



2025 ASSEMBLY BINDER

Central States Synod, ELCA

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Table of Contents

Section I – General Information

Table of Contents	Page 1
Assembly Welcome – Bishop Candea	Page 3
Presiding Bishop Eaton’s Letter	Page 4
Synod Bishop and ELCA Representative	Page 5
Pre-assembly hearing schedule	Page 6
Tentative Assembly Agenda	Page 7
Assembly Procedures and Voting Instructions	Page 9
Synod Assembly Offering	Page 13
Synod Statistical Information for the Year	Page 14
Milestone Anniversaries	Page 16
Central States Synod Bishop's Report	Page 19
Special Thanks	Page 21

Section II – Bishop Election

Discernment Team	Page 1
Electing a Bishop	Page 2
Ministry Site Profile of the Synod	Page 5
Responsibilities and Duties of the Bishop	Page 10
Request for Withdrawal from the ballot	Page 11
Biographies of Clergy Open to Serving as Bishop	Page 12

Section III – Nominations

Nominations Information	Page 1
Nomination Slate	Page 2
Biographical Information for Synod Council Nominees	Page 3
Biographical Information for Consultation Committee Nominees	Page 4
Biographical Information for Discipline Committee Nominees	Page 5
Nomination Form	Page 6
Background Check Disclosure Form	Page 7

Section IV – Budget/Finance

Treasurer’s Report	Page 1
Budget Spreadsheet	Page 5
Salaries and Benefits Detail for FYE 2026	Page 7
Salaries and Benefits Detail for FYE 2027	Page 8
Narrative Budget	Page 9
Salaries and Benefits FYE 2026	Page 13
Congregational Giving	
Border Conference	Page 13
Central Kansas Conference	Page 14
Eastern Missouri Conference	Page 15
Osage Conference	Page 16
Western Kansas Conference	Page 17

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Section V – Compensation Guidelines

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

Section VI – Resolutions

2024 Synod Assembly Actions	Page 1
Resolution SA25.01 – Commitment to the Development of New Congregations	Page 3
Resolution SA25.02 – A Season of Global Awareness	Page 5
Resolution SA24.03 – Thanksgiving for Ministry	Page 6

Section VII – Constitution

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

ASSEMBLY WELCOME



Welcome to the Central States Synod Assembly as we gather under the theme “**Renewed by the Spirit**” echoing the words of the psalmist “You send forth your Spirit and they (we) are created and so you **renew** the face of the earth.” We gather trusting, praising, and seeking to discern the Spirit’s renewing work among us. In times of change and transition, when it is easy to be discouraged and anxious, we gather in hope and joy.

At this assembly, we gather to discern who the Spirit is calling to be the next bishop of the synod. Our presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, will be guiding us through the bishop’s election process. In addition to the bishop’s election, we also gather to:

- elect Synod council and committee members
- hear reports and stories from churchwide and synod ministries
- discuss and vote on a budget for the synod
- respond to resolutions presented by members and ministries of the synod
- celebrate milestone anniversaries of ordination at the banquet on Friday evening

Praising the Spirit’s presence among us, we will also gather for worship, song, and prayer throughout the assembly.

- Opening Worship will be on Thursday evening at the hotel. Bishop Eaton will be preaching, and I will be presiding as we share communion together.
- During morning prayer on Friday, we will hear from three of our ELCA bishops as they reflect on the work of the Spirit throughout the church.
- At the closing worship on Saturday, we will affirm our baptisms and callings to follow Jesus and participate in God’s renewal of our world.
- Before each vote throughout the bishop’s election process, we will pause to sing and pray.

Throughout the assembly, we pray and listen, share and discern:

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, breath of God and fill the minds and hearts of your people.

Come, fire of truth and kindle in us the flame of your love.

Come, font of wisdom, enlighten us and give us counsel and might.

Come, leading spirit and guide our discerning.

Come, Holy Spirit!

May we feel the movement of the Spirit among us.



The Rev. Susan Candea
Bishop
Central States Synod, ELCA

FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



*"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*

April 2025

Dear friends in Christ,

Thank you for your dedication and faithfulness, as together we continue to share God's love throughout the world.

During the past year and a half, I had the privilege to gather with many of you at our God's Love Made Real regional conversations. Connecting with you during these events was extremely inspiring as we heard about the many ways God's love is being made real in communities across this church.

Among the stories that were shared, we heard about a congregation's "bold" decision to reconstruct a food pantry to help increase the capacity to serve more people, a Christmas in July celebration for a single mom and her five children experiencing homelessness, a Queer youth poetry open mic event described by one pastor as a tangible experience of God's Love Made Real, a partially gutted parsonage that was renovated to provide long-term housing for survivors of human trafficking, and an ecumenical ministry group that developed a community center that feeds people with meals and spiritual connections.

Our vision of a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation is being made manifest in these ministries, but these are only a few examples of what's happening throughout our church. I know this is work your congregations do every day, and I thank you for helping people know the way of Jesus to discover community, justice and love.

The world around us is changing, and our church will also experience change with the election of a new presiding bishop and a new secretary at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly this summer. Many of you will be electing a new synod bishop and other leaders.

Amid these changes, our call remains the same: to love and serve others as Jesus taught. Our church will continue our work to proclaim the gospel and to serve all of God's people.

It has been a privilege to serve as your presiding bishop. May God continue to hold us and guide us into the future.

In Christ,



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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

SYNOD BISHOP AND ELCA REPRESENTATIVE

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



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

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

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

**The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop of the 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.

As presiding bishop, Eaton travels extensively, representing the ELCA in a variety of capacities. This has included participating in the ordination of the first woman pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land; addressing the eighth modern convening of The Parliament of the World's Religions; and leading the ELCA delegation to the thirteen Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Krakow, Poland.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly
June 5-7, 2025

2025 Synod Assembly Hearings

Pre-assembly - (via Zoom)

Thursday – May 22

7:00 – 8:00 pm.

Voting Member Orientation

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84977357760?pwd=ian0VBpqi9TQ6Jb0kkUniyaAhiuao4.1>

Meeting ID: 849 7735 7760

Passcode: 021935

Tuesday – May 27

7:00 – 8:00 pm.

Resolutions Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84131164477?pwd=SWqkb0NubiHgogKoUNAr89t5pN2SaO.1>

Meeting ID: 841 3116 4477

Passcode: 180258

Wednesday – May 28

7:00 – 8:00 pm.

Compensation Guidelines Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88380597422?pwd=9s5Pb5KyNiFbfqgDhINO29YrVP21FG.1>

Meeting ID: 883 8059 7422

Passcode: 532735

Thursday – May 29

7:00 – 8:00 pm

Budget Hearing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87676618092?pwd=acnGFyTaijuoBLf8XORnDINblxXN8a.1>

Meeting ID: 876 7661 8092

Passcode: 523076

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly
June 5-7, 2025

2025 SYNOD ASSEMBLY AGENDA

All agenda events take place at the conference hotel:
EMBASSY SUITES - 10401 S. Ridgeview Rd, Olathe, KS 66061

Thursday - June 5, 2025

11:00 a.m.	Assembly check-in§
11:00 a.m.	Display tables open
2:00 p.m.	Voting Member Orientation

3:30 p.m. Plenary Session I

3:30 p.m.	Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, Introductions
4:00 p.m.	<i>Check-in closes for ballot #1</i>
4:00 p.m.	Bishop election process and instructions
4:45 p.m.	<i>Bishop election – ballot #1</i>
5:00 p.m.	Check-in reopens
5:00 p.m.	Break

5:30 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Opening Worship

Friday - June 6, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Assembly check-in
8:30 a.m.	Bishop election withdrawal forms due

8:30 a.m. Plenary Session II

8:30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
9:00 a.m.	Ecumenical Greetings
9:05 a.m.	Nominations
9:15 a.m.	Bishop's Report
9:30 a.m.	<i>Check-in closes for ballot #2</i>
9:55 a.m.	Synod Elections
10:00 a.m.	<i>Bishop election – ballot #2**</i>
10:30 a.m.	Check-in reopens
10:30 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	Treasurer's Report and proposed budget

12:00 p.m. Lunch

§ Check-in will close 30 minutes prior to each bishop election ballot and reopen once all ballots are collected.

** Bishop election ballots 2-5 are as needed until a bishop election has occurred. See pages 13-14 for complete information and requirements for an election on each ballot.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

1:15 p.m.

Plenary Session III

1:15 p.m.	Introduction of top 7 bishop candidates
1:15 p.m.	<i>Check-in closes for ballot #3</i>
2:00 p.m.	<i>bishop election – ballot #3</i>
2:00 p.m.	Check-in reopens
2:15 p.m.	Vice President's Report
2:25 p.m.	Churchwide Report
2:55 p.m.	Resolutions
3:15 p.m.	Break
3:45 p.m.	Q&A session with top 3 bishop candidates
4:30 p.m.	<i>Check-in closes for ballot #4</i>
5:15 p.m.	<i>bishop election – ballot #4</i>
5:30 p.m.	Check-in reopens

6:30 p.m.

Anniversary Dinner Banquet

Saturday - June 7, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Check-in opens
-----------	----------------

9:00 a.m.

Plenary Session IV

9:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
9:00 a.m.	<i>Check-in closes for ballot #5</i>
9:30 a.m.	<i>Bishop election – ballot #5</i>
9:45 a.m.	Compensation Guidelines
	Resolutions {cont.}
	unfinished business
10:15 a.m.	Recess to call to order the Bethany Home Association business meeting
10:45 a.m.	<i>bishop election results, Bishop-Elect's remarks</i>

11:00 a.m.

Closing Worship

12:00 p.m.	Assembly concludes
------------	--------------------

VOTING MEMBER INFORMATION REGARDING ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

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

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

The chart and notes which follow are a first opportunity for you to understand the procedures of this assembly so that you may fully and actively participate. Another opportunity is the **Voting Members' Orientation**. This year we are offering two separate orientation sessions. These sessions will be helpful information for all voting members and will cover voting systems and assembly procedures. Voting members are free to choose either session.

- **Thursday – May 22, 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.** Via Zoom:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84977357760?pwd=ian0VBpqi9TQ6Jb0kkUniyaAhiuao4.1>
Meeting ID: 849 7735 7760
Passcode: 021935
- **Thursday – June 5, 2:00 p.m.**, Embassy Suites Ballroom

During the assembly, if you have any questions, please feel free to communicate with the synod's officers, council members, or staff.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly
June 5-7, 2025

VOTING MEMBER INFORMATION

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

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR CENTRAL STATES SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Prior to the assembly

- Each voting member must register through the synod office no later than May 15, 2025. Late registrations and walk-in registrations at synod assembly will not be accepted.
- Hearings for the budget, resolutions, and compensation guidelines will take place the week of May 27 – 29. The full schedule and Zoom links can be found on page 6. These hearings are open to any member of the synod, not only voting members.

During the assembly

- **To speak to a motion before the assembly**, voting members are asked to come to the microphone with their voting cards to indicate:
 - **GREEN - For** (wish to speak in favor of the item being discussed)
 - **RED - Against** (wish to speak in opposition to the item being discussed)
 - **WHITE - Question** (have a question regarding the item being discussed)
 - **WHITE - Amend** (would like to make an amendment)
 - **WHITE - Call the question** (request that the debate be closed)
- Wait to be recognized by the chair and then introduce yourself, include the name and location of your congregation before speaking.
- The chair will call upon individuals in the order in which they appear at the microphones (alternating, when possible, those in favor and those opposed). Each person will have up to **two minutes** to speak once recognized by the chair. Voting members are reminded to always begin their comments with their name and their congregation's name and location.
- When making an amendment voting members will be asked to submit the written amendment to the synod secretary at the front of the room if possible. When at the microphone, state your amendment, then **wait for the bishop to receive a second**. Once a second has been received, you can speak to why you are making the amendment.
- When no further speakers wish to comment, or the debate has been ended, the bishop will call for a vote.
- Voting will take place using a variety of methods. In order to vote all voting members must pick up their materials at the check-in table located in the hallway outside the main hall.
 - Procedural votes will be done using color-coded cards and instructions will be given.
 - The bishop will announce the results. If the vote is too close to call, the bishop will call for a count of the votes. Please follow the instructions to hold your cards up, until the counters come by each table to tally the votes.
 - Synod elections will be done using personal electronic devices and QR codes. No app or special software is required and voting members will be allowed to share devices. Complete instructions are on page 12.
 - The bishop election will be done using paper ballots. Instructions for each ballot will be given immediately before the ballots are distributed. Only voting members who have their assembly name badge will be issued a ballot.
 - **NOTE: In order to ensure assembly credentials are reported accurately for each ballot of the bishop election, the check in table will close 30 minutes prior to each ballot of the bishop election and reopen once all ballots have been collected.**

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

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTING IN SYNOD ELECTIONS

Voting Using QR Codes

Each voting member has a QR code appearing on their name badge. This code is unique to each voting member and provides them with access to the ballot for synod elections. The ballot is not accessible until the assembly chair opens the vote. At the appropriate time, instructions will be given for voting members to scan their personal QR code, access the ballot, and cast their vote(s). A specialized app or device is not needed. Most smartphones and tablets can access the ballot using the QR code. Voting members may share a device and are encouraged to assist other voting members seated around their table. Please ensure you are scanning the QR code of the voting member wishing to cast a ballot. Volunteers will be available during the voting process to assist those who need assistance or who may not have a compatible device.



Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

SYNOD ASSEMBLY OFFERING 2025

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

Synod Council has designated Lutheran World Relief & Lutheran Disaster Response in North Carolina, as the recipients of the offering collected during synod assembly and will divide the offerings evenly between these two ministries.



Founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II, grounded in Lutheran theology and building on decades of experience, Lutheran World Relief tackles global poverty by helping people adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being. They work with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality to provide aid in emergencies and help families restore their lives. Lutheran World Relief's goal is to help people build self-sufficiency and create new community-owned approaches to problem-solving that will last long after their projects end.

Visit www.lwr.org for more information



Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world.

The ministry of LDR Carolinas has been funded by a grant from Lutheran Disaster Response to provide local faces and voices for this vital ministry. Grounded in faith, we are focused on helping individuals and congregations prepare for disaster and on building a network of resources across North and South Carolina to respond when disasters occur.

Visit www.ldrcarolinas.org for more information

You can visit the synod assembly page www.css-elca.org/assembly to give online, or you may mail your offering to the synod office.

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

SYNOD STATISTICAL INFORMATION JUNE 2024 - MAY 2024

Candidates for Rostered Ministry

Richard Ashley, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, Word and Sacrament
Ryan Bose, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, Word and Sacrament
Sarah Freyermuth, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Word and Sacrament
Rachel Helton, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, Word and Service
Jennelle Hinck, United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Word and Sacrament
Megan Mong, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Word and Sacrament
Joel Pike, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, Word and Sacrament
Douglas Reed, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, Word and Sacrament
Joanie Saltzman, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, Word and Sacrament

New to the Synod Roster

Effective Date

Rev. Sharon Bockelman (Retired), from Pacifica Synod	7/1/2024
Rev. Deborah Cantrell, from Western North Dakota Synod, to Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Topeka, KS	7/15/2024
Rev. Douglas Mathison (Retired), from Rocky Mountain Synod	7/15/2024
Rev. Edward (Max) Franks, from Southeastern Iowa Synod, to Resurrection: A United Methodist Church, Leawood, KS (Synod Council Call)	9/1/2024
Rev. Lisa Simmelink, first call, to Emanuel Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, KS	9/1/2024
Rev. Elizabeth Carr, first call, to St. John Lutheran Church, Lancaster, KS and St. John Lutheran Church, Bendena, KS	9/15/2024
Rev. Matthew (Matt) Schlake-Kruse, from Greater Milwaukee Synod	10/1/2024
Rev. Janice Kibler (Retired), from Rocky Mountain Synod	10/15/2024
Rev. Nicholas (Nick) Giannatasio (Retired), from North Carolina Synod	11/1/2024
Rev. Gerhard Kraus (Retired), from Central/Southern Illinois Synod	12/1/2024
Rev. Thomas (Ed) Breed (Retired), from Southeastern Iowa Synod	1/1/2025

Moves within the Synod Roster

Effective Date

Rev. James (Jim) Peters, from On Leave from Call, to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Herington, KS	9/1/2024
Rev. James (Jim) Peters, from On Leave from Call, to Hebron Lutheran Church, Burdick, KS	9/1/2024
Rev. Ethan Feistner, from Camp Tomah Shinga, Junction City, KS, to Bethany Village, Lindsborg, KS (Synod Council Call)	9/3/2024
Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse, from Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO, to St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Saint Louis, MO (Synod Council Call)	2/3/2025
Rev. Larry Lemke, from Zion Lutheran Church, Ferguson, MO, to Interim Ministry, Central States Synod, KS/MO (Synod Council Call)	3/10/2025
Rev. Matthew (Matt) Schlake-Kruse, from On Leave from Call, to Interim Ministry, Central States Synod, KS/MO (Synod Council Call)	3/10/2025
Rev. Jon Brudvig, from Salem Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS, to Trinity Lutheran Church, Lawrence, KS	4/1/2025

Invitations to Extended Service Accepted

Effective Date

Rev. Dr. Amanda (Mandy) Todd (UCC), to Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lindsborg, KS	1/19/2025
---	-----------

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

On Leave from Call Status Granted		Effective Date
Rev. Dean Apel, OLFC - 1st Year, from Assaria Lutheran Church, Assaria, KS		8/16/2024
Rev. Bethany Rutten-Kempees, OLFC - 5th Year		9/16/2024
Rev. Anita Strommen, OLFC - 1st Year, from Marion Hill Lutheran Church, White City, KS		9/23/2024
Rev. Matthew (Matt) Schlake-Kruse, OLFC - 2nd Year		3/1/2025
Rev. Alfi Wyatt, OLFC - 4th Year		5/14/2025
Disability Status on the Roster Granted		Effective Date
Rev. Timothy (Tim) Leaf, from Trinity Lutheran Church, McPherson, KS		3/5/2025
Rev. Robert (Lee) Bennight, from Disciples of the Plains Parish (American Lutheran Church, Smith Center, KS; Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Stuttgart, KS; St. John Lutheran Church, Kensington, KS; Zion Lutheran Church, Phillipsburg, KS)		3/7/2025
Retired Status on the Roster Granted		Effective Date
Rev. Janice Hawley		8/1/2024
Rev. Ann Rundquist		11/1/2024
Rev. Scott Musselman		12/1/2024
Rev. Timothy (Tim) Carey		3/1/2025
Transfers Out from the Synod Roster		Effective Date
Rev. William Neuman (Retired), to South Carolina Synod		6/1/2024
Rev. Amy Truhe, from Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lindsborg, KS, to Nebraska Synod		6/1/2024
Rev. Mark Fischer, from St. Martin Lutheran Church, Kansas City, KS, to Northwest Washington Synod		7/11/2024
Rev. Jeffery (Jeff) Alvestad (On Leave), to Southeastern Iowa Synod		8/1/2024
Rev. Andrew Baumgartner, from St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church, Saint Louis, MO, to Minneapolis Area Synod		3/25/2025
Rostered Ministers Deceased		Effective Date
Rev. William Bullock		6/22/2024
Rev. Philip Youngquist		6/23/2024
Rev. Lawrence (Larry) Block		6/29/2024
Rev. Linda Diepenbrock		9/23/2024
Rev. John (Jack) Schroepel		10/4/2024
Rev. Arnold (Arnie) Wuertz		10/17/2024
Rev. Francine (Fran) Lantz		12/11/2024
Rev. Frederick Giraud		3/6/2025
Changes to the Roster of Congregations		Effective Date
Hope Local Kansas City, Shawnee, KS	Removed	7/13/2024
Peace Lutheran Church, New Cambria, KS	Withdrawn	8/16/2024
Gathering Table, Kansas City, MO	Disbanded	10/31/2024
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Saint Louis, MO	Disbanded	3/2/2025
Salem Lutheran Church, St. Francis, KS	Withdrawn	5/18/2025
St. John Lutheran Church, Bird City, KS	Withdrawn	5/24/2025

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly
June 5-7, 2025

INDIVIDUALS MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

5 Years

The Rev. Kimberly Frederking
The Rev. Larry Lemke
The Rev. Meagan McLaughlin
The Rev. Ralen Robinson
Ms. Alesia Roccia (PMA)

10 Years

The Rev. Scott Benolkin
The Rev. Ann Rundquist
The Rev. Laura Smith
The Rev. David Viles

15 Years

The Rev. Aimée Appell
The Rev. Cheryl Walenta Gorvie
The Rev. Hans Koschmann
The Rev. Jonathan Wolf

20 Years

The Rev. Wayne Baldyga
Deacon Marlene Hallstrom
The Rev. Adam Wutka

25 Years

The Rev. Judith Conoyer
The Rev. Varinia Espinosa
The Rev. Bruce Freeman
Deacon Edgar Kruse
The Rev. Donna Simon
Deacon Melinda Tillberg
The Rev. Kathryn Whitney

30 Years

The Rev. Linda Bollenbach
The Rev. Keving Clark
The Rev. Kent Happel
The Rev. Donna Holste

35 Years

The Rev. Edward Foster
The Rev. Roger Gustafson
The Rev. Susan Langhauser
The Rev. James Peters
The Rev. Julia Will
The Rev. Richard Wolf
The Rev. Edward Wunderlich

40 Years

The Rev. Jon Anderson
The Rev. Brian Bauer
The Rev. Merle Brockhoff
The Rev. Richard Krenning
The Rev. Susan Rights

45 Years

The Rev. Howard Ellis
The Rev. Michael Kerr
The Rev. David Miller
The Rev. Winston Persaud
The Rev. Gordon Peterson Jr.
The Rev. James Schack

50 Years

The Rev. Larry Blue
The Rev. David Fulton
The Rev. Jimmie Pierce

55 Years

The Rev. Carl Gauck
Deacon Elizabeth Schmitt

60 Years

The Rev. Robert Banitt
The Rev. Charles Maahs
The Rev. Vern Skarstad
The Rev. Harlan Stutheit

CONGREGATIONAL MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

25 Years

Hosanna! Lutheran Church, Liberty, MO

75 Years

American Lutheran Church, Belleville, KS

100 Years

St. Paul Lutheran Church, West Plains, MO

125 Years

Emanuel Lutheran Church, Wakeeney, KS
St. John Lutheran Church, Russell, KS
Trinity Lutheran Church, Chesterfield, MO

150 Years

Assaria Lutheran Church, Assaria, KS

Congratulations and God's blessings to everyone who is celebrating an anniversary of note this year.

BISHOP'S REPORT FOR THE 2025 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

At the synod assembly last year, we approved a resolution to become a Reconciling in Christ synod and adopted this welcome statement:

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.

As the bishop, I have striven to enable people to participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ in. . .

Congregations by:

- Preaching and leading worship in 42 of our congregations for a variety of occasions, including anniversary celebrations, installations, and transitions, as well as to simply be present and share the gospel. As the pastor of the synod, I have enjoyed the opportunities to preach and preside, having preached in all of the congregations of the synod during my tenure as bishop.
- Having conversations about disaffiliation and other concerns raised by congregations and members. While these conversations are not easy, it is important to show up and listen but also to be clear that ***all persons are created in the image of God.***
- Encouraging and supporting collaboration among congregations. Many of our congregations are facing financial and sustainability challenges. Rather than closing more congregations, I have seen congregations become more creative in sharing buildings and ministries.

Synod ministries by:

- Serving on the board of Bethany College, which is one of the 26 ELCA colleges. The college has just completed a search process for a new president, and Dr. Laura Crowley began in May.
- Involvement at Camp Tomah Shinga, which has also gone through staff changes and recently hired Jordan Valentine, previously the program director, to be the new executive director. Camp Tomah Shinga has been an important ministry in nurturing the faith and discipleship of young people across the synod. (Rev. Dave Whetter, Bishop's Associate, attends the board meetings on a regular basis.)
- Sharing leadership with the synod council. The vice-president, Nancy Nagel, and I work together to develop agendas for the meetings as we work together to guide the ministries of the synod. I am grateful to all the members of the synod council.
- Participating on the Mission Endowment Committee to give grants for leaders and outreach ministers and the Candidacy Committee to approve individuals for rostered ministry in this church.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Supporting Leaders by:

- Planning and hosting the Fall Theological Conference last October. The theme was *Spirit Breathed. Spirit Blown: Scripture, the Church, and a Life of Faith* and gave rostered and lay leaders to “wrestle” with theology as lean into where the Spirit is calling the church.
- Planning and hosting Boundary Education workshops for rostered and synod-authorized ministers. The focus of this year’s workshops was racial justice.
- Teaching Synod Authorized Ministers and Parish Ministry Associates, who, as an extension of my sacramental responsibility, can preside at communion. I’m grateful for their ministry and the ministry of Rev. Adam Wutka, Director of Lay Ministry.

Participating on a churchwide level by:

- Serving on the board for the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago who are also in the process of searching for a new president.
- Attending the Conference of Bishops when we meet in Chicago twice a year. This is an opportunity to connect with the wider ministry across the church, recognizing that I am not sure the bishop of the Central States Synod but the ELCA as well. As part of the Conference of Bishops I have served as the chair of the leadership committee as well as the Candidacy and Leadership Working Group that has been revising the candidacy process to make it more responsive to the current needs of leaders and congregations.

I am proud of my leadership helping the synod to become a Reconciling in Christ synod. The last year has been a challenge given the divisive political climate as well as actions by the current government administration that have harmed our neighbors, particularly the most vulnerable, compelling me to speak up and make statements that lift up the alternative way of following Jesus. I have striven to do that with compassion and care, clarity and courage, ever mindful of the privilege to serve in this office.



Bishop Susan Candea

SPECIAL THANKS TO . . .

- Bishop Elizabeth Eaton for joining us from Churchwide and guiding us through the election of a new bishop.
- Bishop Susan Candea for leading the assembly and for her service as our bishop.
- Rev. Dave Whetter for leading Voting Member Orientation, his work with the Compensation Guidelines Committee, the Resolutions Committee, and his service as Bishop's Associate.
- Members of the Synod Council: Vice President, Nancy Nagel; Secretary, Rev. Chad Langdon; Treasurer, Scott Schulte; Richard Ashley, Julie Barstow, Rev. David Frerichs, Tullia Hamilton, Dallas Rakestraw, Rev. Tina Reyes, Alesia Roccia, Logan Simon, Rev. Zac Sturn, and Deacon Mindy Tillberg.
- The members of the Synod Discernment Team; Cathy Hohl, Nancy Nagel, Rev. Merle Brockhoff, Rev. David Frerichs, Andrea Keese, Rev. Kim Knowle-Zeller, Bill Lang, Nancy Nagel, and Debbie Schroeder-Saulnier.
- The bishop's election committee: Cathy Hohl, Nancy Nagel, Joel Pike, Dallas Rakestraw, Ros Thorpe, Rev. Adam Wutka
- Jane Brda and the members of the Nominations Committee
- The Resolutions Committee: Rev. Sue Tarkka, Mark Conn, Emily Levin, Rev. Brenda Rodger, Rev. Dave Whetter, and Rev. Stephen Zeller
- The members of all the synod teams and committees who prepared presentations and reports for the assembly.
- The many ministry partners hosting display and information tables.
- The 2025 Synod Assembly Planning Team: Deacon Gail Brecht, Rev. Janice Hawley, Rev. Joel Hinck, Deacon Dave Mareske, Rev. Sarah Pierce, Rev. Sami Pfalzgraf, Rev. Cynthia Schnaath, Rev. Jordan Stone, and Rev. Noni Strand.
- All of the volunteers assisting with check-in and serving on the floor of the assembly.
- Jill Whetter, for putting together the prayer space and the decorations of the assembly hall.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025



2025 Bishop Election

Reflecting Together in Mindful Preparation

CENTRAL STATES SYNOD DISCERNMENT TEAM

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

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

The Team began publishing monthly devotions in April 2024 focusing on our need for the Spirit's guidance throughout the discernment process. The Team also developed questions designed to guide Synod conversations to identify common understandings about the Synod's ministries, values, challenges, and needs. The resulting profile reflects the collective discernment of over 250 clergy and lay members, who shared their thoughts on the mission, challenges, and opportunities that lie ahead for the Synod and its congregations. The profile was published in early 2025 to assist rostered ministers discerning whether they are open to the call of serving as the Synod's next Bishop.

Complete information regarding the discernment team's schedule, ministry site profile, responsibilities of the bishop and profiles of those open to serving as bishop is available at www.css-elca.org/discernment.

The Team's Members

Cathy Hohl - Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO | Team Facilitator
Nancy Nagel – Vice-President, Central States Synod, Peace Lutheran Church, Washington, MO
Rev. Merle Brockhoff – Retired
Rev. David Frerichs – St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Columbia, MO
Andrea Keesee – Disciples of the Plains, Phillipsburg, KS
Rev. Kim Knowle-Zeller – St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cole Camp, MO
Bill Lang – Emanuel Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, KS
Debbie Schroeder-Saulnier – Living Lord Lutheran Church, Lake St. Louis, MO

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

ELECTING A BISHOP

Bishops in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are elected to a six-year term. Bishop Candea has indicated that she will retire at the end of her term, August 31, 2025. Therefore, at the 2025 synod assembly, the Central States Synod will be electing a new bishop. The election process for a bishop is different from the election of other synod officers and council members. This document outlines the process that is prescribed in the synod constitution. A Bishop's Election Committee has been formed to shepherd the process leading up to and during the assembly. Presiding Bishop Eaton will also be present during the assembly to oversee and guide the election.

The election of the bishop is not just an election, but it is also a call process. As such, we pray that the Holy Spirit will be among us as individuals and within this whole church, as we engage in discernment regarding the election of the bishop. Individual and group reflection, discussion, and prayerful consideration are all important parts of the discernment process – both for individuals who may become nominees and for all members of this church, as we reflect on its needs and the attributes desired of our leaders.

The Central States Synod Constitution:

†S8.11. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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

Prior to the assembly:

- Individuals open to the call to serve as bishop can make this known by filling out a [biographical form](#). This is **not a nomination process**. It is an opportunity for individuals to indicate their willingness to serve. Completed biographical forms were made available on the synod website in April 2025.
- All eligible voting members must register to attend the synod assembly no later than May 15, 2025. There is no in-person registration.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

At the assembly:

- Voting members must check in to receive their name tag. Only individuals who have registered as **voting members**, are checked in, and have received their name tags will be eligible to vote in the bishop's election. Check-in will close approximately thirty minutes before each ballot of the bishop election. These deadlines will be included in the published assembly agenda. Voting members need only check in once upon arrival.
- Bishop Eaton will give verbal instructions immediately before each ballot. Once instructions are given, the assembly will proceed into a time of discernment through song, prayer, and quiet reflection. Paper ballots will be used for each ballot of the bishop election.

The Ballots:

- **First Ballot (Nominating Ballot)**

The first ballot of the bishop election is a blank form with no nominations or candidates. Each voting member writes the name of any minister of word and sacrament on the roster of the ELCA thereby casting a vote for that person to serve as bishop of the synod.

- Individuals who have previously indicated they are open to serving as bishop are **not nominated** unless their name is written down on the first ballot.
- If one person receives three fourths of the votes cast, they are elected bishop.
- If no one is elected, the first ballot is considered the nominating ballot.
- Those nominated will be given instructions on how to withdraw if they do not want to be considered for bishop.

- **Second Ballot**

The names of all those individuals who appeared on the first ballot and who have **not withdrawn** their names will appear on the second ballot. Voting members will cast their vote by selecting one name from the list.

- If one person receives three fourths of the votes cast, they are elected bishop.
- If no one is elected, the assembly will proceed to a third ballot.

- **Third Ballot**

The third ballot will contain the names of the seven persons who received the most votes on the second ballot (including ties). Voting members will cast their vote by selecting one of the names from the list.

- Preceding the ballot, these individuals will each have five minutes to address the assembly.
- Biographical information submitted by these individuals will be available for voting members to review.
- If one person receives two thirds of the votes cast, they are elected bishop.
- If no one is elected, the assembly will proceed to a fourth ballot.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

- **Fourth Ballot**

The names of the three persons receiving the most votes on the third ballot (including ties) will appear on the fourth ballot. Voting members will cast their vote by selecting one of the names.

- These individuals will each have an extended amount of time to answer questions presented by the Bishop Election Committee.
- Voting members will have the opportunity to submit questions the committee may use.
 - Forms to submit questions will be available at the check-in table and must be submitted for consideration by 7:00 p.m. Thursday.
- If one person receives sixty percent of the votes cast, they are elected bishop.
- If no one is elected, the assembly will proceed for a fifth ballot.

- **Fifth Ballot**

The fifth ballot will contain the names of the two individuals who have received the most votes (plus ties) on the fourth ballot. Voting members will cast their vote by selecting one of the names.

- The person receiving the majority of votes cast is elected bishop.
- The bishop-elect will have an opportunity to address the assembly.
- The new bishop will begin their term on September 1, 2025.

This process is intended to be one of discernment, praying for the guidance of the Spirit in calling the next pastor of the synod. Those appearing on the first ballot who wish to withdraw from the bishop's election must submit a withdrawal form no later than 8:30 a.m. Friday, June 6th. Forms can be picked up at the Check-in table outside the assembly hall. Completed forms must be submitted to the bishop election committee. A representative from the committee will be available at the Check-in table outside the assembly hall.

MINISTRY SITE PROFILE OF THE CENTRAL STATES SYNOD, ELCA



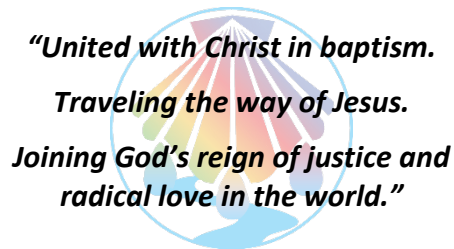
Voting members at Synod Assembly 2024 began preparing for the Bishop's election in 2025 by listening to the Holy Spirit and spending time in discernment with questions about the needs of the synod, its congregations, and its communities.

The discernment continued across the synod, with additional sessions hosted by the Discernment Committee via Zoom in July and August, and individual comments submitted online. The thoughts of more than 250 clergy and lay members were received through these means. Independently, the Synod Council considered the synod's mission priorities and the critical skills needed by the incoming Bishop. Their conclusions were consistent with those shared with the Discernment Committee, with some minor additions that are identified in this document.

The Committee realizes that the views expressed in this document reflect a limited share of the perspectives and experiences throughout the synod. However, considering the thoughtful responses and engagement offered at these sessions, the Committee compiled this Synod Profile to provide a window into how the Holy Spirit is moving through the people of the Central States. The profile begins with our purpose and giftedness, our vision for mission, and identifies challenges to living out that vision. It continues with a description of how we are currently organized for mission and concludes with a picture of the synod's future.

We encourage you to use this profile to become better acquainted with what God is up to in the Central States Synod and what God is calling us to do together for God's preferred and promised future.

Part One: Our Purpose and Giftedness



Congregations interpret this mission statement, adopted in 2021, to mean that we are here to proclaim the Gospel and serve families, the unchurched, the marginalized, immigrants, and others in our local communities. Our communities are both urban and rural, and our congregations are both large and small. Each congregation must be equipped to minister to the needs in its local community.

The Central States Synod's unique gifts for fulfilling its purpose include:

- Knowledge of the Gospel and excitement to share it within our communities;
- Being located in specific communities because we understand where God's love is needed, and we can be God in that place;
- Having facilities that can be available for community use; and
- Creativity which has led to a variety of ministries that spread the Gospel and God's love for others.

The obstacles to completing the work God calls us to do are:

- An inability to develop ways to "do" church differently or collaborate with each other even though we are willing to do so;
- Overcoming fear of change or, alternatively, a self-belief that we are incapable of change;
- Scarce resources which include fewer rostered leaders, decreasing membership, and decreasing financial resources; and
- An inability to share knowledge or stories of successful ministry that could promote further proclamation of the Gospel and sharing of God's love in our communities.



Part Two: How we organize for Mission

Current Synod Staff

- Bishop - Rev. Susan Candea
- Rev. David Whetter, Assistant to the Bishop (full-time)
- Rev. Donna Simon, Director of Evangelical Mission (half-time)
- Rev. Adam Wutka, Director of Lay Ministries (part-time, monthly stipend)
- Rich Gates, Synod Administrator (full-time)
- Tim Anderson, Synod Communications Director (full-time)
- Michelle Goodwin, Bookkeeper (part-time)

Congregations describe the Office of Bishop as supporting congregational growth and ministry by:

- Providing vision for the church's future ministry;
- Equipping congregational leadership (both rostered and lay) to proclaim the Gospel, identify God's mission for their congregations, minister in their communities, and encourage each other's faith formation;
- Assisting in situations that require conflict resolution skills;
- Guiding congregations through pastoral transitions and the call process; and
- Providing education on theology, lay leadership development, and financial sustainability.

The Central States Synod's operating budget is primarily funded by Mission Support from congregations. In addition, the ELCA funds two part-time Director for Evangelical Mission positions, and external grants fund various specific programs.

The synod currently maintains relationships with and provides ministry through a wide variety of entities identified on this [information page](#). Additional information can be found on each entity's website.

Challenges at the Synod Level - Six months after Bishop Candea's October 2019 installation, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. This delayed the synod's ability to focus on its mission of building inclusion within the synod, encouraging women in ministry, and becoming a Reconciling in Christ Synod.

Conferences - Five geographic conferences connect similar area congregations for mission and support. Congregations prefer a structure that supports communication among congregations with similar missions (regardless of geography) and enhances ministry to local communities.

This may be accomplished in various ways such as:

- Decentralizing responsibilities to rely on the autonomy of local congregations. This could also include identifying congregational partners who share similar missions regardless of whether they are geographically close.
- Continuing the current structure with a clear delineation of duties between specific synod staff and the Deans.
- Housing synod staff in various geographic locales.
- Relying on or delegating more to the Deans.
- Relying more on technology to enhance communication between the synod and congregations or among congregations with similar missions or challenges.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

- Relying more on Synod Council for leadership because it, by definition, is diverse both demographically and geographically.

Challenges at the Conference Level - Scarce resources may hinder the effectiveness of each proposed structure. Financial resources may not support adding synod staff, absorbing travel costs, or investing in appropriate technology for remote communication. There is also a scarcity of Rostered Leaders and, despite their willingness to accept additional synod leadership responsibilities, their schedules may not permit them to do so.

Snapshot of Congregations

- 153 congregations across Missouri (58) and Kansas (95), a majority of which are in rural or semi-rural areas.
- Concentrations of congregations in St. Louis and Kansas City where movement from inner city to suburban areas have left significant numbers of congregations in areas of declining population.
- 17 of the synod's 153 congregations either cannot support full-time Rostered Leadership or are currently served by alternative means (i.e., Synod Authorized Ministers, Parish Ministry Associates, or Supply Pastors).
- 76 of the synod's 153 congregations reported total annual receipts of less than \$200,000.

Challenges Facing Congregations - The pandemic significantly decreased in-person worship attendance and, consequently, financial resources for congregations and the Central States Synod. Neither attendance nor financial support have fully recovered, and hybrid remote/in-person worship has been only sporadically successful.

A significant cultural trend that has also impacted congregations is the increasingly strident public discourse which values conflict more than unity. This has entered congregational conversations as people fear discussions of mission and justice will be interpreted as "politics" instead of a Gospel-oriented call.

Over the next six years, congregations must embrace flexibility on how to "do" church (e.g., with or without dedicated buildings, various worship styles, and opportunities), and develop sustainable funding models.

Congregations must boldly and widely proclaim the free grace of the Gospel and model how to live in Christian harmony with those who may hold alternative views.

Part Three: God's Future for the Central States Synod



The top three mission priorities identified for the Central States Synod during the next Bishop's tenure:

- Embracing diversity in all of God's creation - both welcoming people in and reaching out. This includes reaching out to the unchurched, those in all demographics, and our local communities;
- Encouraging and equipping congregations to adapt to the fact that church will look different as congregations become more diverse and, as a result, may require different worship styles and locations; and
- Developing and empowering lay people to minister as the number of Seminary-trained leaders decreases.

Although implicitly included in these three mission priorities, the Synod Council explicitly noted a need to work for justice and inclusion, to communicate the Gospel where "popular Christianity" doesn't live out the love of Christ, and to reconcile with those who have been hurt by the organized church.

The critical skills needed by the incoming Bishop to support the Central States Synod in fulfilling its mission are:

- Gospel-oriented and able to clearly proclaim the Gospel;
- Excellent interpersonal skills including a calm disposition, curiosity, a sense of humor, and humility;
- Ability to recognize and develop others' spiritual gifts (whether rostered leaders, lay leaders, or staff) and use them effectively;
- Being a flexible, bold visionary in following the Holy Spirit's call;
- Able to successfully handle tense situations and resolve conflict in a constructive way;
- Experience in a broad range of ministry settings (and, as the Synod Council observed, this includes being skilled in supporting both struggling and new communities); and
- Strong administrative skills.

The Central States Synod is most excited about:

- Becoming more inclusive by, for example, building more diversity in rostered leadership and congregational membership.
- Building on the 2024 decision to become a Reconciling in Christ Synod.
- Becoming bolder in proclaiming the Gospel to provide unity and healing in these divisive times; and
- Learning how to walk together with each other, our ecumenical partners, and local community leaders and service agencies.

In Christ,

Bishop Election Discernment Team - Cathy Hohl, Chairperson
Central States Synod Council - Nancy Nagel, Vice President

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE BISHOP OF CENTRAL STATES SYNOD

The official job description of the bishop can be found in [chapter 8 of the synod constitution](#) which identifies the bishop as the synod's **pastor, president**, and member of the **Conference of bishops**. While the constitution specifies the bishop's duties, the bishop in consultation with the synod council, has the authority to determine how those duties are carried out.

Pastor of the synod – There are opportunities to preach and lead worship in so many congregations across the synod, to celebrate anniversaries, transitions, ordinations, or simply to be present with and among the people. This allows the bishop to know the congregations and people of the synod and for them to know the bishop. This better enables the bishop to provide pastoral care to rostered and synod-authorized ministers as well as congregations. While this does require a great deal of travel across the two states, the synod currently owns two cars for convenience and to minimize expenses.

While the bishop has full discretion regarding their travel schedule and frequency, the bishop also is responsible for establishing their own communication preferences and boundaries. The synod office is equipped to handle e-mail, phone calls, text messaging, and video conferencing. Responding to messages, requests, and concerns is part of the bishop's communications almost daily.

President of the synod – As the chief "officer" of the synod the bishop exercises leadership regarding the vision and direction of the ministry and the operations of the organization. This includes supervising the staff, ensuring compliance with the constitution, adopting a budget, reviewing financial expenditures, consulting the synod attorney regarding any legal issues, and assuring state and federal filings are completed.

The bishop (or designee) sits on the board of Bethany College, Camp Tomah Shinga, Kansas Interfaith Action, and Lutheran Social Services as well as any synod committees such as candidacy, endowment, Companion Synod, Lutherans Restoring Creation, etc. Most of these meetings are conducted by video conference, although there are occasional in-person meetings throughout the year. For example, once a year the synod council meets in person.

Conference of Bishops – The bishop serves not only the Central States Synod but as a bishop of the ELCA. The Conference of Bishops meets twice a year in Chicago for five days. The conference elects its own officers, has standing committees and a representative to each ELCA churchwide unit and separately incorporated ministry. The conference has a particular role in matters related to rostered ministers, reviews proposals before they are passed along to the ELCA Church Council for adoption, and advises the Presiding Bishop in matters related to churchwide planning and ecumenical relations. Bishops are often asked to consult with churchwide staff on various issues and projects, such as the Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group which is working on redoing the candidacy process. All bishops attend the churchwide assembly every three years as voting members and are asked to attend the Youth Gatherings. Additionally, the bishops of Region 4 (which includes the Central States Synod) meet once a year in retreat. Other than the Conference of Bishops meetings and Churchwide Assembly, individual bishops may determine the amount of time and travel spent on Churchwide, ecumenical, or other activities outside of the synod.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Important dates to keep in mind:

Bishops' Formation (part 1) in Chicago - June 22-26, 2025
Central States Synod Bishop Installation - September 28, 2025
Bishop's Formation (part 2), Chicago, IL - October 2-3
Conference of Bishops Meeting, Chicago, IL - October 3-7, 2025
Installation of ELCA Presiding Bishop, Chicago, IL - October 4, 2025
Conference of Bishops - March 3-7, 2026

Biography Form for Nominees

Ministers of Word and Sacrament on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who appear on the first ballot of the Central States Synod bishop election and wish to allow their name to go forward in the election process will need to complete a biography form no later than 10:30 a.m. June 6th, 2025. The biography form can be completed online here: [Biography Form](#) or by visiting www.css-elca.org/discernment.



Request for Withdrawal from the Ballot

Ministers of Word and Sacrament on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who appear on the first ballot of the Central States Synod bishop election who wish to withdraw must complete and submit a form to the bishop election committee no later than 8:30 a.m. Friday, June 6th. Forms can be picked up and returned at the check-in tables outside the assembly hall.

I, the Reverend _____, request that my name be withdrawn from the ballot for bishop of the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Signed

Date

*(Submit this form to the Central States Synod bishop election committee
no later than 8:30 a.m. June 6, 2025)*

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

BIOGRAPHIES OF CLERGY OPEN TO SERVING AS BISHOP

Individuals open to the call to serve as bishop were invited to submit a [biographical form](#). This is **not a nomination process**. It is an opportunity for individuals to indicate their willingness to serve. The following individuals have discerned that they are willing to serve as bishop of the Central States synod.



Chad Langdon

Date of Ordination: June 23, 2004

Congregation Membership:

Christ Lutheran, Wichita, KS

Current Position:

Pastor

Previous Positions:

Associate Pastor, Hope Lutheran, St. Charles, MO

Education and Earned Degrees:

*Master of Divinity, 2004, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

*Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (emphasis in Management & Marketing), 2000, University of Missouri-Columbia

List up to five (5) current or past churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

- * Synod Council (secretary 2019-present)
- * Camp Tomah Shinga board (president for 3 years)
- * Central States Synod Day Coordinator for 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering
- * Treasurer for Area 5
- * helped start The Bridge (St. Charles, MO) & Mision San Juan de Dios (Wichita, KS)

List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

- * Justice Together (secretary 2023-present)
- * Lake Afton Public Observatory (volunteer coordinator 2018-present)

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of the Central States Synod?

* I have a heart for ministry & an openness to the movement of the Spirit. My spiritual gifts include mercy, leadership, encouragement and service. I think I also bring listening & relationship skills; attention to detail & organization; flexibility & creativity; and faith & a love of the scriptures.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Describe your leadership style:

* Relational, encouraging, permission-giving, consensus-building, servant-hearted... seeking to be the best leader I can be while being the best follower of Jesus I can be.

What do you see as the principal challenge to the Central States Synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it?

I think the principal challenge is to not be afraid while facing all the different challenges at the same time (decline in church participation, financial struggles, raising up new leaders, culture wars, rise of a Christianity that doesn't reflect Jesus, urban/rural divides, etc.). As things change and we experience loss, there is much to grieve and be worried about, but God's Word challenges us to have no fear. If we believe that this is God's church, then God's got us. We, as a synod (& congregations), will likely look very different in the years to come, but if we follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, God will see us through. My approach would be to encourage congregations to try new things, build relationships, recognize resources, experiment, learn from failed experiments, share successful models & ideas, and to be faithful to Jesus no matter what. (And sometimes the most faithful thing a congregation/ministry can do is to die well and help something new resurrect in its place.)

What is your principal priority for the Central States Synod and what will you do to address it?

My priority is to try to follow the Holy Spirit, like a sailboat trying to catch the wind. The path is never straight as a sailboat tacks from one side to the other, but it takes listening, noticing, discernment, paying attention, flexibility, asking good questions, making difficult decisions, and taking action with boldness when it seems that is where the Spirit is leading.

Specifically, I think this approach takes balance. At the synod level, I would try to prioritize and balance my time, energy & work between:

- larger congregations & smaller ones
- rural ministries & urban ones
- justice ministries & mercy ministries
- healthy congregations & unhealthy ones
- starting new ministries & helping others die well

I recognize that true balance is impossible, and you're always slightly off course, but over time, when one takes this approach, the hope is to actually land where the Spirit intends for you to go.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025



Peter W. Rehwaldt

Date of Ordination: Sept. 3, 1989

Congregation Membership:

First Lutheran Church - Mission Hills KS

Current Position:

Interim Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church - Lawrence KS

Previous Positions:

Interim Pastorates: Trinity – Lawrence, KS (2024-25); St John’s Parish – Lancaster and Bendena, KS (2020-24); St. Mark – Emporia, KS (2018-20); St. Andrew – Columbia, MO (2016-18); Gloria Dei– KC, MO (2014-16); Lord of Love– Belton, MO (2012-13); Trinity– Topeka, KS (2010-12); Faith – Prairie Village, KS (2008-2010); Hope – San Mateo, CA (2006-07); St. Timothy Episcopal – Mountain View, CA (2006); First United – San Francisco, CA (2004); Holy Redeemer – Newark, CA (2000-01); St. Matthew’s – San Francisco, CA (1998); Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Kansas – Lawrence, KS (1992-93)

Regular Pastorates: Ruskin Heights – KC, MO (1993-96); Zion – Ferguson, MO (1989-92)

Academic Call: Coordinator, Office of Institutional Research, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA (1996-2005)

Interim Consultant: Good Neighbor Parish – Herrington and Burdick, KS (2023-24); LCM-KU (Westwood House) – Lawrence, KS (2021-22); Reformation – Wichita, KS (2016); Trinity – Alameda, CA (2002)

Education and Earned Degrees:

May 2005: Doctor of Philosophy (Worship, the Arts and Proclamation), Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA [Dissertation: Let All the People Say “Amen!”: A Multigenerational Understanding of Rite, Hymnody, and Preaching]

May 1989: Master of Divinity, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, IL

May 1985: Bachelor of Arts (Honors Program in Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences/Economics), Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

List up to five (5) current or past churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

- I was involved with various boards, committees, and commissions leading up to the 1988 merger that created the ELCA.
- As a member of the LSTC Board of Directors, I helped LSTC adjust to new life in a double merger – merging Christ Seminary - Seminex into LSTC and merging the ALC/LCA/AELC into the ELCA.
- As the interim campus pastor at KU, I worked with churchwide campus ministry staff.
- I served on the Hymn Editorial Committee of the Renewing Worship project, which provided the hymn-related material for ELW.
- As an administrator at the Graduate Theological Union, I was involved with various seminaries and Churchwide offices around issues of seminary education.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

- Last November, on the Sunday before the very divisive election, the Trinity music staff and I planned and led a pre-election hymn festival with the theme "A Place at the Table: Singing Reconciliation and Peace" designed to help folks connect our faith with the decisions that will be made in the voting booth, and remind us that what truly unites us and conquers our fears is the death and resurrection of Christ.
- I have served in many congregations with a wide range of community partnerships – justice-oriented, feeding the hungry, etc. – each with their own local approaches and programs, which has brought home to me that there is no one way to engage with your neighbors.
- I was a board member of the Hollis Renewal Center for nine years (including several years as secretary and vice president), which a ministry of the church, but largely serves the community.
- I have worked with clergy partners in various settings through both local ministerial alliances and personal, one-to-one relationships. Most recently, this includes participating in the Lawrence KS community response to the sudden firing of 1/3 of the faculty of Haskell Indian Nations University as part of the federal government's work to cut the size of government. These partners may not always agree on everything, but we remain partners in Christ for the sake of our communities.
- I serve on the steering committee of the Citizen's Advisory Council of the Lee's Summit R-7 school district, providing the board and administration with community input on major issues impacting the district and broader community.

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of the Central States Synod?

- Passion for the centrality of worship as the source of our hope and peace.
- Passion for hymns, which heal us and bind us together
- Passion for teaching: seminary classes; PMA classes; congregation classes, plenary/workshop teaching for the Hymn Society in the US and Canada; plenary presenter at the 2011 CSS Fall Theological Conference, etc.
- Awareness of the world outside the church, through my experiences as an exchange student in Germany, a State Dept. intern, and by congregation members who work in the political, academic, and media worlds
- Experience with the breadth of the Synod & its congregations – 2 states, large/small, urban/suburban/rural, etc.
- Experience in working with a variety of church leaders – parish pastors, congregational lay leaders, PMAs, Stephen Ministers, interim pastors, chaplains, etc.
- Great experience with transitions – my interim work with congregations, the Seminex experience, the ELCA merger, the struggles over sexuality issues, new hymnals, etc.

Describe your leadership style:

Joan Chittister wrote "Leaders must be an example to the community of its best self." As a leader, I am called to offer my best thinking and action on behalf of the community, be it a synod, a parish, or some other group. At times, this means putting my own thoughts and gifts forward; at other times it means calling forth the thoughts and gifts of others. My approach is to be collaborative and above board, so that people are not blindsided, and that our mutual work can be carried out without duplication and without stepping on each other's toes or leaving gaps and holes. I delight in this exchange of gifts, because it is what makes ministry happen.

Chittister also wrote "The leader must maintain the integrity of the community and encourage it to be what it is meant to be." This integrity – keeping the whole of the community in mind – and encouragement happens by being both organized (having agendas, plans, etc.) and also being flexible enough to take advantage of new opportunities.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

What do you see as the principal challenge to the Central States Synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it?

I believe that our Synod, like the ELCA as a whole, is facing a shortage of pastoral leadership. For quite some time, we have had smaller seminary graduating classes and larger numbers of pastors retiring from ministry, resulting in ever-longer call processes as congregations seek to call new pastors.

In the long term, we need to be purposeful and direct about encouraging people to enter the ordained ministry. The ELCA is studying the barriers to ordination, and we need to be part of those conversations and seek creative ways to tear them down.

In the short term, we need to be creative about how we structure ourselves for ministry. Larger congregations may need to consider using more lay professionals, rather than calling multiple pastors. Smaller congregations may need to consider being served by a PMA, sharing a single pastor between two or more congregations, or merging several small congregations into one.

As bishop, my role would be to help these holy discussions happen.

What is your principal priority for the Central States Synod and what will you do to address it?

Help the synod to be a community of Good News-Bringers to a world in desperate need of truly good news, where outsiders become insiders, beloved children become faith-filled adults, and those who have forgotten the good news of God's love become rememberers of it.

To that end, I would seek to guide the synod, its institutions, and its members to live in the covenant God made with us in baptism, and to:

- Practice curiosity about ourselves and our relationships to others, doing some honest self-assessment of our gifts, resources, and communities;
- Practice entrepreneurship, seeking to find new treasures and discover new uses for old treasures;
- Practice holy hospitality with one another and the world; and
- Learn to embrace conflict rather than fear it, trusting that the power of the resurrection is more than enough to see us through divisions and debates.

I would do this through gatherings like Synod Assemblies, conference meetings, and personal visits across the synod.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025



Donna Simon

Date of Ordination: October 28, 2000

Congregation Membership:

St. Mark Hope and Peace, Kansas City, MO

Current Position:

Pastor, St. Mark Hope and Peace (2000 to present); Director for Evangelical Mission, Central States Synod (2016 to present)

Previous Positions:

Intern Pastor, Lord of Light Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, MI

Youth Director, Messiah Lutheran Church, Redwood City, CA

Summer Day Camp and Afterschool Daycare Leader, then Executive Director, Sequoia YMCA

Education and Earned Degrees:

DMin, Congregational Mission and Leadership, Luther Seminary, 2016

MDiv, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1999

BA, English, San Francisco State University, 1991

List up to five (5) current or past churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

Director for Evangelical Mission, Central States Synod

Dean, Region IV Directors for Evangelical Mission

Intergenerational Team, ELCA Future Church: God's Love Made Real

Dean, Area 7 Congregations, Central States Synod

Board Member, Hollis Renewal Center

List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

Co-chair, Missouri Jobs with Justice Kansas City Workers' Rights Board

Board Member, Communities Creating Opportunity

Board Member, Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom

Co-chair, Mayor's Advisory Committee for Martin Luther King Recognition

Co-Founder, Kansas City Coalition for Welcoming Ministries

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of the Central States Synod?

I love the church and believe in its power to be Christ's body in the world. I want to help our congregations connect with their power and promise as bringers of peace, love, and hope to a world in pain. I prefer to lead from the midst of the people, in collaboration and support, but I am not afraid to speak hard truths when necessary. I am determined, creative, and approachable. I like church people and I want to see them reach their full potential. I am passionate about justice and inclusion and will continue the good work our synod has done to make sure all sorts of people are welcome and celebrated. I know what it is like to feel unwelcome in the church, and I know I'm not alone. I would love for every one of our churches to be known for their warm welcome. For two decades now, I've studied mission and leadership—in my DMin program, but also as continuing ed, including several courses at the Kansas Leadership Center.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Describe your leadership style:

My leadership style is collaborative, supportive, and trusting. I believe in gathering good people, providing the tools, and allowing them the space to excel. Bishop Candea has done that, and every member of the team makes every other member's work better. In a trusting environment, not much falls through the cracks, because staff members and volunteers understand what is at stake and want to do their best. Of course, the buck stops at the bishop's office, so it is important to be in frequent communication with staff and volunteers, just as it is crucial to communicate with leaders and ministries across the synod. Leadership is an activity, not a role. Leaders in the church must have utmost integrity, deep love for the church and her people, and a bit of stubbornness. We have to be willing to try, fail, and try again. As the leader of the synod, I would do all I could to support and equip both our rostered and lay leaders to meet the demands of ministry at this time.

What do you see as the principal challenge to the Central States Synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it?

We must learn a new way of being church. For nearly a century, we have faithfully practiced church by static attraction: put up a building, advertise, and wait for people. That model worked, and most of our pastors were trained for it. We are charting a new course. We still need leaders who know scripture, revere the sacraments, and can preach the word in a way that stirs the people. We also need people with entrepreneurial skills, deep curiosity about the people and places around them, and a dogged determination to share Jesus with a hurting world. One huge challenge is that we've measured "success" in the church solely in members and money. As congregations have grown smaller and less wealthy, they feel as if they are failing. The truth is that a congregation of any size can be a vital asset to the mission of Jesus Christ and the world. We need to celebrate the gifts they all bring, and find new metrics for the impact they are having on the world.

What is your principal priority for the Central States Synod and what will you do to address it?

Our principle priority should be helping congregations look forward to the joyful future God has for them. This is a unique time, but attendance today is similar to where it was a century ago. There are lots of folks out there who are curious about Jesus and like what little they know about him. Twenty-five to forty percent of our neighbors don't attend worship regularly, but are open to faith. As they learn more, they catch the same fire we have—the flame of the Holy Spirit that pulls us toward Christian community. Our challenge is finding ways to connect with those curious folks—simple methods of outreach and evangelism that place us in the spaces where our unchurched neighbors already hang out. As a synod office, our priority would be helping congregations do that.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025



Rev. Zac Sturm

Date of Ordination: July 30, 2006

Congregation Membership:

Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS

Current Position:

Senior Pastor, Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS, 2019-Present

Previous Positions:

Associate Pastor, Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS, 2017-2019

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Kirkwood, MO, 2009-2017

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Sullivan, MO, 2008-2009 (shared ministry with Peace Lutheran)

Pastor, Peace Lutheran Church, Sullivan, MO, 2006-2009

Education and Earned Degrees:

24 Credit Hours Toward a Master of Counseling, Missouri Baptist University, 2012-2015

Master of Divinity, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2006

Bachelor of Arts, Plan II Honors Program, University of Texas at Austin, 2002

List up to five (5) current or past churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

Member of Central States Synod Council, 2023-Present

Voting Member at ELCA Churchwide Assembly, 2022

Member of Central States Synod Discipline Committee, 2009-2015 and 2019-2025

Member, Board of Directors of Lutheran Campus Ministry at KU, 2017-2019

Member, Board of Directors of Lutheran Campus Ministry St. Louis, 2010-2014

List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Central States Synod:

Co-President, Good Faith Network of Johnson County, KS, 2022-2024

Member, Good Faith Network of Johnson County, KS, 2020-Present

Clergy Participant, Kansas Interfaith Action

Flag Football Coach, Olathe Youth Sports (.388 career winning percentage. I did not quit my day job.)

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of the Central States Synod?

I believe it is important for our next Bishop to have familiarity with our synod both geographically and in terms of the different types of congregations we have. I have been blessed to serve in three distinct geographic areas of the synod since I was ordained: 3 years in rural Missouri, 8 years in the St. Louis metro area, and 8 years in the Kansas City metro area. I have served one of the smallest congregations in the synod (at the time), one of the largest, and a mid-size congregation between the two. I cannot know everything, but I can resonate with the challenges that pastors, PMAs, and SAMs face in these areas and in these types of congregations. I believe that experience will equip me to serve those leaders as Bishop. I approach any call with a sense of humor and humility—I do not take myself too seriously. I have used Biblical storytelling and narrative preaching in my ministry since its inception and I believe I have the ability to share the stories of this synod well.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Describe your leadership style:

My leadership style can be summarized in four words: take blame, give credit. When I am faced with a difficult situation in a congregation, my first task is to ask myself how I have contributed to the difficulty. When a staff member or lay leader under my leadership has made a mistake, my approach is to share in the blame and spare them from its full weight. When the congregation I serve experiences vitality, my instinct is to praise the efforts of those behind the scenes and empower and praise those under my leadership. I believe in servant leadership and my approach to the rostered and lay leaders of the synod will always be to listen and ask, "How can I help you in this situation?" I may challenge those under my leadership at times, but I do so in private and never in public. The leaders I have admired in my life are consistent, reliable, and honest and I try to be the same.

What do you see as the principal challenge to the Central States Synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it?

To me, the principal challenge facing the CSS is the ever-changing dynamic of congregational ministry. 30 years ago, if a congregation heard thoughtful sermons from their pastor, shared the sacraments, sang together, had fellowship activities, did missional service, they could rightfully assume that they would grow. That is not the case anymore. Many of our congregations, even with strong leadership, are struggling. The congregation is no longer the social hub of the community. Many tools that pastors have relied on are no longer effective. As Bishop, I would try to find a balance between supporting the best of our traditions and being open to change. I see my role as learning from others who are finding positive results and sharing that knowledge, and any relevant resources, with the rostered and lay leaders of the synod. This work is not easy! But, God is faithful. My approach is to be honest about challenges facing us and to face them with joy and trust in the Lord.

What is your principal priority for the Central States Synod and what will you do to address it?

I am a both/and leader, so I have two principal priorities for the CSS. First, I believe the Bishop is the public face of the synod and needs to engage in public witness to the gospel and public advocacy on behalf of the poor and vulnerable. I have done this advocacy through my involvement with the Good Faith Network and the Kansas Interfaith Action. Our synod has made great strides in its public witness and advocacy, most recently by becoming a Reconciling In Christ synod in 2024, and I want to continue to follow the Spirit where it leads. At the same time, the true agents of change and effective ministry in the synod are the pastors, deacons, PMAs, SAMs, youth directors, and lay leaders. On the ground, they have more influence than a Bishop. Our rostered and lay leaders hold the power and promise of ministry. My second, and equal, priority will be to support our leaders, care for them, listen to them, creatively challenge them, and be a pastor to them.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

2025 NOMINATIONS FOR CENTRAL STATES SYNOD

Introduction

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

Pre-Assembly

Early in the calendar year, the Nominating Committee works with conferences to fulfill its responsibility as described in the synod bylaws (S9.03.04). Nomination forms are to be submitted to the synod office no later than April 15, 2025. The chair of the Nominating Committee is Jane Brda, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, Imperial, MO. Phone: 314-612-0144. E-mail: janebrda3534@gmail.com.

At the Assembly

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

Participating in the Process

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

Helpful information:

Responsibilities for Synod Council members:

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

PRE-ASSEMBLY NOMINATIONS 2025

The Nominating Committee offers the following nominations:

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

Person of Color - lay female (incumbent eligible)	Tullia Hamilton*
Deacon	Joanne Hickey
At Large - lay male	Robert Corrothers
Young Adult (male or female)	Bethany Hill Samuel Neff
Youth (2-year term)	

* Incumbent

Consultation Committee (6-year term)

Clergy	Rev. Melissa Woepell
Clergy	
Lay (2 years of existing term)	

Discipline Committee (6-year term)

Lay	Douglas Reed
Clergy	Rev. Chris Deines
Clergy	
Clergy	

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION—NOMINEES

Synod Council Nominations

Position: Person of Color, Lay Female, Synod Council

Name: Tullia Brown Hamilton

Congregation membership: Bethel Lutheran - University City, MO

Congregational Activities: Worship Committee, Lector, Transition Team

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Synod Council, 2022 Churchwide Assembly voting member

Community Activities: EarthDance Farm (board member), West End Neighborhood Association

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

Position: Deacon, Synod Council

Name: Joanne Hickey

Congregation membership: Reformation Lutheran Church - Wichita, KS

Congregational Activities: I recently moved joined Reformation after moving to Wchita. I enjoy Lenten Studies and contributing to the Lenten Devotionals.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: I was ordained as a deacon in October 2023. I serve as a Hospice Chaplain for a home health agency in Wichita, KS

Community Activities:

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

Position: At Large Lay Male, Synod Council

Name: Robert Carrothers

Congregation membership: Living Lord Lutheran Church - Lake St Louis, Missouri

Congregational Activities: Since Joining Living Lord Lutheran Church in 1989, I have been active in leadership positions. In the 1990s I chaired two strategy committees to expand the church's ministries and building and I was co-chair for two capital stewardship campaigns to expand the church building. I also served on the church council at this time as the vice president. Since I retired from my vocation in 2018, I have served on the church council as president and vice president and been a member of the finance and stewardship committee along with participating in the church's interest group ministry. I have also been a supporter of the Lutheran Men in Ministry program.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: I have not held any of these positions.

Community Activities: I currently serve on the Lake St Louis Board of Adjustment and the Lake St Louis Veterans committee.

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Position: Young Adult (male or female), Synod Council

Name: Bethany Hill

Congregation membership: Advent Lutheran Church - Olathe, Kansas

Congregational Activities: Led VBS (Advent), led activities and worship services (Westwood House), member of hiring boards (both)

Synodical/Churchwide Activities:

Community Activities:

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

Position: Young Adult (male or female), Synod Council

Name: Samuel Neff

Congregation membership: Redeemer Lutheran Church - Salina, Kansas

Congregational Activities: Choir, bells, cantor, usher, video/sound, RIC Committee, Endowment Committee, VBS

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Central Synod Conference Voting Attendee, ELCA Synod Young Male Voting Attendee

Community Activities: Salina Area United Way fundraising

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

Consultation Committee Nominations

Position: Consultation Committee

Name: Rev. Melissa Woeppel

Congregation membership: Bethany Lutheran Church - Lindsborg, Kansas

Congregational Activities: Pulpit supply, adult forum leadership, youth teaching

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Synod call to Bethany College, member of Lutherans Restoring Creation table, involvement in racial and queer justice ministries, 2022 Churchwide Assembly voting member, member of synod assembly planning teams

Community Activities: KIFA, Broadway RFD

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Discipline Committee Nominations

Position: Discipline Committee

Name: Douglas Reed

Congregation membership: Bethesda Lutheran - Winona, Kansas

Congregational Activities: Serve as the SAM for Bethesda and help instruct vacation bible school during the summer.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: Currently serve on the Companion Synod Team and have for the past several years. My wife and I have also have attended Churchwide Assembly a few times in past assemblies.

Community Activities: I currently serve as president of the Oakley High School Booster Club. Recently attended Northwest Kansas Men's Encounter. My wife and I very active in the community with our three boys activities.

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

Position: Discipline Committee

Name: Rev Christopher Deines

Congregation membership: Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church - Lindsborg, Kansas

Congregational Activities: Lead Pastor of Bethany Church. He serves on council, and any or all sub committees. He has done amazing work connecting Bethany College with Bethany Church. He has inspired many committees to revamp old ways of communication in our congregation and community. Currently serving as President of TACOL (Organization within Lindsborg) he is now linking those in need with services provided by TACOL. He sits on the Lindsborg Broadway RFD Board, and he is making lifelong connections with Youth and young adults that might not otherwise have a Pastor in their life. He just finished up a training class to learn how to apply for grants and has formed a committee to help him with grants to help pay for the Bethany Church Renovation plans. He has reached out to the Music & Arts Committee at Bethany church and taken voice lessons from the choir directors so he can better serve in worship by chanting. His door is always open and he is willing to help or assist when the time arises and to Pastor Chris it is all about Relationships, not necessarily Membership. As a result of this, our visitor offering is now much larger than our member offering on a weekly basis. Pastor Chris has helped inspire many members Young and Old in the congregation to continue to provide a safe, happy and loving atmosphere to all who enter our doors.

Synodical/Churchwide Activities: I am unaware of any Synod Roles he may be participating in.

Community Activities: President of TACOL (The Associated Churches of Lindsborg), Member of Lindsborg's Broadway RFD

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

2025 Nomination Biographical Information

Anyone accepting nomination for a Synod Council position must have a background check and therefore fill out a disclosure form. This does not apply to nominees for the Consultation and Discipline Committees or Churchwide voting members. This form is available online at www.css-elca.org/assembly

Conference _____

Position Nominated for: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Congregational membership (include city/state): _____

Congregational activities: _____

Synodical/churchwide activities: _____

Community activities: _____

Person of color/language other than English? _____ yes _____ no

Youth (younger than 18 years old) _____ yes _____ no (DOB _____)

Young Adult (between 18 & 30 years old) _____ yes _____ no (DOB _____)

Nominated by: _____

*Please return this form no later than **April 15, 2025** to Central States Synod, 420 W. 14th St., Suite B, Kansas City, MO 64105 or Tim Anderson at tanderson@css-elca.org*

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Disclosure Form

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

AUTHORIZATION

During the 2025 nominating and election process and at any time during the tenure of any position as a synod officer or Synod Council member to which I may be elected, I hereby authorize First Advantage Background Services, Corporation, P.O. Box 105292, Atlanta, GA 30348, 1-800-845-6004, on behalf of the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to verify my social security number and do a check of the national criminal data base for any convictions. An additional credit history check will be done for the nominees for the position of synod treasurer. I understand that I may request a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of the background verification.

Nominee Name (Please print and include middle name)

Address (Complete address with city/state/zip)

Nominee Signature

Date

Social Security Number *

Date of Birth

*For Identification Purposes Only

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report provides commentary on three different budget years in varying levels of detail. I'll start with detailed comments about the 2024 fiscal year and follow that with a quick summary of any revisions that have been made for the 2025 fiscal year budget. I'll conclude my report with details about the budget proposal for the 2026 fiscal year. This is the budget that will be presented to the assembly for approval. It has been reviewed and recommended by the Synod Council.

There are two versions of the budget for the 2026 fiscal year contained in the material immediately following my written report. The first version is the traditional worksheet style budget with rows and columns of numbers. This version provides a detailed breakout of each budget category for those that like to see the details. The second version is a narrative budget that provides a high-level textual description of the ministries of the synod and the funding required to support them. There are way fewer numbers in this version.

Financial status at the close of the fiscal year completed on January 31, 2025

Summary

In 2024, we had the unexpected confluence of a shallow decline in congregational support and lower than anticipated expenses. We had already budgeted for our expenses to be lower than the previous year, but we had some expenses that finished the year below what we had budgeted. As a result, we concluded the 2024 fiscal with a surplus of \$56,746 as compared to a deficit in 2023 of \$9,191. This means that we did not have to use any of our reserve funds to balance the budget, allowing us to use some of those funds to support future budgets, as I will explain later in my report.

As a part of our income, we were blessed with another robust response to the annual appeal at the end of the year. Thank you to all those congregations and individuals that contributed to this appeal. It helped us to end the year on a high note!

Income vs. Expenditures

Total Expenditures for 2024 were \$1,348,097. The amount spent was \$16,000 less than anticipated and \$122,155 less than the previous year. As I mentioned previously, we had budgeted for our expenses to be \$106,000 lower than 2023, so the additional \$16,000 reduction was a surprise.

Total Revenue & Support was \$1,404,843 and was comprised of support from the congregations, the Annual Appeal, and reimbursements & grants. This amount was greater than we had expected in the budget by \$40,000. The amount received appears to be about \$56,000 less than in 2023, but that difference is due to how we are accounting for the grant received from Churchwide to support the DEM position. We decided to report this grant in Oversight & Pastoral Care in 2024 instead of as Other Income as we did in 2023.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

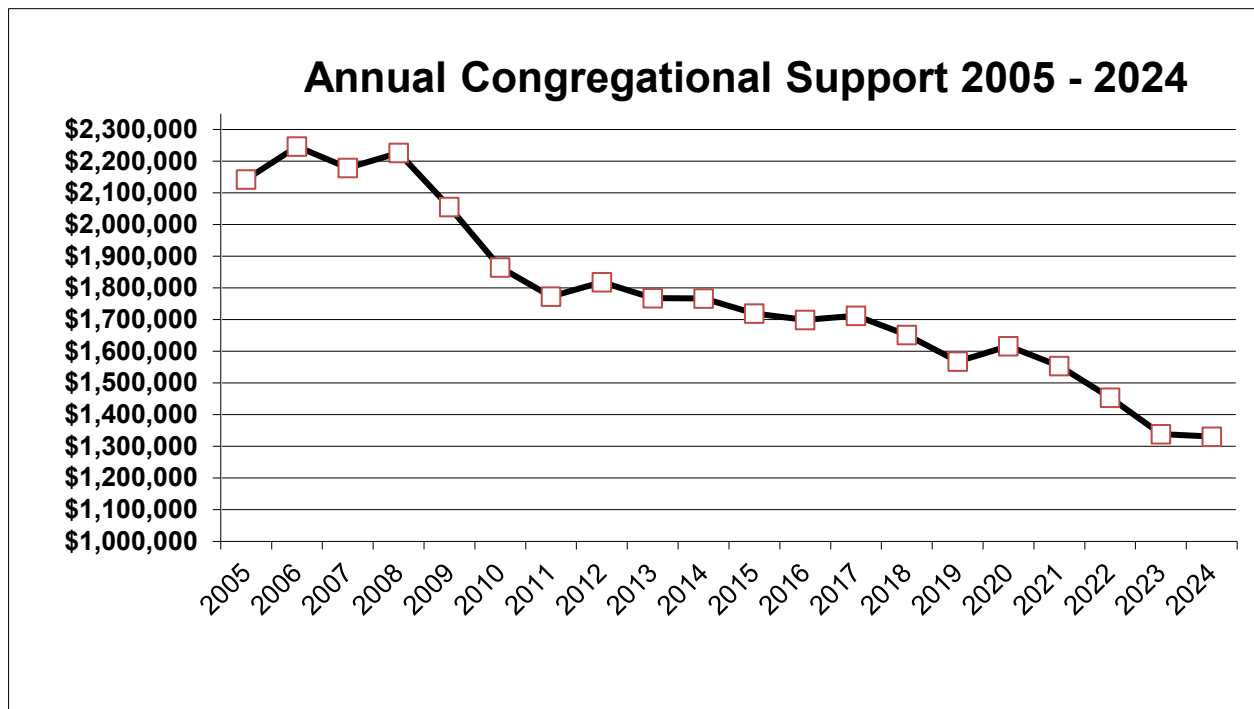
June 5-7, 2025

The lower synod expenses were driven by lower compensation costs for the synod and Campus Ministry staff. The synod staff compensation amount is also impacted by the change in our costs for the synod bookkeeping services.

A detailed listing of the actual income and expenditures for 2024 is included in the attached budget spreadsheet. Refer to the “FYE 1/31/2025 ACTUAL” column.

Congregational Support

Based on the steep decline in congregational giving that we have experienced since 2020, the revised budget for 2024 anticipated a decrease of \$200,000. One of the major headlines for 2024 is that giving from the congregations was actually \$81,000 more than anticipated and was “only” \$8,000 less than received in 2023!



As you can see in the graph above, the slope of the decline in support between 2022 and 2023 was steep at 8.6% and was the third consecutive decrease of that size. From 2023 to 2024, the decline was a tiny 0.6% in comparison. This was driven by strong giving in January 2025, the last month of the fiscal year.

A report detailing the support received in the 2024 fiscal year from each congregation of the synod is attached as a part of this report.

ELCA Churchwide

In 2024, the synod continued to contribute to the Churchwide organization at a 50% rate. This means that half of the donations received from our congregations are shared with the larger church. The total contributed was \$665,552, which was a decrease of \$3,953 or 0.6% from the previous year.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Current fiscal year budget, calendar year 2025

The Synod Council revised the approved budget for the current fiscal year to create a “spending budget” that considers additional or revised information received since last year’s assembly. This spending budget is included in the attached detailed budget spreadsheet as the “Revised” column for 2025 (FYE 1/31/2026).

The major themes for the changes made to the 2025 budget are to provide greater transparency into some of the areas of the budget, support a few one-time events, and to utilize part of the surplus from 2024 to continue to fund key ministries at their prior year levels.

To create the 2025 spending budget, the following key changes were made:

- a. Reduced the anticipated support from our congregations by \$25,000. This slight reduction is inspired by the results from 2024.
- b. Increased the amount to be released from Temporary Restricted Funds to \$90,000 to support the completion of four audits in 2025 to bring us up to date with our annual audits.
- c. Added a line item for Reconciling Works to support our membership as a Reconciling in Christ synod (\$2,500)
- d. Increased the support for the Candidacy committee to \$4,000 to reflect the results from 2024
- e. Change to the Synod Salaries & Benefits include:
 - i. Reduced the compensation amount for the part-time Lay Ministry position to \$20,000
 - ii. Moved the reporting of the grant for the DEM position from Reimbursed/Other Income to this budget line item
 - iii. Moved the expense for Bookkeeping service to Office expenses
- f. Restored a line item for the Bishop’s Fall Theological conference for \$4,000
- g. Added a line item to support a meeting for all First Call pastors attending the Fall Theological Conference (\$2,000)
- h. Added a line item for Asset Replacement Fund as a breakout from Office expenses to show the amount allocated to replace synod assets, i.e., staff automobiles (\$5,000)
- i. Reduced Office Operations to reflect the breakout of Asset Replacement, Audit, and Accounting expenses and the work done by the bishop and synod staff to reduce operating costs in 2024. (\$26,600)
- j. Added a line item for the breakout of Audit expenses to show the costs for completing four audits in 2025
- k. Added a breakout line item for Accounting services to separate this expense from Synod Staff costs and to reflect the decrease in costs due to the change in bookkeeping providers.
- l. Increased the expense for Synod Council meetings to reflect the actual costs
- m. Increased the expense for Conference Dean’s to support a meeting of the Dean’s in conjunction with the Fall Theological Conference.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Proposed budget for calendar year 2026, Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2027

The proposed budget for the fiscal year ending on January 31, 2027 is shown in the attached detailed budget spreadsheet for your consideration. This is shown in the "Proposed" column for the year 2026 (FYE 1/31/2027). This budget will be presented at the synod assembly for approval.

The budget presented is targeting congregational giving of \$1,175,000, which represents a decrease of \$25,000 from the budget for 2025. In this budget, our Total Support & Revenue will support our anticipated Total Expenses of \$1,286,075. This is a decrease of \$19,025 from the revised amount budgeted for 2025.

There were several significant additions and changes made in the budget for 2025. With that in mind, there are just a few key changes from the 2025 budget that require explanation. These changes are:

- a) Decreased the amount for Reimbursement/Other Income by \$19,000 to reflect the completion of the multiple audits targeted for 2025
- b) Continued the 50% contribution rate for Churchwide ministries, but automatically reduced it due to the reduction of anticipated congregation support
- c) Increased the amount for Synod Salaries & Benefits to reflect a 3% placeholder increase for the bishop and assistant to bishop compensation and the elimination of the Director of Lay Ministry position. All other synod staff positions will receive a 3% increase.
- d) Reduced the amount for support of Campus Ministry Salaries & Benefits to provide support for two campus pastors in the synod, acknowledging that KU does not currently have a Lutheran campus pastor. (\$50,000)
- e) Increased the amount for Office Operations to \$27,033 to reflect increased costs due to inflation
- f) Reduced anticipated Audit expenses from \$48,000 to \$13,000 because we expect to conduct only one audit in 2026
- g) Increase the the line item for Accounting services to reflect a 3% increase in costs.
- h) Increased the amount to be set aside for the Bishop Transition fund to replenish that fund after the transition that will occur in 2025.

In the summer of 2024, we replaced Adams Brown as the provider for our accounting services. We had worked with Barbara Beadle from that firm since the creation of the Central States Synod and it is always difficult to terminate a long-term relationship like that. However, I was delighted to welcome Michelle Goodwin as the new bookkeeper. She has already implemented changes to streamline our processes and has worked collaboratively with our synod administrator to enhance reporting and real-time access to financial information.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Scott Schulte
Treasurer

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

BUDGET SPREADSHEET

		2026	2025		2024		
		FYE 1/31/2027	FYE 1/31/2026		FYE 1/31/2025		
		Proposed	Revised	Approved	Actual	Revised	Approved
SUPPORT AND REVENUE							
1	Congregations	1,175,000.00	1,175,000.00	1,200,000.00	1,331,104.20	1,250,000.00	1,450,000.00
2	Annual Appeal	20,000.00	20,000.00	18,400.00	23,300.00	18,400.00	15,000.00
3	Shared Mission	0.00	0.00	0.00	504.78	263.00	0.00
4	Interest	75.00	100.00	175.00	150.53	175.00	175.00
5	Temp. Restricted Funds Released	71,000.00	90,000.00	53,000.00	0.00	55,000.00	40,000.00
6	Reimbursement/Other Income	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	49,783.30	40,250.00	50,000.00
Total Support & Revenue		1,286,075.00	1,305,100.00	1,291,575.00	1,404,842.81	1,364,088.00	1,555,175.00
EXPENDITURES							
7	ELCA CHURCHWIDE MINISTRY	587,500.00	587,500.00	600,000.00	665,552.10	625,000.00	725,000.00
SYNOD MINISTRY							
A. Agencies & Institutions							
8	Camp Tomah Shinga	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	10,000.00
9	Hollis Center-Outdoor Ministry	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
10	Kansas Interfaith Action Coalition	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
11	Missouri Voices of Faith	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00
13	Reconciling Works	2,500.00	2,500.00				
Total Agencies/Institutions		15,000.00	15,000.00	12,500.00	12,500.00	12,500.00	20,000.00
B. Teams and Task Forces							
29	Candidacy	4,000.00	4,000.00	2,000.00	5,623.47	3,000.00	5,000.00
39	Teams & TF Expenses (Shared)	750.00	750.00	530.00	710.00	1,500.00	1,000.00
Total Teams and Task Forces		4,750.00	4,750.00	2,530.00	6,333.47	4,500.00	6,000.00
C. Oversight & Pastoral Care							
41	Synod Salaries & Benefits	457,692.00	421,350.00	486,913.00	444,612.23	488,838.00	487,264.00
42	Campus Ministry Salaries & Ben	50,000.00	75,000.00	75,000.00	91,976.76	118,000.00	138,000.00
43	Fall Theological Conference	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00
44	First Call	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
48	Travel (Synod Staff)	38,000.00	38,000.00	35,000.00	32,719.12	35,000.00	38,000.00
Total Oversight/Pastoral Care		551,692.00	540,350.00	596,913.00	569,308.11	641,838.00	667,264.00
D. ELCA Partnerships							
61	Region IV	500.00	500.00	500.00	528.00	500.00	500.00
Total ELCA Partnerships		500.00	500.00	500.00	528.00	500.00	500.00

(continued on next page)

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

E. Office						
65	Rent & Occupancy	26,400.00	26,400.00	26,400.00	26,400.00	24,000.00
66	Asset Replacement Fund	5,000.00	5,000.00	2,000.00	4,360.12	4,000.00
67	Operations - Total	27,033.00	26,600.00	43,332.00	53,536.91	46,000.00
68	Audit	13,000.00	48,000.00			
69	Accounting	41,200.00	40,000.00			
	Total Office	112,633.00	146,000.00	71,732.00	84,297.03	74,000.00
F. Synod Council						
70	Meetings	2,000.00	3,000.00	650.00	2,123.61	1,300.00
	Total Synod Council	2,000.00	3,000.00	650.00	2,123.61	1,300.00
G. Conferences Support						
71	Dean's Meetings	2,000.00	2,000.00	750.00	1,454.50	986.00
75	Total Conferences Support	2,000.00	2,000.00	750.00	1,454.50	986.00
78	I. Bishop Transition Set Aside	10,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	7,000.00
	TOTAL SYNOD MINISTRY	698,575.00	717,600.00	691,575.00	682,544.72	777,050.00
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,286,075.00	1,305,100.00	1,291,575.00	1,348,096.82	1,555,175.00
	NET REVENUE OVER OR (UNDER) EXPENSES	0.00	0.00	0.00	56,745.99	0.00

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

SALARIES AND BENEFITS DETAIL FOR FYE 1/31/2026

Data Provided for Informational Purposes Only to Detail the Budget Line Item for Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2026

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

Description	Bishop	Clergy Staff	Non-Clergy Staff	Total Compensation
Base Salary	95,469.15	146,505.91	112,558.14	354,533.20
Employer's Social Security	0.00	0.00	8,610.70	8,610.70
Retirement	13,368.00	15,176.28	11,255.81	39,800.09
Basic Medical	5,928.00	22,368.00	36,285.96	64,581.96
Plan Administration & Disability	477.36	632.52	562.80	1,672.68
Continuing Education	1,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
DEM Purchase of Services	0.00	(50,848.50)	0.00	(50,848.50)
Anticipated Portico Increases for January 2025 (already included)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Compensation Prior to Reimbursements	116,242.51	135,834.21	169,273.41	421,350.13

Notes and Comments:

1. Employer's Social Security paid totally by clergy.
2. 0% increase for the bishop and bishop's associate
3. 3% increase for DEM Appell and non-clergy staff
4. Retirement funding rates for clergy are at the maximum contribution rates of 12%. The Bishop receives an additional 2% for a total of 14%. Others are at 10%. Medical plan costs vary depending on the employee's age and if their spouse and/or children are covered.
5. Bookkeeping expense has been moved to the Operations expense category

Number of FTE (full-time equivalents)

Bishop	1.00
Clergy Staff	2.25
Non-clergy Staff	2.50
Total	5.75

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

SALARIES AND BENEFITS DETAIL FOR FYE 1/31/2027

Data Provided for Informational Purposes Only to Detail the Budget Line Item for Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2027

Synod Salaries & Benefits detail for the year ending 1/31/27 is:

Description	Bishop	Clergy Staff	Non-Clergy Staff	Total Compensation
Base Salary	98,083.22	128,151.09	115,934.89	342,359.20
Employer's Social Security	0.00	0.00	8,869.02	8,869.02
Retirement	13,731.60	15,422.40	11,593.56	40,747.56
Basic Medical	5,928.00	22,368.00	37,375.80	65,671.80
Plan Administration & Disability	490.44	642.60	579.60	1,712.64
Continuing Education	1,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
DEM Purchase of Services	0.00	(50,848.50)	0.00	(50,848.50)
Estimated additional benefits costs				36,000.00
Anticipated Portico Increases for January 2026				10,000.00
Total Compensation Prior to Reimbursements	119,233.26	118,105.59	174,352.87	457,691.72

Notes and Comments:

1. Employer's Social Security paid totally by clergy.
2. 3% + \$500 increase for the bishop and bishop's associate
3. 3% increase for DEM Appell and non-clergy staff
4. Retirement funding rates for clergy are at the maximum contribution rates of 12%. The bishop receives an additional 2% for a total of 14%. Others are at 10%. Medical plan costs vary depending on the employee's age and if their spouse and/or children are covered. The 2025 Portico custom comparison adjusted for 1 year older was used to get the above amounts.

Number of FTE (full-time equivalents)

Bishop	1.00
Clergy Staff	2.00
Non-clergy Staff	2.00
Total	5.00

2026 NARRATIVE BUDGET

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

Since we all walk together to carry out God's mission, let's walk through how we will spend our money in 2026!

We are Church Together (\$587,500)

Half of all contributions received by the Central States Synod are shared with the Churchwide organization of the ELCA. This amount enables mission and ministry to happen beyond our borders (although some of these funds do indeed come back to us in terms of grants for new ministries and campus ministries.). We have maintained this same percentage for the past 14 years. It is our hope that this provides a model of consistent mission support for our congregations.

The Ministry Entrusted to the Synod. (\$19,750)

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

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

We will support an advocacy agency in Kansas to work ecumenically to voice our concerns on matters important to all the corners of the synod. **(\$2,500)**

At the 2024 Synod Assembly, we voted to become a Reconciling in Christ synod. As a part of that commitment, we pledged to provide financial support for the Reconciling Works organization. **(\$2,500)**

Do you enjoy having a pastor to lead you? That's due to the work of the Candidacy Committee, who has shepherded those interested in the ministry along the way. **(\$4,000)**

Various ministries that help develop giving and the stewardship of resources through teams and committees such as Lutherans Restoring Creation, the Stewardship Team, and the Companion Synod Team occasionally incur expenses to facilitate the work that they do. **(\$750)**

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

The Ministry of Oversight and Pastoral Care (\$551,692)

When you walk together, you need someone to lean on from time to time and someone to take the lead as well.

The ministry of Oversight and Pastoral Care includes the salaries for Synod Staff, who work tirelessly to “be there” when called upon. They lend support and encouragement to congregations and to leaders, in all the “highs” and “lows” of life together. They sometimes take the brunt of anger and frustration as the powers and principalities of this present age cause friction in human community. These are leaders committed to “being there” in whatever the circumstances. **(\$457,692)**

We have dynamic leaders for two of our Campus Ministry sites in Manhattan and St. Louis. We will support the salaries of these campus ministers, who walk with new and returning students at these Campus Ministry sites. **(\$50,000)**

Each fall the bishop and synod staff meet with all the ordained and some non-ordained leaders from across the synod. This is a time of closely walking together for theological education, discussion, fellowship, and time to better “connect” with each other. **(\$4,000)**

In conjunction with the Fall Theological Conference, all first call pastors share additional time together and with the bishop and support team. **(\$2,000)**

To enable the synod staff to be physically present with congregations and pastoral leaders this area includes travel expenses to support their work “on the road”. **(\$38,000)**

The Ministry of ELCA Partnership (\$500)

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

The Ministry of Place and Property (\$112,633)

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

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

The synod does not possess many assets, but some of those that we have, need to be replaced every so often. A prime example of this are the two cars used by the bishop and the staff to be present where called. In 2024 we replaced both cars, which means we must continue to put away funds to replace those assets in the future. **(\$5,000)**

There are also the usual costs for running an office for any kind of an organization: a copier, paper, phone services, and computers. All those things that the staff needs to conduct the “business” of the synod. **(\$27,033)**

Jesus never had to worry about a financial audit, but the synod does each year. Doing this ensures the careful management of our resources and provides transparency into the business side of the synod. **(\$13,000)**

To support the bishop and staff in the financial management of the synod, we use a part-time bookkeeping service. Our bookkeeper manages the mundane, but critical tasks, which are necessary for the synod to function like payroll, receiving funds, and ensuring our bills are paid. **(\$41,200)**

The Ministry of Leadership and Outreach (\$14,000)

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

How are these ministries funded?

Our mission relies primarily on congregations forwarding a portion of their regular offerings to our synod office as undesignated Mission Support (some call this “regular benevolence to synod”). When these offerings increase or decrease from year to year, the work of the church is strengthened or weakened and this has an impact not only synodically, but nationally and globally. **(\$1,175,000)**

Individuals, families, and congregations may designate gifts for the Synod Assembly offering and in response to the Annual Appeals or other special project needs. **(\$20,000)**

We will once again use some of the surplus that we have realized to help support the work of the synod if we don’t receive the offerings or donations needed. These funds will only be used if necessary and in the amount necessary to balance the budget at the end of the year. **(\$71,000)**

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

To support all these ministries, as a synod we will spend a total of \$1,286,075 in 2026!

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

CONGREGATIONAL GIVING**FYE 1/31/2025**

This report does not reflect any congregational gifts to local or other ministries that do not pass through the Central States Synod. "% Reg Rcpt" is Mission Support as a percent of Regular Giving received by the congregation as reported by the congregation on Form A for 2024.

If you believe there are discrepancies between this report and your congregational giving, please contact the synod office, administrator@css-elca.org.

BORDER CONFERENCE

Name	City, State	Mission Support	% Reg Rcpt	Other Giving
Advent Lutheran Church	Olathe, KS	\$55,245	11.5%	\$400
All Saints Lutheran Church	Blue Springs, MO	\$1,200	1.5%	\$50
Atonement Lutheran Church	Overland Park, KS	\$69,000	5.9%	\$5,140
First Lutheran Church	Saint Joseph, MO	\$3,000	1.1%	\$460
First Lutheran Church	Mission Hills, KS			
First Lutheran Church	Topeka, KS	\$39,339	13.3%	\$9,657
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Kansas City, MO	\$18,000	4.1%	
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Lawrence, KS	\$9,533	3.5%	\$254
Grace Lutheran Church	Osage City, KS	\$4,020	5.0%	\$400
Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Overland Park, KS	\$24,002	1.4%	
Hosanna! Lutheran Church	Liberty, MO	\$6,750	2.7%	\$17
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Kansas City, MO	\$25,300	8.4%	\$800
Kaw Prairie Community Church	Lenexa, KS	\$2,850	0.3%	\$1,250
Lord Of Love Lutheran Church	Belton, MO	\$3,750	3.1%	
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection	Prairie Village, KS	\$18,000	4.4%	\$1,670
Martin Luther Lutheran Church	Lees Summit, MO	\$6,550	2.4%	\$278
Our Savior's Lutheran Church	Topeka, KS	\$21,253	9.9%	
Overland Park Lutheran Church	Overland Park, KS	\$1,925	2.6%	\$1,491
Salem Lutheran Church	Overland Park, KS	\$13,760	5.7%	\$517
Southern Sudanese Worshiping Community	Saint Joseph, MO			
St. James Lutheran Church	Kansas City, MO	\$5,123	2.2%	\$200
St. John Lutheran Church	Lancaster, KS	\$6,027	8.5%	\$820
St. John Lutheran Church	Bendena, KS	\$4,950	7.8%	\$1,898
St. Mark Hope & Peace Lutheran Church	Kansas City, MO	\$3,900	4.4%	\$170
St. Mark Lutheran Church	Emporia, KS	\$18,153		
St. Mark Lutheran Church	Atchison, KS	\$690	1.6%	\$100
St. Mark Lutheran Church	Olathe, KS	\$20,677	5.5%	\$2,323
St. Martin Lutheran Church	Kansas City, KS	\$2,000	1.3%	\$1,310
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Valley Falls, KS	\$900	4.0%	\$500
Trinity Lutheran Church	Lawrence, KS	\$22,547	5.8%	\$4,000
Trinity Lutheran Church	Topeka, KS	\$5,004	3.5%	\$370
Upper Wolf Lutheran Church	Robinson, KS	\$1,640	3.6%	\$1,000

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

CENTRAL KANSAS CONFERENCE				
Name	City, State	Mission Support	% Reg Rcpt	Other Giving
Ada Lutheran Church	Courtland, KS			
Amana Lutheran Church	Scandia, KS			
American Lutheran Church	Belleville, KS	\$3,750		\$1,350
Andover Lutheran Church	Windom, KS	\$6,500	15.3%	\$300
Assaria Lutheran Church	Assaria, KS	\$12,000	7.4%	
Bethany Lutheran Church	Lindsborg, KS	\$20,500	1.9%	\$10,976
Christ Lutheran Church	Eureka, KS	\$300		
Christ Lutheran Church	Wichita, KS	\$20,662	8.5%	\$50
Concordia Lutheran Church	Concordia, KS	\$21,415	21.4%	\$1,637
Elim Lutheran Church	Marquette, KS	\$5,500	5.2%	
Emanuel Lutheran Church	Hutchinson, KS	\$20,000	5.7%	\$1,300
Faith Lutheran Church	Junction City, KS	\$3,840	8.0%	
Falun Lutheran Church	Falun, KS	\$4,000	5.4%	
First Lutheran Church	Manhattan, KS	\$53,246	11.1%	\$2,080
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Wichita, KS	\$21,182	4.1%	
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Washington, KS	\$2,000	3.8%	\$600
Hebron Lutheran Church	Burdick, KS	\$3,000	5.9%	
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Salina, KS	\$3,000	1.9%	\$395
Marion Hill Lutheran Church	White City, KS	\$4,800	14.1%	
Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church	Lindsborg, KS	\$6,341	4.2%	\$1,420
New Gottland Lutheran Church	McPherson, KS	\$6,600	6.9%	
New Hope Lutheran Church	Onaga, KS	\$2,175	6.1%	\$525
Olsburg Lutheran Church	Olsburg, KS	\$3,000	5.9%	
Partners (Mision San Juan de Dios) Ministry	Wichita, KS	\$516	7.1%	
Peace Lutheran Church	Manhattan, KS	\$7,500	2.5%	
Redeemer Lutheran Church	Salina, KS	\$11,195	4.4%	\$532
Reformation Lutheran Church	Wichita, KS	\$27,500	8.0%	
Resurrection Lutheran Church	Haysville, KS	\$5,850	3.6%	\$9,130
Salemsborg Lutheran Church	Smolan, KS	\$1,350	1.0%	\$12,150
St. John (Lanham) Lutheran Church	Hanover, KS	\$1,600	10.8%	
St. John Lutheran Church	Salina, KS	\$21,025	8.1%	\$5,808
St. John Lutheran Church	Wellington, KS			
St. Mark Lutheran Church	Waterville, KS	\$5,000	4.6%	
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Glasco, KS	\$2,573	10.0%	\$121
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Tescott, KS	\$150	0.3%	
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Peabody, KS	\$1,200	5.5%	
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Wichita, KS	\$450	0.3%	\$8,000
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Herington, KS	\$6,167	5.1%	\$100
Trinity Lutheran Church	Greenleaf, KS	\$200	1.2%	
Trinity Lutheran Church	McPherson, KS	\$30,300	9.5%	\$9,896
Walsburg Lutheran Church	Leonardville, KS	\$2,541	3.6%	\$300
Zion Lutheran Church	Hanover, KS			

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

EASTERN MISSOURI CONFERENCE

Name	City, State	Mission Support	% Reg Rcpt	Other Giving
Bethel (University City) Lutheran Church	Saint Louis, MO	\$31,421	8.2%	
Christ Lutheran Church	Webster Groves, MO	\$25,000	7.2%	\$500
Family of Christ Lutheran Church	Imperial, MO	\$1,000	1.4%	\$301
Gethsemane Lutheran Church	Saint Louis, MO	\$24,905	8.6%	
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Manchester, MO	\$72,036	5.8%	\$1,000
Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Creve Coeur, MO	\$17,833	4.9%	
Hope Lutheran Church	Saint Charles, MO	\$10,001	2.7%	\$144
Living Lord Lutheran Church	Lake St Louis, MO	\$31,500	3.8%	\$1,000
Lutheran Church of the Atonement	Florissant, MO	\$4,551	0.6%	\$300
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Hazelwood, MO	\$7,875	3.1%	\$804
Lutheran Church of the Living Christ	Florissant, MO	\$6,000	4.0%	
Peace Lutheran Church	Washington, MO	\$11,500	9.0%	
Redeemer Lutheran Church	De Soto, MO	\$14,408	8.5%	\$2,133
Sargent's Chapel Lutheran Church	Sedgewickville, MO	\$5,000	9.9%	\$1,000
Sedgewickville Lutheran Church	Sedgewickville, MO	\$200	2.3%	
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Bridgeton, MO	\$2,200	1.5%	\$170
St. Andrew Lutheran Church	Poplar Bluff, MO			
St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church	Saint Louis, MO	\$13,200	7.2%	\$540
St. Mark Lutheran Church	Cape Girardeau, MO	\$4,800	3.0%	
St. Philip Evangelical Lutheran Church	Saint Louis, MO	\$1,300		\$209
St. Thomas-Holy Spirit Lutheran Church	Saint Louis, MO	\$11,000	3.9%	\$620
Trinity Lutheran Church	Chesterfield, MO	\$30,000	2.6%	\$500
Trinity Lutheran Church	Kirkwood, MO	\$2,400	1.4%	
Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church	Saint Louis, MO	\$15,576	6.6%	\$1,300
Zion Lutheran Church	Ferguson, MO	\$9,166	5.3%	\$1,730

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

OSAGE CONFERENCE				
Name	City, State	Mission Support	% Reg Rcpt	Other Giving
Christ & Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church	Sedalia, MO	\$600	1.0%	
Community Lutheran Church	Eagle Rock, MO	\$500		\$100
Hope Lutheran Church	Rolla, MO	\$3,452	11.4%	
Immanuel (Brauersville) Lutheran Church	Cole Camp, MO	\$1,400		\$5,613
Kent Memorial Lutheran Church	Sunrise Beach, MO	\$22,711	16.3%	\$95
Messiah Lutheran Church	Springfield, MO	\$46,022	10.1%	\$4,393
Our Savior Lutheran Church	Salem, MO	\$600	3.2%	
Our Savior's Lutheran Church	Camdenton, MO	\$2,547	2.4%	
Our Savior's Lutheran Church	Jefferson City, MO	\$10,200	4.7%	\$2,107
Peace Lutheran Church	Hollister, MO			\$2,730
Peace Lutheran Church	Joplin, MO	\$3,417	7.4%	\$195
Peace Lutheran Church	Salisbury, MO	\$400	2.2%	
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Springfield, MO	\$8,290	3.7%	\$950
Pymont Trinity Lutheran Church	Stover, MO	\$800	3.3%	\$200
St. Andrew Lutheran Church	Columbia, MO	\$32,500	7.4%	
St. John Lutheran Church	Pittsburg, KS	\$6,000	3.7%	\$290
St. Matthew American Lutheran Church	Butler, MO	\$1,315	3.4%	
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church	Cole Camp, MO	\$7,408	3.6%	\$6,402
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Nevada, MO	\$4,997	8.1%	\$400
St. Paul Lutheran Church	West Plains, MO	\$1,040		\$520
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Lohman, MO	\$18,861	11.2%	
Trinity Lutheran Church	Russellville, MO	\$6,000	5.1%	

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

WESTERN KANSAS CONFERENCE

Name	City, State	Mission Support	% Reg Rcpt	Other Giving
American Lutheran Church	Smith Center, KS	\$5,500	5.2%	\$500
Bethesda Lutheran Church	Winona, KS	\$2,000	18.0%	
Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Wakeeney, KS	\$3,250	3.6%	\$650
Denmark (Sylvan Grove) Lutheran Church	Lincoln, KS			
Emanuel Lutheran Church	WaKeeney, KS	\$500	5.4%	
Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church	Stuttgart, KS	\$7,514	7.4%	\$200
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	Hoisington, KS	\$650	1.1%	
Excelsior Lutheran Church	Wilson, KS	\$1,200	18.6%	
Faith Lutheran Church	Oberlin, KS	\$2,100	3.3%	\$100
First Lutheran Church	Dorrance, KS	\$2,500	8.6%	\$50
Garfield Lutheran Church	Garfield, KS			
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Lucas, KS	\$2,900		\$555
Hope Lutheran Church	Rush Center, KS	\$1,250	3.1%	
Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus	Garden City, KS	\$1,500	14.2%	
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Wilson, KS	\$5,480	10.2%	\$200
Our Savior's Lutheran Church	Brewster, KS	\$3,000	12.7%	
Peace Lutheran Church	Albert, KS	\$2,707	3.2%	
Sharon Lutheran Church	Sharon Springs, KS	\$2,180	10.7%	\$405
St. James Lutheran Church	Garden City, KS	\$1,200	3.3%	\$150
St. John Lutheran Church	Kensington, KS	\$9,000	6.2%	\$200
St. John Lutheran Church	Russell, KS	\$10,008	5.1%	
St. John Lutheran Church	Ellis, KS	\$2,400	3.1%	
St. Mark Lutheran Church	Great Bend, KS	\$3,900	3.4%	\$150
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Galatia, KS	\$610		
Trinity Lutheran Church	Hays, KS	\$5,417	7.2%	\$223
Zion Lutheran Church	Phillipsburg, KS	\$4,601	7.3%	\$75

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR 2026

*Compensation & Benefits for Rostered Ministers
Pastors and Deacons*



CENTRAL STATES SYNOD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

COMPENSATION GUIDELINES TASK FORCE:

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

SYNOD STAFF:

The Rev. Dave Whetter, Bishop's Associate

GUIDELINES FOR 2026 PROPOSED

to the Central States Synod Assembly, June 5-7, 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF THE SYNOD

Dear Ministry Partners,

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

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

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

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



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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

The **2026 Compensation Worksheet** can be found at <https://www.css-elca.org/documents>.

Select the “Compensation & Benefits” tab.

Proposed changes appear as highlighted text

SECTION 1: COMPENSATION

A. APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

B. HOUSING ALLOWANCE FOR PASTORS

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

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

C. MINISTRY-PROVIDED HOUSING (PARSONAGES)

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

D. SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE FOR PASTORS

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

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

SECTION 2: BENEFITS

A. ELCA BENEFITS PLAN (PORTICO)

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

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

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

Portico Benefit Services, the nonprofit benefit ministry of the ELCA, provides the benefit program for rostered ministers, lay employees, and their families. Portico provides health benefits that also include dental and prescription drugs, as well as retirement, disability, and survivor benefits in one bundled program.* This program is designed to address the needs of rostered ministers and provide seamless benefits during change of call, leave from call, and other events unique to ministry. Our bundled approach is designed to help ensure rostered ministers and lay employees are protected against significant financial loss from a variety of risks. Through Portico, congregations** in this synod and across the country pool their collective purchasing power to provide benefits in a cost-effective manner.

Congregations and plan members share the cost of benefits. Congregations are expected to

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

support the well-being of their covered plan members by paying all or a significant portion of the contributions for benefits (i.e., monthly premiums for the health plan). Plan members are expected to participate in the cost of utilizing their health benefits through out-of-pocket costs when they receive care (e.g., deductibles, copays, and coinsurance).

The ELCA Church Council endorses a balance of cost-sharing between congregations and plan members; the cost-sharing is reflected in all the ELCA-Primary health benefit options offered by Portico, effective Jan. 1, 2026. Each fall, congregations should engage in conversation with their sponsored plan member(s) to determine the option that best fits their needs and then make their selection during Portico's annual enrollment. Current contribution rates are available at EmployerLink.PorticoBenefits.org or by calling Portico at 800.352.2876.

*A plan member may waive health coverage if they have access to valid medical insurance coverage through their spouse or another employer, or if they qualify for a subsidy due to income level when purchasing health coverage through the exchange.

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

B. AUTOMOBILE EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

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

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

C. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

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

D. VACATION

Because a rostered minister is "on call" day and night and carries heavy responsibilities daily, the recommended minimum annual vacation time is four weeks, which includes four Sundays. The congregation should consider granting additional vacation time based on length of service in ministry. The length of vacation time, including the number of Sundays off and when vacation time is to be taken, are all matters which need to be discussed openly with your rostered minister and are an important part of their compensation.

For a full time, call, it is recommended that a minimum of 20 days of vacation (including 4 Sundays) should be provided as part of the pastor's benefits.

Vacation time should be used within the calendar year and not accumulated, except by special agreement with the congregation council. Vacation time is available during the first year of any call. Vacation time is a good investment in the health and well-being of the rostered minister and his/her family. Time spent in outdoor ministries and retreats with congregation youth and adults, or work on area ministry, synod, or ELCA committees should not be considered vacation time or educational leave.

E. DAYS OFF

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

F. HOLIDAYS

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

G. CONTINUING EDUCATION

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

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

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

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

H. SABBATICAL

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

SECTION 3: DISABILITY AND LEAVE

A. TEMPORARY DISABILITY

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

B. FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE POLICY

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

Family and Medical Leave shall be granted for the following:

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

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

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

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

SECTION 4: OTHER MATTERS

A. ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION

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

Examples vary by congregation, but some have provided:

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

B. INTERIM AND PART-TIME MINISTRIES

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

C. PULPIT SUPPLY

Pulpit supply is to be arranged and paid for by the congregation. \$185 for one worship service, plus \$60 for each additional service is a recommended minimum. If additional responsibilities are requested, such as service planning, visitation, faith formation, etc., additional compensation should be considered. Mileage reimbursement should be provided, based on the current IRS business rate (<https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>).

APPENDIX A - Extended Leave (Sabbatical Guidelines)

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

The distinct benefits of a sabbatical leave are twofold:

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

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

EXTENDED SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES

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

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

APPENDIX B: Sample Family and Medical Leave Policy

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

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

Eligibility

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

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

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

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

PFML will be subject to the following general requirements:

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

How to Request PFML?

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

Reinstatement

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

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

Compliance with State and Local law

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

Notes on this Sample Policy

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

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

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

Central States Synod 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: Retried Ministers Ministers who have died Congregations that closed 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.

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS and CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

Central States Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Amended at Synod Assembly on June 3, 2023

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

Chapter 1

NAME AND INCORPORATION

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

Chapter 2

STATUS

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

Chapter 3

TERRITORY

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

Chapter 4

CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

Chapter 5

NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Chapter 6

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

Chapter 7

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

- †S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.
- S7.11.01. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held annually. The time, place, and format of the Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council.

S7.11.B.18 TRAVEL EQUALIZATION

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

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

S7.11.H.18 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

That the Synod Council shall appoint a Resolutions Committee.

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

S7.11.I.21 On those years when the assembly is held in person, planning for Synod Assemblies will provide opportunities for the youth voting members to get together for fellowship, be oriented to the purpose and procedures of the assembly, and be fully engaged in the assembly.

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

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

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

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

†S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Chapter 8 OFFICERS

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

S8.10. Bishop

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

†S8.16. Conflicts of Interest

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

S8.20. Vice President

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

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

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

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

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

S8.30. Secretary

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

- †S8.32. The secretary shall:
 - a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.
 - b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.
 - c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.
 - d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

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

S8.40. Treasurer

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

S8.50. General Provisions

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

Chapter 9

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- †S9.01.** The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S9.02.** In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.03.** There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of not less than five or more than fifteen members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.03.01.** The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members with one member from each conference. One of the members will serve as chair of the Nominating Committee.
- S9.03.02.** At the time of the appointment and acceptance of the members of the Nominating Committee, the Secretary of this Synod shall cause the following information to be published in the publication(s) of this Synod:

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

Chapter 10 Synod Council

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Chapter 11 COMMITTEES

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

Chapter 12

CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, OR OTHER AREA SUBDIVISIONS

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

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

a. The purposes of the Conference are to:

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

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

The names of and congregations in the Conferences are:

1) Western Kansas

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

2) Central Kansas

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

3) Border

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

4) Osage

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

5) Eastern Missouri

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

The Conference Deans shall:

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

Chapter 13

CONGREGATIONS

†S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod, which is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

S13.30. Discipline

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

S13.40. Synod-Authorized Worshiping Communities

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

Chapter 14

S14.10 MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

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

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2025 Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2025

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

S14.12.A23 This synod, in addition to the requirements of rostered ministers listed above, expects that each rostered minister will proclaim God's love for the world.

S14.13. The pastor shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod. The pastor shall be a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.14. Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.

S14.15. Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S14.16 When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or pastoral candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
- c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective pastor, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of the synod for this bishop's signature.

S14.17. No minister of word and sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer to acceptance or declination to a letter of call within thirty days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional fifteen days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

†S14.18.

The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregarin shall be as follows,

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

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

S14.30. Ministers of Word and Service

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

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

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 15

FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

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

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

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

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

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

Chapter 16

INDEMNIFICATION

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

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

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

Chapter 17

ADJUDICATION

†S17.01. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.

†S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the vice-president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, the applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of an ordained minister or a person on the official roster of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

†S17.03. When there is disagreement between or among congregations of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for a consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

†S17.04. When conferences, clusters, coalitions, or area subdivisions of this synod have a disagreement on a substantive issue that they cannot resolve, the aggrieved party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.

S17.10. Adjudication in a Congregation

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

Central States Synod 2024 Synod Assembly

June 6-8, 2024

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

Chapter 18

AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTION

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