Joel Hinck	Holy Cross, Overland Park, KS
Christyn Koschmann	Martin Luther, Lees Summit, MO
Hans Koschmann	Martin Luther, Lees Summit, MO
Edd Wunderlich	Gloria Dei, Kansas City, MO

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Resolution SA25.02

A SEASON OF GLOBAL AWARENESS

Remembering our Companion Synods and ELCA ministries around the world

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

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

Be it also resolved that **Sunday, October 5th, 2025** shall be designated as the Sunday to remember and celebrate our companion church relationship with the “Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Urals, Siberia and Far East” (ELCUSFE) with a special focus on the Far Eastern Deanery. *(This date was chosen because the first Sunday in October is widely observed by the churches in Russia as a harvest Sunday when they give thanks and celebrate the completion of the fall harvest).*

Be it also resolved that **Sunday, February 15th, 2026** be designated as the Sunday to remember, lift up and celebrate our companion church relationship with the Kote District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG). This would be an appropriate way to conclude the Epiphany Season which is our season of Global Awareness.

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

The Companion Synod Team of the Central States Synod – ELCA

Andrew Beers
Jon Brudvig
Jim Cooper
Matthew Helfrich
Penny Holste
Doug Reed.

Joyce Benedict
Gary Kallansrud
Daniel Lilienkamp
Keith Holste
Janice Kibler
Gary Teske

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Resolution SA25.03 THANKSGIVING FOR MINISTRY

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

The Rev. Joe Bullock Bendena, KS (June 22, 2024)
The Rev. Philip Youngquist, Lindsborg, KS (June 23, 2024)
The Rev. Larry Block, Hazelwood, MO (June 29, 2024)
The Rev. Linda Diepenbrock, Inman, KS (September 23, 2024)
The Rev. John (Jack) Schroepel, Hutchinson, KS (October 4, 2024)
The Rev. Arnold Wuertz, Overland Park, KS (October 17, 2024)
The Rev. Fran Lantz, Robinson, KS (December 11, 2024)
The Rev. Frederick Giraud, University City, MO (March 6, 2025)

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

The Rev. Janice Hawley, from Holy Cross in Creve Coeur, MO (August 1, 2024)
The Rev. Ann Rundquist, from Mission Developer, Kansas City, MO (November 1, 2024)
The Rev. Scott Musselman, from Our Savior's in Jefferson City, MO (December 1, 2024)
The Rev. Timothy Carey, from disability status (March 1, 2025)

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

Peace Lutheran, New Cambria, KS (2nd vote to withdraw on August 4, 2024)
Salem Lutheran Church, St. Francis, KS (2nd vote to withdraw on May 18, 2025)
St. John Lutheran Church, Bird City, KS (2nd vote to withdraw on May 24, 2025)

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

The Gathering Table, Kansas City, MO, a Synod-Authorized Ministry (October 31, 2024)
Holy Trinity, Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO (March 2, 2025)

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