
Scriptural Foundation:

WHEREAS the first followers of Christ came together in one community of faith, pooling their material resources & redistributing them as shared assets according to each one's need.¹

WHEREAS we are called into community characterized by unity & exhibited through acts of tangible care to alleviate the suffering of any individual member of the body of Christ.²

WHEREAS scripture instructs us to meet together in Christian community as an assembly in order to encourage & stir each other up toward love.³

WHEREAS faith is active in love.⁴

WHEREAS love seeks justice in public relationships & social structures.⁵

Social Statements:

WHEREAS, "in grateful response to God's grace, our church develops policies to enable faithful practices in congregations, synods, churchwide ministries & church-related partnerships."⁶

WHEREAS "the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) addresses economic life in light of the moral imperative to seek sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all," recognizing that "the scope of God's concern... is 'for all,' with special concern for people who are poor."⁷

WHEREAS "God created a world that has enough for all, but it needs to be shared & distributed justly." And "disparities in wealth threaten the integrity of the human community."

We believe that "the God who justifies expects all people to do justice... This church, therefore, must unite realism & vision, wisdom & courage, in its social responsibility. It needs constantly to discern when to support & when to confront society's cultural patterns, values, & powers."⁸

WHEREAS this church is called to be a reconciling & healing presence by ministering to human needs, "our daily bread," with compassion & imagination, striving to renew the ways we address emerging problems.

The ELCA committed "to sustain & support its members in their baptismal vocation... through its congregations, synods, & churchwide organization, & affiliated institutions" in its promise to "join with others to remove obstacles of discrimination & indifference that prevent people from living out their callings."⁹

Context of the Problem:

WHEREAS synod required events must be held in venues large enough to accommodate many attendees, & suitably large venues are more available & affordable in larger communities.

WHEREAS remote, rural communities face more systemic economic injustice.¹⁰

Those communities' congregations often have not only smaller memberships, but more low-income

¹ "All who believed were together & held all things in common; they would sell their possessions & goods & distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need." *Acts 2:44-45*

² "That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ & individually members of it." *1 Corinthians 12:25-27*

³ "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love & good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, & all the more as you see the Day drawing near." *Hebrews 10:24-25*

⁴ "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith made effective through love." *Galatians 5:6*

⁵ "But let justice roll down like water & righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." *Amos 5:24*

⁶ *Understanding Lutheran Social Teachings*: elca.org/about-the-elca/who-we-are/our-purpose/social-teachings

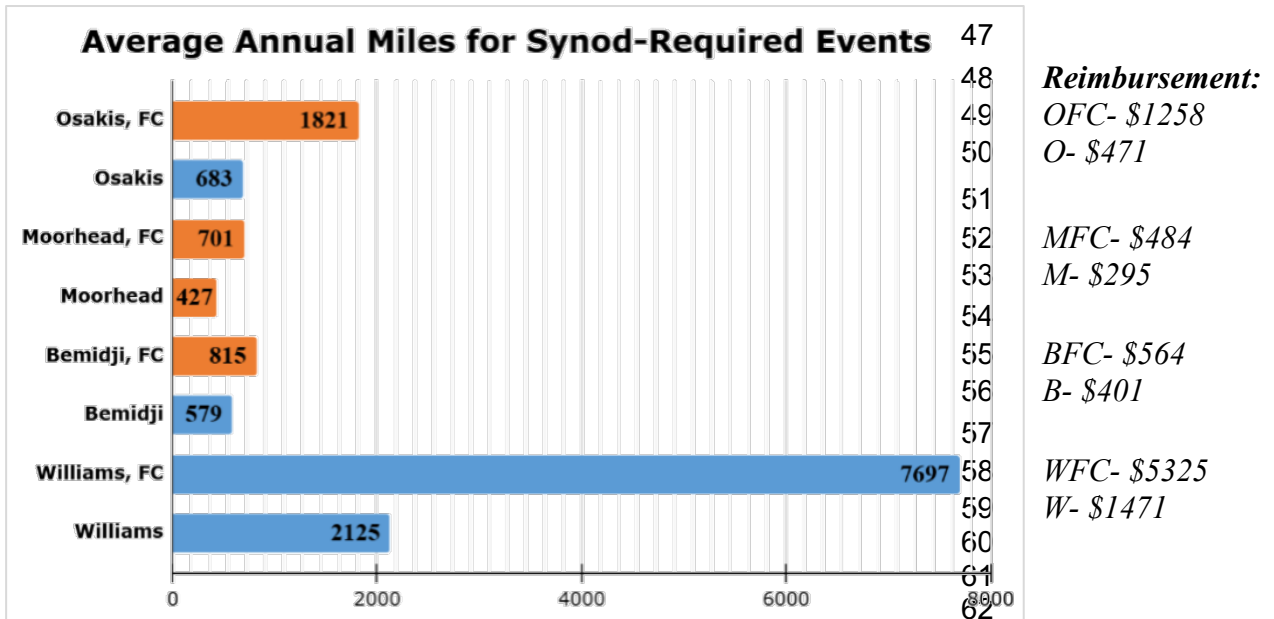
⁷ "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" ELCA social statement, adopted in 1999.

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ "Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" ELCA social statement, adopted in 1991.

¹⁰ See Appendix entry 1

33 members, resulting in fewer financial resources available to them.
 34 Additionally, financially disadvantaged congregations tend to call newly-ordained ministers, who are
 35 required to participate in First Call Theological Education for their first three years, including annual
 36 retreats & monthly meetings.
 37 WHEREAS, in a survey of mileage records over the past 5 years from rostered ministers in
 38 Conferences 1 & 2, we found that the amount of miles driven for synod required events averaged
 39 1,958 miles annually, accounting for 43% of total miles driven on average.¹¹
 40 Those miles driven for synod required events cost the congregations an average of \$1370.60
 41 annually in mileage reimbursement.
 42 WHEREAS these numbers are already deflated, because they reflect the ongoing practice of remote,
 43 rural ministers carpooling with each other as much as possible. If a minister were unable to share
 44 rides (and, therefore, expenses), these numbers could be much higher.
 45 See the graph below to compare the total annual mileage for synod required events alone between
 46 ministers in four different NWMN locations. (“FC:” First Call)



63
 64 **Proposed Solution:**
 65 WHEREAS “Policies Matter, Because People Matter.”¹²
 66 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the NWMN Synod Council create a Travel Equity Policy, in order
 67 to alleviate the burden of travel expenses of synod required event attendance for Rostered &
 68 Synod Authorized Ministers from remote, rural, & low-income communities.
 69 In addition, **BE IT RESOLVED** that at least two ministers who are directly, adversely
 70 impacted by the expense of travel for synod required events be included in the development
 71 of this Travel Equity Policy for the NWMN Synod.

¹¹ See Appendix entry 2

¹² *Understanding Lutheran Social Teachings*