



SECTION

3

REPORTS



Allegheny Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

REPORTS OF THE BISHOP & STAFF

BISHOP'S REPORT

2024 ALLEGHENY SYNOD ASSEMBLY



BISHOP PAULA LEBO

This past year, we were awarded a significant grant from the Lilly Endowment in their Compelling Preaching Initiative in partnership with the Northwestern PA Synod and the Upper Susquehanna Synod. The theme of our Assembly is the title of the proposal submitted for the grant: Go Tell It IN The Mountains. It is an exciting proposal to develop and distribute resources for preaching and faith formation throughout three synodical territories. The steering committee began it's work back in February and has been hard at work searching for a Director for the initiative as well as forming committees and preparing a needs assessment.

We welcomed Sue Ellen Spotts as the shared Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) to the Allegheny Synod and the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Sue Ellen has been a gift to our staff and has undertaken the task of meeting with groups of congregations who are considering new models of ministry and possible realignment of partnerships.

We gave thanks for the work of our former treasurer, Bill Layton and welcomed Paula Nihoff to serve as the treasurer of the Allegheny Synod. The Synod Council unanimously approved of her appointment and she began her duties in January. We give thanks for her willingness to step into this role and pray for Bill as he enjoys retirement.

We celebrated together at ordinations of Laura Waltermire, Regina Holliday, Ted Williams and look forward to the upcoming ordination of Allen Stump. Pastor Laura graduated from Wartburg Seminary in Iowa and returned home to the Allegheny Synod, where she had

been a member of Messiah Lutheran in New Centerville. She was called to serve St. Mark in Pleasant Gap. Pastor Regina graduated from United Lutheran Seminary's Certificate in Theological Studies program and was called to serve Horner Lutheran Church in Somerset. Pastor Ted graduated from Luther Seminary and was called to Gatesburg and Pine Hall Lutheran Churches in the Nittany Conference. Vicar Allen graduated from United Lutheran Seminary's Certificate in Theological Studies program and is serving Christ Casebeer and Laurel Trinity Lutheran Churches in Somerset. We give thanks to God for the gifts of these pastors and look forward to the ways they will bless this Synod and this Church.

This past year we regretfully bid farewell to St. Paul Lutheran in Stoystown and St. John Lutheran in Sinking Valley as they made the decision to disaffiliate from the ELCA. We continue to pray that they will thrive in their new denominational home. As well, in the last year two rostered ministers requested to be removed from the roster of the ELCA. Pastor Brent Book and Pastor Kevin McNamara both sent requests to the Allegheny Synod Council requesting to be removed from the roster as they embark on other ventures. We continue to pray for them as they move in new directions.

One congregation made the difficult, but faithful choice to close. St. Luke, Rockwood ended its ministry as a congregation at the end of 2023. Their building and parsonage are now occupied with new residents. Deciding to close is never an easy task. I am thankful for the wise discernment of the congregation council at St. Luke.

Our hearts were broken when we learned of the deaths of Pastor Denise Arpino, Pastor Linda McElroy Thomas, Pastor Ed Harshbarger and Pastor Bob Kaltenbaugh. At each of their memorial services we were reminded of their dedicated lives of service to the Church and gave thanks for the ways each of them touched the lives of so many in this Synod and in others.

We continue to nurture the partnership we have with the Upper Susquehanna and Northwestern PA Synod for tri-Synodical learning for those interested in becoming lay worship leaders. Our Synod authorized six new lay worship leaders who were trained in this new model: Ben Hoffman (Shepherd of the Hills, Karthus), Christine Frazier (St. Peter's, Osterburg), Sally Shaulis, (Christ, Grantsville, MD), Marsha Hutzell (Evangelical, Greenville), Scott Lantz (Geeseytown-Newry Lutheran Parish) and Rick Focht (St. Luke, Roaring Spring). We give thanks for these new leaders and those who are in the process of being trained. If you feel the Holy Spirit calling you to a new kind of ministry in your congregation, be in contact for information about new classes that are forming.

I ended my term as the Region 8 Bishop liaison to the ELCA Church Council. Bishop Dunlop from the Lower Susquehanna Synod has assumed this role for our region. I continue to serve on the Region 8 Steering Committee. The Committee meets annually and looks for ways that we can share resources and support each other in the work we are called to do individually and in partnership. The staff members of the Allegheny, Southwestern PA and Northwestern PA Synods met together to discuss how we might do ministry across Synod lines.

I serve on the board of our partner ministries, Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries and Camp Sequanota. I give thanks for the dedicated leadership of both of those organizations and for the ways they contribute to our life together. Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries welcomed Mr. Chris Reighard to serve as their CEO. Chris has a long history with the organization as the Chief Financial Officer and has stepped into his new role with enthusiasm.

Camp Sequanota staff and a group of leaders in our Synod have partnered to form the Faith Formation Team. This team has been actively engaging youth and young

adults for retreats, youth events, mission trips and other opportunities to nurture their faith. They worked together to write The Book which has been a wonderful addition to the devotional life of our Synod. Work has begun on the next edition of The Book as the Team plans for another synod youth event.

Our Allegheny Synod Office will be moving in the coming months to The Lutheran Home in Hollidaysburg—one of our partner ministries. Our phone number and e-mail addresses will remain the same. As we embark on this new journey, we look forward to expanding our care for creation by digitizing our files and moving toward a mostly electronic way of supporting you and your ministries.

I am deeply grateful for Pastor Kevin, Michelle and Sue Ellen and the gifts they share with our Synod. I look forward to the ways we will become more focused on our mission to invite people to love one another and live into the gracious welcome of our Lord.

+Bishop Paula

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

2024 ALLEGHENY SYNOD ASSEMBLY



REV. KEVIN T. SHOCK

As I looked over my reports for the previous two assemblies, I realize that change and adaptation are constant in our shared ministry. The truth is really that change is a constant and that adaptation is a healthy way to deal with change. Most days I pray that adaptation were more constant in the church, but I also give thanks for even the small ways that Spirit-led adaptation is happening in the Allegheny Synod. Last year Synod Assembly, in collaboration with the Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly, voted to adapt for the sake of better meeting our ministry needs in this region. That vote led to the hiring of our shared DEM, Sue Ellen, and the opportunity for me to move fully into the Assistant to the Bishop role.

Last year my report included much commentary as to how I was continuing, along with Bishop Paula, to define responsibilities and priorities as DEM and Assistant to the Bishop. Since last year my responsibilities have become more defined, yet I have still spent much time learning the specifics of those responsibilities. I spend much more time working with candidates for ministry and filling out paperwork for the Candidacy Committee on their behalf. I also work more closely with the mobility process, which means that I also work more closely with congregations and parishes that are going through the transition process. In addition I work on leadership ministries for the Synod. In ongoing conversation with Bishop Paula and our clergy I am learning how best to support pastors and deacons on our roster, and yet we are also realizing that this role means equipping and training lay leaders for various ministries in congregations and beyond throughout our Synod. I pray that the work I do holds up to the standard set in my title, that engaging in this ministry in our Synod assists Bishop Paula and allows her more freedom to engage in ministries and initiatives that will help us to grow together, to adapt more readily, and to invite people to love one another in the name of Jesus Christ. I am grateful for the working relationship that Bishop Paula, Sue Ellen, Michelle, and I share. Even when the things we rely on for our ministry feel less certain and as our church body makes movement into uncharted territory, I feel consistently supported, affirmed, and challenged in my ministry, thanks primarily to the staff in the Office of the Bishop.

I am also grateful for the people in congregations and ministries throughout, and in partnership with, the Allegheny Synod who are working toward adaptive ministry. The big-letter-C Change that we have been talking about, and around, for the past three decades or more is no longer on the horizon. We are wading through the thick of it right now. Some parts of the church of Christ do their best to continue faithfully in the way that they have done ministry for as long as they can remember. Other people in the church are recognizing that the way they have been traversing faithfully for generations is no longer as effective at inviting people into Christ's presence or engaging people into the various ministries we have been given by the grace of God in Christ. With the Spirit's help and with our partnership and accompaniment in the Office of the Bishop they are seeking the Way of Jesus as it flows through their community. They are finding new responsibilities and priorities, not just for their current or future pastor or lay leader to do, but for them to take ownership of themselves.

One thing that brings me some joy and humor in this ministry is that the people who apologize for "bothering" me with their many phone calls and text notifications are always the people who are looking to traverse the new way that the Spirit is laying out before them. Their communication is never a bother to me. It is evidence of the Spirit speaking to more than just one person and of their willingness to engage in the partnership of ministry.

I end this report with a simple request: "bother" me more. Although we may have fooled ourselves into believing at one time that we have ministry figured out, we are still figuring it out together. It's not just the Office of the Bishop or pastors or deacons or this Synod Assembly who have been given this task of figuring ministry out; it's all of us in the body of Christ. That means it's both people who are in our congregations and the people who Jesus is in the process of calling into our congregations. "Bother" me more, and "bother" one another more, so with the Holy Spirit we can work on figuring out ministry together.

In the peace of Christ,

The Rev. Kevin T. Shock
Assistant to the Bishop

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR EVANGELICAL MISSION

2024 ALLEGHENY SYNOD ASSEMBLY

*"I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?"*

—ISAIAH 43:19

This verse from Isaiah has sprung to mind more than once since I began this position as Director for Evangelical Mission. There are many new things at work.

This position is new to me, though I spent time prior to this involved in congregational vitality ministry in Maryland.

Though the Allegheny Synod has had DEMs for many years, it is new to share the position with the Upper Susquehanna Synod.

There are a lot of new names for me to learn; new people and congregations to meet; new roads to travel...and a new camp to get to know (I love our Lutheran camps!).

But the new thing which causes both excitement and trepidation for me is the changing shape of the church. For those of us who grew up in or have been long time members of the church, the experience has very specific elements and expectations. We gather on Sunday, in a building (usually with pews, sometimes with chairs), to follow a liturgy, led by a pastor. The offerings which we collect from the members provide the finances for upkeep of the building; salary for the pastor; support of program, service projects, and supplies. We have traditions that we anticipate each year and remember fondly through the years. And through the seasons of life, the church anchors us.

Until now.

Now, for many of us, the pews are sparsely filled on a Sunday. We may not even have enough people for Sunday School classes. Perhaps we haven't had our own pastor—or any pastor at all—for quite a while. If we have a pastor, they are often called on to assist other congregations without one. Not only have our young people left the area and started lives in other places, our retired members are also leaving the area. Even if we seem stable or are growing,

what is emerging doesn't look—or sometimes feel—like the church we have always known. New things are at work, but they can feel strange and discomfiting. It is not easy to perceive the presence of God in the midst of it all.

Into this landscape we can hear the words from Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." How the church looks may be changing, but God's promise to be present with us has not changed. Most of my life I have heard Christians described as "*in, not of the world*." If people are not filling the walls of our buildings, we might ask where they are, what Good News they need to hear, and then take it to them. We need to be brave and bold as we explore Christian mission "*of, not necessarily in the church (building)*."

That's what excites me, as your DEM. Perceiving and exploring with you new ways to take the Good News of Christ's love into the world. Our anchor has always been the Gospel, not the buildings in which we gathered to hear it. I am excited to be among you, and to work alongside you in the evangelical mission into which we are baptized and called.

Recently, a friend shared a prayer of Fr. Pedro Arrupe, a twentieth century Jesuit priest. I have found insight and encouragement in its words, and so I share it with you:

*"Grant me, O Lord, to see everything
now with new eyes,
to discern and test the spirits
that help me read the signs of the times,
to relish the things that are yours and
to communicate them to others."*

In thanksgiving for the opportunity to be in mission with you, in the new thing which God is doing in the Allegheny Synod.

Sue Ellen

SYNOD SNAPSHOTS



Photo details on page 116.



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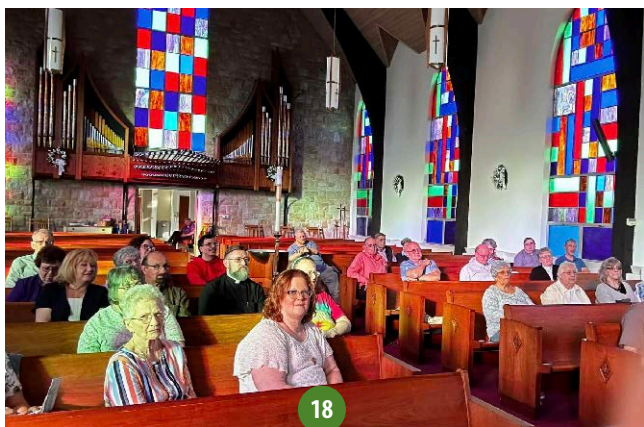
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REPORTS OF THE ELCA

Report of the Presiding Bishop



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

*"We have known and believe
the love that God has for us.
God is love,
and those who abide in love
abide in God,
and God abides in them"*

(1 JOHN 4:16).

Dear friends in Christ,

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

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

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

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

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

In Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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ELCA Foundation

Updates from the ELCA Foundation | Synod Assemblies 2024

The ELCA Foundation doesn't just envision a future; it's building one where intentional generosity and stewardship have allowed the mission and ministry of the ELCA to grow beyond our expectations. Our goal is to create a vibrant culture where intentional giving fuels the expansion of the ELCA's work in the US and around the world.

We're on a mission to grow ELCA ministries by empowering individuals, congregations, synods, and other entities with the tools they need to maximize their financial potential.

But what does that mean for you?

Imagine having a trusted partner who not only helps you navigate the complexities of gift planning and administration but also provides expert guidance on how to invest in the future of your ministry. That's where the ELCA Foundation steps in.

Whether you're considering leaving a legacy through an endowment, navigating estate planning, or exploring creative ways to support your congregation, we're here to make the process seamless and straightforward. Best of all, our gift planning services are completely free for you and your ministry.

Ready to take the next step in growing your congregation's culture of giving? Connect with your local ELCA Foundation representative today and discover how together we can make a lasting impact. Visit Foundation.ELCA.org to get started.

2023 AT A GLANCE

Our gift planning network walked alongside **203 donors/families** in developing their gift plans, which resulted in **\$62.5 million** in future planned-gift commitments. **More than \$17 million** of this will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations.

The network generated **\$116.3 million** in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned-gift commitments, **\$8.8 million in current gifts**, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and **\$45 million in new assets** invested in the Ministry Growth Fund.

CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL GIFT PLANNER:

Sister Marianne Brock, FCEP
Marianne.Brock@elca.org
717-574-9066

8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631 • 800-638-3522 • Foundation.ELCA.org

REPORTS OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL

Report of Synod Council Actions

July 2023 – May 2024

July 2023

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo

- **SC23.07.01** - to adopt the agenda for today's meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Gary Gable

- **SC23.07.02** - to adopt the minutes of the May 2023 Synod Council meeting as presented... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Timothy Albright

- **SC23.07.03** – that Gary Gable be elected (*as per SC23.01.01*) to the Executive Committee for the remainder of his second 3-year synod council term (*thru June 2024*)... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Nancy Hoover, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.07.04** – to adopt the wording for the following **Statements**... the motion is adopted
 - **Mission Statement** – *Inviting People to Love One Another*
 - **Vision Statement** – *All Creation Living in Harmony with Christ*

September 2023

Upon motion by Michele Peese, seconded by Joyce Long

- **SC23.09.01** - to adopt the agenda for today's meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Andrea Paul, seconded by Tim Albright

- **SC23.09.02** - to adopt the minutes of the July 2023 Synod Council meeting as presented... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Joyce Long

- **SC23.09.03** – that the Rev. Jamie Olson be granted *On Leave from Call* status, effective August 27, 2023... the motion is adopted

November 2023

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Tim Albright

- **SC23.11.01** - to adopt the agenda for today's meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Andrea Paul, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC23.11.02** - to adopt the minutes of the September 2023 Synod Council meeting as presented... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Nancy Hoover, seconded by Tim Albright

continued

- **SC23.11.03** – that the sum of \$16,000 be distributed to those eligible seminarians & leaders identified by the Office of the Bishop, as per continuing resolution **S15.40.A18**... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Andrea Paul, seconded by Joyce Long

- **SC23.11.04** - to appoint Paula Nihoff to a 4-year term as Treasurer of the Allegheny Synod, effective January 1, 2024... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula Schmitt, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer

- **SC23.11.05** – that the Rev. Kevin McNamara be granted Retired status on the rosters of the Allegheny Synod & the ELCA effective November 15, 2023... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula Schmitt, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffery

- **SC23.11.06.** – to affirm the call of Sue Ellen Spotts as shared Director of Evangelical Mission of the Allegheny Synod & the Upper Susquehanna Synod... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula Schmitt, seconded by Gary Gable

- **SC23.11.07** – to extend a call to the Rev. Kevin Shock, to serve as full-time Assistant to the Bishop of the Allegheny Synod, coterminous with the term of Bishop Paula Schmitt... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula Schmitt, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer

- **SC23.12.08** – the affirm the second vote of St. Paul, Buckstown to terminate their relationship with the ELCA... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula Schmitt, seconded by Tim Albright

- **SC23.11.09** - approve Portico Benefits Gold+ plan for all Rostered Ministers of the Allegheny Synod & the Synod Staff... the motion is adopted

January 2024

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Michele Peese

- **SC24.01.01** - to adopt the agenda for today's meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Tim Albright, seconded by Pr. Ralph Hamer

- **SC24.01.02** - to adopt the minutes of the November 2023 Synod Council meeting as presented... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Gary Gable

- **SC24.01.03** – that Bishop Paula Schmitt, William Layton, Ann Ferry & Paula Nihoff be approved as signers for the Allegheny Synod checking account for 2024

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Tim Albright

- **SC24.01.04** – to approve the algorithm for defined compensation for Synod Staff ((base salary + years of experience) x premium for synod office) + SS offset = Defined Compensation.... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC24.01.05** – to approve the Articles of Agreement for Laurel Mountain Lutherans, the Salisbury Parish & to approve the bylaws for Brush Valley Fusion of Faith... the motion is adopted

March 2024

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Timothy Albright

- **SC24.03.01** – to adopt the agenda for today's meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Michele Peese

- **SC24.03.02** – to adopt the minutes of the January 2024 Synod Council meeting as amended... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Becky Horn, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC24.03.03** – The Allegheny Synod authorizes the following ministries that are continuing as Synod Authorized Worshiping Communities in 2024... the motion is adopted
 - Gloria De Dios – Pr. Paul Tomkiel, leader
 - Grace Delivered
 - United Lutheran Seminary
 - Global Refuge
 - The ELCA Foundation

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC24.03.04** – to remove the Rev. Kevin McNamara from the roster of the ELCA at his request, effective March 16, 2024... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Timothy Albright, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC24.03.05** – that the Allegheny Synod Office will relocate to the Lutheran Home at Hollidaysburg (ALSM)... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Amanda McCaffery, seconded by Joyce Long

- **SC24.03.06** – to adopt the proposed Investment Policy Statement (parts 1-10 inclusive) & convey this document to the 2024 Synod Assembly... the motion is adopted

May 2024

Upon motion by Tim Albright, second by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC24.05.01** – to adopt the agenda for today's meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffery

- **SC24.05.02** – to adopt the minutes of the March 2024 Synod Council meeting... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Tim Albright, seconded by Gary Gable

- **SC24.05.03** – to amend the proposed 2024-25 synod budget relative to Synod mission support levels, the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Lebo, seconded by Tim Albright

- **SC24.05.04** – to convey the Compensation & Benefits Manual to the 2024 Synod Assembly, along with the recommendation to adopt ... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Tim Albright

- **SC24.05.05** – to convey the 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget to the 2024 Synod Assembly along with the recommendation to adopt ... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Lebo, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffery

- **SC24.05.06** – to remove the Rev. Brent Book from the roster of the ELCA at his request, effective June 16, 2024.

Upon motion by Andrea Paul, seconded by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC24.05.07** – to approve the pastoral roster & the congregational roster... the motion is adopted.

2024 Report of the Secretary of the Allegheny Synod

Dave Finney

I greet you all on the occasion of my final Allegheny Synod Assembly.

My three sequential terms have spanned 2012–2016, 2016–2021, 2021–2024.

During the last 12-years, the Allegheny Synod has been dutifully served by...

- 3 Bishops – Bishop Pile, Bishop Rhyne, Bishop Lebo
- 4 VPs – Spence Garvin, Sam Clapper, Gary Gable, Ann Ferry
- 4 Treasurers – Todd Hammaker, Vicki Hrivnak, Bill Layton, Paula Nihoff
- 1 Secretary – Dave Finney

Being the longest serving officer of the Allegheny Synod in this modern era, I have been grateful for your support during this historic span and I am pleased to embrace the status of *Tenure*, along with all of the rights and privileges appertaining thereto.

My wife Michelle and I moved to Johnstown in 2006, to better care for my parents, Pastor Dave & Betty Lou Finney. Pastor passed away in July of 2012, Betty Lou passed away in March of 2016 and my younger sister Betsy unexpectedly passed away in January of 2017. So the family I came home to be with and care for have all passed from this life.

Later this summer, I will be retiring from the University of Pittsburgh–Johnstown. Michelle & I will be moving to Taylor County in northern West Virginia, to begin our new lives with Michelle's large extended family.

Lutherans are few and far-between in the hills and valleys of West Virginia. There is only one ELCA congregation in Morgantown, one in Fairmont and one in Clarksburg. Despite the shortage of Lutherans, I'm looking forward to beginning my retirement life with family and new friends found in the West Virginia/Western Maryland Synod 8H.

I will miss my church family at St. David's and I will miss seeing all of your smiling faces every year in June.

Godspeed friends... thank you for all of the wonderful memories.

Dave Finney, MBA/MPPM
Secretary, Allegheny Synod-ELCA
SynodSec814@gmail.com

Minutes of the 35th Allegheny Synod Assembly

June 17, 2023
Blair County Convention Center
Christ Unites Us

Welcome

Bishop Paula Schmitt opened the 34th Allegheny Synod Assembly at 8:42 AM

Report of Registration/Quorum

Delegate Count	
Clergy	50
Deacon	1
Vicars.....	4
Laity	
Male.....	37
Female.....	61
Officers	4
Synod Council	3
Total Delegate Count ¹	160
Visitors.....	23
Total Present.....	183

Adoption of the 2022 Minutes, the Agenda & the Rules

Upon motion by Gary Gable, seconded by Dr. Jim Lakso

- **SA23.06.01** - to adopt the minutes of the 2022 Allegheny Synod Assembly as presented... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Bishop Schmitt, seconded by Pr. Bob Way

- **SA23.06.02** – to adopt the agenda for the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly... the motion is adopted

Upon motion by Pr. Ralph Hamer, seconded by Pr. David Bowman

- **SA23.06.03** – to adopt the Rules of Procedure for the Allegheny Synod Assembly ... the motion is adopted (2023 *Bulletin of Reports - pages 7 & 8*)

1 In accordance with provision **57.14** of the Allegheny Synod Constitution, a quorum is deemed to be present

continued

Upon motion by Vice President Ann Ferry, seconded by Pr. Paul Tomkiel

- **SA23.06.04** - To extend voice & vote for the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly, to the UCC clergy & the ELCA Vicars... the motion is adopted
 - UCC Pastor Julie Holm – St. Peter’s, Rebersburg
 - UCC Pastor Dick Henry – Zion, Petersburg & St. Matthew, Marklesburg
 - Vicar Penny Koontz – Mt. Olive, Fairhope & Christ, Buffalo Mills
 - Vicar Allen Stump – Christ Casebeer & Laurel Trinity, Jennerstown
 - Vicar Regina Holliday – Trinity & Horner, Somerset
 - Vicar Christy Harford – Trinity, Sidman
 - Vicar Ted Williams – St. Mark, Pleasant Gap

Introductions

- Mr. Chris Reighard – Interim CEO Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries
- Kirsten Opalinski – ELCA manager for ecumenical and inter-religious relations
- Synod Officers – VP Ann Ferry, Treasurer Bill Layton, Secretary Dave Finney
- Attorney Mark D. Persun - Synod Assembly Parliamentarian
- Pr. Kevin Shock - Assistant to the Bishop/DEM
- Michelle Bossler - Allegheny Synod Office Manager
- Jeanne Fleegele - Assembly Committee Chair
- Pr. Ron Miller – Chair of Reference & Counsel Committee
- Pr. Will Osman & Bill Nihoff – IT

Report of the Synod Treasurer – Bill Layton

3 items (*2023 Bulletin of Reports, page 62 - 66*)

- The Completed Audit – we received an unqualified audit report (*this is a good thing*)
- The Budget Report is summarized into 4 separate columns
 - *Column 1*: To amend the current fiscal year budget (2023-24) by amending several calculation errors.
 - *Column 2*: To adopt the fiscal year 2024-25 proposed spending plan & to authorize the Synod Council to enter into conversation with the Upper Susquehanna Synod to call a shared Director of Evangelical Mission.
 - *If the vote is in the affirmative* – we will consider the 2024-25 proposed spending plan in *Column 4*.
 - *If the vote is in the negative* – we will consider the 2024-25 proposed spending plan in *Column 3*.
 - *See the end notes of these minutes for budget details*
- Compensation & Benefits Manual 2024 (*2023 Bulletin of Reports, page 69 - 87*)

continued

MINUTES OF THE 2023 ASSEMBLY OF THE ALLEGHENY SYNOD

The First Ballot – will consider nominations for Synod Council, the Discipline Committee, the Consultation committee & the Mission Endowment Committee.

Report of the First Ballot

Q1 – Synod Council (lay female) 3-year term, elect 1

- 156 number of valid ballots, 79 minimum to elect
 - Michele Peese – 156 votes (100%)
- Michele Peese is elected to a 3-year term on Synod Council

Q2 – Synod Council (lay male) 3-year term, elect 1

- 157 number of valid ballots, 79 minimum to elect
 - Timothy Albright – 157 votes (100%)
- Timothy Albright is elected to a 3-year term on Synod Council

Q3 – Synod Council (clergy) 3-year term, elect 1

- 157 number of valid ballots, 79 minimum to elect
 - Rev. Ralph Hamer – 157 votes (100%)
- Rev. Ralph Hamer is elected to a 3-year term on Synod Council

Q4 – Synod Council (lay male)- 2-year term, elect 1

- 156 number of valid ballots, 79 minimum to elect
 - Timothy Albright – 156 votes (100%)
- This ballot was vacated as Mr. Albright was elected on the Q2 ballot

Q5 – Consultation Committee (clergy male) 5-year term, elect 1

- 149 number of valid ballots, 75 minimum to elect
 - Rev. Ralph Hamer – 149 votes (100%)
- Rev. Ralph Hamer is elected to a 5-year term on the Consultation Committee

Q6 – Consultation Committee (clergy female) 3-year term, elect 1

- 157 number of valid ballots, 79 minimum to elect
 - Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte – 60 votes (38.22%)
 - Rev. Susan Williamson - 51 votes (32.48%)
 - Rev. Rebecca West – 46 votes (29.3%)
- There is no election, Rev. Irvin-Stellabotte & Rev. Williamson will advance to the second ballot

continued

Report of the Vice President

Ann Ferry conveyed a spoken message to the Assembly.

Report of the Synod Secretary –

Dave Finney (*2023 Bulletin of Reports, pages 47 - 51*)

Secretary Finney's report detailed the four (4) groups of Constitutional changes that the 2023 Synod Assembly will be considering on the Second Ballot, along with the motions adopted by the Synod Council, in order to convey these matters to the Synod Assembly.

Recommended Constitutional Changes from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly

Upon motion by Bishop Paula, seconded by Pr. Amanda McCaffrey

- **SC23.03.04** – that the **recommended changes** to the Allegheny Synod Constitution conveyed to us by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, OH be adopted by the Synod Council & conveyed to the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with a recommendation to adopt... a second to this motion is not required

Bishop Paula Schmitt's Recommendations for Bylaw Changes with regard to Chapter 11– Committees

(*Bulletin of Reports pg. 48*)

Upon motion by Pr. Becky Horn, second by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC23.02.05** – that the changes to Chapter 11 – Committees in the Allegheny Synod Constitution be adopted by the Synod Council & conveyed to the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with a recommendation to adopt... a second to this motion is not required

Bishop Paula Schmitt's Recommendations for Continuing Resolution Changes with Regard to Chapter 11– Committees

(*Bulletin of Reports pg. 49*)

Upon motion by Pr. Becky Horn, second by Pr. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte

- **SC23.02.05** – that the changes to Chapter 11 – Committees in the Allegheny Synod Constitution be adopted by the Synod Council & conveyed to the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with a recommendation to adopt... a second to this motion is not required

Secretary Finney's Recommendation that Bylaw S10.01.05 Be Removed from the Synod Constitution

Upon motion by Secretary Dave Finney, seconded by Pr. Becky Horn

- **SC23.02.06** – that bylaw S10.01.05 be removed from the Synod Constitution as it contradicts required bylaw **†S6.04.01**.... the motion is adopted by the Synod Council & conveyed to the 2023 Allegheny Synod Assembly along with a recommendation to adopt – a second to this motion is not required

continued

Congregation Celebrations

225 years – St. John, Spring Mills

175 years – Christ, Claysburg

150 years – St. Luke, Lilly

125 years – Grace, State College

Rostered Minister Celebrations

5 years

† Pastor Amanda McCaffery - St. Luke, Roaring Spring

† Pastor Kathy Popp – Zion, Everett

† Pastor Nancy Hoover – Grace, Johnstown

10 years

† Pastor Jean Caudill – retired

25 years

† Pastor Sharon Erb – First English, Tyrone

30 years

† Pastor Brent Book – Zion, Boalsburg

† Pastor Glenn Foster – Mountain Saints Parish

35 years

† Pastor Donna Wolfinger – retired

† Pastor Ralph Hamer – serving a special call with ALSM

† Pastor Susan Mazer-Winger – retired

45 years

† Pastor Dennis Doebler – retired

† Pastor Ardelle Mason – retired

† Pastor George Mason Jr. – retired

† Pastor John Palko – retired

50 years

† Pastor Larry Louder – retired

60 years

† Pastor Karl Hommen – retired

continued

ELCA Report

The Allegheny Synod Assembly was pleased to welcome **Kristen Opalinski**, our ELCA representative. Kristen offered a Bible Study as well as a report from the ELCA.

Kristen is currently the manager for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations at **ELCA**. She is a former Communications Officer at **Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa**. Kristen studied Studio Art and Graphic Design at Augsburg College, then went on to earn a Master of Arts in Religion; Religion/Conflict Transformation/Public Leadership at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

Report of the Second Ballot

Q7 – Consultation Committee (clergy female) 3-year term, elect 1

- 156 number of valid ballots, 79 minimum to elect
 - Rev. Susan Williamson – 79 votes (50.64%)
 - Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte – 77 votes (49.36%)
- The Rev. Susan Williamson is elected to a 3-year term on the Consultation Committee

Q8 – Discipline Committee (lay female) 6-year term, elect 1

- 155 number of valid ballots, 78 minimum to elect
 - Denise Shimel – 155 votes (100%)
- Denise Shimel is elected to a 6-year term on the Discipline Committee

Q9 – Discipline Committee (clergy female) 5-year term, elect 2

- 159 number of valid ballots, 80 minimum to elect
 - Rev. Amanda McCaffery – 90 votes (56.6%)
 - Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte – 81 votes (50.94%)
 - Rev. Susan Williamson – 70 votes (44.03%)
 - Rev. Rebecca West – 58 votes (36.48%)
- The Rev. Amanda McCaffery & the Rev. Marth Jo Irvin-Stellabotte are elected to a 5-year term on the Discipline Committee

Q10 – To amend the current fiscal year 2023-24 spending plan (*Column 1*)

- 158 number of valid ballots, 80 minimum to adopt the motion
 - *Yes* - to amend the current fiscal year budget
 - 157 votes (99.37%)
 - *No* – not to amend the current fiscal year budget
 - 1 vote (0.63%)
- The motion to adopt changes to the current fiscal year budget is adopted

continued

MINUTES OF THE 2023 ASSEMBLY OF THE ALLEGHENY SYNOD

Q11 – To adopt the fiscal year 2024-25 proposed spending plan, (*Column 2*), and to authorize the Synod Council to enter into conversation with the Upper Susquehanna Synod to call a shared Director of Evangelical Mission.

- 82 number of valid ballots, 42 needed to adopt the motion
 - *If Yes* – Move to adopt fiscal year 2024-25 proposed spending plan (*Column 4*)
 - 74 votes (90.24%)
 - *If No* – Move to adopt fiscal year 2024-25 proposed spending plan (*Column 3*)
 - 8 votes (5.10%)
- The motion to authorize a conversation with the Upper Susquehanna Synod for a shared Director of Evangelical Mission & to move the motion (Q12) to adopt the fiscal year 2024-25 proposed spending plan (*Column 4*) is adopted

Q12 – To adopt fiscal year 2024-25 proposed spending plan (*Column 4*)

- 157 number of valid ballots, 79 needed to adopt the motion
 - *Yes* – 149 votes (94.9%)
 - *No* – 8 votes (5.10%)
- The motion to adopt the *Column 4* proposed spending plan 2024-25 is adopted

Q13 – To adopt the 2024 Compensation & Benefits Manual

- 154 number of valid ballots, 78 needed to adopt the 2024 Manual
 - *Yes* – 146 votes (94.81%)
 - *No* – 8 votes (5.19%)
- The motion to adopt the 2024 Compensation & Benefits Manual is adopted

Q14 – To adopt the recommended constitutional changes from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, as conveyed by Synod Council motion **SC23.03.04**.

- 155 number of valid ballots, 78 (50%) needed to adopt these constitutional changes
 - *Yes* – 153 votes (98.71%)
 - *No* – 2 votes (1.29%)
- The motion to adopt the recommended constitutional changes is adopted

Q15 – To adopt the recommended *bylaw* changes to *Chapter 11 – Committees*, in the Allegheny Synod Constitution, as conveyed by Synod Council motion **SC23.02.05**.

- 156 number of valid ballots, 104.5 (67%) needed to adopt these constitutional changes
 - *Yes* – 149 votes (95.51%)
 - *No* – 7 votes (4.49%)
- The motion to adopt the recommended constitutional changes is adopted

continued

Q16 – To adopt the recommended *continuing resolution* changes to *Chapter 11 – Committees*, in the Allegheny Synod Constitution, as conveyed by Synod Council motion **SC23.02.05**.

- 155 number of valid ballots, 78 (50%) needed to adopt these constitutional changes
 - Yes – 147 votes (94.84%)
 - No – 8 votes (5.16%)
- The motion to adopt the recommended constitutional changes is adopted

Q17 – To adopt the recommendation to remove conflicting bylaw **S10.01.05**, from the Allegheny Synod Constitution, as conveyed by Synod Council motion **SC23.02.06**.

- 155 number of valid ballots, 103.8 (67%) needed to adopt this constitutional change
 - Yes – 154 votes (99.35%)
 - No – 1 vote (0.65%)
- The motion to adopt the recommended constitutional changes is adopted

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Churchwide Synod Assembly Video (2023 *Bulletin of Reports*, page 40)

Bishop Schmitt's Report

(2023 *Bulletin of Reports*, pages 34-35)

- Making a pot from clay (Play Doh) by our own hands
- Be open to the transformation of our lives & in the lives of others

Rev. Kevin Shock DEM/Assistant to the Bishop Report

(2023 *Bulletin of Reports*, pages 36-37)

- What does congregational life look like in your faith community?
- Vitality = continuing to build relationship... with God & with our neighbors
- The Three Words → Love, Invite & Accept

ELCA Foundation

Sister Marianne Brock

- Sister Marianne is an ordained deacon in the ELCA.
 - Sister Mary Ann is not a catholic nun
- ELCA's gift planner for central PA

continued

MINUTES OF THE 2023 ASSEMBLY OF THE ALLEGHENY SYNOD

- ELCA Foundation...
 - A thriving ministry
 - To support & sustain ELCA ministries
- ELCA Ministry growth fund
 - Fund A – an investment vehicle for long term growth
 - Planned Giving – a thank you note to your past, a love note to your future

Report from Faith Formation

- The Weekend is coming, as is The Book (*distributed to the voting members*)
- December 8,9,10 @ St. James in Huntington for Jr. & Sr. High School students

Sequanota Lutheran Conference Center & Camp

There is a way forward... (*2023 Bulletin of Reports, pages 106-117*)

- Apply faith practices
- Value the natural world
- Integrate educational experience with others, to strength their sense of community
- Formulate an alternative vision for a more balanced life

Closing of the Assembly

Bishop Paula Schmitt declared the 35th Allegheny Synod Assembly closed at 4:41PM

Treasurer's Report

Fiscal year 2023-2024

I'd like to start my report by thanking the Synod Council for showing the trust in me to appoint me as Treasurer of your Allegheny Synod. I'd also to thank former Treasurer, Bill Layton. He has guided this transition to make it as simple as possible. His assistance has been very valuable and absolutely necessary. Even though I have been a member of the Synod's Finance Committee for more years than I can remember, the Treasurer position is much more complex. Bill has been available for me any and every time I have "bugged" him. Thank you, Bill, for being so gracious.

The results of fiscal year 2023-2024 are total income of \$906,784.06 and total expenses of \$882,083.37 leaving a net income of \$24,700.69. All monies received for designated activities has been delivered to those causes.

During the year it was discovered that a small calculation error occurred on the salary on the 2024-2025 budget. This will be presented for adoption by this assembly. The previous approved amount was \$81,925.00 for the Bishop and \$73,770.00 for the Assistant to the Bishop. The correct amounts should be \$83,002 for the Bishop and \$74,847 for the Assistant to the Bishop. The error occurred due to the number of years of service was shorted by 1 year for each and the amount for FICA insurance additional amount required. Also needed is your

approval to change the 2024-25 budgeted amount for DEM Payroll support from the ELCA previously approved at \$5,000.00, should be \$0. WE will not be receiving that money this year. In connection with that, the expense for Salary-DEM should be \$0.00 not \$43,850. Pastor Kevin salary expense replaces this expense.

Our investment accounts have been performing extremely well this past year. There was a reallocation into more secure type of accounts, and that has had a very positive affect on our return on investments. As I become more familiar with our various investments, I will make certain that our investments align with our investment policy. Our auditors have had no exceptions with our total portfolio.

I am known for attempting to make financial reports as understandable as possible for anyone, even for those who do not deal with reports on a regular basis. I hope you find my information easy to understand. My reports can also be found in this bulletin. I am available for any questions be emailing me at office@alleghenysynod.com.

Your Servant in Christ!

Paula Nihoff

Allegheny Synod

Actual 2022-2023 through Proposed Budget 2025-2026

Accounts	Actual YTD 2022-2023	Actual YTD 2023-2024	Budget 2024- 2025 (This Year) Approved	2025-2026 BUDGET Proposed
Revenues				
Synod Operations				
Synod Mission General & Admin				
Income, Mission Support				
052.4000.I - Mission Support	\$556,834.81	\$519,284.80	\$542,914.00	\$532,056.00
052.4050.I - Designated Mission Support	\$67,296.45	\$75,145.79	\$65,614.00	\$64,302.00
Total Income, Mission Support	\$624,131.26	\$594,430.59	\$608,528.00	\$596,358.00
Income Interest				
Total Income Interest	-\$125,167.09	\$173,321.20	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Designated Gifts, Synodical	\$127,613.10	\$162,664.17	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mission&Ministry Development				
052.4105.I - ELCA Funds - DEM	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$8,000.00
052.4106.I - ELCA Funds - DEM Payroll	\$40,468.08	\$30,958.08	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.4304.I - Bishop Discretionary Fund	\$5,180.00	\$5,050.00	\$0.00	
052.8600.I - Lutheran Letter Income	\$2,544.35	\$2,930.57	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
052.8700.I - DEM Support	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	
052.9214.I - Vitality and Innovation Grants Income	\$9,141.00	\$5,448.77	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
052.9450.I - Synod Leadership Team Income	\$475.00	\$7,305.00	\$0.00	
052.9801.I - Memorial Donation Income	\$1,013.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Total Mission&Ministry Development	\$68,821.93	\$62,692.42	\$10,000.00	\$15,500.00
Events, Synodical				
Total Synodical Events	\$37,063.23	\$53,405.01	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Revenues	\$732,462.43	\$1,046,513.39	\$618,528.00	\$646,858.00
Expenses				
Synod Operations				
ELCA Churchwide Mission Support				
Partner Ministry Support				

ACTUAL 2022-2023 THROUGH PROPOSED BUDGET 2025-2026

Accounts	Actual YTD 2022-2023	Actual YTD 2023-2024	Budget 2024- 2025 (This Year) Approved	2025-2026 BUDGET Proposed
001.9100.E - Mission Support - ELCA	\$250,442.03	\$240,299.05	\$192,200.00	\$186,220.00
Total Partner Ministry Support	\$250,442.03	\$240,299.05	\$228,676.00	\$186,220.00
Partners				
Partner Ministry Support				
054.9101.E - ALSM - Allegheny Luth Soc Mini	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$5,000.00
054.9102.E - United Lutheran Seminary	\$13,500.00	\$13,500.00	\$13,500.00	\$13,000.00
054.9103.E - Sequanota Center	\$28,500.00	\$33,500.00	\$33,500.00	\$35,000.00
054.9104.E - Penn State Campus Ministry	\$9,500.00	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$12,000.00
054.9107.E - LAMPA: Luth Advocacy Min Pa	\$1,078.00	\$1,078.00	\$1,078.00	\$2,000.00
054.9108.E - Shawnee Park Chaplancy	\$23.47	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Partner Ministry Support	\$56,601.47	\$63,078.00	\$67,078.00	\$67,000.00
Total ELCA Churchwide Mission Support	\$307,043.50	\$303,377.05	\$295,754.00	\$253,220.00
Designated Gifts - Synodical				
Total Designated Gifts - Synodical	\$145,529.82	\$152,123.91	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Partners	\$202,131.29	\$215,201.91	\$67,078.00	\$67,000.00
Total ELCA Churchwide Mission Support	\$452,573.32	\$455,500.96	\$295,754.00	\$320,220.00
Synod Mission General & Admin				
Salaries, Ordained				
052.7000.E - Salary - Bishop	\$72,690.75	\$74,936.25	\$78,204.00 **	\$81,548.00
052.7020.E - Salary - Ordained Asst	\$13,651.88	\$16,096.05	\$69,478.00 **	\$72,405.00
052.7021.E - Salary - DEM	\$44,820.71	\$50,628.14	\$0.00 **	\$0.00
052.7050.E - Salary Bishop SS Offset	\$5,531.79	\$5,936.74	\$5,983.00 **	\$6,238.00
052.7052.E - Salary - Asst. SS Offset	\$4,234.22	\$5,279.97	\$5,315.00 **	\$5,539.00
Total Salaries, Ordained	\$140,929.35	\$152,877.15	\$158,980.00 **	\$165,730.00
Salaries & Wages, Non Ordained				
052.7060.E - Salary - Office Manager	\$43,494.65	\$45,669.27	\$47,314.00	\$49,207.00
052.7080.E - Stipend - Synod Secretary	\$2,100.00	\$3,300.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00
052.7082.E - Hourly - Housekeeping	\$1,859.50	\$2,081.25	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
052.7084.E - Stipend - Synod Treasurer	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00
052.7085.E - Salary - Accrued PTO	\$14,231.70	\$3,896.85	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Salaries & Wages, Non Ordained	\$65,285.85	\$58,547.37	\$56,514.00	\$56,407.00
Employee Benefits				
052.7100.E - Pension	\$21,991.03	\$23,016.92	\$23,752.00	\$28,371.00
052.7110.E - Employee Health & Other Benefits	\$26,639.55	\$29,762.29	\$29,857.00	\$31,339.00
052.7131.E - Continuing Education	\$856.81	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,400.00

ACTUAL 2022-2023 THROUGH PROPOSED BUDGET 2025-2026

Accounts	Actual YTD 2022-2023	Actual YTD 2023-2024	Budget 2024- 2025 (This Year) Approved	2025-2026 BUDGET Proposed
Total Employee Benefits	\$49,487.39	\$52,779.21	\$54,609.00	\$61,110.00
Employer Expenses				
052.7200.E - FICA	\$3,325.07	\$3,493.74	\$3,480.00	\$3,764.00
052.8104.2 - Miscellaneous Employer Expenses	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Employer Expenses	\$3,925.07	\$3,493.74	\$3,480.00	\$3,764.00
General Expenses				
052.8102.E - Office Supplies	\$1,027.82	\$965.66	\$1,250.00	\$1,000.00
052.8300.E - Postage	\$834.54	\$1,321.26	\$900.00	\$1,400.00
052.9801.E - Memorials/Floral Tributes	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
052.9802.E - Hospitality	\$690.23	\$746.47	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
Total General Expenses	\$2,602.59	\$3,033.39	\$3,250.00	\$3,000.00
General Exp.-Personnel Related				
052.8650.E - Ministry Resources	\$501.83	\$401.60	\$600.00	\$500.00
052.8710.E - Staff Travel - Gas/Milea/Hotel&Toll	\$4,122.84	\$2,686.11	\$10,000.00	\$7,500.00
052.8715.E - Non-Staff Travel - Gas/Mile/Hotel&T	-\$140.25	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
052.8800.E - Vehicle Costs - Ins/Maint Only	\$141.03	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
052.9401.E - Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions	\$5,267.45	\$5,178.60	\$5,300.00	\$5,000.00
Total General Exp.-Personnel Related	\$9,892.90	\$8,266.31	\$16,400.00	\$14,000.00
Expenses, Council & Financial				
052.8005.E - Accounting Software	\$3,885.00	\$1,792.00	\$4,000.00	\$5,650.00
052.8006.E - Bank and CC Fees	\$11,195.94	\$8,392.51	\$10,000.00	\$8,000.00
052.8020.E - Audit Expense	\$4,250.00	\$4,400.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
052.9440.E - Synod Council Expenses (retreat Etc.)	\$680.00	\$1,404.32	\$1,350.00	\$1,750.00
052.9590.E - Depreciation & Amortization - Allowable	\$6,142.27	\$2,853.34	\$6,100.00	\$3,400.00
Total Expenses, Council & Financial	\$26,153.21	\$18,842.17	\$25,950.00	\$23,300.00
Administrative & Technology				
052.8001.E - Software & Computer Maintenance	\$3,907.46	\$3,752.69	\$4,000.00	\$2,500.00
052.8025.E - Accounting Services	\$8,220.00	\$8,520.00	\$8,640.00	\$8,700.00
052.8201.E - Utilities: Network Services Web	\$847.87	\$1,850.18	\$900.00	\$0.00
052.8500.E - Office Equipment (Copier Lease)	\$2,038.33	\$1,926.11	\$2,100.00	\$2,400.00
Total Administrative & Technology	\$15,013.66	\$16,048.98	\$15,640.00	\$13,600.00
Facility Expenses				
052.8103.E - General Supplies Facility	\$289.13	\$270.14	\$400.00	\$200.00
052.8200.E - Telephone & Cell Phone	\$2,416.12	\$3,005.89	\$3,000.00	\$2,500.00
052.8400.E - Electricity	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	0
052.8410.E - Heat	\$720.00	\$720.00	\$720.00	0
052.8420.E - Sewer & Water	\$780.00	\$780.00	\$780.00	0

ACTUAL 2022-2023 THROUGH PROPOSED BUDGET 2025-2026

Accounts	Actual YTD 2022-2023	Actual YTD 2023-2024	Budget 2024- 2025 (This Year) Approved	2025-2026 BUDGET Proposed
052.8430.E - Rent	\$13,392.00	\$13,392.00	\$13,392.00	\$12,600.00
052.9300.E - Professional Insurance	\$4,975.59	\$5,075.45	\$5,000.00	\$5,500.00
Total Facility Expenses	\$24,072.84	\$24,743.48	\$24,792.00	\$20,800.00
Congregational & Ministry Supp				
052.4304.E - Bishop Discretionary - CY Withdraw	\$6,440.00	\$4,695.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
052.9430.E - Global Ministry Synod Team Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
052.9420.E - Leadership Support	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
Total Congregational & Ministry Supp	\$6,440.00	\$4,695.00	\$50.00	\$3,050.00
Other Ministry Teams Expenses				
052.9433.E - Region 8	\$0.00	\$3,230.00	\$3,230.00	\$3,500.00
Total Other Ministry Teams Expenses	\$0.00	\$3,230.00	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00
Mission & Ministry Development				
052.8600.E - The Lutheran Letter	\$3,900.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
052.8801.E - Rostered Leaders Day Events	\$540.00	\$100.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
052.9180.E - Candidacy Expenses	\$0.00	\$2,012.12	\$1,000.00	\$2,400.00
052.9210.E - First Call Theological Education	\$925.00	\$243.34	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
052.9214.E - Vitality and Innovation Grants	\$0.00	\$10,175.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
052.9450.E - Synod Leadership Team Expenses	\$20.00	\$1,580.98	\$5,000.00	\$3,000.00
052.9464.E - DEM Expenses	\$1,819.00	\$7,573.96	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Total Mission & Ministry Development	\$7,204.00	\$26,185.40	\$17,500.00	\$16,900.00
Events, Synodical				
052.4201.E - Synod Assembly Expenses	\$10,217.27	\$11,890.13	\$4,000.00	\$3,500.00
052.4202.E - Lutheran Day - Lakemont Expenses	\$315.00	\$1,638.48	\$200.00	\$200.00
052.4204.E - Bishops Convo - Leaders Exp	\$15,431.44	\$13,502.15	\$3,000.00	\$5,500.00
052.4205.E - Youth Events Expense	\$18,173.08	\$25,759.45	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
052.4207.E - DYD Expenses	\$300.00	\$1,050.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
Total Events, Synodical	\$44,436.79	\$53,840.21	\$8,700.00	\$10,200.00
Total Synod Mission General & Admin	\$395,443.65	\$426,582.41	\$384,792.00	\$405,955.00
Total Synod Operations	\$848,016.97	\$882,083.37	\$676,546.00	\$726,175.00
Total Expenses	\$848,016.97	\$882,083.37	\$676,546.00	\$726,175.00
Net Total	-\$115,554.54	\$164,430.02	-\$58,018.00	-\$79,317.00

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Candidacy Committee Report

The Allegheny Synod Candidacy Committee has been active this year, accompanying candidates for ordained ministry through various stages of their formation. We have worked with nine candidates this year, two of whom have wrapped up their journey with us and have moved into public ordained ministry:

- The Rev. Regina Holliday (TEEM) was approved in November 2023 and ordained March 2024. She is serving Horner Lutheran in the Laurel Highlands Conference
- Vicar Allen Stump (TEEM) was approved in March 2024 and is scheduled to be ordained June 2024. He is called to Christ Trinity Parish in the Laurel Highlands Conference.

The other seven candidates are as follows:

- Vicar Jennifer Bobolsky-Sherbine (MDiv) was endorsed in November 2023 and is serving St. John Summerhill and St. Paul's Mundy's Corner in a 2-year, part-time internship.
- Seminarian Lindsie Hammaker-Struth (MDiv) received a positive entrance decision in October 2023. She is in the process of transferring candidacy to SWPA Synod, where she now resides.
- Vicar Christy Harford (TEEM) is serving First Johnstown and Benscreek on internship.
- Vicar Penny Koontz (TEEM) has completed coursework and is preparing for endorsement.
- Vicar Steve Koths (TEEM) is serving Shiloh State College on internship.
- Vicar Claudia Plows (TEEM) is completing classwork and serving Trinity Sidman.
- Vicar Josh Spangler (TEEM) received a positive entrance decision in October 2023 and is completing classwork while serving Laurel Mountain Lutherans.

The Office of the Bishop gives thanks for those who have served this year on Candidacy Committee: Fern Clapper, the Rev. Sharon Erb (Chair), Ken Lyle, the Rev. Amanda McCaffery, Freda Schluter, and the Rev. Evelyn Wald. Janice Hughes serves as recording secretary.

Two new members were recently appointed to the Candidacy Committee, George Fattman and Lyn Horning, and we look forward to their contribution.

The Rev. Becky Resch is our ELCA Region 8 Candidacy Manager. The Rev. Dr. Gil Waldkoenig returned to our committee this year as the United Lutheran Seminary representative. We also greatly value the work of Deacon Chelle Huth in the formation of our candidates.

Please keep our candidates, committee members, and seminary faculty and staff in your prayers for this ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Kevin Shock
Assistant to the Bishop

2025 Compensation and Benefits Manual

A Tool for Ministry Budgeting in the Allegheny Synod, ELCA

This manual is intended as a tool for ministry sites and their ministers of Word and Sacrament or ministers of Word and Service to mutually plan and budget for the minister's compensation and benefits.

Predominantly we think of ministry in terms of a minister's efforts for members of the ministry on behalf of Jesus Christ. In the same way, the ministry of the laity includes care of the minister and the minister's family on behalf of Jesus Christ.

In many ministry settings, a specific team is tasked with primary concern for care of the minister and their family. One of the key tasks of such a team is to discuss annually with the minister a fair and equitable compensation package. Since the minister depends on the ministry employer to make ample provision for their financial needs, the minister should have the opportunity to discuss those needs in an open and supportive forum. This team is in a position to provide such a forum. The team can gather data from the minister about their financial needs and subsequently make recommendations to the Finance Committee, Council or Board, and/or Congregation for fair and equitable compensation.

There are reasons for the varieties of financial compensation packages within this Synod and the ELCA. Some ministries have full-time ministers while others have less than full-time ministerial service. Some have multiple ministers on staff. Some cooperatives have one minister serving multiple locations. Some ministers have additional education, training, or work experience prior to entering the ministry that benefits their ministry. It is the intention of the Synod to affirm the reality of different ministry arrangements while at the same time ensuring adequate and fair compensation.

This document attempts to provide flexibility in determining base salary by only specifying minimum amounts, in negotiating housing arrangements, and in providing components for some other benefits. Primary in all that is recommended here is the need for the minister and team members to discuss openly and honestly the subject of money and the minister's responsibilities and needs.

This document is not intended to serve as financial or tax advice. Ministry employers are responsible for following legal employment practices regarding compensation and taxation. Ministers are strongly encouraged to employ a qualified tax accountant and/or financial advisor to review their compensation and ensure compliance with tax codes.

Worksheet for Budgeting Minister's Compensation

Each amount is calculated individually on the indicated pages.

** Some items depend on type of housing compensation and/or medical plan.*

Salary & Housing

- A. Annual Base Salary (p 3)
- B. Furnishing Allowance (p 4)*
- C. Social Security Allowance (p 4-5) \$ _____

Benefits

- D. Portico Pension Contribution (p 5)
- E. Other Portico Benefits (p 6-7)
- F. Housing Equity Allowance (p 7)* + \$ _____

Professional Expenses

- G. Synod Assembly & Conference Expenses (p 8)
- H. Automobile Expense (p 8-9)
- I. Continuing Education (Etc.) Expenses (p 9)
- J. Business & Attire Expense (p 9-10)
- K. Leadership Development Expense (p 10)
- L. Medical Expense Reimbursement (p 11)* + \$ _____

Total paid to/for Minister by Employer = \$ _____

To Facilitate Minister's Required Vacation Compensation
(Budgeted by the Ministry, Not Paid to the Minister)

Estimated Supply Expense (p 11) + \$ _____

Total Budgeted Expense for Rostered Ministry = \$ _____

A. Annual Base Salary Compensation

Listed below are recommended *minimum* guidelines for use in developing the compensation package for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service. Each ministry setting requires unique responsibilities; adequate compensation is related but not limited to the expectations of the minister and the ministry they are serving. Ministry employers may choose to compensate ministers beyond the minimum guidelines for additional degrees, certifications, or years of other relevant professional experience.

- 1) Each year the Synod Finance Committee reviews current economic indicators to determine an appropriate starting salary. Starting salary for ministers ordained in 2024 increased 4% from 2023.
- 2) Salary is increased for each year of experience by \$500.

To Calculate years of experience, subtract the minister’s year of ordination from 2024.

2024 - _____ (Year of Ordination) = _____ Years of Experience

Base Salary with a Parsonage		\$42,401
Add Years of Experience x \$500	+ _____	
Minimum Salary with a Parsonage	= _____	

OR

Base Salary without a Parsonage		\$59,457
Add Years of Experience x \$500	+ _____	
Minimum Salary without a Parsonage	= _____	

AND

Compensation for additional degrees, certifications, years of other relevant professional experience		+ _____
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Base Salary A. \$ _____

B. Housing & Furnishing Allowance

A minister whose compensation does not include a parsonage may designate as housing allowance an amount of compensation which is excluded from their Federal taxable income up to the fair rental value of a furnished home plus utilities to the extent that the allowance is actually expended for housing. Qualifying Housing Allowance expenses include rent payments, principal and interest payments on mortgages, taxes, utilities, maintenance, insurance, furnishing, and landscaping. **For more information on housing allowance, the IRS provides this information: [Ministers' Compensation & Housing Allowance | Internal Revenue Service \(irs.gov\)](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international/Ministers%20Compensation%20&%20Housing%20Allowance)**

For the purpose of including a housing allowance in calculating the Total Defined Compensation, Portico will add 30% to Base Salary for a minister whose compensation includes a parsonage.

A minister may receive a Furnishing Allowance. The Furnishing Allowance is excluded from Federal Income Tax to the extent that the allowance is actually expended for furnishing; however, the amount used is subject to Social Security Tax. The Furnishing Allowance is paid directly to the minister and is in addition to any maintenance and repair costs paid directly or reimbursed by the ministry employer.

Congregations which provide a parsonage for the called rostered minister will pay the parsonage's utilities in full each month. Utilities include electric, gas, oil, water, sewer, trash, internet, telephone (if a landline exists in the parsonage). If the rostered minister uses their personal cell phone for church business, a negotiated amount of reimbursement should be paid in addition to the parsonage utility costs. Billing for utilities for the parsonage should be registered in the name of the congregation and directed to the congregation's treasurer for payment.

Furnishing Allowance B. \$ _____

C. Social Security Allowance

For Social Security purposes, ministers are taxed as if they are self-employed. The current combined Social Security and Medicare tax is 15.3%. The Synod policy requires the ministry site to assume at least 50% of the combined Social Security and Medicare tax that the minister is required to pay or an equivalent amount if the minister had previously opted out of Social Security.

To calculate the compensation subject to Social Security Tax, add the Base Salary (A), 30% of Base Salary for ministers with a parsonage only, Furnishing Allowance (B), and any other allowances paid directly to the minister, excluding reimbursed expenses.

A. Base Salary	_____	
30% of A.	+ _____	(for ministers with a parsonage only)
B. Furnishing Allowance	+ _____	(if utilized)
Other Allowances	+ _____	
	= _____	(C1) Compensation Subject to SS Tax

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To calculate the Social Security Tax, multiply the minister's compensation (C1) x 15.3%.

C1 _____ x .153 = _____ (C2) Social Security Tax

To calculate the Social Security Allowance paid by the ministry employer, multiply the minister's Social Security Tax (C2) x at least 50% (more if the ministry employer chooses).

C2 _____ x .5 (or more) = _____ (C) Social Security Allowance

Social Security Allowance C. \$ _____

D. Portico Pension Contribution

Portico Benefits Services administrates pension benefits for the ELCA. The Synod policy encourages the ministry employer to contribute to the minister's pension fund at a rate of 12% of the Defined Compensation.

To calculate the Portico Defined Compensation, add the Base Salary (A), 30% of the Base Salary for ministers with a parsonage only, the Furnishing Allowance (B), and the Social Security Allowance (C).

A. Base Salary _____
30% of A + _____ (for ministers with a parsonage only)
B. Furnishing Allowance + _____
C. Social Security Allowance + _____
= _____ (D1) Portico Defined Compensation

To calculate the Pension Contribution paid by the ministry employer, multiply the minister's Portico Defined Compensation (D1) x 12%.

D1. _____ x .12 = _____ (D) Pension Contribution

Pension Contribution D. \$ _____

E. Other Portico-ELCA Benefits Contribution

Portico Benefit Services, the nonprofit benefit ministry of the ELCA, provides the benefit program for rostered ministers, lay employees, and their families. Portico provides health, dental, prescription drug, retirement, disability, and group life insurance benefits in one bundled program.* This program is designed to address the needs of rostered ministers and provide seamless benefits during change of call, leave from call, and other events unique to ministry. A bundled approach helps ensure rostered ministers and lay employees are protected against significant financial loss from a variety of risks. Through Portico, ministries in this synod and across the country pool their collective purchasing power to provide benefits in a cost-effective manner. For more information, see the [ELCA Philosophy of Benefits](#).

Congregations and plan members share the cost of benefits. Congregations are expected to support the well-being of their covered plan members by paying 100% of the cost of non-elective benefits. Plan members are expected to participate in the cost of utilizing the benefits (e.g., deductibles, coinsurance, and copays).

*A plan member may waive health coverage if they have access to valid medical insurance coverage through their spouse or another employer.

Current contribution rates for benefits are available on at EmployerLink.PorticoBenefits.org or by calling Portico at 800.352.2876.

ELCA Survivor Benefit

Basic group life insurance is offered through Securian is paid for by the congregation. **Rostered ministers may pay for additional coverage through Securian or supplemental insurance can be purchased by the rostered minister.**

ELCA Disability Benefits

When approved, the ELCA disability trust provides monthly income, retirement plan contribution, and health coverage. There are two types of disability benefits: short term and long term. Short term (60 days) compensation and benefits are paid by the congregation. Long term (over 60 days) disability benefits are paid by the ELCA's disability trust.

ELCA Retirement

The ELCA maintains a defined contribution retirement plan for rostered ministers. The Allegheny Synod encourages congregations to contribute a minimum of 12% of the rostered minister's defined compensation to the retirement plan. Members in the plan can also contribute pre-tax contributions through payroll deduction.

ELCA Health Benefit

The ELCA's health benefit plans cover the following areas: medical, dental, prescription coverage, tax advantage accounts (Flexible Spending and Health Savings Accounts) and wellness support. The ELCA Church Council has approved a balance of cost-sharing between congregations and plan members. Portico offers a choice of ELCA-Primary health benefit options that fit this approved balance: Gold+, and Silver+ with either Level A or B employer HSA contribution. Each fall, congregations should engage in conversation with their sponsored plan members to determine the option that best fits their needs, and then make their selection

2025 Compensation and Benefits Manual *(continuation)*

during annual enrollment. In 2024 the Allegheny synod council voted to recommend the Gold+ level.

Plan Choice _____

Cost of Plan _____

Portico Benefits E. \$ _____

F. Housing Equity Allowance (For Ministers with a Parsonage Only)

When a parsonage is furnished as part of the minister's compensation, the minister does not have the opportunity to build equity as a homeowner. The ministry employer may compensate for this lack of equity with a Housing Equity Allowance. Recommended Housing Equity Allowance Provisions:

1. The Housing Equity Allowance equals 3% of the minister's Defined Compensation.
2. The ministry employer pays this amount in monthly installments to a depository agreed to by the ministry employer and the minister.
3. Use of the funds is limited to the provision of housing whenever it is needed, specifically at the time of retirement, disability, or death, or when a congregation disposes of its parsonage.
4. Provisions are to be made for changing the depository when required by relocation of the minister, provided that the original contractual limitations for the use of the funds are maintained.

To calculate the Housing Equity Allowance paid by the ministry employer, multiply the Defined Compensation (D1) x 3%.

D1. _____ x .03 = _____ (F) Housing Equity Allowance

Housing Equity Allowance F. \$ _____

Professional Expenses

The IRS has made it difficult to itemize and deduct professional expenses. Therefore, it is recommended that the ministry employer reimburse professional expenses in full and budget accordingly for these anticipated costs, reviewing these allowances frequently. Professional expenses include:

- G. Synod Assembly and Conference Expenses
- H. Automobile Expenses
- I. Continuing Education, Book, Periodical, and Digital Resource Expenses
- J. Ministry-Related Business and Attire Expenses
- K. Leadership Development

Additional Professional Expenses unique to a ministry may be incurred and compensated.

G. Synod Assembly and Conference Expenses

All ministers are required to attend the annual Synod Assembly and Bishop’s Convocation, for which the ministry employer is required to pay registration, lodging, and meals for the minister while attending these events. Further, ministers may be expected to attend other Synod conferences or trainings, and the ministry employer is expected to pay those registration fees and expenses as well. Expenses for Synod Assembly, Convocation, and other Synod conferences or trainings are to be covered in addition to Continuing Education expenses.

Typical expenses for Synod Assembly and Bishop’s Convocation are \$300 each (\$600 total). Ministers in the first three years of their first call after graduation/ordination are required to attend First Call Theological Education (FCTE). FCTE incurs a fee of \$200/year for three years.

Synod Assembly & Conference Expenses G. \$ _____

H. Automobile Expenses

In most ministry settings, the minister will incur transportation costs that include fuel, repairs, insurance, tolls, etc. The IRS allows reimbursement of a specific amount per mile when a car is used for business purposes. American Automobile Association (AAA) and Department of Transportation studies indicate that the cost of operating automobiles is greater than the mileage reimbursement allowed by the IRS. The ministry employer should provide to the minister a travel allowance adequate to cover all costs. The Synod recommends three possible arrangements (in order of preference):

1. An employer-owned or leased car. The ministry employer owns or leases a car for the minister to use in the course of their duties; the employer pays the cost of fuel, **maintenance** and repairs.
2. Reimbursement to the minister for actual miles driven. The employer pays the leader for the use of their car based on an agreed upon amount per mile and in accordance with IRS regulations. **The IRS rate for 2024 is 67 cents per mile; this may change in 2025.** Amounts up to the IRS rate are not taxable; any amount paid in excess of the IRS rate is taxable compensation.
3. Pay the leader a flat rate for transportation. Having budgeted an amount for travel, the ministry employer pays the minister a regular amount, regardless of the miles driven by the leader. A flat rate travel compensation is considered taxable income, so an additional 15%-20% should be added to the allowance to account for the additional tax obligation of the minister.

Allowable mileage reimbursement guidelines from the IRS can be found in IRS Publication 463. Pages 18-21 discuss allowable reimbursement scenarios. It is the responsibility of the congregation council to clearly state from where mileage is calculated for reimbursement. When an agreement is reached, it should be included on the Definitions for Compensation page on pages 17-19 of this manual.

Automobile Expense H. \$ _____

I. Continuing Education, Book, Periodical, and Digital Resource Expenses

In order to update their skills and strengthen their ministry, the ELCA expects ministers to participate in at least 50 contact hours of Continuing Education (Life-Long Learning/ Professional Development) annually. Such activities are not vacations, and ministry employers shall provide both time and money to facilitate these learning opportunities.

2025 Compensation and Benefits Manual *(continuation)*

For the minister to keep abreast of developments in theology and ministry, expenses for books, periodicals, and digital resources are included with Continuing Education.

Like the Housing Equity Allowance, an account with a depository agreed to by the minister and the ministry employer should be established for Continuing Education. The Synod recommends the employer contribute at least \$700 and the minister at least \$300 annually.

Two weeks study leave, or its equivalent, is to be provided over and above vacation.

Continuing Education, Book, Periodical, Digital Resource Expenses I. \$ _____

J. Ministry Related Business and Attire Expenses

The IRS has made it difficult to itemize and deduct professional expenses. Therefore the Synod recommends the ministry employer reimburse in full professional expenses including, but not limited to, professional attire such as vestments and clerics, ministry use of personal technical resources (i.e. cell phone, computer), professional organization dues, and business entertainment.

Ministry Related Business and Attire Expense J. \$ _____

K. Leadership Development

Leadership Development is different than Continuing Education or vacation, which benefit the ministry but are for the minister's personal development, rest, and renewal. Leadership development benefits the ministry's well-being and growth. The Synod recommends that the ministry employer offer at least \$500 for Leadership Development which may include retreats, resources, coaching, or other education for the minister's development and growth.

Leadership Development Expense K. \$ _____

L. Flexible Spending Accounts/Medical Expense Reimbursement

(Premiums for Medical and Dental Benefits are not to be included here. See p. 5-6)

Health Flexible Spending Account (FSA)

A minister with Platinum+ or Gold+ plans may set aside an amount, pretax, to pay for eligible out of pocket health care expenses. The minister has access to the full amount of the FSA election starting January 1, even though contributions will be withheld from each paycheck throughout the plan year.

Health Savings Account (HSA)

A minister with Silver+ or Bronze+ may set aside pretax money to pay for eligible out of pocket health care expenses. The minister and employer can contribute and any earned wellness dollars are deposited here. For the calendar year 2022, an HSA accepts up to \$3650 per member or \$7300 per family, plus an additional \$1000 if age 55 or older. (Check allowed amounts for 2023 when available.)

Dependent (Day) Care Flexible Spending Account

A minister may set aside an amount, pretax, to pay for day care expenses incurred for the care of the minister's child(ren) or other eligible dependent to enable the minister to work.

Flexible Spending Accounts can be established through Portico Benefit Services.

2025 Compensation and Benefits Manual *(continuation)*

Flexible Spending Designation \$ _____ (made by the minister; not an additional budgeted item)

FSA, HSA, and Depend Care Account contributions are capped; check current allowed amounts.

Medical Expense Reimbursement

The leader may be reimbursed for copays or medical expenses not otherwise covered by insurance.

Medical Expense Reimbursement L. \$ _____

Pre-Tax Contribution

Contributions up to the amount permissible by the IRS are made to Portico Benefit Services and/or other approved depositories. The minister should contact Portico for details on the IRS annual limits for retirement plan contributions.

Pre-Tax Contribution \$ _____ (made by the minister; not an additional budgeted item)

Related Items

Vacation

Sabbath is a commandment of God; therefore, weekly time off and annual vacation are necessary for the minister's personal physical, mental, and spiritual health as well as for their leadership by example. The Synod requires a minimum of four weeks annual vacation, which includes four Sundays, and a minimum of one day off each week. Coverage should be arranged so that the minister is not "on call" during scheduled vacation time. The ministry employer may grant additional vacation time based on the length of service in the ministry.

Vacation of _____ weeks per year (including Sundays)

The 2024 rate for Sunday supply worship leadership will be \$135 for one service, PLUS \$50 for each additional service on the same day, PLUS mileage reimbursement at the 2024 IRS rate.

To budget for supply coverage of the minister's vacation, multiply the number of Sundays offered in vacation (minimum 4) x \$135 (+\$50 per additional service) + an estimate of mileage reimbursement.

Estimated Supply Expense \$ _____ (to be paid to supply leaders)

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence should be negotiated between the minister and ministry employer (council or board) at least 14 days prior to the leave request. If emergency leave is required in which the 14 day notice is not possible, the Executive Committee may grant the leave with the approval of the full council or board.

Sick Leave

Rostered ministers and congregation employees shall receive ten (10) days of paid sick leave per year. Illness of longer than two (2) months should be referred to Portico Benefits. Sick leave may accrue up to a maximum of thirty (30) working days. The decision to grant additional paid sick leave is at the discretion of the congregation council.

Family Leave

In the event of an illness in the immediate family (spouse, children, parents, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law, or legal guardian) that requires the rostered minister or employee's presence, accrued sick leave may be utilized for this purpose.

Maternity/Paternity/Adoptive Leave

Leaves under this section are for the purpose of issues related to parenting, and may only be taken after six (6) months of full-time employment. Rostered ministers and employees who will be absent due to maternity/ paternity/adoptive leave are requested to provide as much advance notice as possible. Eight (8) weeks of paid maternity/paternity/adoptive leave are available to a rostered minister or an employee following the birth of a child or an adoption of a child less than one year old. Such leave must be taken within fifteen (15) weeks of the birth or adoption. If medically necessary, additional time may be requested. Rostered ministers and employees desiring additional leave, either prior to or following the birth of their child or adoption of their child less than one year old, may use accrued vacation or sick time to supplement time off with the approval of the congregation council. The rostered minister or employee agrees to return to work for a minimum of six (6) months after taking leave.

Vacation

Rostered ministers are granted four (4) weeks of paid vacation time including four (4) Sundays each year as a minimum guideline. Rostered ministers should notify the congregation council at least thirty (30) days in advance of vacation and make arrangements for the proper pastoral coverage while out of town. Additional vacation time may be granted to rostered ministers by the congregation council. Unused vacation time will be paid to the rostered minister upon resignation of call or separation from call. Full benefits will be paid through the end of unused vacation time at time of resignation or separation. Congregational employees are granted paid vacation time according to congregational guidelines.

Compassionate and Emergency Leave

In the event of a death in a rostered minister or employee's immediate family (spouse, children, parents, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law, or legal guardian) five (5) days paid leave will be granted to attend the funeral and to deal with family affairs. Additional time may be granted by the congregation council.

Jury Duty

This synod recognizes an employee's legal and civic duty to serve if called to jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness. A rostered minister or employee who is required to serve as such will be entitled to full pay and benefits during the period of such service. Rostered ministers and employees are required to report to work when not required to be present in court, and to call in daily to report their status on returning to work.

Leave Without Pay

Leave without pay may be granted to a rostered minister or employee, for personal reasons, after due consideration has been given to the work requirements of the congregation. Leave without pay may be granted for a period of up to two (2) months. Such leaves of absence are granted by the congregation council only in consultation with the bishop and the Synod Council. The congregation will hold a rostered minister or employee's position open for the leave period, while on an approved leave without pay. If the rostered minister or employee is unable to return to work at the conclusion of the leave period, their position may or may not continue to be held open. This decision will be made, on a case-by-case basis, by the bishop in consultation with the

congregation council. If the individual has been on a leave without pay for medical reasons, a medical release from their physician to return to work must be submitted.

Disability Leave

This synod and its congregations are committed to accommodate qualified rostered ministers and employees with disabilities, to the extent it can do so without undue burden. If, for example, a qualified employee is temporarily disabled and provides the congregation a medical certification recommending leave, the congregation will provide unpaid leave as an accommodation to that employee if it can do so without undue burden. Requests for accommodation should be made in writing, and the rostered minister or employee will need to work with the bishop or his/her delegate to determine the appropriate accommodation and documentation needed. Long-term Disability claims are handled through Portico Benefit Services. See the Portico website for requirements for guidelines to apply. The ministry employer will pay full compensation for the eight week period until Portico Disability Benefits begin. Ministry employers may explore cost benefit of purchasing short-term disability insurance to cover that eight-week period. The Office of the Bishop will work with the congregation council to secure pastoral coverage during the period of disability.

Military Leave

Rostered ministers and regular full-time and regular part-time employees who perform military service will be granted leaves of absence for such service in compliance with state and federal laws. For purposes of this handbook, military service in the performance of duty on a voluntary or involuntary basis in the U.S. Armed forces, the Reserves, or the National Guard under competent authority, and includes active duty for training, inactive duty training, and full-time National Guard duty. Vacation or accrued sick time is not to be used for this leave. Rostered ministers or employees who are called to military service will be paid during their leave at a rate of 50% of their normal wages and benefits will be paid in full. Rostered ministers are asked to notify the congregation council and bishop and submit copies of military orders as soon as they become aware of the military obligation. Employees are asked to notify the pastor and congregation council as soon as they become aware of the military obligation and submit copies of military orders. An employee's eligibility for reinstatement after completion of military service is determined in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

Sabbatical Leave

In January 2004, the Synod Council approved the following Sabbatical Guidelines:

Vision: Throughout Holy Scripture, from Genesis' beginnings to Jesus' ministry and the church's witness, accounts of holy activity are clearly set apart by rest, quiet places, and time for restoration. God has given us, God's people, the Sabbath pattern as a time of renewal, a time to be reminded of whose we are and what we are called to do, a time of rest that refreshes us for life.

In the lives of ministers of the Allegheny Synod, time apart from the regular responsibilities of ministry benefit both the ministry setting and the minister. Over an extended period, a Sabbatical, rest separate from the immediate expectations of congregational ministry, can renew a congregation and refresh a leader's sense of call for ministry. As the minister is released from the regular responsibilities of the call, it does not mean that congregational life is suspended. In fact, many congregations report that the Sabbatical was a time for growth and renewal.

Each Sabbatical will be unique. Sabbatical is clearly permission for a minister to be blessed by time away. In the church, as we discuss Sabbaticals for ministers, the challenge is for us to pursue its meaning for each Christian community. These guidelines are intended to help congregations and ministers create a mutual plan of rest and renewal for ministry.

Purpose, Rationale, and Expectations

We are familiar with the Sabbath, the seventh day of creation, when God rested. The word “Sabbatical” is derived from Sabbath, and is defined as a time reserved for rest, research, renewal, enrichment, learning, spiritual growth, travel, and strengthening of ministry gifts. Sabbaticals provide opportunities to see new directions, renew relationships, to begin new pursuits. Nourishing one’s soul and changing perspective requires a change in one’s space and place. Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness, after which his ministry set off on a new course.

Preparation for a Sabbatical is important, and openness to the movement of God’s Spirit in the life of people and minister is vital. A Sabbatical is arranged in consideration of the congregation’s ministry. It can be expected that while a minister is on Sabbatical, congregational life –worship, education, outreach, evangelism, etc., will continue. Sabbatical leave is not a vacation, nor is it only continuing education. While life-long learning and continuing education are vital for all, and ministers are expected to participate in regular opportunities to grow and be strengthened, the Sabbatical is an enriching component of ministry, which may include particular continuing education opportunities, but most likely will encompass more. Necessarily, the plans for a Sabbatical will be mutually detailed well in advance of departure.

Many congregations reflect that while their minister was away they learned new things about themselves and the ministry they share with one another. Thus, renewal of God’s people and minister occurs. Sabbaticals provide a means by which the congregation can minister to their leader. The Sabbatical may also bring into being a Sabbatical for the congregation, a time to rethink the “busyness” of congregational life, a time to reevaluate the congregation’s relationship with God, a time for the Holy Spirit to lead their ministry in new ways. Most importantly, the congregation gains a minister who returns to God’s calling with renewed vigor, insight, appreciation, and vision.

Ministers of the church in the Allegheny Synod need Sabbath time to break away from the stress and strain and the 24/7 nature of ministry. A Sabbatical gives a minister more than a time to study, learn, and rest. To keep the Sabbath is to renew one’s trust in God to provide by abstaining from those activities that provide material resources. A Sabbatical provides ministers time to be nurtured by God, reflect on their relationship with God. A Sabbatical gives the minister an opportunity to reflect on God’s call and discover the importance of who they are in the light of who God wants them to be.

Benefits of Sabbaticals

Sabbaticals provide a means for the congregation to gain new insight into mission and ministry and to minister to their called leader. A Sabbatical leave will benefit the congregation, the church leadership, and their shared ministry. A few of these benefits are listed below.

For the Ministry

An opportunity to show support for the minister and their family; a time to develop lay leadership by assuming some of the minister’s responsibilities; an opportunity for learning new ideas to enhance their ministry; renewed congregational leadership; opportunities for spiritual

growth; leadership stability, while not losing an effective and respected minister to burnout or a new call.

For the Ministry Leadership

A time to renew their energy and rediscover their zeal for ministry; an opportunity for learning new ideas to enhance their ministry; a time for prayer, rest, and renewing their relationship with God; a time to spend with family and friends to renew and strengthen relationships; an extended time for focused study and spiritual growth.

Mutual Benefits

Renewal of the covenant between the leader and the congregation; improved understanding of each other's perspective: the leader will experience more of life in the pew during the Sabbatical, and the lay leadership will come to a greater understating of how the congregation's ministry is renewed, revitalized, and stimulated; an opportunity for learning new ideas to enhance their ministry

Suggested Sabbatical Guidelines

A Sabbatical is encouraged for ministers of the Allegheny Synod after 5-7 years of service in the same setting, beginning after three years of First Call Theological Education.

The length of Sabbatical is encouraged to be a minimum of 3 months, though each Sabbatical may vary in length, depending on the covenant agreed upon by the congregation's council and the minister. It is strongly encouraged that the entire Sabbatical be taken continuously to allow for disengagement from pastoral responsibilities and duties.

Sabbatical time is not considered vacation time or continuing education time for the minister but a separate experience of renewal for continued ministry.

Planning for a Sabbatical can begin anytime. When possible, it is suggested that the discussion begin early in a ministry.

Final preparations are encouraged at least 6 months to a year in advance, including the writing of a covenant, which provides full compensation and benefits for the minister and outlines the vision and practical details of the Sabbatical.

A covenant designed by the congregation's council, or its designated representatives, and the minister is encouraged. The congregation's leadership usually does the final affirmation of the covenant. The time of planning of Sabbatical should focus on the vision and hopes for the Sabbatical time as well as practical arrangements regarding pastoral coverage and financial considerations for the congregation. Conversation with the synod can help facilitate this planning and implementation so that it is intentional and mutually beneficial for both the congregation and the minister.

As Sabbatical coverage for a congregation is discussed, there are resources within the synod to help in planning for pastoral coverage. Possibilities for Sundays include utilizing the gifts of retired pastors, worship led by authorized lay leaders of the synod, youth led worship services, hymn sings, etc. Coverage for pastoral care may be arranged in a variety of ways, including support from area pastors.

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It is expected that a minister will return to their call from the congregation after their Sabbatical. It is suggested that in the Sabbatical covenant this expectation is discerned between the congregation council and the minister, with at least one to two years of continued service after the Sabbatical being the norm.

Upon return from Sabbatical, the minister is encouraged to provide a reflection or report to the congregation about the Sabbatical experience. This can be flexible and creative in its form, yet, provide an opportunity for congregation and minister to learn from and explore the benefits of the Sabbatical time.

A comprehensive list of sabbatical resources, ideas, retreat centers, etc. are available at www.alleghenysynod.org or by contacting office@alleghenysynod.com or 814-942-1042

Worksheet: Estimate of Household Expenses

To calculate the percentage of salary to be designated as Housing Allowance for tax purposes

Housing Allowance for year extending from _____ 20__ to _____ 20__

Estimated expenses:

- A. Rent for leased property or payments on home purchase
(down payments, acquisition costs, mortgage payments of principal) \$ _____
- B. Garage rental (if not included in A) \$ _____
- C. Utilities *(gas, electricity, water, sewer, oil, telephone, trash removal, cable, internet, firewood or other heating fuel)* \$ _____
- D. Insurance
(homeowner's, fire, extended coverage, liability, contents, flood) \$ _____
- E. Repairs and maintenance \$ _____
- F. Furnishings and improvements \$ _____
- G. Interest and taxes (may want to itemize these separately) \$ _____
- H. Other housing expenses (list in detail)

If the minister is living in a parsonage and there is no landline, the congregation may pay a monthly stipend to help cover the cost of cell phone usage related to the church.

The congregation may provide internet at a parsonage. \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Congregational Council Action on Housing Allowance

To provide a record of Housing Allowance designation for tax and audit purposes

The _____ Committee advised the Council that under the tax laws an ordained minister of the gospel is not subject to Federal Income Tax with respect to the “rental allowance paid as part of compensation to the pastor used to rent or provide a home.” Where the minister owns a home, the amount of the Housing Allowance will be an amount equal to the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appliances, plus the cost of utilities.

The Council, after considering the statement of the Rev. _____ setting forth estimates of the amount expected to be spent to rent or otherwise provide a home during the period of

_____ 20__ to _____ 20__ and in light of the Federal Income Tax law and of the established salary level, on motion duly made and seconded, adopted the following resolution:

Resolved that the Rev. _____ receive a Salary of \$ _____ and a Housing Allowance of \$ _____ for the period _____ 20__ to _____ 20__, to be so designated in the official records.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary of Council

Notification of Housing Allowance by Congregation

To provide a record for the minister of the Housing Allowance designation for tax and audit purposes

Dear Rev. _____:

This is to advise you that at a meeting of the Congregation Council, held on _____ 20__, your Housing Allowance for the period _____ 20__ to _____ 20__ was officially designated and fixed in the amount of \$ _____.

Secretary of Council

NOTE: Retain the original of each of these agreements in the congregation files, send a copy to the Allegheny Synod Office, 918 Hickory Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16686 and provide a copy to the pastor.

Definition of Compensation, Benefits and Responsibilities of the Pastor

Prepared by: _____

For the Reverend: _____

For the period of: _____ to _____

A. COMPENSATION

The congregation will provide the following annual compensation:

- 1. Base cash salary
Parsonage included \$ _____
Parsonage NOT included \$ _____
2. Social Security Allowance (1/2 of 15.3%) \$ _____
3. If parsonage is included:
Utilities allowance \$ _____
Furnishing allowance \$ _____
Housing equity allowance \$ _____

B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS

The congregation will sponsor the pastor in the pension and other benefits program through Portico Benefit Services.

(Sponsorship includes health, pension, disability and life insurance. Health insurance is expected to be provided in full by the congregation for the pastor, spouse and family where applicable. If the health coverage is waived, a certificate of insurance must be provided to the Allegheny Synod Office. Full cost coverage is expected for this option.)

- ELCA Pension at _____ % (12% recommended) \$ _____
ELCA Health, Disability and Life Insurance \$ _____
Other insurance benefits \$ _____

C. EXPENSES

The congregation will provide the following expenses related to this pastor's ministry.

- 1. Automobile/travel/mileage allowance (IRS guideline for mileage recommended) \$ _____
2. Other professional expenses (See Compensation and Benefits manual) \$ _____
3. Official meetings of the Synod \$ _____
(i.e. Bishop's Convocation, Synod Assembly, First Call Theological Education, Synodical Committee meetings, etc.)

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- 4. Continuing Education \$ _____
(Minimum of \$700 from the congregation.)
- 5. Moving expenses \$ _____
- 6. Other expenses \$ _____

Please list: _____

D. AGREEMENT

- 1. Vacation time of _____ weeks per year including _____ Sundays.
- 2. Continuing Education time of _____ weeks per year. *(Recommended 2 weeks per year)*
- 3. Sick time of _____ days per year.
(Recommended 10 days per year. Congregation Council may decide whether time can be accumulated)
- 4. Participation in the First Call Theological Education event where applicable.
(Congregations calling a pastor in the first three years of ministry are expected to contribute \$300 per year for 3 years to help offset the cost of this event.)
- 5. Ongoing care through a Mutual Ministry Committee
- 6. Up to two months of continued salary, housing and other contributions to Portico Benefits in a 12-month period in the event the pastor is physically or mentally disabled and,
- 7. Where applicable, parental leave up to eight weeks with full salary, housing and benefits.

E. OTHER PROVISIONS

Special emphasis of the pastor and special encouragement and support from the congregation:

- 1. During this time period, the pastor will give special attention in ministry to the following:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
- 2. The congregation will support the pastor in these emphasis' in the following ways:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

F. OTHER MATTERS

(Accountabilities, service on Synodical committees, work in church camps or other boards)

2025 Compensation and Benefits Manual *(continuation)*

We, the undersigned, certify that the necessary approvals of the congregation and congregation council have been granted for the provisions so set forth in this agreement.

Congregation President: _____
Print Sign

Congregation Secretary: _____
Print Sign

Date: _____

I certify and accept the above statement:

The Reverend _____

Date: _____

Photo Captions for photo pages 38–39

1. Bishop Paula and Pastor Kevin participated in an extraordinary service of rededication and unity at Brush Valley Fusion of Faith. Brush Valley Fusion of Faith is the merger of two UCC and one Lutheran congregation in the Nittany Conference. Three congregations have become one. This has been a journey of faithful discernment and prayer. These congregations now begin a new chapter in ministry together. We give thanks to God for their bold witness to unity and partnership.
2. Closing worship service for The Weekend Synod Youth Event. What an amazing time of singing, praying, and celebrating Jesus in Word and Sacrament! THANK YOU to Pastor Brandon Cian and the people of St. James in Huntingdon. They allowed us to take over their building, they changed their worship time so we could all worship together, they gave up their usual seats, and they did their best to sing different styles of music. They were incredibly gracious and hospitable to us and welcomed us as Jesus would. We are also extremely grateful to the planning team, the musicians, and the adult leaders for making a wonderful event for our youth.
3. Bishop Paula worshipped with the folks at Horner Lutheran Church this morning as they extended a call to Vicar Regina Holliday to be their next pastor. It was a good day for the Church. We congratulate Horner and Vicar Regina and look forward to her ordination (early March).
4. Pastor Mark Fischer, Interim at St. David's in Davidsville, has been leading Lutheran worship at FCI-Loretto for a few months. He coordinated a donation of 75 LBWs to replace the hymnals in poor condition at the prison. Thanks to Pastor Tyler Graham and Salisbury Lutheran Parish for the donation, and thanks to Pr. Fischer for his ministry among those in prison.
5. Pastor Kevin worshiped this morning at Redeemer Church in Chesapeake VA. His brother-in-law's brother, Eric, is the lead pastor there. This was Eric's last Sunday before taking a sabbatical over the summer.
6. Bishop Paula preached for the Easter Vigil at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Altoona with Bishop Audrey Scanlan. It was a lovely evening of ecumenical partnership as we celebrated Christ's resurrection.
7. Josephine Marube being installed as deaconess at Kisii Lutheran mission. In attendance is KELC bishop, Diakonia Coordinator, Women coordinator and other invited guests.
8. Worship Gathering
9. Bishop Paula visited with Trinity, Sidman. It was a big day with a baptism and first communion celebration— glad to be with these folks for this happy day.
10. Bishop Paula celebrated Christmas Eve with the community at Mt. Calvary in Johnstown.
11. Congratulations to the ELCA's newest pastor, Regina Holliday. Regina was ordained at Horner Lutheran Church where she was called to serve as pastor. We give thanks to God for this new leader among us.
12. Pastor Traci Marriott, Pastor Brandon Cian and Pastor Drew McCaffrey participated in the 2024 Special Olympics Winter Games Polar Plunge today at Canoe Creek Star Park. Congratulations! Good work!
13. Trinity, Sidman, baptism and first communion celebration.
14. A good day for the church in our territory, Pastor Kevin and Bishop Paula were at Faith in Somerset to authorize five new lay worship leaders for our Synod. Front row from left: Rick Focht, Christine Frazier, Sally Shaulis, Marsha Hutzell, and Ben Hoffman. Pictured with these new leaders are their mentor/support pastors. We give thanks for the ways the gifts of these leaders will bless our Synod. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about becoming a lay worship leader, contact the Allegheny Synod Office.
15. Pastor Kevin worshiped with the people of Zion Boalsburg, on their first Sunday after Pastor Brent Book retired. Pastor Kevin is grateful for their hospitality and eagerness to serve. Please pray for them and all of our congregations in transition.
16. Communion Celebration
17. Regina Holliday ordained at Horner Lutheran Church where she was called to serve as pastor.
- 18–19. April meeting: The Johnstown and Laurel Highlands Conferences met together for a combined conference meeting at St. David's Lutheran Church in Davidsville.
20. Your Allegheny Synod voting members to the Churchwide Assembly enjoying dinner out together.
21. The Weekend Synod Youth Event.