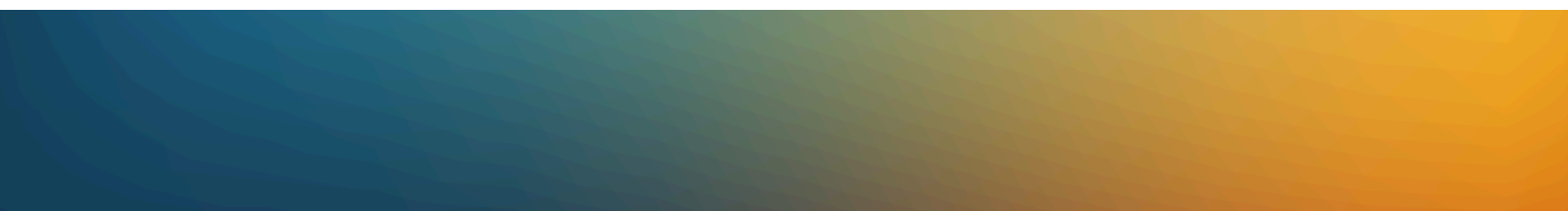




**VIRTUAL**  
**SYNOD 2026 NWMN ASSEMBLY**

*...grace in a digital space*



# Table of Contents

*Welcome.....3*

*Special Guests.....5*

*Assembly Goals.....7*

*Agenda.....8*

*Offering.....9*

*Synod Constitution.....9*

*Voting Member Responsibilities.....10*

*Synod Assembly Tips..... 11*

*Synod Assembly Business Items..... 12*

*2026 Sample Ballot.....14*

*NW MN Synod Council.....16*

*Glossary of Terms.....17*

# Welcome to Synod Assembly

*From Bishop Bill Tesch*

Dear Siblings in Christ,

It's a privilege to welcome you to the 2026 Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly.

This year we gather under the theme *Grace in the Digital Space*. Though we are meeting through screens and across miles, we trust that the Holy Spirit is not confined by bandwidth or geography. The same Spirit who gathers us around Word and Sacrament gathers us here — in living rooms, church offices, kitchens, and fellowship halls — binding us together as one body in Christ.

Grace has always found its way into unexpected places. Today, it meets us in pixels and microphones, in shared documents and Zoom squares. Even here, especially here, we listen for God's call, discern together, and participate in the work of Christ's church in Northwestern Minnesota.

Thank you for serving as a voting member of this year's Assembly. We are grateful for your faithfulness in your congregation and community, and for your willingness to gather in this digital space for the sake of our shared ministry. We are also excited to partner with LiveWire this year as we pilot new ways of gathering, engaging, and participating together online.

As we worship, deliberate, elect leaders, and make decisions for our common life, may we practice grace with one another — in patience, careful listening, thoughtful conversation around memorials, and trust. Our life together is rooted, not in perfect technology or seamless processes, but in God's steadfast love for us and for this church.

**Throughout our time together, we will:**

- Gather in worship and prayer
- Hear from keynote speaker Pastor Jeremy Steele
- Receive a word from our Churchwide Representative, the Rev. Louise Johnson
- Consider resolutions brought forward by conferences and the Synod Council
- Discuss and act on the FY2028 Mission Plan
- Welcome new ministers into the life of this synod
- Commission Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs)
- Hear reports and stories from across our shared ministries and partnerships

Wherever you are joining from today, you are part of something larger: a synod called, connected, and sent.

Welcome to Synod Assembly.



Bishop Bill Tesch  
Bishop of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod




---

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).*

---

March 23, 2026

Dear siblings in Christ,

As you gather for your synod assembly, I want to express my gratitude for what you are doing — and have been doing — for this church, *our* church.

In the months since I was installed as presiding bishop, I have been focused on connection. Some of you have heard me talk about what it means to be a connected church. This vision of connectedness grows directly out of one of the three priorities we, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have named for this season of our life together.

When we lifted up these priorities, we committed ourselves to them not as abstract ideas but as guiding commitments for how we live and serve as church. As I reflected on them, the third priority stood out with particular clarity: to be a connected, sustainable church, raising the bar together.

That priority has been shaping my thinking and my leadership. It asks not just what we do but how we do it — together, across congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. Connectedness is not a program or a slogan; it is a way of being church that recognizes our shared calling and our shared responsibility. This is not my church. It is yours. It is ours, together. The ministries you carry out in your congregations and synods are not just yours — they are ours together.

Over the next several years, you will hear this priority expressed with greater focus and clarity. In 2026, our emphasis is on connection — strengthening relationships, listening deeply and recognizing how much we depend on one another.

In 2027, you will begin to hear me speak more intentionally about sustainability — how we steward our people, our resources and our structures so that our witness remains strong for generations to come. By 2028, connection and sustainability will come together in a shared language of togetherness, as we more fully live into who God is calling us to be as church.

So, when you hear language about being together, it is about living out the ELCA’s vision of a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. It matters deeply to me that we know who we are, moving forward as one body, trusting God and one another.

I believe this is how connection is built — not by standing alone but by being church together.

With gratitude and hope,

The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
 Presiding Bishop  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



# 2026 NWMN SYNOD ASSEMBLY

*...grace in a digital space*

## *The Holy Spirit has never been limited by geography.*

And today, “the ends of the earth” look a lot like the phones in our pockets and the screens on our desks.

At this year’s Synod Assembly, we will explore how grace shows up in places that are sometimes chaotic, noisy, overwhelming — and yet still holy. Together, we will reflect on how digital tools can help us share the gospel, foster relationships, tell the truth, and bear witness to Christ’s love in an online world hungry for connection.

As congregations continue navigating changing forms of communication and community, we will consider what faithful digital discipleship looks like for churches of every size and context. We will celebrate the many ways God continues to work through creativity, courage, pixels, and people.

Our hope is that this Assembly will encourage deeper connection, spark new imagination for ministry, and remind us that God’s grace is already at work — even in digital spaces.

## Keynote Speaker



### Jeremy Steele

Jeremy Steele is a skeptic. He’s also a Pastor. He is one of the most followed faith voices online, with almost a million people engaging with his content every week.

He has helped thousands of people navigate hard conversations about politics, identity, belonging, and spirituality without falling into alienation or tribalism. Alongside his work in faith communities, Jeremy also helps businesses and employees explore hot-button issues with respect, fostering workplace environments where people can disagree without tearing teams apart.

As a speaker, Jeremy invites people to rethink how they approach hard conversations and complicated relationships using practical tools to help bring people together.

# Churchwide Representative



**Pr. Louise Johnson**

We are pleased to welcome Rev. Louise Johnson as our Churchwide Representative for this year's Synod Assembly.

Pastor Johnson serves as the Executive for Vision for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. An ordained pastor in the ELCA and an experienced executive leader, she brings a strong record of innovation, change leadership, and organizational transformation to her work. Prior to her current role, she served as president of a struggling school in a declining industry and, in less than five years, led the institution to the highest enrollment and fundraising levels in its 165-year history.

She is known for her strategic leadership, clear communication, and ability to build strong, mission-driven teams. Pastor Johnson works effectively across diverse constituencies and is deeply committed to helping organizations discern and pursue their purpose with clarity and courage.

In addition to her Master of Divinity degree, she holds a Certificate in Leadership and Management from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

We are grateful for her leadership in the wider church and look forward to her presence among us at Synod Assembly.



# Parliamentarian

We're grateful to have Rolf Nycklemoe serving as parliamentarian for the 2026 Synod Assembly. Rolf is a lifelong resident of Fergus Falls and a practicing attorney with deep experience in municipal law, estate planning, probate administration, real estate, and elder law. He currently serves as the City Attorney for Fergus Falls. With his legal expertise and calm presence, Rolf helps ensure our assembly proceedings are clear, fair, and faithful to our governing procedures. We're thankful for his guidance and support in this important role.



**Rolf Nycklemoe**

# Goals of the Assembly



## 1

### *Be Faithful in Relationships*

- (Re) connect with old and new partners in ministry from around our congregations' region.
- To accompany leaders through support and encouragement as they lead Christ's church.

## 2

### *Be Authentic in Welcome*

- Reaffirm our commitment to be a diverse church, welcoming all in the name of Jesus.
- Experience hospitality in each other's presence as followers of Jesus.

## 3

### *Love that Makes a Difference*

- Make decisions that build up the body of Christ and benefit our beloved neighbors
- Invest in our time and work to positively impact the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

## Assembly Access

### *Synod Assembly Webpage*

The Synod Assembly webpage will serve as your central hub for Assembly materials and resources throughout our time together. There you will find the Assembly handbook, consent agenda, reports, resolutions, nominee biographical information, sample ballot, and other important documents.

Visit: <https://nwmnsynod.org/synod-assembly-2026/>



### *Visitors*

The entire Assembly will be streamed online. You can participate for free as a visitor via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nwmnsynod>

### *Prayer Requests*

We know life doesn't pause just because we're gathered for Synod Assembly. If there's something on your heart — a joy, concern, celebration, grief, or prayer request — we invite you to share it with our prayer team at any time throughout the Assembly.



Unless you indicate otherwise, prayer requests will remain confidential and shared only with the prayer team.

## *Friday, May 29*

### **5:30PM | Orientation**

- Overview of agenda
- Practice voting

## *Saturday, May 30*

### **9:00AM | Opening Worship**

- Presiding Minister: Bishop Bill Tesch

### **9:35AM | Plenary One**

- Opening of the Assembly
- Credentials Report
- Adoption of Rules & Agenda
- Churchwide Representative Report | Rev. Louise Johnson
- Bishop's Report | Bishop Bill Tesch

### **11:05AM | Break**

### **11:20AM | Plenary Two**

- Credentials Report
- Keynote Speaker | Jeremy Steele
- Treasurer Report
- Vote on Resolution 4 (Mission Plan)
- Associate to the Bishop for Leadership Report | Rev. Genelle Netland
- Associate to the Bishop for Mission, Director of Evangelical Mission Report | Rev. Rebel Hurd
- Lunch Prayer

### **12:45-1:30PM | Lunch Break**

- 1:15PM Memorials & Anniversaries

### **1:30PM | Plenary Three**

- Resolutions
- Holy Cow Award
- Servant of Christ Award

### **2:25PM | Break**

### **2:40PM | Plenary Four**

- Elections
- Keynote Presentation | Jeremy Steele
- SAM Commissioning
- Unfinished Business

### **5:00PM | Closing of the Assembly**

## Worship

All are welcome to participate in the Synod Assembly Worship service online.

**Worship including Holy Communion--Saturday, May 30 at 9AM**

Preaching Minister: Bishop Bill Tesh

Those who have registered have received elements to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.



### 50%—NWMN COMMITTEE FOR RACIAL EQUITY, JUSTICE & RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

Supporting congregations partnering with immigrant and Indigenous communities.



### 50%—WELCOME FUND (MINNEAPOLIS AREA SYNOD)

Supporting congregations serving immigrants and newcomers.

**Give Online:**

[NWMNSYNOD.ORG/GIVE](https://nwmnsynod.org/give)  
Select Synod Assembly Offering

**Give by Mail:** 

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO NW MN SYNOD  
Memo: Synod Assembly Offering

NORTHWESTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD  
CONCORDIA COLLEGE  
MOORHEAD, MN 56562

## 2025 Synod Assembly Minutes

You can access the 2025 Northwestern Synod Assembly Minutes at: <https://nwmnsynod.org/synod-assembly-archives>

## Northwestern Minnesota Synod Constitution

You can access our current constitution at:  
<https://nwmnsynod.org/constitution-resources>

## Rules of Procedure

Rules of Procedure, along with a Robert's Rules Quick Reference and Chart of Ranking Motions, can be found in the Assembly mailing or on the Synod Assembly website:  
<https://nwmnsynod.org/synod-assembly-2026/>

## Technology Help

Need tech support during Synod Assembly? **Call 218-299-4013.** A tech support operator will collect your name, phone number, and a brief description of the issue, and a member of the tech team will follow up with you directly.

# Voting Member Responsibilities

## *Study the Pre-Assembly Materials*

- Voting member materials will be available to view and/or print on the synod website: <https://nwmnsynod.org/synod-assembly-2026/>
- In the true sense of the word “synod,” we are “walking together” through this new way of gathering and learning together! Patience and grace will make this a faithful experience for everyone!

## *Participate*

- Attend all assembly sessions and participate in all legislative actions.
- Come to the Assembly with an open mind, open heart, and readiness to learn and grow together as we navigate this Holy Experiment!

## *Share*

- Share the information and actions of the Assembly with your congregation after the Assembly! A verbal or written report (or both!) can do this. Help your congregation to know about their work of ministry beyond your local parish.

## Pre-Assembly Zoom Information Sessions:

We'll be hosting two informational sessions to help prepare voting members for all the items of business that will be considered by the Assembly. These sessions will provide an overview of what is being proposed, along with a time for questions and answers. We will also practice with the electronic voting system.

**Sunday, May 17, at 7:00 PM**

<https://cord.zoom.us/j/99220448679>

**Monday, May 18 at 1:00 PM**

<https://cord.zoom.us/j/98615113297>

*Recordings of these sessions will also be available on the Synod assembly website if you are unable to participate in real-time. <https://nwmnsynod.org/synod-assembly-2026>*

# Getting Started



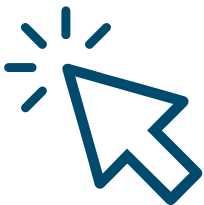
## *Set your space*

- Grab your **Synod Assembly Kit**, something for note taking, get settled in.
- Open your **Zoom Meeting link**, (found in your registration email). You will need a good internet connection and should open Zoom before the first session starts. Updates happen!
- Once logged in, check your **audio & video**. Make sure your **display name** includes **your first + last name as well as your congregation**



## *Zoom Basics*

- Please **mute** when you are not speaking. There is a microphone icon at the bottom of your screen.
- Keep your **camera on** when possible!
- **Reaction buttons** are a fun way to stay engaged for the day.
- **Move around** and away from screens during breaks. Stand, stretch, and hydrate.



## *How to Participate*

- Zoom **Chat** is the tool to communicate with Assembly leaders and other attendees.
- Direct chat to the **Moderator** should be used to be called on for discussion on official business.
- For **Worship**, please join in spoken responses, singing, and communion as you are able.



## *Community Guidelines*

- Extend welcome and friendship, even in this digital gathering!
- Engage in the day and listen with care and respect.
- Be aware of timeliness and sharing space with multiple voices during discussions.



## *Need Help?*

- Need tech support during Synod Assembly? **Call 218-299-4013**. A tech support operator will collect your name, phone number, and a brief description of the issue, and a member of the tech team will follow up with you directly.

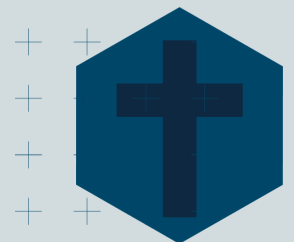
# Business Items for 2026

Known items of business for this Assembly are listed below. Other items may yet arise from the Executive Committee recommendation, Synod Council recommendation, or from the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

## Resolutions

The Assembly will consider and vote on the following resolutions:

- **Resolution #1 | Compensation Guidelines (see below)**
- **Resolution #2 | Synod Constitution Updates**
  - Approves updates to two non-required provisions in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Constitution following changes adopted by the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.
- **Resolution #3 | Care for Creation Committee**
  - Establishes an ongoing synod committee focused on environmental stewardship
- **Resolution #4 | Reception of Skjeberg Lutheran Church**
  - Formal reception of a congregation into the Northwestern Minnesota Synod
- **Resolution #5 | FY2028 Mission Plan (see below)**
- **Resolution #6 | Resolution to Revise the Bishop Election Pre-Identification Process**
  - Updates the synod's bishop election pre-identification process by establishing clearer timelines, broader participation opportunities, and additional guidance regarding candidate discernment, transparency, and communication.
- **Resolution #7 | Mileage Equity Resolution**
  - Addresses financial disparities related to travel for synod-required events
- **Resolution #8 | World Council of Churches Climate Justice Decade Resolution**
  - Encourages participation in global climate justice efforts.



## Elections

The voting members of the Synod Assembly will elect:

- Synod Council Members
- Consultation Committee Members

The nominees have surfaced from the Synod Nominating Committee and conference assemblies. We invite you to review the election information below. In addition to these individuals, any Voting Member can nominate an individual. You can find the ballot at the end of this handbook, and the biographies on the website: <https://nwmnsynod.org/synod-assembly-2026>



# Business Items Continued...

## *Compensation Guidelines*

### **Resolution #1 | The Assembly will be asked to:**

- Approve the 2027 Compensation Guidelines for:
  - Ministers of Word and Sacrament
  - Ministers of Word and Service
  - Synod Authorized Ministers
  - Professional Lay Staff

## *Mission Plan and Budget*

### **Resolution #4 | The Assembly will be asked to approve:**

- FY2028 Mission Plan
  - includes projected revenue, mission support, and overall synod budget priorities

The budget will be presented and voted on during Plenary Two. The budget shows the interdependence that exists between congregations, the Synod, and Churchwide organization. It also represents the partnership and impact that we have together to live out our shared mission: “Freed by God’s grace to be wholly devoted to Jesus and our neighbor in love.”

## *Other Business*

### **Additional items may include:**

- Constitutional or continuing resolutions
- Items brought forward by Synod Council
- Recommendations from the Committee on Reference and Counsel



# 2026 NWMN Synod Assembly Sample Ballot

**A. Synod Council Representatives** *(Elected for 3-Year terms to represent their specific conferences or serve at-large; terms expire in 2029).*

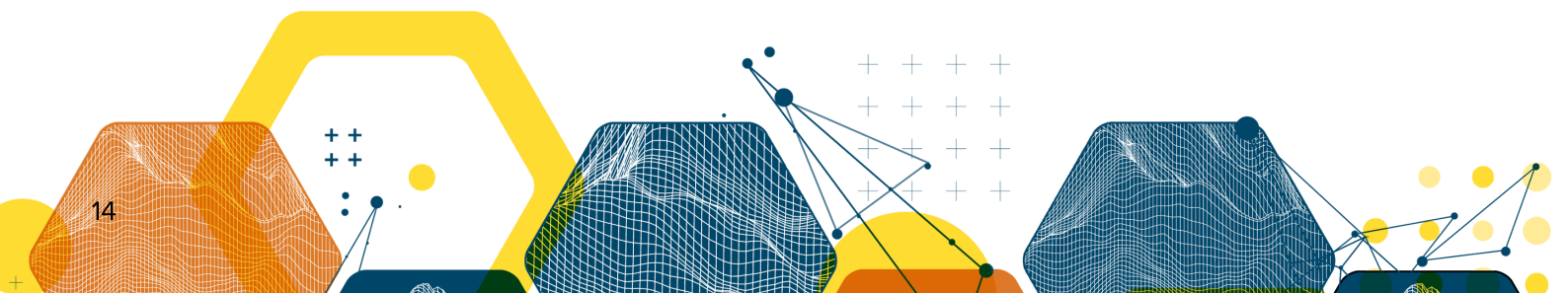
- **Conference 2:**
  - Pr. Stephanie White (Rostered Minister)
- **Conference 5:**
  - Hide Michel (Lay)
- **Conference 7:**
  - John Wold (Lay)
- **Conference 8:**
  - Nola Smith (Lay - 2nd Term)
- **Youth Representative**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ (2 year term)

**B. Consultation Committee** *(Elected for a non-renewable 6-year term; responsibilities include resolving disputes within the synod). Note: The synod is seeking one (1) Rostered Minister and up to three (3) Lay leaders.*

- **Rostered Minister (Select 1):**
  - Brother Jeff Brown (Conference 1)
  - Pastor Phyllis Johnson (Conference 3)
  - Pastor Dave Adams (Conference 5)
- **Lay (Select up to 3):**
  - Erica Nelson (Conference 3)
  - Terry Burrell, SAM (Conference 5)
  - \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Congregational Constitution Review Committee** *(The Chair is elected by the assembly for a 3-year term).*

- **Chair:**
  - Pr. Alex Ohman



## II. RESOLUTIONS & ACTION ITEMS

**Resolution 1: 2027 Compensation Guidelines** To approve updated minimum salary and benefit recommendations for all rostered ministers (Word and Sacrament, Word and Service), SAMs, and professional lay staff, including a recommended 3.5% COLA.

Yes  No

**Resolution 2: Updates to the NWMN Synod Constitution** To approve updates to two non-required provisions in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Constitution following changes adopted by the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Yes  No

**Resolution 3: Establishment of a Care for Creation Committee** To transition "Care for Creation" from a task force to a formal standing committee with defined bylaws and a dedicated budget line.

Yes  No

**Resolution 4: FY2028 Mission Plan** To approve the synod's financial roadmap for Feb 2027-Jan 2028, including projected revenues of \$2,086,485 and sharing 47% of mission support with the churchwide organization.

Yes  No

**Resolution 5: Reception of Skjeberg Lutheran Church** To formally receive Skjeberg Lutheran Church into the NWMN Synod following their transfer from the Eastern North Dakota Synod.

Yes  No

**Resolution 6: Resolution on Bishop Election Process** To update the synod's bishop election pre-identification process for a bishop election.

Yes  No

**Resolution 7: Mileage Equity Policy** To direct the Synod Council to develop a policy addressing the high travel expense burden for ministers serving in remote, rural, and low-income communities.

Yes  No

**Resolution 8: World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action** To commit the synod to the WCC's ten-year initiative (2025-2035) for climate justice, including goals for greenhouse gas reduction and advocacy for vulnerable communities.

Yes  No



# SYNOD COUNCIL

## Executive Committee

- Rev. Bill Tesch, Bishop
- Sharon Josephson, Vice President
- Rev. Christopher Eldredge, Treasurer
- Rev. Ali Haugerud, Secretary
- Rev. Kayla Billings, At Large
- Deanna Swendseid, At Large
- Jerry Peterson, Fergus Falls\*

### Conference 01. Northern Border

- Rev. Andy Graves, Hallock
- Deanna Swendseid, Stephen

### Conference 02. Thief River Falls

- Rev. Stephanie White, Thief River
- Christine Van Emmerik, Red Lake Falls

### Conference 03. Crookston

- Rev. Curt Peterson, Crookston
- Kip Fontaine, Fertile\*

### Conference 04. Bemidji

- Rev. Kayla Billings, Bemidji
- Marilyn Grandstrand, Bagley

### Conference 05. Moorhead

- Pr. Al Brooks, Twin Valley
- Robert Stein, Wolverton

### Conference 06. Detroit Lakes

- Rev. Eric Clapp, Perham\*
- Audrey Brant Loer, Wadena\*

### Conference 07. Fergus Falls

- Rev. Anna Monke-Gervais, Pelican Rapids\*
- John Wold, Fergus Falls\*

### Conference 08. Alexandria

- Dn. Sharon Bridges, Miliona
- Nola Smith, Alexandria

### Lay At-Large

- Willard Hiebert, Moorhead\*
- Jerry Peterson, Fergus Falls\*
- Dr. Paul Dovre, Moorhead
- Riley Santelman, Alexandria
- Lauren Heseltine, Alexandria\*
- Rev. Salim Kaderbhai, Fergus Falls\*
- Glory Lekashu, Moorhead
- Aaron Bieberdorf, Bemidji
- Ardys Horner, Detroit Lakes

## Guests

- Dr. Tim Hiller – ELCA Churchwide Council
- Dr. Per Anderson – Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota
- Carol Balk – Synod Women of the ELCA
- Pr. Rebel Hurd – Associate to the Bishop for Mission/Director of Evangelical Mission-ELCA, Moorhead
- Pr. Genelle Netland – Associate to the Bishop for Leadership, Bemidji

*\*A special thank you to those individuals who are concluding their service on Synod Council!  
Well done, good & faithful servants!*

# Glossary of Terms

## ELCA Terms:

**Call:** For Lutherans, “call” or “calling” refers to the vocations of every Christian—the roles in which they live out their baptismal faith, such as family member, citizen, worker, or church member. In the context of public ministry, a call is an official invitation to become a public minister in this church. A pastor or deacon receives a call as he or she begins serving a congregation, institution, or agency of the church.

**Conference of Bishops:** The 65 bishops of the ELCA meet for prayer, deliberation, and discernment.

**Church Council:** The governing board of the ELCA, entrusted with the business of the ELCA between triennial churchwide assemblies.

**Churchwide:** A term referring to any ministry, process, or emphasis carried out across the entire ELCA. The term is also used to refer to the ELCA’s headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, which is housed in the ELCA Lutheran Center near O’Hare Airport.

**ELCA:** Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Denominational title), formed by the 1988 merger of the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). This church body has three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, headquartered in Chicago. The ELCA has over 4.2 million members in about 10,000 congregations (2010 figures).

**Full Communion:** A relationship between Christian denominations in which each fully accepts the validity of the other’s ministry and sacraments.

**Full Communion Partners:** In the ELCA this term refers to those denominations with which we enjoy full-communion relationships: Episcopal Church, USA, United Methodist Church USA, Moravian, Presbyterian Church USA, Reformed, and United Church of Christ.

**Portico:** Portico, a nonprofit corporation based in Minnesota, provides retirement, health, and related benefits and services to enhance the well-being of nearly 50,000 pastors, deacons, lay employees, and their families. Portico’s vision is for those it serves to lead healthy lives and achieve financial security.

**Presiding Bishop:** The pastor elected by the churchwide assembly to lead the ministry of the entire ELCA; currently serving is Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

**Region 3:** One of the nine regions of the ELCA and includes nine synods. Region 3 consists of the synods in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

**Synod:** In the ELCA, one of the 65 geographical units or expressions of the church. The word synod is Greek for “walking together,” thus, each synod is the partnership of the ELCA congregations committed to partnering together to enhance ministry. The synod is not an office or a staff, it’s a partnership.

**Synod Assembly:** The Synod Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the synod, with a regular meeting held at least tri-annually. All rostered ministers under call, Synod Council members, and lay representatives from each congregation within the synod serve as voting members.



## Synod Terms & Facts

**The Northwestern Minnesota Synod is comprised of approximately 95,000 baptized members in 217 congregations in the northwest corner of Minnesota.**

**Our Mission** is to nurture safe and healthy spaces for the ministry of the Gospel to unfold and shape an abundant future for all in Northwestern Minnesota.

**Bishop:** A bishop is an active minister of Word and Sacrament (pastor) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) who is elected by the Synod Assembly to a six-year term. They are to provide care and oversight for the congregations and rostered ministers of the synod. The bishop is the chief executive officer of the synod. Currently serving the Northwestern Minnesota Synod is Bishop Bill Tesch.

**Conference:** A geographical grouping of congregations within the synod. The Northwestern Minnesota Synod has eight conferences: Northern Border, Thief River Falls, Crookston, Bemidji, Moorhead, Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, and Alexandria. Each conference is led by a dean.

**Dean:** From the Latin 'deacus' an official in charge of ten monks. In the ELCA a conference dean coordinates the work of congregations within the conference.

**DEM:** Director for Evangelical Mission, a position called and funded by the churchwide organization to serve in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod; Rev. Rebel Hurd is currently serving in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

**Executive Committee:** Four officers and three at-large members of the Synod Council.

**Mission Support:** The dollars each congregation sends to the synod to support the ministry of the synod and the ELCA churchwide organization.

**Partners in Ministry:** The ministries that exist as a result of our shared work and receive financial support from the synod (ie: a share of mission support dollars). Our current Partners in Ministry are:

- Companion Synod, Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) of India
- ELCA Colleges and Universities
- Luther Seminary
- Lutheran Advocacy-Minnesota
- Lutheran Campus Ministry-Crossroads-MSUM & Lutheran Campus Ministry of Bemidji
- Minnesota Council of Churches
- Oak Grove Lutheran School
- Parish Nurse Program
- The Way (formerly the Native American Christian Ministry)
- Peoples Church
- Native Neighbors Table

These are YOUR ministries! They rely on partnership and collaboration with the congregations of this synod, and we encourage you to engage with these ministries, While they receive a share of your Mission Support dollars, we invite you to consider sharing additional financial support directly with these ministries.

**Synod Office:** Our main office is located on the Concordia College Campus, where the bishop and staff facilitate our ministry together. Contact the office by calling 218.299.3019

**The mailing address is:**

Northwestern Minnesota Synod ELCA  
Concordia College  
Moorhead, MN 56562

**Our physical location is:**

Concordia College | Riverside Center  
310 14th Ave. S  
Moorhead, MN 56560

**Synod Council:** The elected leaders of a synod, including laity and rostered ministers, the vice president, secretary, treasurer, and bishop.

## Leadership Terms

**Candidacy:** The process by which those discerning a call to ministry are supported and guided by the synod candidacy committee through the process of Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval as they prepare for ministry vocations as rostered ministers.

**Deacon:** A rostered minister called to the ministry of Word and Service.

**Interim:** A rostered minister who is serving a ministry in transition from one called minister to its next called minister.

**Intern:** A seminary student who is on staff of a ministry as part of their theological education.

**Lay Person:** A term referring to the people of God. This is typically used to refer to those who are not members of either Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastor) or Ministers of Word and Service (deacon). The collective community of lay people is sometimes called the laity.

**Officers:** The officers of the synod are the Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, and treasurer.

**On Leave from Call (OLFC):** Rostered pastors and deacons who are currently without a call to a ministry.

**Roster, Rostered:** The roster is the official list of all the pastors and deacons in the ELCA. A leader who appears on this list is said to be “rostered.”

**Pastor:** A rostered minister called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

**Synod Authorized Minister (SAM):** A lay person who has been authorized by the synod bishop to serve the congregation in the absence of an available rostered minister.

## Assembly Terms

**Credentials:** The process used to authenticate voting members.

**Memorial:** A document which is considered by the voting members of a Synod Assembly, asking the Churchwide Assembly to take a position or initiate an action related to a specific issue.

**Plenary:** A full session of all voting members in which business is conducted and reports are heard.

**Quorum:** The minimum number of voting members required to be present for the transaction of business to occur.

**Reference and Counsel:** This committee reviews all resolutions and memorials prior to their consideration at an assembly.

**Resolution:** Requests for actions, priorities, or positions are brought before the Assembly in the form of a resolution.

**Visitor:** Any person who attends an assembly to observe, not as a voting member.

**Voting Member:** At an assembly of this church, an individual elected to listen, discern, and decide on behalf of the whole church. (The term, “delegate” is not used in relation to assemblies.)

