



Northwestern Ohio Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

2026

**THE WAY
OF LOVE**

1 JOHN 4:19



Synod Assembly

May 30th, 2026

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Bowling Green

“ —

| **We Love because**

He first loved us. |

— ”

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Welcome to the 2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

We thank you for joining us as we explore what it means to be a synod walking together in the way of love and prayerfully considering Assembly business. This booklet includes all the information you need about the business items for this Assembly including the Order of Business, Slate of Nominees/bios, Constitutional Updates, and more.

Glossary

Lay: A child of God who loves and serves Jesus alongside rostered and authorized ministers.

RM: Rostered Minister (Word and Sacrament - called as a Pastor or Word and Service - called as a Deacon)

SAM: Synod Authorized Minister, a lay person who is appointed by the Bishop and authorized by the Synod Council to pastorally care for a community.

Conferences: The Northwestern Ohio Synod is divided into seven areas or conferences. Below are the abbreviations for each conference as they will be referred to throughout the Business Materials. For a map of the synod and view of each conference visit: nwos-elca.church/about/synod-congregations/

Maumee Valley Conference = MV

Toledo Area Conference = TA

North Central Conference = NC

Eastern Conference = E

Southeast Conference = SE

Southwest Conference = SW

Central Conference = C

Conference Deans: Deans are leaders who have been designated to provide support for parishes and leaders in their conference and serve as liaisons between parishes and the synod office. For a full list of the Conference Deans and where they serve, please see page 9. Conference Deans are wearing navy blue shirts at this assembly.

Synod Council: The Northwestern Ohio Synod Council is the board of directors of this synod, serving as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the synod assembly. Members of the Synod Council are elected at the Synod Assembly. Each member serves a term of three years and may be reelected for one additional term. Synod Council members are wearing light blue shirts at this assembly. For a full list of Synod Council members, please see pages 6-7.

Check-In Information

Check-in tables will be arranged alphabetically by last name. Simply find the appropriate table; tell the volunteer your name, congregation, and city; and they'll record that you have arrived and provide you with a name tag and voting device (for voting members). Printed copies of the Assembly Business Materials are not available. Please bring your own printed copy or download this document to an electronic device.

Hospitality Information

Please note that for some, the temperature in the St. Mark's Family Life Center may be a bit on the chilly side – please dress accordingly and bring layers.

There will be an assortment of refreshments offered in the morning. Lunch will be provided at noon.

Supplementary Reports

Some affiliated agencies and organizations have provided updates and reports which are available individually on our Assembly webpage [www.nwosassembly.org].

Please note that our 2024/25 audited Financial Statements will be made available separately on our Assembly webpage once they are finalized by our auditors, Crum and Company. All registered voting members will be informed via email when these statements are available.

2024 Synod Assembly Minutes

Minutes from the 2024 Synod Assembly have been approved by Synod Council and are available to view at nwosassembly.org.

Assembly Related Committees/Taskforces

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

Reference and Counsel

This committee ensures that all resolutions, memorials, and assembly amendments are in order and do not conflict with this Church's governing documents. The committee makes no recommendations to the Assembly otherwise.

Rev. Adam Sornchai (SE)
Rev. Rebecca West-Estell (TA)
Jacob Henry
Norm Shade

Assembly Parliamentarian

The Assembly Parliamentarian assists the Assembly and Chair with parliamentary procedure.

Paul Brooks, SAM

Nominating Committee

This committee secures nominees for election.

Rev. Alan Fuhrhop (MV)	Becky Seibert (At-Large)
Rev. Deb Monnin (SW)	Rev. Robin Small (NC)
Diane Ninke (At-Large)	Rev. Matt Wheeler (E)
Kate Philabaum (TA)	David Wolfe (SE)

Compensation Guidelines Taskforce

This Taskforce is to prepare draft guidelines for Assembly consideration.

Shea McGrew, SAM, SC Treasurer
Rev. Robin Owen (SW)
Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri (MV)
Tom Ritter (TA)

Credentials Committee

This committee reports the credentials of the voting membership.

Rev. Alan Fuhrhop (MV)
Diane Ninke (TA)

Synod Staff

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly



Bishop Daniel Beaudoin
Bishop



Deacon Sherry Krieger
Assistant to the Bishop for
Strengthening Parishes &
Parish Development



Rev. Sarah Schaaf
Assistant to the Bishop for
Emerging Church &
Community Engagement



Calla Gilson Burns
Director of Community
& Global Engagement



Cassie Mugler
Director of Administration



Cheryl Sondergeld
Director of Leadership
Development



Jillian Russell
Communication &
Administrative Coordinator



David J. Seitz
Business Manager



Diane Stultz
Administrative Assistant



Jacob Henry
Governance & Policy
Specialist



Vince Krolak
Technology Specialist

Synod Council

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly



Bishop Daniel Beaudoin
President
2028



Nancy Yunker
Vice President
2026



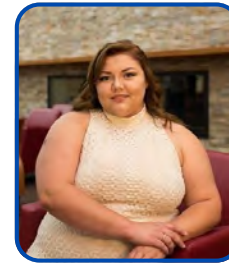
Michelle Schaffer
Secretary
2028



Shea McGrew
Treasurer
2030



Rev. Tucker O'Leary
Central Rostered
2028



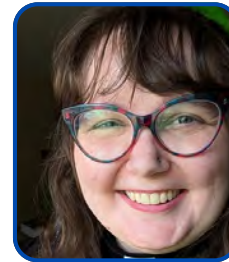
Caitlin Brink
Central Lay
2026



Deacon Carolyn Steinfeldt
Eastern Rostered
2026



Beth Kieffer
Eastern Lay
2028



Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri
Maumee Valley Rostered
2026



Kelly Weber
Maumee Valley Lay
2028



Rev. Melanie Haack
North Central Rostered
2027



Clark Price
North Central Lay
2027

Synod Council

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly



Rev. Tanyce Addison
Southeast Rostered
2027



Jerusha Walker
Southeast Lay
2026



Rev. Melodi Hagen
Southwest Rostered
2028



Wendy Bauer
Southwest Lay
2027



Rev. Aaron Baughman
Toledo Rostered
2028



Kevin Swagler
Toledo Lay
2026



Kathy Jurrus
At-Large Lay
2026



Christine Reasoner
At-Large Lay
2028



Josh Billnitzer
At-Large Young Adult
2028



Rodney West-Estell
At-Large Minority
2027

Synod Conference Deans

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly



Rev. Stacy Lauer-Scovanner

Eastern Conference



Rev. Matthew Wheeler

Eastern Conference



Rev. Mindy Elliot

Maumee Valley Conference



Rev. Janine Shearer

Maumee Valley Conference



Rev. Shawn O'Brien

North Central Conference



Rev. Carol Pretorius

Southwest Conference



Rev. Adam Sornchai

Southeast Conference



Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson

Toledo Area Conference



Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri

Toledo Area Conference

Synod Call Facilitators and Liaisons

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly



Helena Morris

Maumee Valley
Conference



Mary Boals

Maumee Valley
Conference



Paul Brooks

Central Conference



Tom Ritter

Toledo Area Conference
North Central Conference



Hannah Mapus

Eastern Conference
North Central Conference



David Wolfe

Southeast Conference

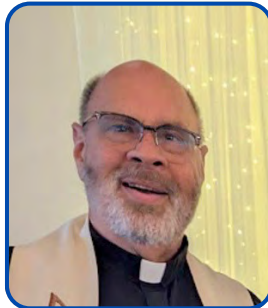


Rev. Deb Monnin

Southwest Conference

Synod New Ministry Journey and Transformation Team

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

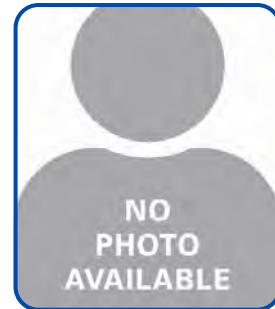


Rev. Tim Philabaum

Team Leader



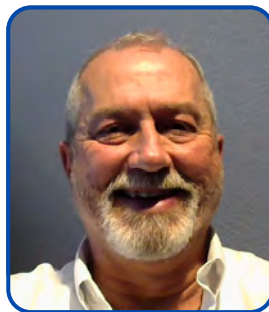
Rev. Michael Poole



Rev. Tracy Pryor-Poole



SAM Jeannine Grimm



Rev. Jeff Bunke



Rev. Nancy Kin



Rev. Ken Pollitz



Rev. Cindy Ritter



"We love because he first loved us."

The 2026 theme for the Northwestern Ohio Synod is the Way of Love, which is the Way of Jesus. In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus shares the Greatest Commandment. ***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*** Many of us remember learning this beautiful teaching of Jesus in Sunday School or catechism class. Many of us have committed these words to memory. But learning and quoting the words of love is not the same as living the Way of Love.

The love that Jesus calls us to is unconditional. This is a love that is not based on our worth or our ability to reciprocate. This is a love that shows up in deeds and not simply words. *"Little children, let us love, not in words or speech, but in truth and action"* (1 John 3:18). The way of love is enduring. St. Paul reminds us, *"Love never ends"* (1 Corinthians 13:8a). Finally, the way of love is transformative, calling us to reflect God's love with and for the neighbor, the community, and the world. This is a love that when mobilized has the power to change the world.

The Way of Love always begins with God. Here is God's self-giving love, fully revealed in Jesus, poured into us by the Holy Spirit, and lived out in our lives for the sake of the other. As we read in the 2026 Way of Love Memory Verse, *"We love because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). John provides a beautiful glimpse into the Way of Love, which is a love that we are called to share with the world.

During our time together for the 2026 NWOS Synod Assembly, we will be leading with the Way of Love in mind. During the assembly, you will be introduced to several partners in ministry that lead in the Way of Love. You will receive a gift of love through our new 2026 Bible Study; we invite you to share this resource within your communities.



Access our 2026 Way of Love Resources
by scanning the QR code.

Proposed Order of Business

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

Saturday May 30, 2026

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 7:30 AM | Registration Opens (until 9 AM) |
| 9:00 AM | Gathering Worship |
| 10:15 AM | Business Session #1 |
| | Welcome |
| | Testing of Voting Devices and Credentials Report |
| | The Way of Love Teaching |
| 11:20 AM | Presentation and Close of Nominations |
| 11:45 AM | Story of Love |
| 11:50 PM | Lunch (provided by Call of the Canyon) |
| | <i>(Those participating in the mass choir will have practice at 1:00 PM in the Sanctuary).</i> |
| 1:15 PM | Business Session #2 |
| | Story of Love |
| | Voting on Nominations |
| | Presentation of Constitutional Updates |
| | Presentation of Financial Reports and Mission Spending Plan |
| | Presentation of Compensation Guidelines |
| | Churchwide Report |
| 2:00 PM | Story of Love and Pie Break |
| 2:45 PM | Synod Leadership Reports |
| | Voting on Constitutional Updates |
| | Voting on Mission Spending Plan |
| | Voting on Compensation Guidelines |
| 4:45 PM | Story of Love |
| 5:00 PM | Sending Worship |

Proposed Assembly Rules of Procedure

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

The following standing non-parliamentary rules of the assembly may be adopted by a majority vote:

- Rule 1. (a) To obtain recognition, a member must go to the microphone and be recognized by the chair; (b) The member will identify themselves by giving their name, and the name of their congregation, agency, or institution, including town/city; (c) the member will speak clearly and concisely.
- Rule 2. During voting, non-voting guests must be seated in designated guest areas to the sides of the Assembly floor.
- Rule 3. Any/all amendments shall be submitted to the Synod Council Secretary via email to assembly@nwos-elca.org, or in writing to the Secretary's Table on the Assembly floor no later than 12pm (noon) Saturday May 30, 2026. It is the responsibility of the amendment's author to confirm with the Secretary, prior to the deadline, that the Secretary has received the amendment.
- Rule 4. No materials may be distributed within the bounds of the Assembly floor except as authorized by the Synod Council Executive Committee, Synod Staff, or unless authorized by the Assembly.
- Rule 5. The Consent of all nominees for election must be secured prior to being nominated and nominees will be listed in alphabetical order by last name on the ballot. All nominees are requested to submit a bio form to be made available to the Assembly.

The following standing parliamentary rules of the Assembly may be adopted by a 2/3 vote of the assembly:

- Rule 6. (a) Unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the Assembly, all speeches during discussion shall be limited to two (2) minutes; (b) Speakers may speak a second time on the same issue, but only after all others desiring to speak have been given an opportunity to do so; (c) If a speaker agrees with the points made by a previous speaker, the speaker should state their agreement and not repeat the same points.
- Rule 7. The chair shall have the authority to adjust the Order of Business and to call items of business in the order the chair considers to be most expedient to the conduct of the Assembly's business.
- Rule 8. Except for items introduced by the Synod Council, items of business which are not in the Order of Business, may be introduced by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.

Proposed Constitutional Updates for the Synod Constitution

The following constitutional amendments are recommended by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Per S18.12 amendments recommended by the Churchwide Assembly may be adopted by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly without prior presentation, and amendments that are identical to provisions in the Constitution for Synods are ratified upon adoption by the Synod Assembly.

Following is the official notification of amendments to the Constitution for Synods that were approved by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Additions are underlined; deletions are struck through; all changes are highlighted.

To view the full Synod Constitution (Revision 20) which includes the required changes approved by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, please click here <https://nwos-elca.church/resources/constitution-resources/>

Section 1: Amendments to Required Provisions

Chapter 8. OFFICERS

†S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the second month September following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

Rationale: Clarification through a fixed date.

Section 3: Provisions Reclassified from Required to Non-Required

Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

‡S1.21. The seal of this synod is *(describe)*.

Rationale: Because corporate seals are no longer in frequent use, the recommendation is to make this a non-required provision.

Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

‡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.

Rationale: Recommend making this a non-required provision to allow for situations where the person receiving the highest number of votes could be elected.

Chapter 11. COMMITTEES

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

Rationale: This provision is being made non-required.

Section 4: Amendments to Non-Required Provisions

Chapter 7. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshipping communities and/or outreach ministries 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.

Rationale: This would allow synod-authorized ministers (SAMs) or representatives of synod authorized worshipping communities or outreach ministries to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

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 receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) 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 (including ties in the final qualifying position) 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 (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.

Rationale: Clarification of election process in the event of tie votes.

Chapter 10. SYNOD COUNCIL

S10.05. ~~No e~~Elected members of the Synod Council shall ~~not~~ receive compensation solely for such ~~their~~ service as council members.

Rationale: Clarification, and establishment of the possibility that elected Synod Council members may receive compensation for other services provided to the synod.

S10.06. No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, 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).

Rationale: For purposes of avoiding conflicts of interest, this provision allows synods to define where relatives of synod staff may or may not serve.

- S10.~~06~~07. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet
- S10.~~06~~.07.01 Should a vacancy occur...
- S10.~~07~~08. The composition of the Synod Council
- S10.~~07~~.02.~~08~~.01 Each member of the Synod Council...
- S10.~~07~~.03.~~08~~.02 The Synod Council shall meet at least quarterly.
- S10.~~07~~.04.~~08~~.03 No elected member of the Synod Council...
- S10.~~07~~.05.~~08~~.04 The terms of the Synod Council members...

Rationale: Renumbering

S10.09 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council

Rationale: This provision was never included in previous versions of the Synod Constitution.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATIONS

S13.40. Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities and Outreach Ministries

Rationale: This amendment reflects a change in terminology when referring to authorized worshiping communities and extends the synods' authority to acknowledge authorized outreach ministries as well.

S13.41. Authorized worshiping ~~Worshiping~~ communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and 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.

Rationale: This amendment reflects a change in terminology when referring to authorized worshiping communities and extends the synods' authority to acknowledge authorized outreach ministries as well.

Slate of Nominees

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

* indicates incumbent

Synod Council	Term	Nominee	Nominee
Vice President	2026-2030	Steve Detmer	Amy Schroeder
At-Large Lay	2026-2029	Raegan Homan	Kathy Jurrus*
At-Large Youth	2026-2029	Kelsey Schwiebert	
Central Lay	2026-2029	Jacob Branan	
Eastern Rostered Minister	2026-2029	Rev. Clayton Bailey	Deacon Carolyn Steinfeldt*
Maumee Valley Rostered Minister	2026-2029	Rev. Steve Basselman	Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri*
Southeast Lay	2026-2029	Kristen Ealy	Jerusha Walker*
Toledo Area Lay	2026-2029	Dawn Milner	Kevin Swagler*
At-Large Minority	2027-2030	Birdena Martin	
North Central Lay	2027-2030	Andy Kessler	Karen Young
North Central Rostered Minister	2027-2030	Rev. Brandi Bailie	Rev. Robin Small
Southeast Rostered Minister	2027-2030	Rev. Tanyce Addison*	Rev. Richard Genzman
Southwest Lay	2027-2030	Kara Manning	Ingrid Miller-Tebbe
Southwest Rostered Minister	2027-2030	Rev. Mark Bauer	

Consultation	Term	Nominee	Nominee
Rostered Minister	2026-2032	Rev. Adam Sornchai	Rev. David Westphal
Lay	2027-2033	Jeannine Fuhrhop	Tristan Schryer
Rostered Minister	2027-2033	Rev. Matthew Diehl	Rev. Doug Pretorius
Discipline	Term	Nominee	Nominee
Lay	2026-2032	Brian Miller	Jana Ringwald
Rostered Minister	2026-2032	Rev. Howard Abts	Rev. Mark Wentz
Lay	2027-2033	Steve Reinhard	
Rostered Minister	2027-2033	Rev. Alan Brown	Deacon Jennifer Heinze
Nominating	Term	Nominee	Nominee
At-Large	2026-2029	Megan O'Brien	Jessica Sornchai
Eastern	2026-2029	Sherry Ferne	Hannah Mapus
Maumee Valley	2026-2029	Helena Morris	Kelly Weber
North Central	2027-2030	Rev. Brandi Ballie	Linda Henry
Southeast	2027-2030	Linda Aufdencamp	Kevin McNeal
Southwest	2027-2030	Rev. Carol Pretorius	

Churchwide Assembly 2028

Nominees

Female Lay Voting Member
(Elect 3)

Crystal Chapman

Becky Seibert

Kristen Ealy

Sheila Smith

Helena Morris

Jessica Sornchai

Sarah Neal

Ellen Williams

Cary Roehm

Karen Young

Male Lay Voting Member
(Elect 3)

Paul Brooks

Brad Isbell

Marvin Coressel

Shea McGrew

Don Davis

Alex Schmidt

Todd Hone

Nick Wenzel

Rostered Female Voting
Member (Elect 2)

Rev. Tanyce Addison

Rev. Janine Shearer

Deacon Jennifer Heinze

Rev. Robin Small

Rev. Beth Ferne-Johnson

Rev. Rebecca West-Estell

Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri

Rostered Male Voting
Member (Elect 2)

Rev. Clayton Bailey

Rev. Doug Pretorius

Rev. Ian Boden

Rev. Mark Wentz

Rev. Chris Hanley

Person of Color

LaTrina Smith

Youth/Young Adult

Phoebe Jackson

Synod Council Vice-President Nominee Bios: 2026-2030

Nominee: Steve Detmer, Epiphany, Toledo
For: Synod Council, Vice President



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

On the administrative side of this position, I bring over 37 years of experience working in a Fortune 500 company in various leadership roles. I am confident in my ability to strategize, plan, organize, facilitate, analyze, consult, and communicate. I have global travel experience and love working across diverse cultures. I was also a part-time adjunct at BGSU, teaching in both the graduate and undergraduate colleges. I retired from corporate work and teaching last year.

I am a lifelong Lutheran, beginning with a rural, small-town upbringing (Holgate), and now in an urban context (Epiphany, Toledo). I have served in a variety of congregation-level roles (council president, membership, stewardship, Christian education) and have led Bible studies, served as worship assistant, and preached on several occasions. I am active in the Via de Cristo movement (Lutheran Cursillo) and have recently completed Stephen Ministry training. I started the Diakonia program last year and plan to pick it up again in the fall.

I have also been active outside of the congregation - in the past as a scout leader, United Way volunteer, BGSU advisory board member, ELCA Youth Gathering leader (InfoLine), and NWO Synod Appeal chair. Currently I am an election poll worker, and I spend a good amount of time designing and building sets for Epiphany Players (a community theatre and ministry).

I have been blessed with experiences, perspectives, and the energy to serve.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I borrow from our Via de Cristo framework to describe how my faith shapes my approach to engagement: Through Piety, I ground myself in where I sense the Spirit is leading me. This includes daily meditation (Lectio 365 is my favorite) and prayer, weekly worship, and monthly spiritual direction. Through Study, I look for guidance from Scripture and podcasts (e.g., the Bible Project, Working Preacher) to see what those before me have done and what I can discern from others. Through Apostolic Action, I respond to God's blessings in my life by finding ways to use my gifts to serve and minister to others.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

Foremost, my hope lies in the knowledge that God's love for all creation is unchanging and eternal. The Church, with all its beauty and flaws, is part of that plan. I have hope for the future of the Church because I see a longing for people to be in community with one another - not only within their own congregations and communities, but also across cultures. And when we bring the love of Christ into these fellowships, the Church begins to move and take shape. I am hopeful because what we long for most (to belong and to love) is the very way Christ designed the Church to thrive.

Nominee: Amy Schroeder, St. Marks, Bowling Green
For: Synod Council, Vice President



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I have been an active member of St. Mark's Lutheran church for 25 years where I have been blessed to be on call committees, facilitated fundraising efforts, coordinated and been on local, global, and domestic mission trips, and served in countless roles during worship. I have experience guiding teams, listening thoughtfully to others, and helping groups make decisions with clarity and purpose. Through my involvement in church and community, I've developed a strong sense of collaboration, whether planning events, supporting outreach efforts, or mentoring others. I also bring discernment, adaptability, and a commitment to serving with integrity, all of which help me lead effectively and support a shared vision.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith shapes my approach by grounding me in a spirit of humility and purpose. It calls me to serve others selflessly, whether through volunteering, supporting outreach efforts, or simply being present for those in need.

In discernment, my faith encourages me to seek wisdom through prayer, reflection, and listening—helping me make thoughtful, values-driven decisions rather than reacting quickly or independently.

In collaboration, my faith reminds me that we are stronger together. I strive to listen openly, respect diverse perspectives, and work in unity with others in the church and community, whether planning events, leading groups, or supporting shared goals.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

What gives me hope for the future of the church is its ability to grow through community, embrace new voices, and remain rooted in love, service, and through the Word. I see people coming together with renewed purpose, seeking truth, and supporting one another in meaningful ways.

Synod Council Nominee Bios: 2026-2029

Nominee: Raegan Homan (Roehm), St. Marks, Van Wert
For: Synod Council, At-Large, Lay



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

There are many different experiences and opportunities that have shaped who I am as a person along with have shaped my faith to better disciple others. The first experience includes being a summer intern at Freedom International Ministries in the Dominican Republic where I had different responsibilities within a school setting along with leading other mission teams during their time serving. As an intern I grew my relationship with the Lord along with trusting in His mission. Another opportunity from the Lord includes being a co-leader of campus ministry at St. Marks Lutheran in Bowling Green, Ohio. Through this experience the Lord used my gifts and talents of creativity and collaboration to work alongside a peer to plan different events along with the weekly small group devotional. Overall, these experiences have encouraged me to embrace the gifts that the Lord has provided and use them to bring Him glory and to share the Good News.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith shapes my approach to service through Galatians 5:22-23, the Fruit of the Spirit. By grounding my faith in scripture, I am able to have the Fruit of the Spirit at the forefront when serving others. Serving is not about the work that is completed but rather how it brought Glory to God's name or brought someone closer to the Lord. My faith allows me to understand humility and being part of something so much greater than myself. My faith's foundation also guides me back to the Father in times of uncertainty or in challenging times. My faith shapes my approach to discernment through the daily practice of prayer and reflection through spending time in God's word. Lastly, my faith shapes my collaboration with others through understanding that we are all working towards the same goal and serving the same God.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

There are many things that make me hopeful for the future of the Church, including the immense interest and curiosity to serve others. As a young individual myself, I have seen the hope and desire of young people to be involved and to serve. Along with the next generations of Christians, the church community as a whole makes me hopeful for the future. Creating a space where people are welcome and loved when beginning their walk with Christ ultimately leads to more disciples and faithful people. By creating devotionals and space for everyone to grow in their faith using

gifts and talents, we are able to then better disciple others as a church community. Overall church communities and their willingness to serve makes me hopeful for the future.

Nominee: Kathy Jurrus, Epiphany, Toledo
For: Synod Council, At-Large, Lay

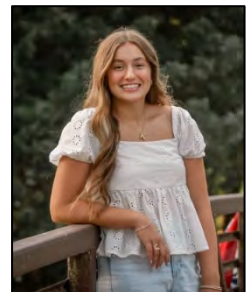


The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am currently a member of the NWO synod council. At Epiphany, I sing in the choir and serve as the choir music librarian along with attending Bible study. I have been involved in VBS, Epiphany's theatre ministry and served as a communion assistant and lector. In my previous congregations, I have served on church council, served on the support committee for several of the seminary interns, was a synod delegate for many years and served on the evangelism committee. I have a four-year college degree and have graduated from the NWO Synod's Diakonia program. I am active in the local Via de Cristo movement where I am currently secretary and registrar. I am a retired registered nurse and have served on my state and national specialty nursing and certification boards.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
"We are the Church". I believe that we can work together and through our prayer life and study of the Word, direct our actions to spread the Good News to others that we encounter in our daily lives.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
I am hopeful for the future of the Church because "God is in Control". Even though I wonder why things happen like they do, I know it is all a part of His plan.

Nominee: Kelsey Schwiebert, St. Stephen, Hamler
For: Synod Council, At-Large, Youth



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am involved in various activities: 4H, volleyball, basketball, track, archery, Student Council, Peer-to-Peer Guidance group, National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Luther League. Being involved in all these has helped me build great leadership skills, hard work, dedication, and willingness to learn and help others around me.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

Faith has helped shape my approach with others because I always try to treat everyone with kindness and respect. With everything that I do, I don't do it with the purpose of seeking praise or trying to outdo everyone else; I do it to help spread the light and joy of God to those around me.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I feel that in the past, there has been a negative stigma that God is not present in many people's lives and that there are not a lot of people who believe in God, but over the past couple of years, I can see that changing. I feel that the stigma has been broken. There are many influential people online who share the word from the Bible. Even if they get hate for it, they continue to share God's word. Overall, I am very hopeful that there will be many more believers of Christ and more people who will attend the Church to help grow in their faith.

Nominee: Jacob Branan, Good Hope, Arlington
For: Synod Council, Central Conference, Lay



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I bring strong organizational and leadership skills to this position, along with meaningful experience serving in parish ministry. I am comfortable organizing, leading, and collaborating with groups of people to plan and carry out successful programs and events.

Last year, I served as the director of our church's Vacation Bible School, where I coordinated volunteers, planned activities, and helped create a positive, faith-filled experience for children. I also directed our Live Nativity, a parish-wide Christmas event that shared the story of Jesus' birth with the wider community, requiring careful planning, teamwork, and communication. In addition, I have served as the secretary of our Parish Education Board for the past two years.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith shapes my approach to service by calling me to invest in the next generation of the Church. As a teacher, I believe children are not only an important part of the parish, but the future of it. Because of this, much of my service is focused on supporting, guiding, and nurturing children in ways that help them grow both academically and spiritually.

Faith also guides my discernment by reminding me to be patient, compassionate, and attentive to the needs of others. I try to approach decisions with prayer and

reflection, asking how my actions can best serve the Church community and reflect Christ's love.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

What gives me hope for the future of the Church is the presence, faith, and potential of its young people. Through my work with children in the parish, I see their curiosity, enthusiasm, and openness to faith. When children are supported by committed adults and given opportunities to learn, serve, and belong, the Church continues to grow in meaningful ways.

I am also hopeful because of the many dedicated volunteers, families, and parish leaders who collaborate to support faith formation. My experiences working alongside others in leadership and education roles have shown me that when people share their gifts and work together with a common purpose, the Church remains strong and adaptable. This combination of engaged youth and committed collaboration gives me confidence and hope for the Church's future.

Nominee: Rev. Clayton Bailey, Grace, Fremont

For: Synod Council, Eastern Conference, Rostered Minister



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

In serving five congregations, in three different synods, I have seen a wide variety of ministry across the church in my twenty-four years as a pastor. I have a passion for worship leadership, serving and connecting to the community, and youth ministry.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I once was challenged to write a personal mission statement. It is a bold reminder of who I am, and who I am called to be. "I am a baptized child of God, fed and forgiven by Jesus Christ, and empowered to serve by the Holy Spirit." This is not only who I am, but who we are all called to be as we work and worship in the world together.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

We live in challenging times. While there may be so much unrest in our world, the peace and presence of Christ continue to have depth and meaning that speaks truth in the midst of troubled times. Today, more than ever, is our chance to live out our baptismal promises and present the Light of Christ to the world.

Nominee: Deacon Carolyn Steinfeldt, St. John, Sandusky
For: Synod Council, Eastern Conference, Rostered Minister



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
Congregational Youth and family ministry experience, past Synodical president of the Women of the ELCA, former vice president of the Churchwide Lutheran Association of Christian Educators, Stephen's Minister, current member of the Candidacy Northern Ohio Candidacy Committee.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I believe God is the God of all people and we are all called to serve God by caring for others, even those we might not understand. As a Home Economics teacher, my focus was on the family in all of its expressions. I believe as rostered Deacon in the ELCA I have continued this focus on the importance of family and community.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The glowing faces of children when they hear the story of Jesus' love for them.

Nominee: Rev. Steve Basselman, St. Martin's, Archbold
For: Synod Council, Maumee Valley, Rostered Minister



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have served in various capacities within the Northwestern Ohio Synod over the past 25 years, but not as much recently. I served as a full-time parish musician for over 20 years and became rostered as a Deacon in 2016. I was ordained into Word and Sacrament ministry in 2024.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith shapes my interactions with people in a practical way. I have served and led a variety of ministry for many years taking people where they are as a starting point.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

My hope for the church is that local congregations remain connected within their communities.

Nominee: Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri, Trinity, Wauseon
For: Synod Council, Maumee Valley, Rostered Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
My gifts include communication, discernment, and relationship building throughout the church. The experience I offer comes from my first term in this position on synod council, and an outsider perspective as someone who only moved to Northwest Ohio in 2021 to serve my first-call congregation.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
Our faith calls us to do two things—love God and love our neighbor. These two principles shape my approach to all types of interactions when it comes to the wider church and the world. I serve with love as the foundation, I discern with love as the lens, and I collaborate with love at the center.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
The passion of younger members of the church universal makes me hopeful for the future of the church. Not because I believe that youth or young adults are ONLY future leaders of the church, but because I see them as leaders of the church NOW that offer inspiration and hope when we fully support their input.

Nominee: Kristen Ealy, First Evangelical, Upper Sandusky
For: Synod Council, Southeastern Conference, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I believe that my resourcefulness, integrity and willingness to learn and help make groups I am a part of continue to make progress. Not only at church but through school and sport leagues I don't shy at exploring ways to promote growth and awareness. I value what my peers bring to the table and work well with others, even in difficult situations.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
Attempting to 'Love like Jesus' isn't just our Bible School motto, it is how I try to navigate this world. Service to me is not for recognition, I want to do good for others and not be seen! Working with other faith-based organizations and churches within our community is about working together with love and purpose despite our differences!

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

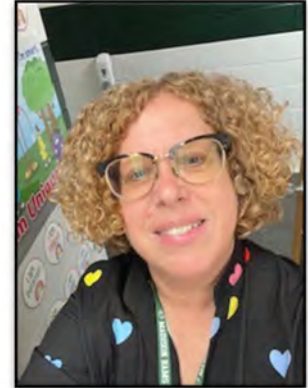
I believe that we are facing tough and challenging times, but that is what makes it exciting. To explore ways of being church in new and inventive ways and see just how far we can go. I'm thinking that even though change is hard, it can be beautiful as well!

Nominee: Jerusha Walker, Trinity, Galion

For: Synod Council, Southeastern Conference, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I am currently serving my first term on Synod Council, and I have found it to be a truly enjoyable experience. The information and perspective gained is valuable, especially in my newer role as a Synod Authorized Minister. I appreciate having first-hand knowledge of the ministry and business of the Synod in order to better serve my congregation. Synod Council provides support, resources and opportunities for personal growth that have been important to my development as a leader. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve - thank you!



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I believe that my faith shapes my approach to everything I do. I try my best to be a light shining wherever darkness threatens. I aim to lead with love and offer grace, sharing God's word and truth to the best of my ability.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The Church has the ability to bring love and peace to all who long for new life. As we are fed and nourished at the table and cleansed in the waters of baptism, we are equipped as the church to offer hope, work for justice, show mercy and bring light to the world. Living in God's steadfast love, the Church can serve all those in need with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Nominee: Dawn Milner, Providence, Holland

For: Synod Council, Toledo Area, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

30+ years in education gave me strategic oversight and mentoring skills, while 9 years as a pastor's wife provided a deep heart for parish life. I offer the confidentiality, active listening, and fiduciary discernment vital for Synod leadership.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith is rooted in servant leadership; I view every classroom and parish interaction as an opportunity to reflect Christ's grace. I approach discernment through prayerful listening, seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to balance institutional needs with pastoral care. For me, collaboration is an act of stewardship, honoring the diverse gifts within the Body of Christ to build a more inclusive, vibrant community.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I am hopeful because I see the Holy Spirit moving through intergenerational connection. Youth are not just the future, but the present of the Church. Their hunger for authentic community and social justice, paired with the wisdom of our elders, creates a vibrant, evolving Body of Christ capable of profound grace and renewal.

Nominee: Kevin Swagler, Community of Christ, Whitehouse
For: Synod Council, Toledo Area, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I have been very active in our congregational leadership and council for the past several years. This time frame includes the covid challenges as well as our congregation's journey through the retirement of our pastor and the ensuing work and process to complete the call of our new pastor. I feel that these experiences bring a valuable congregational perspective to the discussions and responsibilities of Synod Council.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith teaches me that all of God's children are connected and have been blessed with different talents and gifts. By embracing those differences and connecting together to do the good work of Christ, we magnify the results of our efforts to steward and safeguard our community.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I believe that the Church, being the bedrock of the Christian message, is the proper foundation for building family and community. Historically there have been good as well as difficult times for the followers of Christ, but through consistent and steady work of Christians all over the world, the Church will continue to teach the message and provide the avenues for Christians to do God's work.

Synod Council Nominee Bios: 2027-2030

Nominee: Birdena Martin, Ascension, Toledo
For: Synod Council, At-Large, Minority

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I bring leadership, collaboration, and community-focused experience from serving on multiple boards. I help develop programs, build partnerships, and educate communities, empowering individuals to advocate for themselves and create lasting impact.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
My faith guides me to lead with service, compassion, and purpose. It reminds me that my role in any space is not to lead alone, but to listen, collaborate, and uplift others. Through prayerful discernment, I strive to be intentional about how decisions impact the broader community, especially those who may not always have a voice. My faith also shapes how I build partnerships, encouraging unity, respect, and shared responsibility. At its core, my faith calls me to serve in ways that educate empower and strengthen communities so individuals can advocate for themselves and thrive.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
What gives me hope for the future of the church is its growing focus on service, community engagement, and meeting people where they are. I see the Church creating space for collaboration, education, and meaningful dialogue, while empowering individuals to serve beyond the walls of the parish. When the Church partners with the community, lifts up diverse voices and equips people to lead with compassion and purpose, it remains relevant, impactful, and rooted in faith.

Nominee: Andy Kessler, St. John, Williston
For: Synod Council, North Central Conference, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
Some gifts and experience that I would bring to the position is that I am a very technical person, and business oriented as well. I work in IT Systems Administration for the University of Toledo and additionally have served as the technical admin at my home church, so I have a plethora of tech knowledge.



Additionally, I have sat on various community boards and councils, so I thoroughly understand what it means to represent your constituents.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith can shape my approach to service, discernment and collaboration simply because I want to care for one another and help one another in ways that I know I am able to. I often find myself overworked, or seemingly out of time in the evenings because I am running tech for local community theater productions, but I know that's a simple thing that I can do to better my community, which is something I believe I should do.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

One thing that makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is that we are seeing a slow influx of church leaders, worshipers, and staff members, who truly want to welcome all people, regardless of sex, gender identity, political affiliation, race, or other demographics, into the church. For such a long time, these people were pushed away because they didn't meet the 'standard' of what a Lutheran or Christian was defined as. But since we are instructed to love thy neighbor, and welcome the stranger, people are starting to wake up to what is right.

Nominee: Karen Young, SonFire By The River, Pemberville
For: Synod Council, North Central Conference, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

Gift of listening and community. The churches in Pemberville have formed a wonderful working relationship based on how much we are alike rather than different. I think will give a collaboration perspective to this position.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My day starts with "God be with me, always"! As long as our eyes, ears, and hearts are open to the whispers of God in our lives then we can move forward with optimism and faith to be as one in Christ.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

See the goodness in this world. There are so many people that do "random acts of kindness" each day without any trumpet blast of praise. We need to keep showing people that being a Christian matters, seeing the beauty in each day, listening instead of judging, asking God to be your guide in every step we take in life. Going back to the simplicity of life, knowing God is even in the small things like a simple smile to everyone your meet. Each one, reach one!



Nominee: Rev. Brandi Bailie, Salem Grace United & Zion, Luckey

For: Synod Council, North Central Conference, Rostered Minister



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have served in parish ministry for 16 years and have served on synod councils in two other synods. I hope to bring that experience and an eagerness to learn and serve to the Northwest Ohio Synod.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith reminds me that we are all members of the same body in Christ — and we are all needed. That shapes how I serve, listen, and collaborate, trusting that God is already at work in every person and every decision.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I am hopeful because I see people showing up in small rural congregations, in communities, in hard conversations, and in places I don't always expect. Seeing God still at work in so many ways strengthens my own faith and gives me hope for the future of the Church.

Nominee: Rev. Robin Small, St. Mark's, Bowling Green

For: Synod Council, North Central Conference, Rostered Minister



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

As the pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Bowling Green, Ohio, I am deeply committed to both local and global service. Within our community, I serve as the chairperson for Wood County Area Ministries and am an active member of the Bowling Green Ministerial Association. My advocacy work includes serving on the Wood County Homeless Coalition and the Bowling Green City Human Relations Commission. Beyond our local borders, I serve on the Northwestern Ohio Synod (NWOS) nominating committee and lead St. Mark's global partnership with the Kashasha Lutheran Parish in Tanzania, where we support vital improvements to their medical clinic and schools.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

I truly enjoy listening and being fully present for others, believing that our strongest bonds are formed when we take the time to hear one another's stories. For me, there is joy in connecting people—bridging gaps and building relationships that help others find their own path to success. By leading with empathy, I strive to walk alongside my neighbors through their challenges and celebrations alike, ensuring that no one feels they are navigating life alone. Ultimately, I believe that when we show up for each other with an open heart and an attentive ear, we create a vibrant, supportive network where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I see a bright future for our ELCA family because we are a people bound together by the amazing power of God's grace. My heart is full of hope when I think about how we carry the love of Christ from the gospels out into our neighborhoods, near and far; it's a message that reminds us we are already loved exactly as we are. There is something truly sacred about the way we gather in worship—sharing life around the "word, water, wine, and bread"—where we are reminded that we belong to God and to each other. This community is what keeps us moving forward, inviting everyone—and that means EVERYONE—into a life filled with more joy, more welcome, and the courage to walk the way of Jesus together.

Nominee: Rev. Tanyce Addison, Good Hope, Bucyrus
For: Synod Council, Southeast Conference, Rostered
Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I love engaging with people and seeking opportunities to share Christ. Experience: 35 years of teaching, H.S. and church Choirs, Bands, Musicals, Ministry. Seeking Creative ideas to connect church and community. Lifelong learner.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

Everything we experience should point to Christ. We are out of tune when we don't walk in this harmonious, righteous path. Prayer, Reflection, Confession, Hope, Repeat.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

God is always God. God is going to do what God is going to do. We are invited to be - to become and to belong in God's world. That's hope.

Nominee: Rev. Richard Genzman, St. John Windfall,
Cardington
For: Synod Council, Southeast Conference, Rostered
Minister



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

1. Have been a parish pastor for 45+ years, both rural and urban settings
2. 26 years as an Army National Guard Chaplain
3. Helping lay members grow in their knowledge of Scripture and relationship with God
4. Passion for preaching and teaching

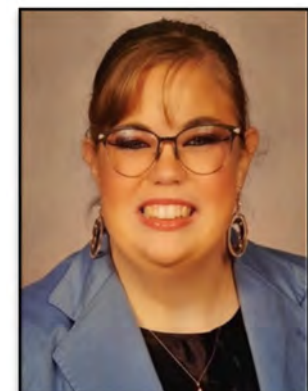
My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

1. I see service as a grateful response to grace given us.
2. Everyone has gifts to use in God's service.
3. Ordinary tasks matter just as much as great acts of service.
4. Collaboration is fostered by respecting other's perspectives and recognizing that God's work is greater than any one person.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

1. The training of laity to be leaders in the church.
2. Seeing congregational members being the incarnational presence of God in communities.
3. When congregations are open to the new things God is doing.
4. Young people seeking authentic faith.
5. Christians working alongside others.

Nominee: Kara Manning, Zion, Lima
For: Synod Council, Southwest Conference, Lay



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I have served as Vice-President, President and Secretary of Zion Lutheran Church's Council. I have served as youth leader and Sunday school teacher at Zion as well as a helper for kids' chapel with the daycare for their summer latchkey program. Outside of my parish I am a member of an Emmaus community where I am blessed to help bring woman closer to God and help some find God again.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

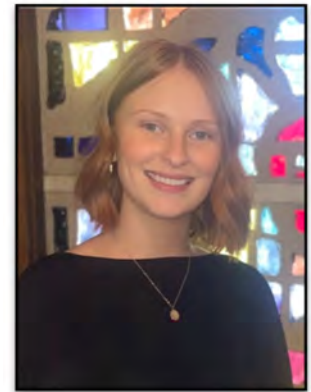
My Faith has helped me become an even stronger leader in my parish and in community. My faith gives me the strength to serve as the hands and feet of Christ both for my parish and the woman and children that I serve. I love giving back especially to communities who have impacted my life but also to strangers I do not know; God's love is infinite and he loved all so I too shall love all.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

What makes me hopeful for the future of the church is watching leaders in the congregations step up. Seeing the kids get excited to help with Sunday worship. Also seeing the parish come together and supporting each other. God is constantly moving in the parish and the leaders and that gives me the most hope for the future.

Nominee: Ingrid Miller-Tebbe, St. John, Celina
For: Synod Council, Southwest Conference, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
Six years in youth ministry has allowed me to grow my leadership and teaching skills. Teaching and listening are where I am most gifted: I am blessed to hear the dreams and the struggles of young people, and to help the older generations in the church to hear them, too. (Sometimes I think of this as the gift of translation.)



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I consider service, discernment, and collaboration with the body to be expressions of my baptismal promises. The promises I affirmed at my confirmation call me to live among God's faithful people and to serve them. I trust in a loving God, one who calls us his beloved to keep his covenant.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

Young people! We have so much to learn from them. They care deeply about the state of the world, treating our neighbor with love and kindness, and fighting for what is right. We often think about the future of the church with anxiety, but walking with young people helps me to hear Jesus' voice so clearly: "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now!" (Matt 6:34)

Nominee: Rev. Mark Bauer, Trinity, Moulton
For: Synod Council, Southwest Conference, Rostered
Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am a lifelong Lutheran having served in Nebraska, Missouri,
and Ohio. Have worked with youth ministry, planned adult
retreats Synod wide, and have a love for faith filled worship
life.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and
collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
We have gifts as God's people that we can share with other congregations in our
community as well as listening to their stories and receiving their gifts.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Over my lifetime, I have seen the love of God work through the joys and trials of
being the people of God as we provide hope and encouragement through many
different occasions.

Consultation Committee Nominee Bios: 2026-2032

Nominee: Rev. Adam Sornchai, St. John Windfall, Cardington
For: Consultation, Rostered Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I bring fourteen years of sustained parish leadership rooted in Word and Sacrament, experience navigating theological and political diversity with pastoral care, and a demonstrated commitment to collaborative discernment. I offer myself for this work in a spirit of faithfulness, compassion, and wisdom, for the sake of the wider Church.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith roots my service in the gospel. Word and Sacrament continually reorient me to Christ's self-giving love, shaping how I listen, discern, and collaborate with others. I understand the Church as the Body of Christ, where wisdom emerges through prayerful community rather than individual certainty. This frees me to approach service with humility, patience, and trust in the Spirit's work among us.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I am hopeful because Jesus Christ is the future of the Church, and we are an Easter people in a Good Friday world. I see the Spirit stirring renewed hunger for grace, authenticity, and communities rooted in Christ's self-giving love.

Nominee: Rev. David Westphal, St. John's, Bellevue
For: Consultation, Rostered Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am a certified spiritual director, have a certification in church leadership, have served as interim in four congregations since retirement assisting them with their transitions, and served as a parish pastor for over forty years.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

Through the Holy Spirit, I have been given gifts that enable me to serve in the church as pastor, leader, and teacher. This has given me the skills to collaborate with others and help others during times of discernment.

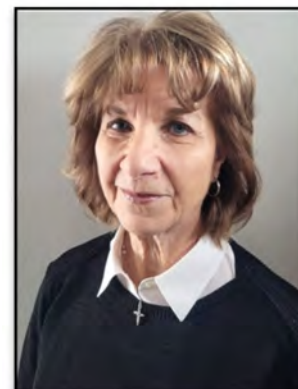
What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The love of God to make new, the power of the Gospel to redeem, the gift of Sacraments to offer hope, the presence of the Holy Spirit to abide.

Consultation Committee Nominee Bios: 2027-2033

Nominee: Jeannine Fuhrhop, St. Stephen, Hamler
For: Consultation, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am a Licensed Insurance Office Manager & Compliance officer. Daily I monitor compliance, human resources, training staff & plan events for a multi office agency. I multitask & assist others with their needs. My gifts fit any opportunity to serve.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
Listening to others, working with them, guiding them to their answer, not deciding for them. Helping others with their needs.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
I hope others can experience support from their local congregations, synod, & the Church, similar to what I & my husband receive in our faith journey as he answers his call to serve. Seeing how the church can reach outside the 4 walls to retain relationships with current members along with reaching others through worship, teaching, fulfilling needs, & serving God.

Nominee: Tristan Schryer, Nevada Lutheran, Nevada
For: Consultation, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I served 3 years as my church council president; I also participate in Lay Leading as my church is going through a pastoral transition.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
I do enjoy serving my church, and I am willing to help any way I can.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
That regular congregation members can help their parishes out so much with active service participations and up to leading church services.

Nominee: Rev. Matthew Diehl, Hope Evangelical, Hamler
For: Consultation, Rostered Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
Strong interpersonal skills, objective, collaborative, prior
committee and leadership roles, maintains strict
confidentiality and upholds high integrity.

Served on similar committee in another Synod.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and
collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
My faith provides direction and assists me in navigating the joys and struggles of
being in service with others in the parish and/or the community. My faith guides my
humble servant leadership and assists me in navigating decisions through spiritual
discernment. My faith helps me to remain focused on prayer, promotes love,
understanding, and mutual respect.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
My hope for the future of the Church rests on the people of God who embrace faith
in its many facets, continue to love and spread the Gospel in their local
communities and beyond, foster a reliance on prayer, and that leaders are
adaptable and discerning of the times in navigating a changing culture. And
primarily, the biblical promise that Jesus will build his Church, and it will not be
overcome.



Nominee: Rev. Doug Pretorius, St. Mark's, Wapakoneta
For: Consultation, Rostered Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have 41 years of serving the church as a pastor and I have
25 years of being a conference dean. I have interacted with
congregations and pastors beyond superficial connections
and am aware of many congregational dynamics. I have
also done my own work in discerning where my pastoral
actions are faith driven and where they are psychologically
or family of origin driven.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

A key Bible verse for me is Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God--not the result of works so that no one may boast, ?For we are what he has made us, created by Jesus Christ for good works which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." All this we do by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

We have the message of grace which is what will change the world. Love alone will be the force that conquers evil and brings forth a good and just society. Through the work of the church, we hear God's call to do both contemplation (knowing God and knowing what God wants) and action (doing what God does and serving as Jesus served.)

Discipline Committee Nominee Bios: 2026-2032

Nominee: Brian Miller, St. John, Celina

For: Discipline, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I served most of my adult life in leadership positions in various organizations. As a Township Trustee for 8 years, I managed roadways, cemeteries, contractors and staff. As a Park Manager, I managed a state park which included the natural resources (Ohio's largest inland lake), campground as well as paid and volunteer staff. I then went on to become a District Park Manager with the responsibility of managing 14 state parks. In this position, I managed 11 direct reports and provided oversight to another 250 staff during the recreational season. After retirement, I owned and operated my own small engine repair business until I was elected County Commissioner of which I currently serve. I am involved with a couple of non-profit organizations of which I am an officer. Last but not least I have served as Vice President as well as President of St. John Lutheran Church and am currently serving on the Call committee.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith is the foundation of what I do for my community each day. I prioritize helping others over helping myself. I live every day to help make our community a better place for all. One of my most fulfilling endeavors is to help the elderly and widows with various tasks.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

This is a tough question. I hope that we can continue to make the love of Christ known and even though we aren't seeing the number of people in the pews that people are still believing in God more than ever.

Nominee: Jana Ringwald, St. Mark's, Van Wert

For: Discipline, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have 40 years of work experience in the Insurance Industry prior to my retirement, with most of those years in supervisory/management roles. The last 10 years of my career were at an executive level.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

Seeking God's love and guidance provides the support to make the tough day to day decisions in our work and personal lives. Serving as President of our Church Council allows me an opportunity to learn from others and grow spiritually through working with pastoral leadership.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

It seems there is a "faith trend" happening in the US with more youth and adults identifying with Christianity.

Nominee: Rev. Howard Abts, St. Lucas, Toledo & St. John's, Stony Ridge

For: Discipline, Rostered Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I am devoted to God, to God's Church, and to the ELCA in particular. I have served as an Interim Minister and Intentional Interim Minister and have served as such from 2004 until the present.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I am more and more persuaded that God wants no one to come to harm, and that it is the responsibility of God's people to be zealous in preventing harm being done to vulnerable people.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

By the work of the Holy Spirit among us, it is clear that God has not given up on us.

Nominee: Rev. Mark Wentz, Lutheran Church of the Master, Perrysburg

For: Discipline, Rostered Minister

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:

I have been a rostered leader for 11+ years, and currently in my 2nd parish. Prior to that, I was a physician and chaired my hospital ethics committee for 7 years.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I always try to ask myself, "what would Jesus Christ do in this situation?" My first choice is usually to seek consensus in a given situation. I try to be a humble servant of Christ.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The Church is changing, and I think it is an exciting and challenging time to be part of those changes.

Discipline Committee Nominee Bios: 2027-2033

Nominee: Steve Reinhard, Martin Luther, Bucyrus
For: Discipline, Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have worked in many different settings including small business, elected positions and voluntary boards. This employment and leadership could help me to solve problems.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
I have served on the church council for several years. We have a small congregation, and that has taught me the necessity of cooperation and working together.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
I see a renewed interest in the church. We have people coming back to church and participating in activities beyond Sunday service.

Nominee: Rev. Alan Brown, Solomon, Woodville
For: Discipline, Rostered Minister

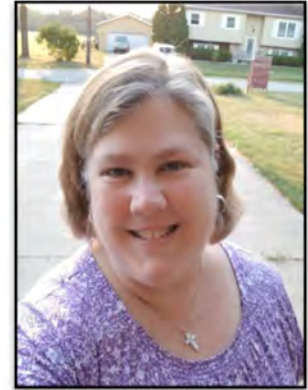
The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I bring 27 years of service to the Church as clergy person who has served in a variety of settings and locations.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
My faith guides me to be a collaborative, group-oriented, team player who works to advance the mission of group and move it forward.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
I see the church becoming more resilient, more nimble, and more focused in living out its mission. I also see the church re-discovering its role as sharer of the gospel in word and deed. These are encouraging signs of hope for the future to me.

Nominee: Deacon Jennifer Heinze, Zion, Perrysburg
For: Discipline, Rostered Minister



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
In my 12 years as a hospice and hospital chaplain, I am daily witnessing the messy and often emotionally shocking realities of our human existence. Being in this ministry setting, I continue to be reminded that while we are all the same in our humanity, our experiences greatly differ, and our relationships with others, our feelings about ourselves, and our feelings about God/higher power/Spirit are individually unique to each of us. I have been able to do this ministry with a more open and discerning mind, and look for the humanity and Spirit in everyone.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
No two individuals think, feel, worship, or believe exactly alike. Regardless of the situation, Christ's compassion and love for others was at the center of it. Situations may not be positive or ideal, yet I feel there is always room to see how we can do and be better. We can always find ways to do the hard things with that compassion and love. I strive to be fair in my work because I don't know everything, and we each bring our own unique gifts to every situation. Christ did not just call me to serve; He called all of us.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
I feel we have reached a point where the disparities between those who try to love as Jesus loved and those who merely want to have power and control is glaringly obvious. And I am thankful more and more people are recognizing how important it is to care for each other and support each other with compassion and grace. The church at large will have a brighter future because of what we are experiencing now and how many more people are understanding what is important and what we should be doing.

Nominating Committee Nominee Bios: 2026-2029

Nominee: Megan O'Brien, St. John, Williston

For: Nominating, At-Large

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am willing to cold call people and ask them to join synod committees.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
I try each day to do my best to love and serve my neighbors in the name of Jesus.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Our synod has a lot of good people doing good work that is future-focused and welcoming.



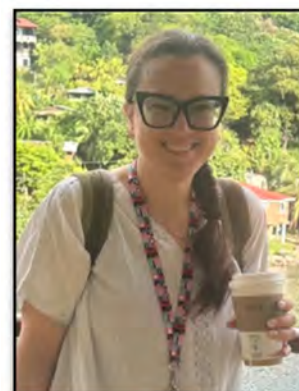
Nominee: Jessica Sornchai, St. John Windfall, Cardington

For: Nominating, At-Large

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have a passion and respect for this church and what we bring to the world. I would come to this opportunity with reflection and care for my role as a voting member.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
My faith has shaped my personal and professional life as a palliative care social worker, foster/adoptive parent, and pastor's spouse. I love people. I also know that with each other, we can accomplish great things, as the hands and feet of Christ.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Our advocacy for the most vulnerable in our society and around the world, as well as what we do to meet the basic needs of our neighbor. Our own church feeds our community on a weekly basis, and it has been beautiful to see this ministry grow. My own children have found their place at the table, helping to serve. In a church that thinks of ALL its neighbors, my children will grow and learn to do the same.



Nominee: Sherry Ferne, St. John, Port Clinton
For: Nominating, Eastern Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am a retired high school counselor and teacher. Being a pastor's spouse has enabled me to meet lots of talented people in many congregations especially for the dozen years John was doing intentional interims.



I have a passion for serving in the church: 8 years on Trinity Seminary's Board, 4 years on our local church council, many years on our Parish Ed. Committee, many years of teaching Sunday School and Bible School.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
My faith calls me to servanthood: I am willing to serve in any way that is helpful.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
God's love, mercy, and grace sustain my hope for the church's future. I see hope in the flexibility and servanthood of our incredible pastors, leaders, and lay folks.

Nominee: Hannah Mapus, Zion Evangelical, Gibsonburg
For: Nominating, Eastern Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I enjoy getting to know people and sharing faith stories. I think this gift could be vital when serving on the nominating committee; learning who may have gifts for serving on the different committees.

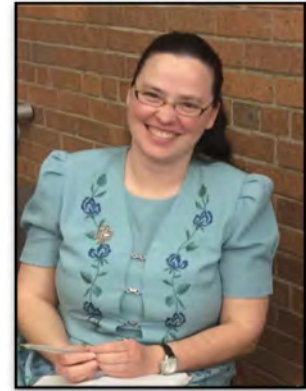


My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
I feel we are all given gifts we should use to serve God in any way, and as many ways as we can. Our self-awareness leads us to discern our talents and strengths. We strive to work together, using our God-given gifts, to carry out the work of Christ in greater ways.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Kindness. Even through all the ugly, non-Christlike happenings in this world, some people still choose to be kind. They work for peace and justice and find ways to be kind to their neighbors.

Nominee: Helena Morris, Zion, Defiance
For: Nominating, Maumee Valley Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I serve on the Board of Directors for the Lutheran Diaconal Association. I have served in different leadership positions within congregational ministry, including head deacon, youth leader, and treasurer. I am responsible and committed.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
I am rooted in faith and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I try to do everything through the lens of the Gospel, from how I interact with others to how I make decisions about day-to-day activities. I aim for respect, collaboration, and mutuality.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Jesus the Christ.

Nominee: Kelly Weber, St. Peter, Ridgeville Corners
For: Nominating, Maumee Valley Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
Lifelong Lutheran, involved in church and synod, new SAM. Communications professional turned mom. Compassionate, attentive to detail, practical.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
My faith is central to everything I do. No matter which hat I'm wearing at any given moment, I try to remember that I am a Christian above all. We're all members of one body and called to different roles.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
God is everywhere if you seek him. From the beginning of time through today's divisive world... God has sustained his people. While the Church may evolve, the goodness of God will endure forever.

Nominating Committee Nominee Bios: 2027-2030

Nominee: Rev. Brandi Bailie, Salem Grace United & Zion,
Lucky

For: Nominating Committee, North Central Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have served in parish ministry for 16 years and have served on synod councils in two other synods. I hope to bring that experience and an eagerness to learn and serve to the Northwest Ohio Synod.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

My faith reminds me that we are all members of the same body in Christ — and we are all needed. That shapes how I serve, listen, and collaborate, trusting that God is already at work in every person and every decision.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I am hopeful because I see people showing up in small rural congregations, in communities, in hard conversations, and in places I don't always expect. Seeing God still at work in so many ways strengthens my own faith and gives me hope for the future of the Church.

Nominee: Linda Henry, St. John's, Stony Ridge

For: Nominating Committee, North Central Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
My experience as a Synod council member should make it easier to share with others what it is like to serve on Synod council or subcommittees.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

Faith gives us hope that many things are possible. The Lutheran church along with many others is still undergoing many changes. But change can be a good thing! The ability to find the best path forward is the big challenge.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I still see young families who want their faith lives to grow. They want to be an active part of church life.



Nominee: Linda Aufdencamp, Trinity, Marion
For: Nominating Committee, Southeast Conference



The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I am a lifelong Lutheran. My experiences growing up Lutheran were a credit to my parents. As a young child I started Sunday School at age 3, attended Vacation Bible School every summer, sang in the junior and senior choirs, made it through four years of Catechism (which concluded with a public examination!) and enjoyed Luther League as a teen. My parents sacrificed to support my attendance at Capital University where I graduated with an education degree. My early career in the Marion City Schools was as a teacher of grades K-2. After acquiring my master's degree from The Ohio State University, I was selected for the position of Literacy Specialist for my building. In that role I was responsible for after-school in-service instruction for the K-2 staff. I taught techniques for developing reading and writing followed by demonstrating, observing and coaching my staff to implement the new literacy practices. After retirement I served as a part-time Literacy coordinator in one of the Marion County Schools. I also tutored students who needed an extra boost to pass the State Tests in Literacy. As a retiree, I have enjoyed traveling, reading and volunteering for various offices, committees and activities at Trinity Lutheran. I consider these experiences as gifts reflecting God's hand in my life. Learning to get along with others, caring about others and relying on God's love to navigate my way through life are gifts of the spirit that continue to guide me.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

Reflecting back on my life to date, I have experienced Faith not as a mountain climbing endeavor but as more of a path-following journey. God is always leading me, but I sometimes lose track of him and find myself going my own way. Scripture, prayer and the voices of my brothers and sisters of faith are what He uses to draw me back to the path He has for me to follow. Before every decision--teaching Sunday School, serving as an assistant minister and church council president, collaborating with our Scout Troop to refurbish our church playground, training to become a Hospice volunteer, serving a multi-year term as secretary of the Retired Teachers Association, handling the finances of a TOPS group to support other in pursuing a healthy lifestyle--faith has been a foundation for practicing discernment and collaboration. Recently, I have made the decision to become a member of the Women's Club Home here in Marion. It is a group of local women working together to provide mission-based programs to empower women and enrich the community while preserving the historic home. I learned that there is work to be done in the new Women's History Research Center on the grounds. I am looking forward to working

with students at The Ohio State University Marion as they explore the archives of the home's history. I'm looking forward to this next step to discover what the Lord has in store for me in this project. I know He will continue to bless me with new friends and new experiences.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

My congregation is one of many navigating the two related issues of aging membership and dwindling finances. As council president during a period of being without a pastor following his retirement, I came into personal contact with synod personnel. This motivated a new behavior of delving into online and hard copy publications from the synod and also exploring on the internet information about the ELCA such as the current budget. I am impressed by the problem solving and new directions being explored to meet the lack of ordained ministers. I also see the inclusive efforts to welcome persons of all races, cultures and lifestyles to join us in worship as hopeful. I see hopeful signs of understanding in my own congregation that efforts to connect to individuals in our rural and residential area shows the love, care and concern that Jesus modeled in his ministry. The use of social media by local pastors, synod and ELCA leaders is slowly growing, and I am beginning to notice welcoming language about the benefits of corporate worship being included. I hope that individual Lutherans will be inspired to use media opportunities to share their own stories of how church membership enriches their lives. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

Nominee: Kevin McNeal, First Lutheran, Galion
For: Nominating Committee, Southeast Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
Having served on Synod Council for 2 terms, Church Council multi terms as President, and having led worship in a handful of area churches, I find it easy to talk to and work with others. Having been part of First Lutherans Meal Ministry for several years, I find it easy to work in a team setting.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

When we come together as God's people, and to serve God's people, we must listen, not just with our ears, but our hearts as well, only then can we hear where God is leading us as individuals, a team, and His church on Earth.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The willingness for God's people to come together. Regardless of any differences we may have, coming together to server our God and his people.

Nominee: Rev. Carol Pretorius, St. Peter, Delphos
For: Nominating Committee, Southwest Conference

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I had a background in education and counseling before becoming a rostered minister. I have the gift of relating to people in positive ways.

My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by: I love God and I love serving the church as pastor in Delphos, Ohio. I am currently the dean for the SW Conference. I believe that the Holy Spirit is alive and working in and through us to help us discern how we move and journey in faith both individually and corporately. As a former teacher, administrator, counselor, and wife of Pastor Doug Pretorius, I have had many years to develop skills in networking and working with people both in the church and in the communities where I have lived and served.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
We are a church that values Jesus' call to love and are therefore encouraged to live out our faith through the eyes of grace and love for all people. We are a church that values helping those in need not only in our towns and cities, but in the world.



Churchwide Assembly Nominee Bios: 2028

Nominee: Crystal Chapman, St. Paul, Marblehead
For: Voting Member, Female Lay



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I have been a lifelong member of my church. I have been a Sunday School and Catechism teacher, served on Altar Guild, church council, I am currently the office administrator, active on our outreach committee, and have been applying the gifts that I have been taught through the Growing in Faith courses to offer additional support to our congregation

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
By listening and understanding what others are trying to relay. Keep things confidential and stay out of triangle relationships. Stay humble and always try to ask myself, "What would Jesus do?"

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
The hope that I have and the excitement that I feel when the Holy Spirit is at work in me. I wish and want that for anyone who is looking for that feeling.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
Just knowing the direction, I want to see the church go and grow in.

Nominee: Kristen Ealy, First Evangelical, Upper Sandusky
For: Voting Member, Female Lay



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:
Lifelong member, grew up with the programs of Sunday School and Youth Groups, attended Camp Mowana for 9 years. Now as Administrator, I am integral in almost every part of the church and congregation. I have been a key player in PTA, volunteering for Music Parents, helping with community outreach and sports parent groups. I also assist one of our elderly members with transition to nursing facility and his personal well-being.

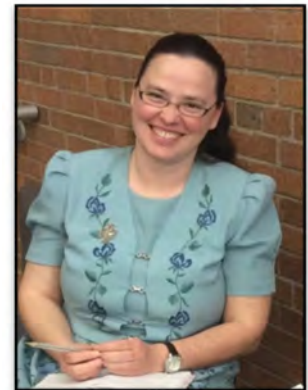
I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
Patience, having a clear and structured way to get the desired outcome. Putting aside differences by planning with intention and communicating the needs for all involved to act as a team, despite the challenges.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
The new and exciting ways we can be "The Church" giving of ourselves in any way possible to benefit the great good. I believe that even with the issues of this world there is still good in people and we need all to remember that we should be living like Jesus!

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
I would love to devote more time encouraging struggling parishes, especially those without called ministers, to strengthen from within your church family...make disciples and leaders for worship by lifting up those that are able to give their time and talent to lead when vacancies occur.

Nominee: Helena Morris, Zion, Defiance
For: Voting Member, Female Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I serve on the Board of Directors for the Lutheran Diaconal Association. I have served in different leadership positions within congregational ministry, including head deacon, youth leader, and treasurer. I am responsible and committed.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:
I am rooted in faith and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I try to do everything through the lens of the Gospel, from how I interact with others to how I make decisions about day-to-day activities. I aim for respect, collaboration, and mutuality.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Jesus the Christ.

Nominee: Sarah Neal, St. Mark's, Bowling Green
For: Voting Member, Female Lay



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I have been actively involved in both parish and community life in a variety of leadership, service, and ministry roles. At St Mark's church, I helped with the new directory and am currently serving my second term on Church Council. I'm involved with the Outreach Committee, which supports initiatives at the local, regional, and global levels. Our recent Mission trip to Tanzania is one of many examples of our outreach.

I regularly support church life by providing baked goods for church events as needed and contributing to various Bible studies. In addition, I was recently elected as the North Central Conference Representative of Northwest Ohio WELCA. I have visited long-term living facilities, as a helper to Pastor Robin, and as a leader for worship services.

I help coordinate and support St. Mark's weekly Wednesday Night Meal, which is a free will donation community meal, and all are welcome. My role includes recruiting volunteers, coordinating guest speakers, and partnering with organizations such as Wood County Hospital, which provides monthly services including free or reduced-cost flu shots. We work to create a welcoming atmosphere by arranging musicians, serving guests at their tables, and fostering a restaurant-style experience. This happens 32 weeks a year.

I am in my second year of Growing in Faith which is offered jointly by both the NWO and NEO Synods. I'm now prayerfully waiting to see where God will send me next.

Beyond the church, I serve as a Member of the Board of Directors for the Bowling Green Christian Food Pantry, supporting food security efforts in our community. This food pantry is where families are able to shop for their food in a dignified, relaxed atmosphere.

My latest project is being a member of the "Tontogany Fest" planning committee. This is a yearly event hosted by the village of Tontogany in which I live. I love this because it's a way for neighbors to be neighbors!

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

I build trust and collaboration by beginning with listening. I believe that truly hearing others is one of the most effective ways to understand differing perspectives. Often, when someone is upset or frustrated, what they need most is to feel heard and respected. By creating space for people to share openly and without judgement, I have found that common ground, understanding, and collaboration naturally follow.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

What gives me the most hope for the future of the Church is our children and youth. At St. Mark's, we are blessed with an outstanding Children and Youth Director who offers meaningful opportunities for all ages and interests. The strong participation across our ministries reflects a vibrant and engaged congregation.

Recently, we hosted a "Planning Party" that was so well attended we needed to bring in additional tables and chairs. The event was thoughtfully led by two young women who created an atmosphere that was fun, welcoming, and productive. The congregation generated so many ideas for ministry, fellowship, and prayer that we ultimately had to narrow them down to the top five.

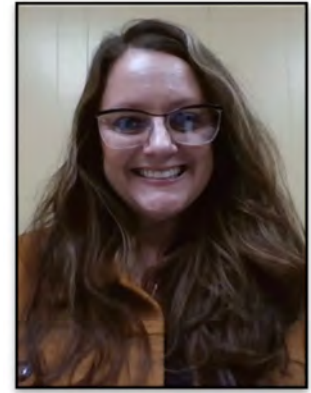
Experiences like this - rooted in fellowship, creativity, and God's love - are what give me confidence in our Church's future.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I will begin by listening closely to what is shared, preached, discussed and prayed on during the Churchwide Assembly. Upon returning home, I plan to share those experiences through a concise, focused presentation that highlights what I saw, heard, and learned during the assembly.

I believe engagement begins with enthusiasm and understanding. By communicating the spirit, energy, and significance of the assembly, I hope to inspire others to feel connected to the wider church and encouraged to participate in its ongoing work.

Nominee: Cary Roehm, St. Mark's, Van Wert
For: Voting Member, Female Lay



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I served as an assistant to the Awesome Attitudes Wednesday night youth program for 4 years and then transitioned into becoming the high school youth leader for 8 years. As part of my leadership, I coordinated mission trips both in the US and one to the Dominican Republic.

Additionally, my husband, daughter and I travelled to Israel with other members from our church in 2023. I have also served on a variety of committees in the church and am currently cochair of our Call Process committee, serve on the personnel committee, communion server, and lector.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

In my professional career I have worked in public education for 27 years serving students with disabilities. Working with minority groups comes second nature to me based on the work that I do and the students I advocate for. In order to build trust, you have to give and earn respect. Building trust is accomplished by focusing on Biblical principles, listening to others, and working towards solutions when there are differences.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I pray daily for non-believers to come to know Jesus. I am hopeful that the Church will rebound from declining numbers to overflowing because Christians have put aside differences and want to make a difference in the lives of those most vulnerable such as those who suffer mental illness, homelessness, and addiction.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

Learning more at CWA, will help me better educated and equipped to engage our congregation regarding the work of the wider church. I am willing to present outcomes and initiatives that are implemented or approved. I also believe that my experience at CWA will provide me the opportunity to collaborate with other attendees and get ideas on ways to engage our congregation.

Nominee: Becky Seibert, Grace, Fremont
For: Voting Member, Female Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:
Chair of Altar Guild, Bible studies, WELCA Joy Circle, Summer feeding program, Music & Worship Committee.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
By open communication and non-judgmental relationships, feeding programs, community participation, offering a safe place.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
I am hopeful for the future of the Church because I see and have seen the face of Christ in those outside the walls of our building.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
Continuation of being the hands and feet of Christ and sharing that we are children of the same God.



Nominee: Sheila Smith, Zion, Lima
For: Voting Member, Female Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:
I have been active in the life of our parish and community by participating in nearly every aspect of Zion. I volunteer regularly for our many outreach events, normally organizing them as well. I have gotten to know nearly all of our church family by name and have initiated several collaborations within our community.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
Look to what we do agree on. Look for common ground. Maybe agree to disagree, respectively.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Every time I see a young family worshiping together, or a preschool student remembering a Kids Chapel lesson.



I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

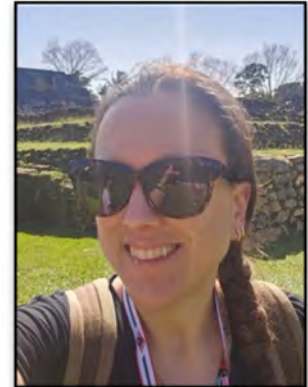
Zion does a lot of outreach programs, so anything learned could definitely be shared throughout our partners in the community.

Nominee: Jessica Sornchai, St. John Windfall, Cardington
For: Voting Member, Female Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I have most recently served as a lay voting member of churchwide assembly in 2025.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
Diversity is beautiful and all voices deserve to be heard and to have a place at the table, especially tables that they were never able to speak at before. I have had to collaborate in my career as a social worker with colleagues in other disciplines and have served many different people as their social worker.



What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Love will always prevail. I love how our church represents the love of Christ.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I will continue to share with others how to advocate for the voiceless, as well as be an active and engaged member of my own congregation and community. I enjoyed learning about Sumud during churchwide assembly in 2025 and have looked into doing their devotions.

Nominee: Ellen Williams, Zoar, Perrysburg
For: Voting Member, Female Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Chair of Zoar Book Club; Member Zoar Social Outreach Committee (Committee Secretary / providing food & clothing for local homeless shelter); Co-director of program "Monthly Mingle" (church members/ young people hosted monthly activities/dinner for individuals with developmental disabilities. Member on several community boards of agencies providing services to individuals with autism/developmental disabilities/juvenile delinquency.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
Begin with respect for cultural differences and embrace collaborative activities that foster collaboration and support a unified purpose. Use communication techniques that demonstrate transparency and an atmosphere open to differing opinions. Be sure to elicit everyone's ideas/opinions when seeking a unified response.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Throughout history and under constant change, the church continues to endure. It has moved from the concept of a "building" to the image of a fluid force within the community and the world. It adapts to changing technologies and continues to minister to the entire global community of believers/non-believers.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
I am hopeful that the information I gain and the growth I experience as a result of attendance at CWA will enrich my capabilities to encourage my church and community to engage in more expansive endeavors supported by the church at large.

Nominee: Karen Young, SonFire By The River, Pemberville
For: Voting Member, Female Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Since the organization of our church in 2011, I have been involved in the worship and vision team. I currently serve as the church administrator which includes creating the weekly worship service based on the ELCA lectionary, coordinating with the band (also playing keyboard) and being involved in our mission activities along with social media and constant contact posts. We are a congregation of 40+ active members that have a heart for community and world missions.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
LISTENING to our people, friends, and neighbors. The Pemberville community churches (Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran churches) have been meeting regularly and worship together 5-6 times a year plus many community projects and activities together. It's important to stay judgement free in assessing all information to prayerfully form a plan. My days usually start with "God be with me" and he in turn guides me!

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

Looking for kindness in each day. There are a lot of good people in this world that help their fellow man without a trumpet sound of gratitude. I think we keep sharing how Christ is working for good through the many different faces of God. It might not put more people in the pews, but it will let people know that God does exist even in the simple smile to each other. Each one, reach one!

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I feel as long as you are committed to your faith, then engaging in your community happens naturally by the people God puts in your life.

Nominee: Paul Brooks, First Lutheran, Findlay
For: Voting Member, Male Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Other than regular attendance, I serve on the endowment committee, overseeing the investments, applications and distribution of funds. I have participated in God's work, our hands projects numerous times. I currently serve on the Synod disciplinary committee. I completed diakonia several



years ago and became the call facilitator for the central conference. In November of 2024 I was given a letter of SAM from our Bishop to serve at St. Johns in McComb and St Lukes in North Baltimore, I continue serving in those parishes.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

Everyone has something in common with everyone else, even if its just that we are human. As we explore further, we find other commonality to build upon and work with. I listen without a need to be right, asking open questions, looking to scripture for guidance as we explore together where the will of God is leading.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

God's church will be fine; God is in charge. Our perception of what the church is or should be may give us some discomfort. There are many doing God's work, actively seeking Gods will. God took Moses, one man and lead an entire nation out of bondage. Jesus took 12 men and look at us now, why wouldn't I be hopeful?

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

By going among them with the good news and allowing God to do what God does best. By asking the community to look beyond their front door to all of creation, all of the people and all of the needs.

Nominee: Marvin Coressel, St. Stephen, Hamler
For: Voting Member, Male Lay



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

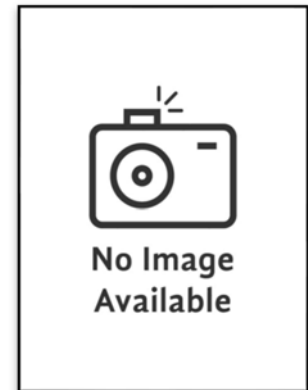
I have held several congregational positions since joining the congregation in 1986. Also representative at synod gatherings. I have also joined in 3 Mission trips to Puerto Rico to help rebuild after hurricane Maria.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
By listening and realizing that there are other points of view.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Because I know that God is present and at work at all times.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
By being a good representative of the church.

Nominee: Don Davis, Emanuel, Marion
For: Voting Member, Male Lay



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Just completed two years as president of the congregation. Was just elected to be property chairman. Oversaw the recent church kitchen remodel as we are state and local health department inspected. Was baptized, confirmed and married at Emanuel Lutheran Church.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
Support and encouragement in working for the Kingdom.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
The doors opening outward, dedicated pastoral staff.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
Yes.

Nominee: Todd Hone, St. John, Celina
For: Voting Member, Male Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

- Parish Council Vice President, 2017-2019
- Parish Council President, 2020-2021
- Confirmation/Catechism Instructor, 2011-Present
- Attended Synod Assembly, 2018
- Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, February 2019
- Nominations Committee, 2015, 2017, 2018 & 2019
- Call Committee, 2019
- Endowment Committee, 2021



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
By using a 'cooler heads prevail' approach to minimize an adversarial dynamic. Usually, 'stepping back to see the bigger picture' helps to identify areas of agreement or common goals. Try to prevent disagreements from being labeled as 'hate' or 'intolerance', and to keep a focus on the fact that 'We are not enemies'.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
The ecumenical/interfaith relationships and efforts since the late 1990's are very important ... not just for the ELCA, but for Christianity and people of faith as a whole. We, the people of God, need each other now more than ever.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
The Churchwide Assembly is a journey of faith and a pondering of ideas about our mission in the world moving forward. I will reflect upon the lessons that will be learned at the CWA and share that insight with my fellow parishioners and extended community.

Nominee: Brad Isbell, St. Mark, Toledo
For: Voting Member, Male Lay

The gifts and experiences I bring to this position are:
I have just recently finished up a 6-yr term on council at St Mark Lutheran Church. In this 6 yrs I have learned so much valuable information about the behind-the-scenes workings & operations of the church.



My faith shapes my approach to service, discernment, and collaboration with others in the parish and/or community by:

I feel that I have been called to work in the outreach of the church in the neighborhood community. I have a connection it seems with the underprivileged people, the homeless, the addicts. My faith has helped me to serve the community through everyday conversations with our neighbors as well helping to feed & provide them with fresh produce & other necessities.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I see a future for the church in the younger members, the children, & the families that are in attendance to services & volunteer for our community events. Although numbers seem to be down for churches & planting the seed wherever we can, will help build upon the church.

Nominee: Shea McGrew, Peace, Bowling Green

For: Voting Member, Male Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Currently, I serve Hope Lutheran Church in Bowling Green as a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM), having started in 2021. I also serve as Treasurer of Synod Council for the Northwestern Ohio Synod. Having lived in various locations around the country for my career, I was a member of and active in a number of ELCA congregations. Service in those settings included church council membership and leadership, assisting with stewardship efforts, and occasionally filling in to lead worship and preach in the absence of the pastor. I am also currently involved in the Ottawa County, Ohio community as Executive Director of the Ottawa County Community Foundation. We work to address the needs of the county by making grants to non-profits and offering scholarships. I encourage individuals, families and businesses to use the power of charitable giving to improve the quality of life in that area.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

This begins with embracing diversity of thought and perspective. It is essential to welcome the thoughts and opinion of all, and to be an active listener. I try to build trust on this platform and then emphasize finding points of agreement. If conflict arises, early de-escalation of it is essential, though not always easy. In my own speaking I try to be honest and direct, but helpful and hopeful.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

There is always room for hope when considering that the Holy Spirit is at work in us and in the wider church. It seems clear that the Church must evolve (and is

evolving) as the world and society change, and this process will have many pressure points. However, if we maintain our focus on the charge to make disciples and to love and care for our neighbors, it can be the basis of our hope for the future.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I stand ready to take up the work of the wider church in my location and context. If I am still serving as a SAM at that time, I will engage the congregation in this work as well. Even if not, I will be active in a congregation and ready to serve the wider church and its needs.

Nominee: Alex Schmidt, St. Paul, Defiance

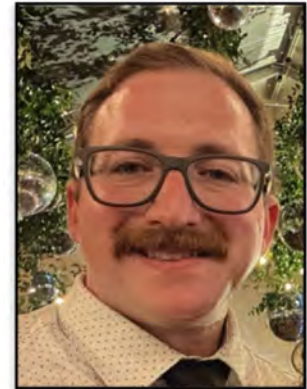
For: Voting Member, Male Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I serve as an assistant minister in worship, have served in various Parish Council roles, and completed the Northwestern Ohio Synod's Diakonia: Growing in Faith course.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

I build trust through building relationships, consistency, and follow-through. Prayer, patience, and the willingness to pause help me listen well and respond faithfully during times of difference or conflict.



What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I am hopeful because Christ's grace continues to shine through imperfect people. Even in uncertainty and conflict, I have seen the Church pray, serve, and care for all in need.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I will share insights from CWA through conversations, council involvement, and congregational updates, helping others see how our local ministry connects to and supports the wider Church.

Nominee: Nick Wenzel, St. Peter, Norwalk
For: Voting Member, Male Lay

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I have been an assisting minister, lay preacher, lector, youth director, and president of Church Council. I also run our church Facebook page. I also serve as high school principal at a school close to our church community where many of our members reside.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

You build trust and collaboration by listening and learning from others. When you do this, you can find common ground to build on.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I'm hopeful that we have a core base of beliefs that is inclusive! Being inclusive of all children of God helps to build a vision of unity and understanding.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I see where there is a need for people my age and younger to be more involved not just at our church level but beyond. We need to take on roles and bring our voice to help build a new generation of believers in the words of Jesus Christ.

Nominee: Rev. Tanyce Addison, Good Hope, Bucyrus
For: Voting Member, Rostered Female

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Leading the church to see the strengths we have to use to meet the needs in our community. We have created outdoor communion, food ministry, animal blessings, going beyond our walls to discover worship in the ordinary.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

Intentional listening to each other is crucial. It is important to seek connections. God will provide the tools for this- we must be willing to use them.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

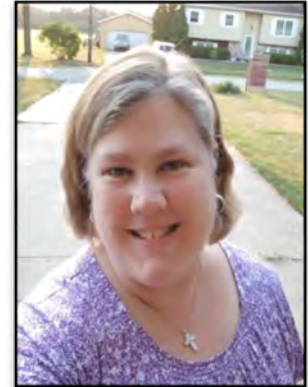
God is in control! Trusting in the presence of Christ may be a little uncomfortable, but, oh, what an adventure! God never disappoints!

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

Sharing and reflecting is essential! Use of photos, experiences shared through media, written form, speaking with people! I love to tell the story!

Nominee: Deacon Jennifer Heinze, Zion, Perrysburg

For: Voting Member, Rostered Female



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I am currently called by the Northwestern Ohio Synod as a Hospice Chaplain. In that regard, I am actively ministering to the community through end-of-life presence and support. I am also on the Supply Roster and fill in for parishes regularly. I attend my home church, Zion, when I am able, and while not as active as I once was before my call, I help with services when I can.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

As a hospice chaplain, my goal is always to be present with my patients and their families in whatever way is meaningful for them, regardless of their faith affiliation or beliefs. Differences in race, creed, economic status or geography are inconsequential when our mortality levels the playing field for everyone. Being open to others sharing vulnerabilities and emotions builds the trust necessary to minister to those coming to the end of their life and their families who are witnessing it.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I feel we have reached a point where the disparities between those who try to love as Jesus loved and those who merely want to have power and control is glaringly obvious. And I am thankful more and more people are recognizing how important it is to care for each other and support each other with compassion and grace. The church at large will have a brighter future because of what we are experiencing now and how many more people are understanding what is important and what we should be doing.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I will continue to live, work, and worship within the call from Christ to love my neighbor, serve my neighbor, and love God. Daily, I remember Christ's mission was to show what is possible when we give ourselves over to God. I don't have to be an ELCA Deacon in order to do the same. My humanity connects me with everyone else in the church and the world, and I am called to serve whenever and wherever Christ leads me.

Nominee: Rev. Beth Ferne Johnson, St. Stephen, Sylvania
For: Voting Member, Rostered Female



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I currently serve as the pastor of St. Stephen in Sylvania, and, since 2024, I am part of the Dean Team for the Toledo Area Conference. I am involved in supporting the work of the LSS Food pantry, working alongside church volunteers to regularly clean the pantry, and am active with luncheon gatherings of women clergy from across Lucas County.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

I intentionally work to be curious and to listen with compassion to all people. I seek to find points of understanding and common experience to build upon those while looking for opportunities to learn from others.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

First, I am hopeful because we are God's people and God has a plan for us. God's resurrection promises and the gospel message of grace, hope, and love will always make a way and will be heard.

Second, in my experiences in parishes in Detroit and Youngstown, I have learned that "when you act out of fear, you bring about the very thing you're afraid of". Staying faithful in the face of fear is important. (Thanks to Dr. Rachel Wrenn for putting this thought I've also had for a long time into these concise words.)

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

In addition to sharing the work of the wider church with the congregation I serve, I would, as dean, share information at one of our monthly conference meetings. I would also make myself available to share information and my impressions with individuals or congregations once I was home.

Nominee: Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri, Trinity, Wauseon
For: Voting Member, Rostered Female

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I believe connecting with the whole church is an important part of my ministry. This includes active participation with local ecumenical partners where I serve, in regional conference gatherings, through serving as a synod council representative, and by joining our synod's Global Mission Board to work with our global companions.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

Building a healthy, diverse environment starts with the foundation that every single person is a beloved child of God, created in the image of our God. We can recognize and celebrate our differences, while acknowledging that this truth remains to unite us and to guide us into relationships of trust and collaboration.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The passion of younger members of the church universal makes me hopeful for the future of the church. Not because I believe that youth or young adults are ONLY future leaders of the church, but because I see them as leaders of the church NOW that offer inspiration and hope when we fully support their input.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I attended the 2025 CWA as a Congregational Observer, not a voting member, because I believed it was important to engage with the wider church and bring back that information to where I serve. That sentiment would hold true if I were a voting member, so that a stronger relationship can be created between local communities and the denominational church.

Nominee: Rev. Janine Shearer, Emanuel, Napoleon
For: Voting Member, Rostered Female

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Maumee Valley Conference Dean, HopeWood Outdoors board member, Henry County Housing Team member, Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group Leader, Congregational and Soaring Arts Space to Grieve group leader.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
Individual conversations in the unity of Christ can make collaboration across differences easier. Finding the common piece that both groups can agree on as a springboard is a powerful strategy. I think of the housing groups I'm part of. We worship in different places, believe different things about the way government should be run, but we all care deeply that people are housed. We are able to work together from our common passions.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
I have so much hope in the way the Church keeps showing up. I think I remember that 95% of our congregations have food related ministries. We love and care for our neighbors most basic needs. I am so grateful for the ways the Church steps in to be neighbors in crisis moments. It's that energy that sustains us and moves us forward!

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
I will continue to have conversations and share what CWA decided. I will continue to share stories of feeling the Holy Spirit moving in and through the room at CWA in 2019. It was a transformative experience for me and a story worth sharing.

Nominee: Rev. Robin Small, St. Mark's, Bowling Green
For: Voting Member, Rostered Female



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:
As the pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Bowling Green, Ohio, I am deeply committed to both local and global service. Within our community, I serve as the chairperson for Wood County Area Ministries and am an active member of the Bowling Green Ministerial Association. My advocacy work includes serving on the Wood County Homeless Coalition and the Bowling Green City Human Relations Commission. Beyond our local borders, I serve on the Northwestern Ohio Synod (NWOS) nominating committee and lead St. Mark's global partnership with the Kashasha Lutheran Parish in Tanzania, where we support vital improvements to their medical clinic and schools.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
I truly enjoy listening and being fully present for others, believing that our strongest bonds are formed when we take the time to hear one another's stories. For me, there is joy in connecting people—bridging gaps and building relationships that help others find their own path to success. By leading with empathy, I strive to walk alongside my neighbors through their challenges and celebrations alike, ensuring

that no one feels they are navigating life alone. Ultimately, I believe that when we show up for each other with an open heart and an attentive ear, we create a vibrant, supportive network where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I see a bright future for our ELCA family because we are a people bound together by the amazing power of God's grace. My heart is full of hope when I think about how we carry the love of Christ from the gospels out into our neighborhoods, near and far; it's a message that reminds us we are already loved exactly as we are. There is something truly sacred about the way we gather in worship—sharing life around the "word, water, wine, and bread"—where we are reminded that we belong to God and to each other. This community is what keeps us moving forward, inviting everyone-and that means EVERYONE-into a life filled with more joy, more welcome, and the courage to walk the way of Jesus together.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

It is so important to me that when we return from the Churchwide Assembly (CWA), we bring back more than just a report—we bring an honest and accurate account of the spirit, the debates, and the decisions that shape our future. I see it as a vital part of my call to help our local family realize that we aren't an island; we aren't just called to care for our own backyard, but to see ourselves as a vital branch of a much larger family. I want everyone at St. Mark's to feel that beautiful truth: that God's kingdom is wide, inclusive, and held together by all whom He has claimed in baptism. My hope is that, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, I can come home and warmly invite my community into conversations that open our eyes to new neighbors who need our care. Together, we can look at the world through the lens of Christ and act in love to make sure everyone knows they have a place at the table.

Nominee: Rev. Rebecca West-Estell, Glenwood, Toledo
For: Voting Member, Rostered Female

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Founding board member of the Christian Legal Collaborative; Board of Trustees member of Advocates for Basic Legal Equality and Legal Aid of Western Ohio; Chair of the 2025 Access to Justice Awards Breakfast in Toledo; Steering Committee member of the MLK Annual Faith Observance in Toledo.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
By open and honest communication ensuring everyone's perspective is heard and included.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
Jesus Christ and the hope He brings to everything we do for ALL things are possible through Christ who gives us strength.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
Through intentional and active inclusion of the Gospel in my everyday endeavors. Christ is the hope of the world, and I will intentionally spread the message of that hope through my actions and relationships.

Nominee: Rev. Clayton Bailey, Grace, Fremont
For: Voting Member, Rostered Male

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

One of my joys in serving at Grace is our community soup kitchen which provides a warm meal for 30-50 individuals each Thursday. You'll often find me on the serving line or out sharing conversation with those having lunch. It is a humbling reminder of how we are all called to serve and minister to everyone, especially those at risk and in need.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:
Sharing conversation is the first step in breaking down any differences that we may have. Be it small talk, or a simple "how are you today" can open the door to a deeper understanding and appreciation of who we are, and where we may find commonalities between us.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:
As we face challenging times in our nation, now is our opportunity to continue to proclaim the grace, hope, love, and peace that Christ brings to all of us. I always remain hopeful in the gospel, and what it means to be the hands, feet, voice, and heart of Jesus reaching out to a troubled world.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:
Too often we see our congregations as stand-alone ministries. There is strength in knowing that we are part of the greater church. Together we can share resources, ideas, and dreams as well as support one another in shared ministry experiences. In

doing so we create healthier congregations and build stronger bridges out into the communities we are called to serve.

Nominee: Rev. Ian Boden, Emanuel, Marion

For: Voting Member, Rostered Male



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Life in my parish involves many aspects of life. It includes sitting and listening with those who are lonely, uncertain, and hurting, praying and playing with preschoolers, making sandwiches for homeless youth in our community, learning how to crochet with local crafters who are both church and unchurched, visiting with law makers, worshipping with all of God's people, and so much more. Beyond the local parish, I have had the privilege of working with and partnering with LOVEboldly, an Ohio LGBTQIA+ affirming ecumenical ministry, serving on the ELCA Young Adult Ministry steering committee, and representing the Order of Lutheran Franciscans in several Ecumenical dialogues as well as serving as a formation companion to those discerning a Lutheran Franciscan calling.

Beyond the church, it is a joy of mine to serve the community through work with Scouting America helping young people to have a place where they are seen, heard and known.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

Trust and collaboration come from places of authenticity and vulnerability, as well as believing the best in others. I seek to build trust through listening, showing up, and honesty. My philosophy on collaboration is inviting all people to dream dreams and cast visions. That collaboration is rooted in a shared mission that does not erase differences but instead transcends differences or uses differences to compliment and work together.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

We are in a time when as a Church we are encouraged and invited to be particularly creative and courageous. I am hopeful because the Holy Spirit is inspiring and calling us as a Church, as Christians of the Lutheran expression to follow Christ into the margins of our world and society. As children come forward for communion, I am hopeful. As young adults share their voices and perspectives with faith and civic leaders, I am inspired. As people of all ages come together to worship God and to rest in God's holy mysteries, I am confident that God is not done with the Church yet. I am hopeful for the future of the Church because I still hear God's call.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I can commit to inviting the community I serve to engage with the resources of the wider church, to be collaborative and creative with other congregations, to be bold in living the Gospel and to pray for the wider church through uplifting specific ministries, offices, synods, and companion synods. I believe that excitement is contagious and authentic sharing can resonate with passions members of my community may already have or ones that they are invited to discover.

Nominee: Rev. Chris Hanley, Glenwood, Toledo

For: Voting Member, Rostered Male

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I aim to be a neighborhood pastor. I am involved in local community leadership and the Toledo Museum of Art next door to the church. I also teach New Testament for the Synod's Growing Faith program. To broaden my horizons, I spent a sabbatical learning Spanish in Guatemala, and then I went on the Border Immersion trip to get a fuller understanding of issues surrounding immigration.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

Glenwood is a community with amazing diversity, and in order to live out our mission to embody the neighborly love we're learning from Jesus, we have had challenging discussions on race, LGBTQ inclusion, and accessibility. Arising from differing views, a welcoming promise emerged as a litany that we say each week to remind ourselves of our commitments to follow Jesus.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The Spirit is always far ahead of me. Whenever I feel like it's all falling apart, the Lord sends a neighbor or an opportunity with an organization, people who are embodying Jesus' neighborly love in surprising ways. I'm seeing the church become a hub where a variety of people embody Jesus' love in the same space, some of whom worship on Sunday.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

When one of my congregants, Birdena Martin, attended the churchwide assembly in 2025, we informed the congregation about the upcoming decisions. I will help the community of Glenwood understand the context of the decisions at hand, studying Scriptures, social statements, and whatever else will help clarify what's at stake and how we can be the church together in these decisions.

Nominee: Rev. Doug Pretorius, St. Mark's, Wapakoneta
For: Voting Member, Rostered Male

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I have served 35 years in my first call and am in the eighth year of my second call. I have always been active in the local ministerial groups. I have served synodically on the candidacy committee, the retreat planning committee, the Lakeside planning committee, and as conference dean.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

To build trust and collaboration across differences you need to listen empathetically, to respond respectfully, and to love radically.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

The Church proclaims the love of Christ within us, to us and for us. There is no "other." There is only "us." The power of the love of Christ is like that of the roots of the acorn growing and splitting the rocks of hatred and evil.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I will report and explain the actions of the assembly wherever it is needed.

Nominee: Rev. Mark Wentz, Lutheran Church of the Master,
Perrysburg
For: Voting Member, Rostered Male

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

I have been a parish pastor for 11 years. I'm a current member of the NWO synod candidacy committee for 9 years. I've previously been Synod Council member. I've been a SAM mentor and currently a SAM supervisor. I'm a spiritual director for the Via de Cristo community.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

I try to keep an open, receptive, and calming presence. I nearly always try to see both sides of a disagreement, and reflect on both sides whenever possible, and ask how Christ would deal with the situation.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

I think we are in a period of regrouping and reorienting. The way we've "always done things" is being challenged and changed. That gives me hope, as we still lift up the gospel of Christ, but look to new ways of being Church. The fact that my congregation is "getting it" also gives me hope.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

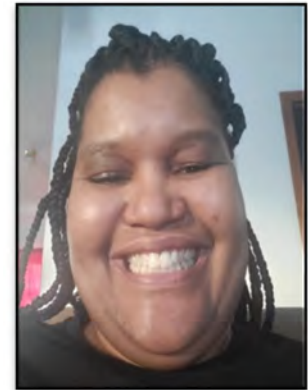
I'd say I'm already pretty engaged. But I think I'm inclined to spread what I'll learn at the CWA, to fellow church members, fellow ministers, other members of my community. From my previous experience at CW, I found my enthusiasm for the work of my local synod goes up as well.

Nominee: LaTrina Smith, Salem, Toledo

For: Voting Member, Person of Color

I have been active in the life of my parish and community by:

Yes, I joined my church about three years ago. I was asked by fellow member Tina Spouse because they were looking for a baker for their special event. I was then asked to join Norf- End Neighbors. This is where I continue with my work by helping feed the community every Tuesday and help with events.



I build trust and collaboration across differences by:

So how we build trust is over food. As far back in Jesus' time breaking bread with people like his Disciples. So, when we have other churches who help volunteer that helps us on Tuesday meal we break bread. I love to bake and my Aunt Barbara taught me the secret to good dessert was made with love. So anytime someone comes to volunteer I bake a treat to share.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is:

What makes me hopeful for future of my church is my pastor sees who we are and what we can keep going. Jesus knew as he walks to each town, city speaking the word of his father. Even when people called him names, he knew to keep going. So, with future of my church I see us keep going with our meal maybe doing it a second day a week. Keep doing more community events.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

So how I can commit is to listen to more people. Not just the ones I work with but the ones I serve. Making sure to get to know one thing about a person. Working

together to make something small like a new idea for Tuesday meal. My mother taught me to listen to key words to better understand how to keep going in life and church.

Nominee: Phoebe Jackson, Grace Evangelical, Elmore
For: Voting Member, Youth/Young Adult



I have been active in the life of my parish and community by: My community is so big! I am privileged to be able to serve my community in many capacities, through working for a wildlife refuge and coaching youth sports, helping at a local community supported agriculture (CSA) farm, my church involvement and facilitation of community events, and leading outreach efforts for my congregation. I am a regular at a coffee shop in Toledo where I've met half my friends, a member of a few different clubs, and I attend every single community event I can in between every other thing. I am interested in building networks between local organizations that allow us to support each other more fully.

I build trust and collaboration across differences by: Building trust is the first step to collaboration across differences. I believe in listening to others, in hearing what they need, not what you need from them, nor what you want them to need. We are called to meet others where they are at, right now, in this moment in their lives and in ours. We must be prepared in these moments to identify over and over the things that make us alike, the parts of thoughts we share- the things that allow us to meet humans as a fellow human. Only that allows us to work for things greater than us, do things greater than we thought possible, and make differences in our communities, in our world, with full knowledge of our differences.

What makes me hopeful for the future of the Church is: I am hopeful for every single moment I see folks come together and do things together for something larger than themselves. I have always experienced church as a place where taking action is more accessible. The ELCA Lutheran church is at the center of my family, the reason I felt I had so many grandparents as a child growing up in small-town congregations, and why I felt empowered to ask questions about everything. In our world, diverse church experiences exist, and not all are wonderfully positive. It is not our job to sweep these things away, nor is it our job to placate. It is our job to reform, to meet people, to be completely in the service of Christ is to be Him for others. That isn't always easy. Today, more than ever, I see more people willing to try, I see more efforts to engage in conversation, and I see us reaching out toward each other. Every one of these actions is an expression of hope.

I can commit to engaging my community in the work of the wider church after my return from CWA by:

I intend to bring our local visions closer to the broader mission of the church. I will use events in the community to continue to facilitate environments where people can gather without feeling pressured by specific agendas. My goal is to bring the diverse perspectives I encounter back to my local area to strengthen our capacity for care.



NWOS Two Year Mission Spending Plan

FY 26-27 Spending Plan - Approved at the January 2026 Synod Council Meeting

	2024/2025 Actual	FY-2025/26 Assembly Approved Spending Plan	FY 2025/26 Actual	2026/2027 Council Approved Mission Spending Plan	2027/2028 Mission Spending Plan
Operating Revenues					
Mission Support	1,173,084	1,009,500	1,114,915	1,024,000	1,031,000
Investment Income	27,447	14,350	58,432	45,612	51,250
Churchwide POS for DEM	112,294	114,821	114,340	115,340	117,647
Annual Fund, Unrestricted	209,915	250,000	305,067	300,000	344,000
Misc Income, Registration Fees	16,569	10,000	13,488	15,000	15,000
ELCA Grant for Campus Ministry	7,885	7,800	-	-	-
Total Revenues	1,547,194	1,406,471	1,606,242	1,499,952	1,558,897
Operating Expenses					
ELCA Proportionate Share	469,334	403,800	445,966	409,600	412,400
Advocacy				2,000	2,000
Ohio Council of Churches	2,500	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Subtotal Transforming the World	471,834	405,800	447,966	413,600	416,400
Developing Disciples:					
Trinity Lutheran Seminary	20,000	20,000	18,333	10,000	10,000
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries	20,000	20,000	23,000	20,000	20,000
Candidacy & Lay Leader Training	17,784	12,000	24,964	30,000	30,000
Ohio Luth. Campus Ministries	7,800	7,800	-	-	-
ELCA Ohio Universities	5,000	4,000	4,000	2,000	2,000
Special Events	3,875	3,000	7,481	10,000	10,000
Subtotal Developing Disciples	74,459	66,800	77,778	72,000	72,000
Strengthening Parishes:					
Grant: Redeemer, Toledo	10,567	11,400	11,400	11,900	12,495
Grant: Salem, Toledo	11,400	11,400	11,400	11,900	12,495
Grant: St Luke's, Toledo					12,495
Grant: Camino de Vida	10,999	11,400	11,000	11,000	11,000
Deans and Teams	24,643	23,000	22,573	25,000	37,000
Subtotal Strengthening Parishes	57,609	57,200	56,373	59,800	85,485
Administration and Operations					
Staff Salaries	529,033	562,277	539,927	554,682	582,416
Benefits	153,477	197,865	140,783	145,210	149,566
Payroll Taxes & Expenses	28,444	29,520	29,188	29,594	31,742
Accounting, Auditing, & Fees	56,106	49,440	59,892	52,400	53,972
Technology & Support	33,818	28,840	25,267	25,000	25,750
Contract - Generosity				50,000	51,500
Professional Exp. & Cont. Edu.	14,965	14,000	13,994	14,500	14,500
Building & Grounds	9,658	6,695	12,223	11,250	11,587
Insurance	12,048	12,360	13,102	13,500	13,500
Auto Expenses	27,461	17,335	22,942	25,000	25,750
Supplies & Resources	33,363	10,300	14,610	15,000	15,450
Region 6 Archives	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Legal Fees & Consulting	4,380	2,575	180	4,000	4,120
Subtotal Admin. & Operations	911,753	940,207	881,108	949,136	988,853
Total Operating Expenses	1,515,655	1,470,007	1,463,225	1,494,536	1,562,738
Non-Cash Items					
Total Depreciation (Non-Cash)	11,712	7,500	18,291	-	-
Total Expenses & Non-Cash Items	1,527,367	1,477,507	1,481,516	1,494,536	1,562,738
Net Operating Total	19,827	(71,036)	124,726	5,416	(3,841)



Northwestern Ohio Synod
Statement of Activities from Operations
February 1, 2024 thru January 31, 2025

	Annual Budget	2/1/24 thru 1/31/25	% of Budget Used
Operating Revenues			
Mission Support	\$ 1,160,000	\$ 1,173,084	101%
Income from Operating Investments	14,000	23,157	165%
Gain/(Loss) from Operating Investments		4,291	
Gain/(Loss) on Asset Disposal		-	
Candidacy & Class Fees/ Misc. Income	10,000	16,569	166%
Churchwide POS for DEM	112,294	112,294	100%
ELCA Grant for Campus Ministry	7,800	7,884	101%
Annual Fund - Unrestricted*	145,000	209,915	145%
Total Operating Revenues	1,449,094	1,547,194	107%
Operating Expenses			
Transforming the World			
ELCA Proportionate Share	464,000	469,334	101%
Ohio Council of Churches	2,000	2,500	125%
Total Transforming the World	466,000	471,834	101%
Developing Disciples			
Hopewood Outdoors, <i>fka Luth Outdoor Ministries</i>	20,000	20,000	100%
Ohio Luth Campus Ministries	7,800	7,800	100%
ELCA Ohio Universities	4,000	5,000	125%
Trinity Lutheran Seminary	20,000	20,000	100%
Special Events	3,000	3,875	129%
Candidacy & Training	10,000	17,784	178%
Total Developing Disciples	64,800	74,459	115%
Strengthening Parishes			
Grant: Redeemer, Toledo	11,400	10,567	93%
Grant: Salem, Toledo	11,400	11,400	100%
Grant: Camino de Vida	11,000	10,999	100%
Deans, Call Facilitators, & Teams	23,000	24,643	107%
Total Strengthening Parishes	56,800	57,609	101%
Administration and Operations			
Staff Salaries	530,900	529,033	100%
Benefits	170,000	153,477	90%
Payroll Taxes & Expenses	28,000	28,444	102%
Professional Expenses & Continuing Edu.	14,000	14,965	107%
Accounting , Auditing, & Fees	48,000	56,106	117%
Technology & Support	28,000	33,818	121%
Auto Expenses	16,000	27,461	172%
Building & Grounds	6,500	9,658	149%
Supplies & Resources	10,000	33,363	334%
Insurance	12,000	12,048	100%
Legal Fees and Consulting**	2,500	4,380	175%
SAM Training (Multi-Synod)	2,000	-	0%
Region 6 Archives	9,000	9,000	100%
Total Administration and Operations	876,900	911,753	104%
Depreciation	5,000	11,712	234%
Total Operating Expenses	1,469,500	1,527,367	104%
Net Total From Operating Activity	(20,406)	19,827	



Northwestern Ohio Synod
Statement of Donor Restricted and Endowment Activity

February 1, 2024-January 31, 2025

	Income	Disbursements	Balance
<u>Endowment Activity</u>			
Gain/(Loss) from Endowment Investments	\$ 178,744		\$ 178,744
Endowment Additions/ Disbursements	5,000	22,342	(17,342)
Total Endowment Activity	183,744	22,342	161,402
<u>Donor Restricted Activity</u>			
	Income	Disbursements	Balance
Youth Events		7,272	3,381
Microgrants (fka Imagining Renewal)	33,316	49,065	32,659
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	1,178	3,205	3,643
Rural /Small Town		5,311	-
Seminary Scholarships	812	4,178	57,511
Dodoma (Tanzania) Companion Synod	6,226	2,500	110,455
Mexico Companion Synod			(468)
Slovak (Serbia) Companion Synod			17,015
Discipleship Initiative		2,770	71,551
GMB General (NWOS GMB)	6,500	25,839	1,296
Dodoma Disability Ministry Fund		-	9,732
Diakonia Grant	27,549	2,463	21,647
Makumira Seminary Resources			5,604
On the Way	10,000	48	51,302
Campus Ministry	1,962		20,891
"Year of" Resources			5,474
Generosity Grant-Zion	8,200		8,387
Energizing Churches Grant-Zion	10,000		10,229
Gain/(Loss) from DR Investment	54,654		56,654
Total Donor Restricted Activity	160,397	102,651	486,963

Summary of Net Asset Activity

	Unrestricted	Endowment & Donor Restricted	Total
Net Total from Current Activity	\$ 19,827	\$ 219,148	\$ 238,975
Net Asset Beginning Balance	654,111	1,477,008	2,131,119
Net Asset Current Balance	\$ 673,938	\$ 1,696,156	\$ 2,370,094

David J. Seitz

April 7, 2026



Northwestern Ohio Synod
Statement of Financial Position
February 1, 2024 thru January 31, 2025

Assets

Current Assets:	
Checking Account	150,960
Money Market Savings Account	104,332
Operating Reserve Mutual Fund MM3328	96,743
Operating Reserve Mutual Fund MM4415	462,466
Endowment Mutual Fund MM7452	1,190,337
Donor Restricted Mutual Fund MM1903	388,747
Accounts Receivable	-
Prepaid Expenses	11,550
Total Current Assets	2,405,135
Fixed Assets	
Furniture, Equip. & Trans.	171,152
Accumulated Depreciation	(128,335)
Operating Lease (Use of Building)	30,332
Total Fixed Assets	73,149
Assets Permanently by Donor (Weber Trust)	31,180
Total Assets Permanently by Donor	31,180
Total Assets	\$ 2,509,464

Liabilities & Net Assets

	<u>Balance</u>
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	32,678
Payroll Payables	2,343
Proportionate Share Payable	56,606
Pass Thru Payments Payable	7,227
Accrued Liabilities	36,485
Event Registrations	-
Other Funds Held	4,031
Total Liabilities	139,370

Net Assets

Unrestricted Reserves	710,022
<u>Council Designated Funds</u>	
Synod Endowment Fund	1,198,583
CD Endowment Funds Available for Disbursement	-
Total Council Designated Funds	1,198,583
<u>Donor Restricted Funds</u>	
Youth Events	3,381
Microgrants (<i>fka Imagining Renewal</i>)	32,659
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	3,643
Seminary Scholarships	57,511
Dodoma (<i>Tanzania</i>) Companion Synod	110,455
Mexico Companion Synod	(468)
Slovak (<i>Serbia</i>) Companion Synod	17,015
Discipleship Initiative	71,551
GMB General	1,296
Dodoma Disability Ministry Fund	9,732
Diakonia Grant	21,647
Makumira Seminary Resources	5,604
On the Way	51,302
Campus Ministry	20,891
Year of Resources	5,474
Energizing Churches Grant	10,229
Generosity Grant	8,387
Total Donor Restricted Funds	430,309
Permanently Restricted by Donor	
Weber Trust - Permanent	31,180
Total Permanently Restricted by Donor	31,180
Total Net Assets	\$ 2,370,094
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 2,509,464



Northwestern Ohio Synod
Statement of Activities from Operations
 February 1, 2025 thru January 31, 2026

	Annual Budget	2/1/25 thru 1/31/26	% of Budget Used
Operating Revenues			
Mission Support	\$ 1,075,000	\$ 1,114,915	104%
Income from Operating Investments	20,000	45,971	230%
Gain/(Loss) from Operating Investments		12,461	
Gain/(Loss) on Asset Disposal		1,000	
Candidacy & Class Fees/ Misc. Income	10,000	12,488	125%
Churchwide POS for DEM	114,821	114,340	100%
ELCA Grant for Campus Ministry	7,800	-	0%
Annual Fund - Unrestricted*	225,000	305,067	136%
Total Operating Revenues	1,452,621	1,606,242	111%
Operating Expenses			
Transforming the World			
ELCA Proportionate Share	430,000	445,966	104%
Ohio Council of Churches	2,000	2,000	100%
Total Transforming the World	432,000	447,966	104%
Developing Disciples			
Hopewood Outdoors, <i>fka Luth Outdoor Ministries</i>	20,000	23,000	115%
Ohio Luth Campus Ministries	7,800	-	0%
ELCA Ohio Universities	4,000	4,000	100%
Trinity Lutheran Seminary	20,000	18,333	92%
Special Events	5,000	7,481	150%
Candidacy & Training	18,000	24,964	139%
Total Developing Disciples	74,800	77,778	104%
Strengthening Parishes			
Grant: Redeemer, Toledo	11,400	11,400	100%
Grant: Salem, Toledo	11,400	11,400	100%
Grant: Camino de Vida	11,000	11,000	100%
Deans, Call Facilitators, & Teams	23,000	22,573	98%
Total Strengthening Parishes	56,800	56,373	99%
Administration and Operations			
Staff Salaries	560,190	539,927	96%
Benefits	153,560	140,783	92%
Payroll Taxes & Expenses	28,840	29,188	101%
Professional Expenses & Continuing Edu.	14,000	13,994	100%
Accounting , Auditing, & Fees	49,440	59,892	121%
Technology & Support	29,500	25,267	86%
Auto Expenses	25,000	22,942	92%
Building & Grounds	10,560	12,223	116%
Supplies & Resources	15,000	14,610	97%
Insurance	12,250	13,102	107%
Legal Fees and Consulting**	2,575	180	7%
Region 6 Archives	9,000	9,000	100%
Total Administration and Operations	909,915	881,108	97%
Depreciation	7,800	18,291	235%
Total Operating Expenses	1,481,315	1,481,516	100%
Net Total From Operating Activity	(28,694)	124,726	

David J. Seitz

April 7, 2026



Northwestern Ohio Synod
Statement of Donor Restricted and Endowment Activity

February 1, 2025-January 31, 2026

	Income	Disbursements	Balance
<u>Endowment Activity</u>			
Gain/(Loss) from Endowment Investments	\$ 209,210		\$ 209,210
Endowment Additions/ Disbursements	-	52,088	(52,088)
Total Endowment Activity	209,210	52,088	157,122

	Income	Disbursements	Balance
<u>Donor Restricted Activity</u>			
Youth Events		1,748	1,571
Microgrants (<i>fka Imagining Renewal</i>)	2,480	30,704	4,946
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	680	675	3,700
Rural /Small Town			113
Seminary Scholarships	3,000	(53)	61,432
Dodoma (Tanzania) Companion Synod	82,513	122,200	71,334
Mexico Companion Synod	15,026	4,633	9,924
Slovak (Serbia) Companion Synod	5,733	10,733	12,272
Discipleship Initiative		3,564	69,057
GMB General (NWOS GMB)		2,015	(715)
Dodoma Disability Ministry Fund		4,010	5,722
Diakonia Grant	1,405		21,951
Makumira Seminary Resources			5,689
On the Way		1,581	50,467
Campus Ministry			21,207
"Year of" Resources		1,679	3,859
Generosity Grant-Zion		3,188	5,284
Energizing Churches Grant-Zion		3,128	7,252
Fresh Expressions	50,000	23,089	28,370
Conflict resolution Training Grant	10,000	11,368	(1,368)
Wartburg Castle Grant 2025	50,000	44,349	5,651
Wartburg Castle Grant 2026	35,000	-	35,000
Gain/(Loss) from DR Investment	6,587		6,587
Total Donor Restricted Activity	262,424	268,612	429,306

Summary of Net Asset Activity

	Unrestricted	Endowment & Donor Restricted	Total
Net Total from Current Activity	\$ 124,726	\$ 150,935	\$ 275,661
Net Asset Beginning Balance	673,938	1,696,156	2,370,094
Net Asset Current Balance	\$ 798,664	\$ 1,847,091	\$ 2,645,755

David J. Seitz
April 7, 2026



Northwestern Ohio Synod
Statement of Financial Position
February 1, 2025 thru January 31, 2026

Assets

Current Assets:	
Checking Account	198,066
Money Market Savings Account	80,510
Operating Reserve Mutual Fund MM3328	110,148
Operating Reserve Mutual Fund MM4415	505,899
Endowment Mutual Fund MM7452	1,305,671
Donor Restricted Mutual Fund MM1903	444,911
Accounts Receivable	-
Prepaid Expenses	11,919
Total Current Assets	2,657,124
Fixed Assets	
Furniture, Equip. & Trans.	179,268
Accumulated Depreciation	(128,327)
Operating Lease (Use of Building)	30,332
Total Fixed Assets	81,273
Assets Permanently by Donor (Weber Trust)	31,180
Total Assets Permanently by Donor	31,180
Total Assets	\$ 2,769,577

Liabilities & Net Assets

	Balance
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	6,171
Payroll Payables	3,187
Proportionate Share Payable	48,104
Pass Thru Payments Payable	23,847
Accrued Liabilities	34,955
Event Registrations	3,427
Other Funds Held	4,131
Total Liabilities	123,822

Net Assets

Unrestricted Reserves	838,154
Council Designated Funds	
Synod Endowment Fund	1,343,266
CD Endowment Funds Available for Disbursement	10,437
Total Council Designated Funds	1,353,703

Donor Restricted Funds

Youth Events	1,571
Microgrants (<i>fka Imagining Renewal</i>)	4,946
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	3,700
Rural/Small Town Ministry	113
Seminary Scholarships	61,432
Dodoma (<i>Tanzania</i>) Companion Synod	71,334
Mexico Companion Synod	9,924
Slovak (<i>Serbia</i>) Companion Synod	12,272
Discipleship Initiative	69,057
GMB General	(715)
Dodoma Disability Ministry Fund	5,722
Diakonia Grant	21,951
Makumira Seminary Resources	5,689
On the Way	50,467
Campus Ministry	21,207
Year of Resources	3,859
Energizing Churches Grant	7,252
Generosity Grant	5,283
Fresh Expressions Grant	28,370
Wartburg Castle Grant 2025	5,651
Wartburg Castle Grant 2026	35,000
Conflict Resolution Training Grant	(1,368)
Total Donor Restricted Funds	422,718
Permanently Restricted by Donor	
Weber Trust - Permanent	31,180
Total Permanently Restricted by Donor	31,180
Total Net Assets	\$ 2,645,755
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 2,769,577



2027/28

Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of the Northwestern Ohio Synod

"The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12)

draft - NOT Approved yet by Synod Assembly on May 30, 2026

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Introduction

Doing God's work in the world calls for leaders who bring a variety of training, skills, interests and life experiences to the work they do in congregations, communities and partner organizations. Many of these leaders are called to serve as ministers on one of the rosters of the ELCA: Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors) and Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons).

- Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Ordained pastors serve with active, courageous faith to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and offer the hope of the sacraments in congregations and other ministry settings. Some pastors are called to specialized ministries such as chaplaincy and campus ministry.
- Rostered Ministers of Word and Service. Ordained deacons serve in congregations and other ministries of the ELCA, including family ministries, youth, administration, volunteer ministry, social services, music, or parish nursing. Deacons connect the church with the needs of the world and work to equip others to lead a living, active and caring Christian life.

Every rostered minister goes through theological training and a candidacy process. The candidacy process raises up, prepares, certifies, and approves public leaders in the ELCA. Family, friends, congregations, ministry organizations, synods, seminaries, and staff from the churchwide organization all play important roles in this process.

These compensation guidelines will apply to both types of rostered ministers, however, there are some areas where they will differ, and every attempt has been made to clearly mark these areas. Please contact the synod office should you have questions about which sections apply to which roster.

Base Salary Adjustments – Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors)

The base salary guidelines for Ministers of Word and Sacrament were reviewed and adjusted in 2025 to better align with our neighboring synods to provide more equitable compensation across the region. This adjustment included an increase of 10 percent plus a cost-of-living allowance (COLA). In order to continue providing equitable compensation across the region, the Compensation and Guidelines Task Force is proposing an increase of no less than 5 percent (or COLA) for 2027, and no less than 3 percent (or COLA) for 2028. For each year of ordination, a consistent increment of \$600 will be added to the base salary in recognition of years of experience.

Base Salary Adjustments – Rostered Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons)

Guidelines for Ministers of Word and Service are currently more in line with our neighboring synods. For 2027/28, we recommend annual increases of no less than 5 percent (or COLA) for 2027 and no less than 3 percent (or COLA) for 2028. For each year of ordination, a consistent increment of \$600 will be added to the base salary in recognition of years of experience.

Future Salary Adjustments

Base salary adjustments are based on a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to the base salary for zero years of ordination. The Social Security Administration releases this percentage in the Fall of each year.

Synod Council may take action to increase, but not decrease, the percentage applied to Base Salary Guidelines in years when there is no synod assembly.

Housing Allowance

To calculate the housing allowance for a Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament not living in a parsonage, congregations will find the Median Home Value (MHV) for their town, city, or county. The compensation worksheets have helpful links to Zillow or the National Realtors Association to find this number. You can also ask a local realtor for their expertise in finding the MHV.

The MHV is then multiplied by 1.25% to find the monthly allowance amount and multiplied by 12 months for an annual amount. The percentage can be increased at the discretion of parish leadership.

Please see the worksheets below for step-by-step instructions on how to properly calculate housing allowance.

Housing Equity Allowance

Congregations may provide a parsonage for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, which is an advantage to both congregation and pastor in some housing markets. However, a pastor living in a parsonage does not have the opportunity to accrue equity in a home. A housing equity allowance is designed to address this situation, so that when a pastor moves from a parsonage and either retires or moves to a new call, they will have the equity they might have accrued while owning a home. For Ministers of Word and Sacrament who live in a parsonage, the method for calculating Housing Equity Allowance has been adjusted to be more in line with the calculation method based on median home value.

Congregation Recommendations

It is recommended that congregations follow the suggested salary guidelines for rostered ministers which reflect years of experience and education as indicated in the *2027/28 Base Salary Guidelines*.

However, these are guidelines and not requirements. Congregations and ministers are encouraged to negotiate compensation packages that are mutually beneficial while addressing the unique circumstances of congregation and minister. Compensation includes more than mere cash compensation – it also entails health benefits, pension contributions, vacation, professional expenses, continuing education, housing and parsonage, or even student debt assistance. Congregations and ministers are encouraged to explore the breadth of compensation elements, being creative and flexible in creating compensation packages that work for both parties and address specific contexts. You may also want to visit the ELCA website (www.elca.org) for further compensatory information; and the Portico Benefit services website (www.porticobenefits.org) for health benefits rate information.

These compensation guidelines serve to guide conversations in budgeting for the rostered minister's compensation and to give insight into what is a fair and reasonable compensation package for trained, approved, and called leaders of our church. We often think of ministry in terms of a rostered minister's efforts on behalf of the members of a congregation. In the same way, the ministry of the laity includes the care of the rostered minister and family. This mutual concern for one another is a witness to what we believe and practice in the life of the church.

A Note on Clergy Couples

Each member of a clergy couple is seen as their own entity which should be compensated fully by their calling congregation. Base salary, housing allowance, and other benefits should be calculated for each member of the couple individually when filling out a compensation worksheet. A congregation is responsible for the health insurance of the Rostered Minister and family. Health Insurance costs might be adjusted or shared through Portico when calling a member of a sponsored couple. However, there should be wording in compensation worksheets to assure health insurance coverage in the case that the call status of either spouse changes.

Annual Review of Compensation for Rostered Minister

The compensation package of each rostered minister (pastor or deacon) under call should be reviewed annually by the congregation's executive committee, congregational council, or other finance team. The congregational council can then make recommendations to the congregation. Updated compensation agreements should be written and recorded in the congregation's personnel files on an annual basis.

The key task of the executive committee (or other team) is to discuss annually with the rostered minister a fair, honorable, and equitable compensation package. Since the rostered minister depends on the congregational council and the congregation to make adequate provision for their financial needs, the rostered minister should have an opportunity to discuss those needs in an open and supportive forum. The team can

receive data from the rostered minister about his or her financial needs and subsequently make recommendations to the congregational council for a compensation package.

At the same time, the minister should recognize the financial realities of the congregation and should make reasonable and realistic requests. If desired compensation is beyond the current means of the congregation, the minister and congregational leaders should formulate a plan to address giving and financial resources.

Both congregation and minister should evaluate their expectations of each other and seek to communicate these clearly so that the compensation package reflects those expectations reasonably. At all times, both congregation and minister should be prepared to and seek to compromise.

Items included in the yearly compensation adjustments (may be different for pastor vs deacon):

1. Base Salary based on years of experience
2. Social Security Allowance (pastors)
3. Housing Allowance (for pastors without a parsonage) or Furnishing Allowance and Housing Equity Allowance (for pastors with a parsonage)
4. Health and Medical Benefit adjustments consistent with Portico Benefit Services. Each congregation will need to use the Calculators found at www.PorticoBenefits.org to determine the amount of the rostered minister's benefits. You will need to have your rostered minister's birth date to calculate Portico Benefits.

A congregation that finds it cannot meet the compensation amount called for in these guidelines and thus cannot compensate its rostered minister fairly and adequately, should consider alternatives such as shared ministry with neighboring congregations, a shared rostered minister, a part-time rostered minister, or other arrangement. It should be noted that cutting back a full-time rostered minister's hours to part-time hours invalidates the original letter of call and requires negotiating a new call. Congregations facing any of these situations should contact the Office of the Bishop for advice and assistance.

Base Salary Guidelines – Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors)
 2027 2028*

<i>Years Ordained</i>	<i>Year of ordination</i>	<i>Base Salary</i>		<i>Years Ordained</i>	<i>Year of ordination</i>	<i>Base Salary</i>
0	2027	\$48,665.00		0	2028	\$50,125.00
1	2026	\$49,265.00		1	2027	\$50,725.00
2	2025	\$49,865.00		2	2026	\$51,325.00
3	2024	\$50,465.00		3	2025	\$51,925.00
4	2023	\$51,065.00		4	2024	\$52,525.00
5	2022	\$51,665.00		5	2023	\$53,125.00
6	2021	\$52,265.00		6	2022	\$53,725.00
7	2020	\$52,865.00		7	2021	\$54,325.00
8	2019	\$53,465.00		8	2020	\$54,925.00
9	2018	\$54,065.00		9	2019	\$55,525.00
10	2017	\$54,665.00		10	2018	\$56,125.00
11	2016	\$55,265.00		11	2017	\$56,725.00
12	2015	\$55,865.00		12	2016	\$57,325.00
13	2014	\$56,465.00		13	2015	\$57,925.00
14	2013	\$57,065.00		14	2014	\$58,525.00
15	2012	\$57,665.00		15	2013	\$59,125.00
16	2011	\$58,265.00		16	2012	\$59,725.00
17	2010	\$58,865.00		17	2011	\$60,325.00
18	2009	\$59,465.00		18	2010	\$60,925.00
19	2008	\$60,065.00		19	2009	\$61,525.00
20	2007	\$60,665.00		20	2008	\$62,125.00
21	2006	\$61,265.00		21	2007	\$62,725.00
22	2005	\$61,865.00		22	2006	\$63,325.00
23	2004	\$62,465.00		23	2005	\$63,925.00
24	2003	\$63,065.00		24	2004	\$64,525.00
25	2002	\$63,665.00		25	2003	\$65,125.00

For each year of ordination above 25, \$600 should be added.

*2028 base salaries in this chart reflect a minimum 3% increase on the base with 0 years of ordination, but it is recommended that the COLA for 2028 be used when it is released.

Base Salary Guidelines – Rostered Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons)
 2027 2028*

<i>Years Ordained</i>	<i>Year of ordination</i>	<i>Base Salary</i>		<i>Years Ordained</i>	<i>Year of ordination</i>	<i>Base Salary</i>
0	2027	\$54,075.00		0	2028	\$55,700.00
1	2026	\$54,675.00		1	2027	\$56,300.00
2	2025	\$55,275.00		2	2026	\$56,900.00
3	2024	\$55,875.00		3	2025	\$57,500.00
4	2023	\$56,475.00		4	2024	\$58,100.00
5	2022	\$57,075.00		5	2023	\$58,700.00
6	2021	\$57,675.00		6	2022	\$59,300.00
7	2020	\$58,275.00		7	2021	\$59,900.00
8	2019	\$58,875.00		8	2020	\$60,500.00
9	2018	\$59,475.00		9	2019	\$61,100.00
10	2017	\$60,075.00		10	2018	\$61,700.00
11	2016	\$60,675.00		11	2017	\$62,300.00
12	2015	\$61,275.00		12	2016	\$62,900.00
13	2014	\$61,875.00		13	2015	\$63,500.00
14	2013	\$62,475.00		14	2014	\$64,100.00
15	2012	\$63,075.00		15	2013	\$64,700.00
16	2011	\$63,675.00		16	2012	\$65,300.00
17	2010	\$64,275.00		17	2011	\$65,900.00
18	2009	\$64,875.00		18	2010	\$66,500.00
19	2008	\$65,475.00		19	2009	\$67,100.00
20	2007	\$66,075.00		20	2008	\$67,700.00
21	2006	\$66,675.00		21	2007	\$68,300.00
22	2005	\$67,275.00		22	2006	\$68,900.00
23	2004	\$67,875.00		23	2005	\$69,500.00
24	2003	\$68,475.00		24	2004	\$70,100.00
25	2002	\$69,075.00		25	2003	\$70,700.00

For each year of ordination above 25, \$600 should be added.

*2028 base salaries in this chart reflect a minimum 3% increase on the base with 0 years of ordination, but it is recommended that the COLA for 2028 be used when it is released.

Compensation Spreadsheet and Worksheet

Below is an in-depth explanation of our Compensation Worksheet steps. For an easy tool to help determine compensation numbers, you can find an Excel document at this link: <https://nwos-elca.church/resources/compensation-guidelines/>

You can use the spreadsheet to fill out the final compensation worksheet, which can be found at this link: <https://nwos-elca.church/resources/compensation-guidelines/>

Please be sure to determine if you need the worksheet for a Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament WITHOUT a parsonage or WITH a parsonage or for a Rostered Minister of Word and Service, as those documents are adjusted according to each situation.

Step 1: Determining Salary Compensation

The salary compensation of a rostered minister (pastor or deacon) is made up of two components: base salary and additional/merit compensation.

Base Salary

Congregations are encouraged to utilize this synod's recommended base salary guidelines as a starting place in determining base salary. These guidelines can be found on pages 9 and 10 of these guidelines.

This figure will be entered on Line A of the Compensation Worksheet.

Additional/Merit Compensation

Other factors may be taken into consideration when determining additional / merit compensation for the rostered minister (pastor or deacon). These factors may include:

1. Additional relevant education, certifications, or degrees
2. Relevant prior work experience (i.e. second career ministers)
3. Additional work expectations
4. Size of the congregation/multiple congregations
5. Expected supervision of staff
6. Length of service to the parish
7. Merit and performance
8. Educational debt load
9. Other

This figure will be entered on Line B of the Compensation Worksheet.

Total Salary

To arrive at Total Salary Compensation (Line C), add together Line A and Line B

Honoraria and Other Fees

Honoraria or other fees received for weddings, funerals, outside speaking engagements, or from any other source should *not* be taken into account when setting the base salary or additional/merit compensation, nor should any income received by the spouse be a consideration.

Step 2: Determining Housing Allowance for Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors)

Congregations should provide housing for pastors through a parsonage and/or a housing allowance.

If a congregation provides a parsonage, this number is still calculated to help calculate the Housing Equity Allowance placed later on the worksheet. If a congregation does not provide a parsonage, the congregation should provide a housing allowance which can be calculated as shown below

Calculating Housing Allowance

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Median Home Value} \\ & \times 1.25\% \text{ (minimum)} \\ & \underline{\times 12 \text{ months}} \\ & = \text{Housing Allowance (E)} \end{aligned}$$

Housing allowance is based on the median home value of where the majority of parishioners are based. To find this value you can use the zip code at the Zillow link below, use the county value from the National Realtors Association link below or ask a local realtor that is familiar with the housing costs where you are located. That number is then multiplied by a rate of at least 1.25 percent that is chosen by your congregation.

Links to find Median Home Value:

Zillow (by zip code)

<https://www.zillow.com/home-values/44/oh/>

National Realtors Association (by county) <https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics/housing-statistics/county-median-home-prices-and-monthly-mortgage-payment>

These figures will be entered on Lines D-F of the Compensation Worksheet for Pastors WITHOUT a parsonage.

These figures will be entered on Lines N-P on the Compensation Worksheet for Pastors WITH a parsonage, to aid in calculating Housing Equity Allowance (see step 4 below).

Once Housing Allowance is determined, the amount designated as Housing Allowance can be adjusted to the needs of the pastor *so long as the Total Defined Compensation remains the same*. In other words, the pay designated as salary on the W2 can decrease (or increase) and the part designated as Housing Allowance can increase (or decrease). This provides tax savings to the pastor at no additional cost to the congregation.

In IRS Publication 517, the IRS states that “The church or organization that employs you must officially designate the payment as a housing allowance before the payment is made. A definite amount must be designated. The amount of the housing allowance cannot be determined at a later date.” (*A sample resolution for designating housing allowance is available below*). Designation of housing allowance can be made through a separate line item on the budget, or through action recorded in council minutes.

Sample Resolution

The following resolution was duly adopted by the church council/board of directors of [Name of Church] at a regularly scheduled meeting held on [Day, Month, Year], a quorum being present:

Whereas, ministers who own or rent their home do not pay federal income taxes on the compensation that their employing church designates in advance as a housing allowance, to the extent that the allowance represents compensation for ministerial services, is used to pay housing expenses, and does not exceed the fair rental value of the home (furnished, plus utilities); and

Whereas, Pastor [First and Last Name] is compensated by [Name of Church] exclusively for services as a minister of the gospel; and

Whereas, [Name of Church] does not provide Pastor [First and Last Name] with a parsonage; therefore, it is hereby

Resolved, that the total compensation paid to Pastor [First and Last Name] for calendar year ____ shall be [\$____], of which [\$____] is hereby designated to be a housing allowance; and it is further

Resolved, that the designation of [\$____] as a housing allowance shall apply to calendar year ____ and all future years unless otherwise provided.

Parsonage Utilities and Maintenance

A congregation that provides a parsonage is responsible for the cost of utilities (gas, water, electric, trash, internet, etc.) and maintenance, and it is strongly recommended that congregations directly pay utility companies.

Furnishings Allowance for Pastors Living in a Parsonage

Pastors living in parsonages may be provided with a “furnishings allowance.” Even in a parsonage, every pastor has some expense in maintaining their home.

When the furnishings allowance is designated in advance, and to the extent it is actually used for housing expenses, it is a non-taxable source of income for the pastor.

This figure will be entered on Line F of the Compensation Worksheet.

Total Housing Allowance

The total housing compensation is determined by entering line F, whether that is an actual housing allowance or only a furnishing allowance.

Step 3: Determining Defined Compensation for Deacons and Pastors

Defined Compensation for Rostered Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons)

For a deacon, defined compensation is equal to the deacon's total salary (Line C).

Please consult Step 5 for guidance in estimating employer expenses for FICA.

Defined Compensation for Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors)

In order to determine Defined Compensation for a pastor – which is utilized in determining benefits – you must first determine the Social Security Allowance.

Social Security Allowance

Under most circumstances, an employer pays one half of the FICA tax (Social Security and Medicare combined), and the employee pays the other half. Clergy are in a unique situation because the Internal Revenue Code mandates that ordained pastors are classified not as 'employees', but as 'self-employed' for Social Security taxes, meaning ordained pastors pay the entire 15.3% FICA tax (7.65% employee portion plus the 7.65% employer portion, known as SECA for self-employed persons).

But according to the Internal Revenue Service ordained pastors are NOT considered self-employed, but instead viewed as employees for income tax purposes and are thereby issued a W-2 like all other employees.

Throughout the ELCA, Synods strongly recommend that all congregations pay the additional 7.65%, as a congregation would for all other employees. This additional 7.65% is termed a "Social Security Allowance" and is calculated as follows:

Note: the calculation is different for parsonage and non-parsonage housing arrangements.

Social Security Allowance for a pastor receiving a housing allowance (non-parsonage):

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Total Salary Compensation (C)} \\ & + \text{Housing Allowance (F)} \\ & = \text{Social Security Base} \\ & \times 7.65 \% \text{ (employer rate)} \\ & = \text{Social Security Allowance (G)} \end{aligned}$$

Social Security Allowance for a pastor living in parsonage:

Total Salary Compensation (C)
x 1.3 (Housing Equivalency Factor)
= Subtotal
+ Furnishings Allowance (F)
= Social Security Base
x 7.65 % (employer rate)
= Social Security Allowance (G)

This figure will be entered on Line G of the Compensation Worksheet.

Under current law, congregations are prohibited from directly paying social security tax for pastors. To remedy this, congregations should provide the allowance as an additional cash component that runs through the congregation's payroll system. The allowance must be considered as salary in reporting to the IRS, and is also considered income when computing pension plan contributions.

If a pastor requests it and the congregation is willing, a congregation may withhold voluntary federal and state tax contributions. Otherwise, pastors are required to make quarterly estimated tax payments.

Total Defined Compensation

Defined compensation is not synonymous with cash compensation. Defined compensation is the base amount on which benefits are calculated and is different for parsonage and non-parsonage housing arrangements.

For a pastor receiving a housing allowance (non-parsonage):

Total Salary Compensation (C)
+ Total Housing Allowance (F)
+ Social Security Allowance (G)
= Total Defined Compensation (H)

For a pastor living in a parsonage:

Total Salary Compensation (C)
+ Total Housing Allowance (F)
+ Social Security Allowance (G)
= Total Defined Compensation (H)

This figure will be entered on Line H on any of the Compensation Worksheets.

Step 4: Determining Portico Benefits

ELCA associated employers and those recognized by the ELCA as eligible employers may sponsor their employees in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program offered by the ELCA – Portico Benefit Services. The program is available to rostered ministers (pastors or deacons) scheduled to work 15 or more hours per week for 6 or more consecutive months per year.

For all Portico benefits related information and questions, please contact Portico for the most up-to-date information.

Pension and Health Benefits

Because of the variety and complexity of factors involved in determining healthcare and benefit rates, please use the Portico Benefit Calculator to determine benefit figures: (<https://employerlink.porticobenefits.org/Home/Resources/Calculators.aspx>).

These figures will be entered into lines I, J, K, L, and M on the Compensation Worksheet.

Housing Equity Allowance for Pastors Living in a Parsonage

It is recommended that congregations which provide a parsonage also provide for a housing equity allowance for their pastor. Housing equity should not be paid directly to the pastor, but rather invested in a Portico account for that purpose. The purpose of this allowance is to provide financial resources for a pastor to purchase housing upon retirement, when moving calls and/or as described by Portico policy or applicable law. To find an equitable number, your congregation must first determine housing allowance for your area based on the Median Home Value of the zip code or county where the parsonage is located. The Median Home Value is then multiplied by a percentage of at least 1.25% and multiplied by 12 to find what annual housing allowance would be for a pastor with a housing allowance. This was covered back in step 2 in this document. The numbers for Median Home Value and chosen percentage are added into Lines N and O on the compensation worksheet. Line P is then those numbers multiplied by 12 to account for an annual number. Equity allowance is then calculated as 13% of line P.

Housing Equity allowance will be entered on Line Q of the Compensation Worksheet

Waiving Coverage and Health Waiver Bonus

Sometimes a rostered minister may elect to waive Portico coverage and receive coverage through their partner's health benefit plan. In these cases, the congregation is strongly encouraged to provide a Waiver Bonus to the rostered minister to help defray the cost of insurance. The rostered minister will also need to provide Portico with a signed waiver.

If applicable, this figure will be entered on Line N (pastors with no parsonage and deacons) OR Line R (pastors with parsonage) of the Compensation Worksheet.

Total Benefits

For deacons or pastors without a parsonage, add lines I – N to arrive at the total benefit cost, and enter this figure on Line O.

For pastors with a parsonage, add lines I, J, K, L, M, Q and R to arrive at the total benefit cost, and enter this figure on Line S.

Sick Leave, Disability, and Workers' Compensation

Sick leave of up to two months per year with full salary, housing, and benefits should be provided by the congregation when needed. This is not accumulated and should not be abused. Congregations may desire to have conversation with their rostered minister or establish their own policies outlining how this may be used.

Unused sick days are not paid out upon separation.

Disability Insurance

Portico Benefit Services Disability Benefits Plan does not pay a benefit during the first two months of disability. During the first two months the congregation/organization provides full compensation including housing. Beginning with the third month the employee is entitled to receive from Portico Benefit Services a monthly benefit equal to 2/3 of the employee's "Monthly Defined Compensation" minus any Social Security benefits to which employee and family members are deemed to be entitled based on employee's earning record (check limited Portico Benefit Services interpretation), and minus any other governmental disability program benefits payable to the employee and family members based on the employee's disability.

Workers' Compensation

NWOS strongly recommends that all congregations elect workers' compensation coverage for their *ordained* rostered ministers (pastors) by filing Form U-3S. Ohio requires coverage for deacons.

Step 5: Determining Additional Congregational Expenses

Congregations should cover additional expenses that are integral to the job functions of the rostered minister (pastor or deacon).

Mileage Reimbursement and Automobile Expenses

The congregation should reimburse miles driven in carrying out duties as a rostered minister at the rate allowed by the IRS (Check IRS guidelines at: <http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/article/0..id=156624.00.html>).

The rostered minister should submit a signed report monthly to the responsible financial officer of the congregation. It is important that automobile expenses be paid on a reimbursement basis. as a flat sum automobile allowance will be fully taxable to the rostered minister.

This figure will be entered on Line P (pastors with no parsonage and deacons) OR Line T (pastors with parsonage) of the Compensation Worksheet.

Continuing Education

It is the expectation of the ELCA and the Northwestern Ohio Synod that every rostered minister will engage in at least 50 hours of continuing education per year. This continuing education is intended to benefit both the rostered minister and the congregation through ongoing development of biblical/theological understanding and ministry skills. Continuing education time is not to be regarded as vacation, nor should it be used by the rostered minister for vacation.

To assist the rostered minister in meeting this expectation, it is suggested that congregations provide a continuing education reimbursement of at least \$2,000 (with expenditures verified by receipts), and at least two weeks (a total of 14 days including two Sundays) accruable for up to three years. Rostered ministers should annually report to their council their used and unused continuing education days. This should be maintained in the congregation's personnel records.

Continuing education may range from a single day seminar to enrollment in a formal program at an educational institution. Scheduling of continuing education opportunities should be determined by the rostered leader in consultation with the congregation's staff support team (Mutual Ministry Committee) and the congregational council.

Unused continuing education days or allowances are not paid out upon separation.

This figure will be entered on Line Q (pastors with no parsonage and deacons) OR Line U (pastors with parsonage) of the Compensation Worksheet.

Professional Expenses

Congregations may elect to provide the rostered minister with a professional expense reimbursement account to cover additional miscellaneous expenses such as:

- Dues to professional organizations
- Work related Books, periodicals, subscriptions
- Vestments
- Business meals

Congregations are strongly encouraged to develop written policies that outline acceptable use of a professional expense reimbursement account.

If applicable, this figure will be entered on Line R (pastors with no parsonage and deacons) OR Line V (pastors with parsonage) of the Compensation Worksheet.

Unused professional expense allowances are not paid out upon separation.

Additional Covered Expenses

Congregations and rostered ministers may negotiate that additional specific events be covered. Two examples are listed below:

First Call Theological Education (FCTE) is an ELCA three-year structured program designed to support and strengthen the newly rostered minister in terms of:

- (1) ministry skills,
- (2) ministerial identity; and
- (3) discernment of context.

FCTE is experiential learning designed to meet participants at their point of need as they encounter the demands and expectations of ministry. This program meets a portion of the expected continuing education contact hours.

Costs for this can come out of a rostered minister's continuing education reimbursement or professional expense reimbursement account, or congregations may choose to cover this in addition to these existing reimbursements.

If applicable, this figure will be entered on Line S (pastors with no parsonage and deacons) OR Line W (pastors with parsonage) of the Compensation Worksheet.

Spiritual Retreat

Congregations may provide paid time and expenses for each rostered minister to spend at least one week a year on intentional, disciplined spiritual retreat. This is in addition to the continuing education time already provided and may be covered out of a rostered minister's continuing education reimbursement, professional expense

reimbursement account, or congregations may choose to cover this in addition to these existing reimbursements.

If applicable, this figure will also be entered on Line S (pastors with no parsonage and deacons) OR Line W (pastors with parsonage) of the Compensation Worksheet.

Estimating Employer FICA Taxes for Deacons

While Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastors) pay self-employment tax (outlined in Step 2: Determining Defined Compensation), Rostered Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) are treated as employees for tax purposes. This means that the congregation as the employer must pay the employer side of FICA tax, which is 7.65%.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Total Salary } \textcircled{C} \\ \times 7.65\% \\ \hline = \text{FICA cost to congregation} \end{array}$$

This figure will be entered on Line T of the Compensation Worksheet.

Total Additional Expenses

For deacons, add lines P thru T to arrive at total additional expenses. This figure will be entered on on Line U.

For pastors without a parsonage, add lines P thru S to arrive at total additional expenses. This figure will be entered on on Line T.

For pastors with a parsonage, add lines T thru W to arrive at total additional expenses. This figure will be entered on on Line X.

Step 6: Determining Total Financial Cost to Congregation

Total Compensation Package

The total financial cost to the congregation for deacons can be determined as:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Total Salary Compensation (C)} \\ + \text{Total Benefits (O)} \\ + \text{Total Additional Expenses (U)} \\ \hline = \text{Total Financial Cost (V)} \end{array}$$

This figure will be entered on Line V of the Compensation Worksheet.

The total financial cost to the congregation for pastors without a parsonage can be determined as:

Total Salary Compensation (C)
+ Housing Allowance (F)
+ Social Security Allowance (G)
+ Total Benefits (O)
+ Total Additional Expenses (T)
= Total Financial Cost (U)

This figure will be entered on Line U of the Compensation Worksheet.

The total financial cost to the congregation for pastors with a parsonage can be determined as:

Total Salary Compensation (C)
+ Furnishing Allowance (F)
+ Social Security Allowance (G)
+ Total Benefits (S)
+ Total Additional Expenses (X)
= Total Financial Cost (Y)

This figure will be entered on Line Y of the Compensation Worksheet.

Step 7: Determining Intangible Benefits

Similar to many other jobs, rostered ministers receive several intangible benefits.

Weekly Time Off

Rostered ministers (pastors and deacons), like anyone else, need time off from work to replenish and re-energize.

Congregations should ensure that each rostered minister has two full days off per week. The rostered minister's weekly schedule (days/hours) may be negotiated as necessary. For the well-being of the rostered minister and health of the congregation, such a schedule should not exceed 50 hours in a work week. This should be viewed as an upper limit for hours worked, and not an average. The work of a minister will oftentimes be variable and change in relation to the church calendar. For example, Lent and Advent may be busier times averaging 50 hours a week, while a summer schedule may average 30 hours a week.

In managing time at work and time off it might be helpful to consider each day as having three segments of 4 hours: morning, afternoon, and evening. Each week contains twenty-one such segments. Working ten of those segments, equaling approximately 40 hours, is suggested as the norm.

Vacation

It is important for rostered ministers to have a period of time away from the call in order to refresh and recreate. Congregations ordinarily provide a minimum of four weeks vacation per year (28 days or 20 "work days"), including four Sundays for full-time rostered ministers.

The accrual (or non-accrual) of unused vacation time should be set by a congregation's own personnel policies which should outline how many vacation days can be accrued and the maximum vacation days allowed in a calendar year. If allowed by personnel policies, accrued vacation days should be carefully recorded and detailed in the annually updated compensation agreement.

Regardless of accrual, the rostered minister should annually report to the council their used and unused vacation days and a record of this should be maintained in the congregation's personnel files.

All costs and procurement of supply ministries during vacation times, including Sunday supply, are the responsibility of the congregation and the congregational council. A list of available pulpit supply may be secured from the synod web site (www.nwos-elca.org).

Deferred Paid Holidays

Rostered ministers ordinarily work on holidays that many secular workers have off, such as Christmas Eve or Good Friday. Congregations should provide a “deferred paid holiday” that allows the minister additional time off without depleting vacation time. These deferred holidays should be listed in the annually-updated compensation agreement.

Family Leave

The church places a high value on family, and congregations should offer family leave when appropriate. These guidelines are offered to help congregations approach situations requiring family leave in a caring manner and apply for all rostered ministers:

Parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child – Twelve (12) weeks of paid parental leave should be available to parents immediately following the birth or adoption of a child. The needs of each rostered minister and congregation may vary. It is recommended that the congregation pay full salary and benefits during this time. At a minimum, full benefits for the rostered minister should be maintained during a parental leave. Some factors that may be considered in determining salary and benefits during such a leave are the rostered minister’s length of service with the congregation, vacation time available, housing costs, and the hardship to the rostered minister or the congregation. In the case of adoption, the number of weeks of leave before and after the adoption should be specified in advance, and with mutual discussion with the rostered minister.

Family leave at other times may be granted by the congregation. There are times in our lives when leave is needed for families. Examples would be during times of severe illness, trauma, or death of a child, spouse or parent. The length of the leave and the salary and benefits which the congregation will provide the rostered minister should be negotiated by the rostered minister and the congregation. It is recommended that the congregation, at a minimum, provide full benefits for the rostered minister during any family leave granted.

Disability

In the event a sponsored member of the ELCA benefits program is unable to perform the material duties of her or his normal occupation for any employer as a direct result of injury or physical or mental disorder resulting in disability, the member is covered by disability benefits.

Sabbatical/Renewal Leave

Congregations may offer their rostered minister sabbatical/renewal leave for spiritual and professional renewal. Rostered ministers are eligible for sabbatical/renewal leave

after serving in ministry for 6 years (during the seventh year), regardless of a change in call. Rostered ministers will be eligible for subsequent sabbaticals every seven years thereafter.

Usually lasting 3 months (13 weeks) in length, sabbatical/renewal leave is intended to refresh the rostered minister's spiritual life and sense of calling. The request, specific description and purpose of the sabbatical leave is ordinarily submitted to and approved by the congregational council at least six months prior to the time it begins. Congregations may want to include in the budget and accrue funds each year toward sabbatical/renewal leave (so costs might be spread over several years).

Alternative sabbatical/renewal leave arrangements, (perhaps 6 weeks after 3 years), may also be considered in conversation with the rostered leader and parish leadership. For more guidance, please contact the Synod Office.

During sabbatical/renewal leave, the congregation continues to provide normal compensation, and pays for pulpit supply, visitation, and related congregational ministerial expenses. The rostered minister is typically responsible for expenses related to the sabbatical such as additional living expenses, tuition, books, and supplies. Normal vacation time may be used to extend the sabbatical leave. A report of sabbatical activities is to be submitted to the church council. A rostered minister taking a sabbatical is expected to continue to serve the congregation granting the sabbatical for at least one year following the leave.

Churchwide and/or Synodical Commitment

There are times when a rostered minister may be called upon to serve in ways that take them beyond the congregation. Examples may include church-related activities such as serving as a Bible study leader or chaplain at a church camp, on a syndical or ELCA committee or task force, or short-term teaching at a college or seminary. In any case, this "extended ministry" should be fully negotiated through the congregation's staff support team (Mutual Ministry Committee) and with the approval of the Congregation Council. Such outside ministry should not be considered as vacation time.

Rostered ministers are constitutionally required to attend the Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly when held, along with voting members from the congregation.

Pulpit Supply (for vacation and other absences)

A supply minister ordinarily receives:

1. Preaching:
 - One weekend service – \$225 or higher
 - Each additional matching service (Ex: 2nd service on Sunday morning, a Saturday evening/Thursday evening, etc.) – \$50
 - Weekday service (i.e. Wednesdays in Lent) – \$225 or higher
2. Mileage is ordinarily reimbursed at the current IRS rate per mile (check the IRS website for current rates: <http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/article/0..id=156624.00.html>)
3. All reasonable hotel and meal costs may be reimbursed if needed and agreed upon.

A list of current supply ministers can be found here: <https://nwos-elca.church/resources/supply-list/>

Congregations (Parishes) in Transition

When a season of ministry changes by the movement of the Holy Spirit and a pastoral leader moves on, Synod staff and a “Journey Team” (a group of two or more Synod leaders, lay and ordained) will come alongside the parish to help them travel through their “New Ministry Journey”.

The compensation for the Journey Team will depend on the roles of the team members.

Pulpit Supply

A supply minister is one who fills in one Sunday at a time.

A supply minister ordinarily receives:

4. Preaching:
 - One weekend service – \$225 or higher
 - Each additional matching service (Ex: 2nd service on Sunday morning, a Saturday evening/Thursday evening, etc.) – \$50
 - Weekday service (i.e. Wednesdays in Lent) – \$225 or higher
5. Mileage is ordinarily reimbursed at the current IRS rate per mile (check the IRS website for current rates: <http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/article/0..id=156624.00.html>)
6. All reasonable hotel and meal costs may be reimbursed if needed and agreed upon.

A list of current supply ministers can be found here: <https://nwos-elca.church/resources/supply-list/>

Transition Consultation Team Member

A group of two or more Synod leaders, lay and ordained will come alongside the parish to assist with the phases of the New Ministry Journey. More information about the New Ministry Journey can be found on the NWOS web site.

Compensation for the team:

1. A minimum of \$45 per hour for visitation and other related ministry
2. Mileage reimbursement for performing congregational responsibilities at the current IRS rate (<http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/article/0..id=156624.00.html>)
3. Reimbursements for congregational expenses (e.g. telephone, postage, meals, hotel, etc.)
4. Preaching:
 - One weekend service – \$225 or higher
 - Each additional matching service (Ex: 2nd service on Sunday morning, a Saturday evening/Thursday evening, etc.) – \$50
 - Weekday service (i.e. Wednesdays in Lent) – \$225 or higher

Interim Pastor

The Northwestern Ohio Synod has the discretion to appoint an Interim Pastor when a congregation enters a time of transition. An Interim Pastor may serve under an agreement which can range from just a few hours on Sunday morning to full-time ministry. In some cases, the Interim Pastor may be issued a term call, but this must be done in consultation with the Northwestern Ohio Synod Bishop and approved by Synod Council.

A full-time Interim Pastor (five days per week) will ordinarily receive compensation according to their years of experience as indicated by the guidelines or comparable to the previous pastor. Either a parsonage or housing allowance is normally provided, as well as pension and medical benefits, if applicable, mileage reimbursement for performing congregational responsibilities at the current IRS rate and reimbursement for any other ministry related costs incurred (e.g. telephone, postage, meals, etc.).

Compensation for an interim pastor serving less than full-time may be determined as outlined in the traditional Rostered Minister Guidelines spreadsheet. This includes deductions for those who are not full-time interims.

Alternatively, and more applicable for sporadic interim work, an Interim pastor may be compensated on an hourly basis:

5. A minimum of \$45 per hour for visitation and other related ministry
6. Mileage reimbursement for performing congregational responsibilities at the current IRS rate (<http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/article/0..id=156624.00.html>)
7. Reimbursements for congregational expenses (e.g. telephone, postage, meals, hotel, etc.)
8. Preaching:
 - One weekend service – \$225 or higher
 - Each additional matching service (Ex: 2nd service on Sunday morning, a Saturday evening/Thursday evening, etc.) – \$50
 - Weekday service (i.e. Wednesdays in Lent) – \$225 or higher

Separation/Severance Guidelines

There are varied circumstances in which a rostered minister may resign their call with a congregation: local difficulties, conflict, vocational changes, continued education, or even changes in family or other unforeseen circumstances. If these or similar events occur, ministers and congregations are encouraged to be in conversation with each other about creating separation/severance arrangements. Parties should consult with the synod regarding the Separation Guidelines approved by the Synod Council, and parties are encouraged to seek mediation if there are difficulties arriving at a separation agreement.

Roster and Congregation Report for April 2024 – March 2026

2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

ORDINATIONS

Rev. Steve Basselman	St. Martin, Archbold	October 20, 2024
Rev. Ian Boden	St. Peter, St. Clair, MI	January 10, 2026
Rev. Alan Fuhrhop	Bethlehem near Okolona	March 15, 2026

INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Paul Myers	St. Lucas, Toledo	April 22, 2024
Rev. Alan Brown	Solomon, Woodville	May 20, 2024
Rev. Michael Conklin	Zion, Sandusky	June 4, 2024
Rev. Clayton Bailey	Grace, Fremont	October 9, 2024
Rev. Steve Basselman	St. Martin, Archbold	October 20, 2024
Rev. Paul Bailie	St. Paul, Lakeside St. John, Marblehead	November 12, 2024
Rev. Brandi Bailie	Salem Grace United, Lucky Zion, Lucky	November 21, 2024
Rev. Melissa Micham	Olivet, Sylvania	September 9, 2025
Rev. Matthew Diehl	Hope, Hamler	October 16, 2025
Rev. Robert Noble	Christ, Dowling	December 3, 2025
Rev. Ian Boden	Emanuel, Marion	January 14, 2026
Rev. Gretchen Mertes	Trinity, Bryan St. Peter, Edon	February 14, 2026
Rev. Alan Fuhrhop	Bethlehem, Okolona	March 15, 2026

CALLED/TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE SYNOD

Rev. Robert Cochran (retired)	Southern Ohio Synod
Rev. Sharon Stonerock (retired)	Florida-Bahamas Synod
Rev. Brenda Piper (retired)	Florida-Bahamas Synod
Rev. Matthew Carpenter	Northeast Pennsylvania Synod
Deacon Amanda Carpenter	Northeast Pennsylvania Synod
Rev. Janine Dress (retired)	Southeastern Synod
Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy	Northeastern Ohio Synod
Rev. Brenda Peconge	Southeastern Iowa Synod

Rev. Willam Stenke
Rev. William Schroeder (retired)

Lower Susquehanna Synod
The Southeastern Synod

CALLED/TRANSFERRED INTO THE SYNOD

Rev. Jeffery Gainsley (retired)
Rev. Blanche Tyree (retired)
Rev. Matthew Diehl
Rev. Stephen Rust (retired)
Rev. Gretchen Mertes

Upper Susquehanna Synod
Northeastern Ohio Synod
Virginia Synod
North Carolina Synod
Northwest Washington Synod

ASCENSION TO THE ROSTER

Rev. Alan Brown Solomon, Woodville May 20, 2024

APPROVED FOR ON LEAVE STATUS

Rev. Robert A. Johnson June 1, 2020
Rev. Adam Taylor September 1, 2021
Rev. Dan Gutman May 26, 2024
Rev. Rebecca West-Estell September 30, 2025

ECUMENICAL PARTNERS SERVING IN THE SYNOD

Rev. Adam Bohland	United Church of Christ, Extended Service	The Lutheran Church of Our Saviour and St. Petri, Toledo
Rev. Mark Kuhlman	United Methodist, Extended Service	Messiah, Toledo
Rev. Loren Miracle	United Methodist, Supply	Christ, Carey
Rev. Chris Walter	United Methodist, Extended Service	Immanuel, Deshler

SYNOD AUTHORIZED MINISTERS (SAM)

Word and Service/SAM Ministers

Deacon Jean Wise

Williams County Parish (St. Peter, Edon and Trinity, Bryan)

M.Div and TEEM/SAM Ministers

Michelle Detmer (M. Div.)

West Toledo Parish (Epiphany and All Saints, Toledo)

Robert Glenn (TEEM)

English, Bluffton

Jacinda Jones (M.Div.)

Findlay Cooperative (St. John and Trinity, Findlay)

Beth Kieffer (TEEM)

Grace, Castalia

Mary Miller (M.Div.)

St. John Celina, and St. Paul, Northstar

Frank Weaver (TEEM)

Faith United, Toledo

SAM Ministers

Paul Brooks

St. Luke, North Baltimore and St. John, McComb

Eric Corns

Sonfire by the River and Bethlehem, Pemberville

Tom Fleming

St. Mark, Ada

Robert Frank

St. John's, Rocky Ridge

Brent Gardner

Zion, Sandusky and Supply

Jeannine Grimm

Sunday Supply

Alex Heffelfinger

St. John, Hicksville

Hannah Mapus

Zion, Gibsonburg

Jim Martin

Faith, Toledo

Shea McGrew

Hope, Bowling Green

Adam McIntosh

St. John, Toledo

Deb Noll

St. Paul, Jenera

Maureen Pump

St. Mark, Fremont

Clione Schneider	Christ, Dowling
Chris Staup	First, Stryker
Michelle Theilen	St. James, Toledo
Jerusha Walker	Trinity, Galion
Donna Warren	Trinity, Malinta
Dave Wachtman	St. Mark's, Defiance
Kelly Weber	St. Peter, Ridgeville Corners and Defiance Area Supply
Eliza Wertenberger	Wabash Co-Op

RESIGNED/REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER

Rev. Ryan Cordle to North American Lutheran Church
 Rev. Matthew Voyer to North American Lutheran Church

RETIREMENTS

Rev. Mark Bogen	May 5, 2024
Rev. Jim Wenger	May 26, 2024
Rev. Martin Billmeier	June 30, 2024
Rev. Ed Wahl	June 30, 2024
Rev. Holli Burkard	June 30, 2024
Rev. Ann Marshall	August 25, 2024
Rev. Rich Genzman	August 25, 2024
Rev. Mark Rich	September 10, 2024
Rev. Robin Owen	July 27, 2025
Rev. Tim Nilsen	August 1, 2025
Rev. Janet Wittenmyer	August 1, 2025
Rev. Mary Beth Smith-Gunn	January 1, 2026
Rev. William Haggis	February 1, 2026
Rev. Pete Bowmer	February 1, 2026

DEATHS

Rev. Daryl Hanson	May 17, 2024
Rev. Donald Baacke	May 23, 2024
Rev. James Barkenquast	September 20, 2024
Rev. Paul Long	September 27, 2024
Rev. Brian Peltomaa	January 9, 2025
Rev. Paul Stengel	February 6, 2025
Rev. Donald Wukotich	April 14, 2025
Frank Raeske (SAM)	April 21, 2025
Rev. Lance Franke	May 8, 2025
Rev. Richard Buchsteiner	May 30, 2025
Rev. Roger Marlow	July 8, 2025
David Gerfen (SAM)	September 22, 2025
Rev. Ralph Schibler	November 12, 2025
Rev. Bernell Boehm	December 25, 2025
Jon Rhoades (SAM)	December 31, 2025
Rev. Stephen Rust	February 14, 2026
Deacon Jane Fogle	March 9, 2026

CONGREGATIONAL CLOSINGS

St. John, (Leesville) Crestline	July 21, 2024
Peace, Galion	July 28, 2024
Emmanuel, Hessville	October 27, 2024
Calvary, Northwood	September 28, 2025

CONGREGATIONAL MERGERS

St. John, (Leesville) Crestline and Peace, Galion with Trinity, Galion	August 4, 2024
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CONGREGATIONAL DISAFFILIATIONS

First English, Wapakoneta	April 13, 2024
Zion, Lafayette	September 21, 2024
Trinity, Delta	June 1, 2025

2025 Rostered Leader Anniversaries

5 Years

Rev. Barry Halter
Rev. Tucker O'Leary

10 Years

Rev. Aaron Baughman
Rev. Michael Hanck
Rev. Richard Jensen Jr.

20 Years

Rev. Katherine Kolodziejczyk
Rev. Lee Ann Pomrenke
Rev. Violet Coombs

30 Years

Rev. Kathleen Shuck

35 Years

Rev. Beth Huener
Rev. Craig Lewis
Rev. Peter Bowmer
Rev. Ronald Heinz
Rev. William Schultz

40 Years

Rev. David Westphal
Rev. James Wenger
Rev. Janet Wittenmyer
Deacon Karen Keckler
Rev. Philip Gardner

45 Years

Rev. Robert Ohrsedt II
Rev. Dana Bjorlin
Rev. Dennis Wansitler
Rev. Richard Genzman
Rev. Steve Nelson
Rev. Timothy Philabaum

50 Years

Rev. Charles Campbell Jr.
Rev. Dennis King
Rev. James Budke

55 Years

Rev. Douglas Meyer
Rev. Roger Giese
Rev. Ronald Keller

60 Years

Rev. Reuben Drefs

2026 Rostered Leader Anniversaries

5 Years

Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri
Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri
Rev. Jacob Nekoranec

10 Years

Rev. Edward Hunker
Rev. Janine Shearer

15 Years

Rev. Adam Sornchai
Rev. Alan Brown
Rev. Robyn Provis
Rev. Stacy Lauer-Scovanner

20 Years

Rev. Becky Bolander
Rev. Kathleen Suggitt
Rev. Robin Kapostasy
Rev. Stephen Bond

25 Years

Rev. Barbara Gibson
Rev. Joan Christoffers

30 Years

Rev. Daniel G. Beaudoin
Rev. Samuel Payne

40 Years

Rev. Denise Brown Deacon
Diane Wheeler
Rev. Jeffrey Gainsley

45 Years

Rev. Craig Scholl
Rev. John Dyer
Rev. Mark Bogen
Rev. Merlin Jacobs

50 Years

Rev. Charles Horn
Rev. Dane Meuschke
Rev. Edward Wahl
Rev. Philip Scherr
Rev. Richard Rentner
Rev. Timothy Rothfuss

55 Years

Rev. Henry Seibert
Rev. James Dumke
Rev. Joseph Bartczak

60 Years

Rev. Robert J Johnson
Rev. Daniel Mohr Jr.
Rev. Gary Woodruff

65 Years

Rev. Darwin Wilson
Rev. Paul Young
Rev. Richard Billings

2026 Assembly Supplemental Materials

We are so thankful you were able to join us for the 2026 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly. We know the assembly day is very busy and often we cannot cover everything we wish we could. Due to this, we have provided access on our website to the Assembly Supplemental Materials.

Materials include:

- Digital assembly documents including financial documents
- Reports from synod partners
- Resources from our “Stories of Love” presentations
- NWOS resources



Access our 2026 Assembly Supplemental Materials by scanning the QR code or by visiting

www.nwosassembly.org/assemblydocuments