

Fiscal Year 2028 Mission Plan Of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA

Executive Summary

The FY2028 Mission Plan of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod reflects a shared commitment to the Gospel and to one another as congregations walking together in mission. Congregations are expected to contribute \$1,410,332 in Mission Support during the fiscal year that runs from February 1, 2027-January 31, 2028. This is a tangible expression of partnership in ministry across this mission field of small and mid-sized communities amidst lakes and prairies. In keeping with our covenant in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 47% of that support—\$662,856—will be shared with the churchwide organization, extending our impact into global mission, leadership development, and churchwide ministry.

Alongside Mission Support, our annual Rooted and Rising campaign provides a vital stream of generosity in which **100% of resources are invested locally**, strengthening congregations and leaders for the mission God is calling us to in Northwestern Minnesota. Rooted and Rising provides a \$380,000 annually toward our shared mission. This mission plan, therefore, anticipates \$2,086,485 in revenues and concludes with a positive balance of nearly \$18,000 which, if realized, will represent a small contribution to the synod's modest cash reserves.

Our mission plan prioritizes leadership development, congregational accompaniment, and rural ministry innovation. It reflects a growing conviction that the future of the church lies in equipping people for their baptismal vocation in daily life. In all things, this mission plan seeks to align our shared resources with God's mission—trusting that the Holy Spirit continues to call, gather, and send us for the sake of the world.

A Theological Frame for Our Mission

The 2028 Mission Plan of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod is more than a financial document—it is a theological statement. It reflects who we are as a people set free by the Gospel to be wholly devoted to Jesus and our neighbor in love. This plan reflects a growing conviction across our synod: that renewal does not come primarily through adding programs, but through deepening baptismal identity and equipping people to live out their baptismal calling from Jesus Christ every single day.

Congregational Partnership in the Gospel

We anticipate \$1,410,332 in Mission Support from congregations. This is not merely income—it is a shared commitment to walk together in mission.

Participation in the Wider Church

47% of congregational mission support—\$662,856—will be shared with the churchwide organization, extending our mission globally.

Rooted and Rising: Investing Fully in Local Mission

In addition to Mission Support, the Northwestern Minnesota Synod continues to be strengthened by the **Rooted and Rising** initiative—an expression of generosity specifically directed toward the renewal of congregations and leaders within this synod. While Mission Support reflects our shared commitment across the whole church—and is faithfully shared with the wider ELCA—**Rooted and Rising funds remain 100% within the synod**. This allows for direct investment in local ministry, including leadership development, congregational accompaniment, and initiatives that foster vitality in our rural and small-town contexts.

While funds raised for Rooted and Rising stay local, our Minister for Generosity also regularly engages people of our synod around their generosity to the various life-giving ministries of our Churchwide Organization such as World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response and the Fund for Leaders seminary scholarships, to name just a few.

Together, these two streams of revenue, Mission Support and Rooted and Rising reflect a both/and commitment:

- **Participation in the wider mission of the ELCA, and**
- **Focused investment in the life and future of the church in Northwestern Minnesota**

A Fully Integrated Mission Plan

For the first time, this plan integrates the revenue and spending for programs that used to be external to our budget. This integrated plan provides a snapshot of all that we are doing to serve the Gospel through synod ministry.

Investing in Leaders and Congregations

This plan centers on the accompaniment of congregations and their leaders, with a substantial share of resources directed toward staff and travel, alongside a significant investment in leadership formation—pastors, deacons, SAMs, and lay leaders. Together, these twin commitments—accompaniment and leadership development—represent, in our view, the most faithful and promising path forward as we engage the challenges facing the church in the 21st century.

Looking Ahead

We continue to trust that God is at work, shaping communities rooted in Jesus Christ and sent into the world we are called to serve with Christ's love.