



A2B, Pr. Genelle Netland, Synod Assembly Report



Living out Acts 1:8 in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod looks like....

Call Process:

- One congregation is choosing to gather in the church but watching another congregation's Youtube worship, they have found that being together matters and when there is pulpit supply available, that is when they commune and baptize;
- One congregation has been not meeting on Sundays at all and only meeting on Wednesday evenings – dinner church style, worship attendance has doubled;
- Seven congregations explored a Holy Experiment/Shared Pulpit experience: 2 ordained, 4 SAMS, a shared google voice/email for care needs;
- Three congregations decided to rotate worship by month and have discovered worshipping with 70 people is more fulfilling than 10, offerings have gotten to the membership congregations and their pastor can actually visit during fellowship instead of run to the next worship service.

I hope these images of how Jesus is still being followed, worshiped and experienced, inspires us all.

Call Committees are taking their time and following the Spirit. In most of our congregations who are actively interviewing, they are not just calling a candidate because that is who is made themselves available. The call committees are saying no or not now to some candidates they have interviewed. This demonstrates faithfulness and not desperation and shows these faithful ones are taking their role seriously and making the fit/partnership more important than the vacancy.

We have reached a new normal where when congregations are in transition, it is not automatically mean they move into a call process but have to consider other options. Partnerships, Ecumenical shared resources, Holy Closure, Synod Authorized Ministry and Fresh Expressions are viable options that congregations are also learning about and leaning into.

I couldn't do this work without the help of the Ministers of Community & Leader Engagement: Pr. Dave Swonger (now retired); Pr. Chris Leach (resigned effective this assembly); Pr. Laurie Skow-Anderson and Pr. Dennis Preston and my companion and administrative support person, Joan Meulebroeck (retired effective this assembly). It has been a great joy to serve with these individuals and with this amount of change, time to rethink how to approach this on going ministry. More to come!

Lutheran Campus Ministry:

- It's a joy to work with both campus ministries at Moorhead State and Bemidji State. Both campuses are in leadership transition, prayerfully considering how we, the church, best show up in a rapidly changing context of higher education.
- Bemidji endured the loss of insurance for a few months on the house where peer ministers lived and programming gathered which caused the board to update policies and procedures that support housing an intentional community. Then the derecho came and caused some damage to the house and campus. And despite these challenges, they hired an administrative assistant and house maintenance staff, accepted 4 peer minister applications and have partnered with a local accountant to guide the ministry in more efficient financial practices.
- Moorhead state has had some home renovations (with a new exterior paint job coming),

Retreats

Gathering people together to encourage, inspire and renew is a gift. This year retreats included Deans, First call, Ready to Retire, SAM, Sr. Pastor, and a region 3 sponsored woman's retreat, "Called to One Another: Cultivating the Kin-dom Together" focused on quality of call for women rostered leaders.

Churchwide Partnership

Coordinating the synod group to Arizona for the assembly and following up with the work from that assembly has been part of the work in my portfolio. The roster manual got an update and implementing those changes has been part of my work.

Coaching

In 2025 I embarked on becoming an ELCA Coach in hopes to help lead that ministry from the synod perspective starting in 2026. With Pastor Rebel helping teach me the role and Pr. Meggie Bjertness as our Coach champion, I too will have the credentials to be a coach and use these gifts with people in our synod.

Care

Bishop Tesch and I have partnered with a few congregations who have experienced some challenges and conflict, and have been a part of many one on one and group calls, meetings and gatherings to pray, equip, encourage and walk with clergy, deacons, SAM's, council presidents, councils, call committees and community members. I too have received care when I lean into these situations too.

Thank you to the Conference Deans who gather regularly to help us listen well to local ministry joys and challenges, communicate information and events and invite leaders to gather for fellowship and learning. Thank you to outgoing deans: Pr. Kelly Ahola and Pr. Eric Clapp, and those deans who continue another year of ministry: Pr. Megan Graves, Pr. Jonathan Dodson, Pr. Michael Wright, Pr. Matt Peterson, Pr. Tammy Jacobson and Pr. Maddie Elliott.



2025 & early 2026 Quick Stats

5

Ordinations

9

Retirements

4

Transfers in

7

Transfers Out

22%

*of our congregations in
a transition*

2

*Congregations left
the ELCA*

2

*Congregations
Closed*

It's been a joy and privilege to serve you all as I go around this synod and observe
*"..you receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall
be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the
end of the earth."*

With the love of Jesus in my heart,

Rev. Genelle Netland

Pr. Genelle Netland