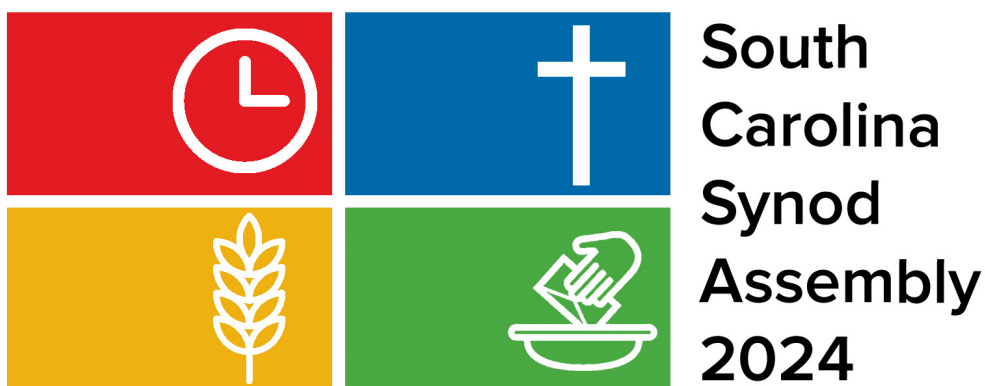


BULLETIN OF REPORTS

South Carolina Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Thirty-Seventh Assembly

Celebrating 200 Years
of the
Lutheran Synod of South Carolina



Like Good Stewards

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” I Peter 4:10

June 8, 2024

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Report of Committee on Agenda and Program
(Proposed Assembly Agenda)
2024 SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD – ELCA ASSEMBLY
June 8, 2024
9AM-4PM



Like Good Stewards

"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." 1 Peter 4:10

For our 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly, we are excited to introduce our theme of "Like Good Stewards".

"Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen."

1 Peter 4:8-11

We will be sharing stories from across the Synod of how congregations, organizations, and individuals are being good stewards of their gifts and resources to care for creation, to give financially, and to work towards justice and peace. We believe there are many places where this stewardship overlaps – for instance a farmer in the lower part of the state that is farming in a method of caring for creation from the soil up, and then in turn uses 10% of their earnings to feed those in their community.

Synod Assembly will be Saturday, June 8th. This will be the Thirty-seventh Assembly of the South Carolina Synod – ELCA and the 199th meeting of the Lutheran Church in South Carolina! We anticipate our gathering lasting from 9am until 4:00pm.

It is important that all participants attend orientation on Friday, June 7th. While we're using the same system as in previous years, Lumi, there have been some changes in our procedures. Guests are welcome to watch the Assembly proceedings through a webcast on our SC Synod website.

Prior to this year's Assembly, we gathered online for 4 weeks of Bible study with Dr. Mark Allen Powell. To help us fully understand key votes on the proposed budget and compensation guidelines, we held two pre-assembly forums which allowed for questions

and answers specific to those votes. On June 8th, along with the general business of the synod, we will be worshipping together, and hearing from ministries from across the synod.

The Nominating Committee met on Wednesday, November 8 and have spent hours of faithful work in creating a slate of nominees for elections. We have 27 positions up for election in 2024. This team was careful in their selections, taking time to consider gifts, varied ages, roles within the church, experience, and locations across the state. We thank them for their work.

We are so excited to be able to gather with one another virtually and not only do the business of the Synod, but to hear the amazing stories of ministry going on across the Synod and learn from each other. “Like good stewards,” may we share our gifts with those around us in order to show God’s radical love and welcome to all, and may the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly be a time of sharing these stories, inspiring others, and getting people excited to say THIS is my church!

THE COMMITTEE ON AGENDA AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDS:

1. THAT NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR OF CANDIDATES FOR ANY ELECTIONS HELD AT THIS 2024 ASSEMBLY BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE REQUESTED BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON THE OFFICIAL FORM PROVIDED FOR THAT PURPOSE;
2. THAT THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL RECEIVE NO MOTIONS OR RESOLUTIONS AFTER THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2024 at NOON;
3. THAT THE BAR OF THE SYNOD BE DESIGNATED AS THE REGISTERED VOTING MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN THIS ASSEMBLY;
4. THAT THE BISHOP, AS PRESIDING OFFICER, BE GIVEN AUTHORITY TO CALL FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA IN THE ORDER DEEMED APPROPRIATE, PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF TIME MANAGEMENT, AND SPECIFICALLY WITH REGARD TO BALLOTING, RESOLUTIONS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS DURING THE ASSEMBLY;
5. THAT THE PROPOSED AGENDA BE A GUIDE FOR THE 2024 ASSEMBLY OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Davidson
Assembly Manager

Saturday, June 8, 2024

Session 1 – 9:00 AM-10:50 AM

Order for Opening of Assembly and Worship
Organization of Assembly
Reference and Counsel Introduction of Special Guests
Report of Synod Council (Part 1) Procedural Matters Affecting this Assembly and
Proposed Compensation Guidelines
***Nominating Committee Report**
Introduction of New Leaders of the SC Synod
Report: ELCA
Ministry Spotlights
Break

Session 2 – 10:50 AM-12:18 PM

Report of Registration
General Elections: Ballot 1 (Majority needed to elect)
Ministry Spotlights
Report of Synod Council (Part 2) Proposed Budget and Treasurer's Report
Reference and Counsel 1
Report of Synod Council (Part 3) Constitutional Matters
Report of Registration
General Elections: Ballot 2 (If needed, majority to elect)
Ministry Spotlights
200th Anniversary

Lunch Break

Session 3 – 1:05 -4:10 PM

50th Anniversary Recognition
Report: Bishop Aebischer
Reference and Counsel 2 (as needed)
Ministry Spotlights
Report: Vice President
Ministry Spotlights
Break
Installation of New Council
Closing Worship
Closing of Assembly

2024 SC Synod Assembly Committees & Volunteers

Agenda and Program Committee

Wendy Davidson, Assembly Manager
Deacon Sarah Bowers, Creative Assistant

Registration

Katherine Davidson

Worship & Music Leadership Team

The Rev. Jesse Canniff-Kuhn, Co-Chaplain

The Rev. Josh Kestner, Co-Chaplain
The Rev. Rebecca Wicker, Necrologist

Communications & A/V Technology

Neal Fischer, Director of
Communications
Lumi Global

The Rev. Michele Fischer
Mrs. Celie Addy
The Rev. Lisa Isenhower

South Carolina Synod Council

Bishop Ginny Aebischer
Deacon Lexanne Graves
The Rev. Ozzie Herlong
Mr. Raymond Hendrix
Becky Koch
The Rev. Bobby Morris
Tex Davis
Virginia Herlong
Ben Bernstein
Deacon Katie Justice
Sheila Caughman
Daniel Crofts
William Newmyer

Kathy Riffin
LaVone Griffin
Mary Katherine King
The Rev. Josh Kestner
The Rev. Joanna Gragg
Hunter Prest
Jeffrey Stringer
The Rev. Rachel Hoffman
Cindy Davis
Randy Fellers
Beth Trump
Joyce Rose-Harris
The Rev. Carl Taylor

2024 New Leaders to the SC Synod

The Rev. Robb Harrell
The Rev. Ron Philabaum
The Rev. Jenny Pratt

The Rev. William Strand
Deacon Beth Barkhau
Deacon Chris St. Clair

Nominating Committee

Deacon Sandra Holland, Chair
The Rev. Carl Taylor
Elliott Cox
Linda Albert
Richard Delap
Robert Epting

Silke Pyrlik
Zach Lindler
Deacon Deborah Poole
Deacon Katie Holland
The Rev. Christopher Girardeau

Conduct of Elections Committee

The Rev. Rachel Hoffman, Co-chair
The Rev. Mike Watson, Co-chair
The Rev. Angela Jennings

Charlene Fink, Staff

Committee of Reference and Counsel

The Rev. Gregg Hoffman, Chair
The Rev. Hank Moody, Parliamentarian
The Rev. Christina Johnson
Randy Fellers

The Rev. Fred Klinker
Deacon Ashlyn Cox
The Rev. Emily Hartmann
The Rev. Ozzie Herlong

*We deeply appreciate everyone's assistance to make this Assembly possible.
Please forgive us for any names that were inadvertently left off this list.*

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly Elections

2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly Nominating Committee

2023-2024 Terms

Deacon Sandra Holland, Chair
Deacon Katie Holland
Rev. Carl Taylor
Rev. Christopher Girardeau
Robert Epting

2024-2025 Terms

Elliott Cox
Linda Albert
Richard Delap
Robert Epting
Silke Pyrlik
Zach Lindler

Positions open for election with description summaries of responsibilities:

SYNOD COUNCIL

Terms begin after Synod Assembly. Meetings are generally schedule in June, September, December, February and April. Synod Council members have voice and vote at assemblies and are expected to attend. The Synod Council operates with internal committees. Most committees meet prior to the regular council meetings, but some may also meet at other times.

1. Lay Woman (Northern Area which includes Foothills, Heartland, and Upstate Conferences)
2. Lay Man (Central Area which includes Midlands, Saxe Gotha, and Western Conferences)
3. Lay Man (At Large)
4. Lay Woman (At Large)
5. Lay Women (POC/LOE)
6. Rostered Minister (Eastern Area which includes Amelia, Coastal, and Epiphany Conferences)
7. Rostered Minister (At Large)

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE

The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of 12 persons of whom six shall be rostered ministers and six shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive reelection. The functions of the Committee on Discipline of this synod are set forth in Chapter 20 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Synod Council shall fill vacancies on the Committee of Discipline for any unexpired term.

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be rostered ministers and half shall be lay persons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive reelection. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws. The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of 12 persons.

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND GRANT COMMITTEE

An Endowment Grant Committee for the South Carolina Synod Mission Endowment Fund shall consist of the Bishop of the South Carolina Synod or his/her appointee, the Treasurer of this Synod, and five members elected by the Synod Assembly. Two of the elected members shall be lay women, two shall be lay men, and one shall be an ordained minister on the roster of this Synod. The term of office for the five persons elected by the Synod Assembly to membership on this committee shall be three years; individuals so chosen may not serve more than two consecutive full terms. The members of the Endowment Grant Committee shall not receive compensation for their duties. The Endowment Grnd Committee shall be responsible to the South Carolina Synod through the Synod Council and shall provide annually a report of disbursements to the Synod Assembly.

The Endowment Grant Committee shall meet at least annually and provide the means, dates, and deadlines for grant requests, review such requests, and make recommendations for disbursements to the Synod Council through the synod's Finance Committee.

1. Lay Man
2. Lay Woman

SOUTH CAROLINA LUTHERAN RETREAT CENTERS, INC.

Members of the Board of Trustees elected by the Synod Assembly (9) and by the Board (6) may serve two consecutive three-year terms. The Board generally meets four times a year with one meeting being an overnight meeting. Members of the Board benefit the work of the ministry by being active members of committees. The Board promotes and coordinates the ministries at Kinard Conference Center and Coastal Retreat Center. It establishes goals and objectives; oversees policies; is accountable for fiscal affairs; and employs and supervises the Executive Director. Board members are to be active congregational members, skilled in interpersonal relationships, visionary, able to work cooperatively, and advocates for and financial supporters of this ministry.

1. Rostered Minister

Voting Members to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA), July 27 to August 2, 2025 in Phoenix, Arizona. Times and dates may shift for this event.

Allocation of (9) voting members using the formula, (6) of them must be lay- (5) women and (4) men. Vice president counts a lay woman. Bishop counts as rostered minister (Woman). A minimum of one of the (9) must be a person of color or person whose primary language is other than English.

A minimum of one the (9) must be a youth (a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election, June 8, 2024) or young adult (a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election, June 8, 2024).

Therefore, elect:

- (3) lay men
- (2) lay woman
- (2) rostered ministers (pastors or deacons, one woman and one man)

In addition to the (9) persons allotted by the formula, one additional person of color or person whose language is other than English.

In addition to the (9) persons allotted by the formula, one additional youth or young adult would also be elected, for a total of (11) members.

SC SYNOD NOMINATING PROCESS

The Synod Council recommends and invites people from across the Synod to serve on the Nominating Committee. Representation is gender and clergy/lay person balanced. Committee members serve for two years. Half the committee rotates off each year. The Synod Council names the committee in September. The Nominating Committee meeting is set for mid-October/early November.

The committee members are asked to bring names of potential nominees for the specific open positions. They are encouraged to call the church leaders in their area to solicit names for nominees.

The positions open for nominations are announced in the Synod ENews which allows us to receive nominations from the general population of our Synod.

At the meeting, all names that have been received are listed for the various positions which are up for election. The Constitution is followed on how many nominees are presented for each election.

The committee considers gifts and any potential conflicts which might be present for each potential nominee. Example: Sometimes one person is brought for two different positions and the committee has to decide which position to nominate them for; we check that a person is not nominated for a position that their spouse or immediate relative is already serving in; we make sure we are not putting two people up against each other from the same congregation or nominating someone from a congregation that is already represented on that council, board or committee, etc. This conversation and discernment is surrounded in prayer.

The committee prioritizes the nominees into the order they wish to have them contacted. The committee members divide the list and call persons who have been nominated.

Nominees are sent biographical information forms with a deadline to return the completed form. The synod office tracks and follows up on nominees with the help of the committee and prepares the slate of nominees for publication in our registration materials. Biographical information is published with registration materials for voting members of Assembly.

The Nominating Committee Chair makes the report of the ballots at Assembly and we accept additional nominations from the floor.

Slate of Positions and Nominees

Biographical Information is included for those nominees who completed the form.

Synod Council – Lay Woman – Northern Area

Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)

**Norma Price
Ellen Girardeau**

Position Nominated For: Synod Council – Lay Woman – Northern Area

Full Name: Norma Lavender Price

Email Address: nslprice@bellsouth.net

Mailing Address: 1019 Wallace Drive Newberry, SC 29108

Congregation: Summer Memorial

Congregation City: Newberry

Employment/Profession: Retired School Teacher and Adjunct Professor at Newberry College

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Served on three call committees for SMLC, currently serving as President of church council for the second term, served as conveyor of Summer Memorial WELCA organization, very active in Kathryn Luther circle, taught and directed Bible School many years, currently serve on our visitation team, active on Mutual Ministry, Evangelism, and Christian Education.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

**What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.**

This is a hard question for me to answer because my church, I feel, has always been there for me. But what I feel is my most joyous memory was last May, as part of the call committee from my church, we extended a call to Pastor Rebecca Wicker. What a joy this has been as Pastor Wicker and I have worked so well together to make Summer Memorial Lutheran Church the best Lutheran church in Newberry County. We had two members of our congregation die

within two weeks of Pastor Wicker arriving, she immediately met with the families and performed one funeral and assisted family in the other funeral. We held a "Meet and Greet" and "Covered Dish Lucheon" and "wow" did my congregation make both of those festive, joyous, and heavily attended!

Summer Memorial Lutheran Church may be a small mill village church on Milligan Street, but we have a lot going on and I am so proud to be a part of this congregation.

I conclude by saying I feel I am a hard worker and would love to serve the Synod in any capacity that I am asked to serve.

Position Nominated For: Synod Council – Lay Woman – Northern Area

Full Name: Ellen Sharp Girardeau

Email Address: ellengirardeau1@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 1026 E Meadow Dr, Lancaster, SC 29720

Congregation: Reformation

Congregation City: Lancaster

Employment/Profession: Stay-at-home mom to Arthur (2.5 year-old boy)

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- Grace Lutheran Church School of St Petersburg FL, Spanish teacher, 2014
- University Lutheran Church of Clemson SC, ecumenical youth group leader, 2016
- Providence Lutheran Church of Lexington SC, secretary, 2017
- Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Columbia SC, mail clerk, 2018
- Living Springs Lutheran Church of Columbia SC, elementary school youth group leader and children's worship space coordinator, 2019
- Trinity Ecumenical Parish of Moneta VA, nursery worker, 2020
- Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Columbia SC, Spiritual Direction program administrative assistant, 2021

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

**What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.**

The women at my current congregation organized a baby shower for me, which took place in our fellowship hall as soon as my husband began preaching there part-time, almost three years ago. The event was especially meaningful because the planners put forth a lot of effort into creating a lovely gathering, despite the fact that they didn't know me at that point in time.

I love that I just recently had the chance to help plan a similar shower in the same space for another mom-to-be! Reformation has given me several opportunities to use my gifts as a wannabe party planner over the last three years, and I am overjoyed by the other ways they have made my son feel welcome.

Synod Council – Rostered Minister – At Large
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)
Bobby Morris
Megan Lineberger

Position Nominated For: Synod Council – Rostered Minister – At Large

Full Name: Megan Lineberger

Email Address: pastormegan17@gmail.com

Mailing Address: PO Box 367, White Rock, SC 29177

Congregation: Bethel Lutheran

Congregation City: White Rock

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- SC Lutheran Church Youth Treasurer 2002-2003
- SC Lutheran Church Youth President 2003-2004

- SC Synod Council Youth Representative 2001-2004
- Lutheridge Counselor 2005, 2006; Lutheridge Senior Staff 2007
- Youth and Family Ministry- St. John's Lutheran, Cherryville, NC 2008-2013
- Trinity Lutheran Church Pastoral Internship 2015-2016
- Associate Pastor- Lutheran Church of Redeemer 2017-2021
- Charleston Area Justice Ministries 2018-2021
- SC Synod Deepening Discipleship Table Convener 2021-2023
- Lutheran Services Carolinas Foster Program 2023-current

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

One of my more recent joyous memories from my current faith community is when Bethel installed our Little Free Library. The project began as a small idea of a few, and grew into a project that included our Lutheran men (visioning and building), youth (painting), outreach team (facilitating and supporting), Girl Scouts (donating a bench to stop by and read), and so many others. We hosted an event with former USC authors reading stories and celebrating the important gifts of reading/literacy and community. I believe we are living into God's vision for the kingdom when church and community work together. The Little Library is a simple way we connect with our neighbors and an example of how meaningful it is when we all work together for a common goal.

Synod Council – Lay Man – Central Area
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)
Tex Davis
Russell Pye

Position Nominated For: Synod Council – Lay Man – Central Area

Full Name: Tex Davis

Email Address: gamecockpoppa@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 125 Heatherfield Drive, West Columbia S.C.

Congregation: Mt. Tabor

Congregation City: West Columbia

Employment/Profession: Attorney

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

I initially served on Mt. Tabor's Church Council from 2014-2017. In 2017, I served as Council President. I was elected once again to Church Council in 2023. I currently serve as Treasurer. From 2019 to 2020, I served on the SC Synod Nominating Committee (2020 - Chair). In 2021, I was elected to SC Synod Council. I have also served on the Synod Council Executive Committee from 2022-2024.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

My family and I joined the ELCA faith community in 2008. Each of my family members has been able to find his or her own niche. Be it music for my wife or youth activities for my children. My faith community at Mt. Tabor and through the SC Synod have walked with me through many highs and lows. I am grateful to the many wonderful people who I have gotten to know and who have helped me groom in my faith. I would be honored to continue to serve the SC Synod on Church Council.

Synod Council – Lay Woman – At Large
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)
Nancy Appel
Colleen Hilton

Synod Council – Lay Man – At Large
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)
Bernie Lee
David Bouknight

Position Nominated For: Synod Council – Lay Man – At Large

Full Name: Bernie Lee

Email Address: franandbernie@hotmail.com

Mailing Address: 169 Morgan Dr., Lexington SC 29072-3903

Congregation: St. David

Congregation City: West Columbia

Employment/Profession: Retired Major, USAF; Retired OSHA Officer II, SC Budget and Control Board

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- High School Youth Sunday School Teacher (Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Warner Robins GA; 1990-1991)
- Member of St. David Lutheran Church (1994-present)
- Confirmation Teacher (1995-1996)
- Adult Sunday School Teacher (1999-2008)
- Sunday School Secretary (2008-2018)
- Worship Assistant (2010-2012)
- Lector
- Church Council, Secretary (2008-2009) and President (2009, 2010, 2018 & 2019)
 - Assisted Interim Pastor in Call Process and coordinated with Bishop Yoos and then Asst. to the Bishop, Ginny Aebischer, on our Ministry Site Profile (2018-2019) in calling current pastor
- Committee to Update the St. David Constitution (2016-2019)
- Editor of St. David E-Newsletter (2018-2021)
- Synod Communicator for St. David (2017-2020)
- Young-At-Heart (2010-Current)
- Lutheran Men & Committee of 100 (Current)
- Cemetery Committee, Chair (2014-Current)
 - Acknowledge Memorials (2016-2023)
- OTHER INFORMATION:
- Neighborhood Watch, Block Captain (2009-2018)
- Grandparents Camp at Lutheridge NC (2019-Current)
- American Red Cross:
 - Blood Donor since 2004 (10+ gallons)
 - Blood Drive Coordinator for St. David (2016-Current)
 - Volunteer Blood Transportation Specialist (2016-2023)
 - Volunteer Blood Ambassador, Regional Office (2024-Current)
- Hobby - Read Books
- 1975 Graduate of Newberry College

- Married to Fran Shull (June 5th, 1976, at St. David Lutheran Church, West Columbia SC)
- 2 Sons (one is Pastor Jason Lee, St. Philip, Myrtle Beach), 1 Daughter & 6 Grandchildren

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

Not having grown up in the church, when some high school friends shared what Jesus meant to them, I was baptized soon thereafter. Jesus walked beside me through several schools and led me to my wife and first and second careers. I learned how to serve others by living with my grandparents for three years, being a husband, a father and a grandfather, and educating and working with fellow employees, customers and church members. When my wife's cousin was killed in Iraq, I started donating blood in his memory and volunteered with the Red Cross; I still do. When my parents passed, I was so consoled by church members I now return that comfort the best I can as Chair of our Cemetery in assisting with final arrangements. Thanks to Him for the talents and life given to me.

Synod Council – Rostered Minister – Eastern Area
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)
Christina Johnson
Mary Finklea

Position Nominated For: Synod Council – Rostered Minister – Eastern Area

Full Name: Christina Johnson

Email Address: pastorchristina024@icloud.com

Mailing Address: 4486 Mandi Ave. Little River, SC 29566

Congregation: King of Glory

Congregation City: North Myrtle Beach

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- King of Glory Lutheran church 2021-Present
- ELCA – Churchwide offices 2008-2021
- St. Mark Lutheran church 2019-2021
- Prince of Peace Lutheran church 2017-2019
- Good Shepherd Lutheran church 2015-2017

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

Firstly, I must profess my love for Jesus Christ and feel the Holy Spirit led me to South Carolina, which is my home, and to King of Glory Lutheran Church. I have faith in the people of the church, a love for the fellowship of the people who enter the doors, and a commitment to share God's love through supporting others. My prayer is for the continued growth of the church and for the social ministries we provide to our community. Additionally, I pray for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to provide me with the spiritual gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and faith according to God's will for my life (1 Corinthians).

I am a cradle Lutheran I have the unique experience of growing up in the Lutheran and Jewish faiths.

Amidst my earlier faith journey, I studied the bible for ten years, with 200 women at the local suburban ecumenical Community Church. The bible study consisted of weekly lectures, and homework questions that we discussed at length. I found it very interesting to hear the different perspectives of women from other faiths. Some were more open to being free in Christ than the other guilt ridden, have to pay the way to heaven thinkers. The faith community of CBS and St. Paul Lutheran church has supported me through my then nine-year-old son Jacob when he was hit by a car. They provided prayer, food, babysitting my other three children, and emotional support while Jacob went through physical therapy and healing. I would not have made it through that chapter of life without them in our lives.

This biblical study opened my heart to a passion of Experiential Worship; otherwise known as Post Modern Christianity. I was one of five on a team of experiential free-spirited people who, with our pastor, helped to start from scratch, to support and plan an inclusive Experiential/Post Modern worship service called "Kindred". We were creative in our outreach and included the community with door-to-door personal invitations. Among many other activities a Halloween Fall Festival and musical concerts were open and free to the community to help build relationships.

We did not discriminate, for many people of various ages, gender and religions attended our weekly Kindred services. Kindred included the sacrament, dancing, healing oil, prayer stations and contemporary music. With the focus of we're all connected and threaded together, I learned that in serving others I have to be open to the Spirit of God and free myself from my own inner agenda.

While working for the ELCA Churchwide offices I had an opportunity to take classes and events at the Lutheran Center, such as Mentoring, Inner Strength, and Leadership, mission developer training, grief coaching certification, coaching 1 and 2 certification, boundary training, behavioral interview training, innovation, and design thinking training, and much more accumulating to over 100+ hours of training outside of 7 ½ yrs. of seminary at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. I have been trained and educated in the 21 Century way of ministry which is relationship focused and theologically sound in the latest teachings. The inner community of the congregation and the surrounding community is my priority and desire to build relationships. Theological commentaries and books are my passion, along with people in community to share God's love for each other and the world are my passions.

In one event, on the 11th floor conference room, I met a woman at the well, really it was the coffee counter☺. She and I had a long conversation about my life journey, my ministry, and my involvement in preparation for experiential Kindred worships services. In the conversation she says to me "I think you have a call". To my amazement I couldn't figure out how she could hear my cell phone ringing in my purse halfway across the room. No, she says, "Not a call from your cell phone, but from Jesus". Thus started the search at my synod office with conversations with the bishop for what path could be right for me and my call.

I always want to be a pastor from a very young age and my faith community, Trinity Lutheran church provided the lifelong learnings and tool kit for me to attend seminary. I grew up as a cradle Lutheran in the Lutheran church with a very large youth group, Sunday school and Awana. My mother was Swedish Lutheran, and my dad was a German Jew. My five siblings and I grew up next door to my Jewish grandmother and learned very early on the ecumenical values of ethnicity, religious denominations and the importance of community acceptance and building trust.

My faith community supports me in my extroverted personality, I love to be around good people that love each other well and love Jesus the most. Mark 10:43 teaches me that "Let the one who would be great among you be your servant. The education I have received has prepared me for the role of pastor, but the call to serve comes from God. Again, thank you for your consideration as rostered minister for the South Carolina synod council.

Position Nominated For: Synod Council – Rostered Minister – Eastern Area

Full Name: Mary Mappus Finklea

Email Address: Pastorfinklea@bellsouth.net

Mailing Address: 1800 Bishop Drive, Florence, SC 29505

Congregation: Cross and Crown

Congregation City: Florence

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- Lutheran Services Carolinas, Board Member, 2007- current
- Eastern Carolina Community Foundation, former Board Chair, 2021
- Women In Philanthropy, former President, 2019
- Lutheran Ecumenical and Interfaith Representative Network, various roles as member, board member, vice president, for approximate years 2008-2020
- Other community organization board service for Mercy Medicine, Lighthouse Ministries, and the Florence chapter of League of Women Voters

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

A joy filled moment for me occurred recently at Alumni Day at LTSS. To gather with friends and respected colleagues in the chapel and once again raise our voices in song and worship really feels like a foretaste of the feast to come. Having the assembly boldly sing songs of faith always boosts my spirit and warms my heart.

**Committee on Discipline – Rostered Minister - Man
Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)
Christopher Shealy
Christopher Girardeau**

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Rostered Minister – Man

Full Name: Christopher D. Shealy

Email Address: cshealy88@gmail.com

Mailing Address: PO Box 1087, Prosperity SC 29127

Congregation: Mt. Hebron

Congregation City: Leesville

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- *Newberry Community Choir (2001-5, 2009-17)
- *regular blood donor (2005-present)
- *adult Sunday School teacher (~2010-7)
- *Relay for Life volunteer / team member / captain (2010-7)
- *SC synod assembly delegate (2011-2, 2014-7, 2020-3)
- *church council (2011-3)
- *Care & Fellowship team member / chair (~2011-5)
- *VBS music leader, classroom teacher (~2012-6)
- *intern at Grace Lutheran, Boone NC (2019-2020)
- *pastor at Mt. Hebron, Leesville SC (2021-present)

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

I have two very joyous memories that I'll share. The first comes from December 2021, my first winter at Mt. Hebron. I was leading Christmas Eve worship, and as the service came to a close, we dimmed the lights in the sanctuary, everyone lit their candles, and we all joined in singing "Silent Night." It was beautiful. I walked away from the front of the church and joined my wife in the pew. We got to sing together, out of the same hymnal, for a few brief moments. For me, it was the best part of the service. My second memory comes from this past fall. Mt. Hebron celebrated 125 years of ministry! And, we had 125 people in attendance for our big worship

service - about three times the average for Sunday morning! Bishop Aebischer was in attendance and gave a wonderful message. Having a "packed house," seeing all the smiling faces, talking with everyone, serving communion to all those people - it was a very joyous occasion.

There have been many times when the church was there for me - how do I pick just one? I'll briefly mention 2008, when both grandparents on my Dad's side died five months apart. In each case, the church was there for me and my family: lifting us up in prayer, calling us, visiting us, sending us cards, providing us food (so many casseroles!), and in general getting us through such a tough time.

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Rostered Minister – Man

Full Name: Christopher Daniel Girardeau

Email Address: christopher.girardeau@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 1026 E Meadow Dr, Lancaster SC 29720

Congregation: Reformation

Congregation City: Lancaster

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range:	Under 30	30-45	46-60	over 60
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Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

MORE Justice Member, Columbia SC (2017—2021); 315th Airlift Wing First Sergeant Council Member, JB Charleston SC (2019—Present); SC Synod Inclusiveness Network (2021—Present); SC Synod Gender and Sexuality Justice Task Force Founder and Chair (2022—Present); SC Synod Nominating Committee (2022—Present); Co-Instructor of "Debunking the Clobber Passages: An Ecumenical Seminar" (2023); Worship Leader: Region 9 First Call Stewardship Retreat (2023); Worship Leader: House Band, 2023 SC Synod Assembly (2023); Worship Leader: Kairos Confirmation Camp (2023); Lutheridge 75th Birthday Capital Appeal, Alumni Gifts Team Member (2024); ELCA Youth Gathering, Community Life Team (2024); Lancaster Rotary Club Chaplain (2024—Present)

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

One of my most joyous memories from my faith community is also one of the most profoundly difficult times as well. In November of 2022, my dad passed away suddenly. I was just on the cusp of my first year anniversary as an ordained pastor and his death felt like the earth disappeared underneath my feet. I was not only at a loss for words and at a loss for what to do. Thankfully, this is where the Body of Christ shows up best.

Instead of feeling frazzled and strained to fulfill my role as a pastor, my congregation immediately jumped into action to cover for me so that I could concentrate on grieving and being with my family.

That, of course, would've been more than enough kindness, but they went above and beyond to care for me and my family—they prayed for us, cooked us meals, offered to do errands, and sent flowers to the funeral; multiple congregation members even drove almost 4 hours, round-trip, to be there at my dad's funeral, offering love and support. I cannot overstate how much I needed and appreciate their kindness and love during that time.

Furthermore, the Body of Christ is not just confined to one congregation; it is truly more ever-present than we can actually realise. The amount of outpoured love that I experienced during that time from family, friends, synodical colleagues, and ecumenical siblings was an integral part of me making it through that time in a healthy way.

It seems that in profound vulnerability, we are able to experience profound love. It seems to me that God is loving relationship itself; and our relationships, necessarily, are where we experience love at its fullest.

Relationships matter. Relationships are everything. Relationships are where we fully experience God.

Committee on Discipline – Rostered Minister - Woman
Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)
Rebecca Lord Phillips
Mary Anderson

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Rostered Minister – Woman

Full Name: Rebecca Lord-Phillips

Email Address: Pastorlordphillips@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 103 Randy Drive Taylors SC 29687

Congregation: St. Michael

Congregation City: Greenville

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Associate pastor at Grace Lutheran Rock Hill SC June 2015-April 2018, Pastor for Christ the King Lutheran March 2021-February 2024

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

One of the things that brings me joy about St. Micheal is how naturally intergenerational relationships are formed. It's normal to see a fussy baby passed to another pew to be cooed and calmed. Teens and adults alike are happy to stop and listen to a child talk about their toy, and make them feel heard. Each Sunday is a joyous memory of a demonstration of how faith is shared and modeled in a loving family of faith.

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Rostered Minister – Woman

Full Name: Mary W. Anderson

Email Address: mwanderson140@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 140 Shuler Rd. Columbia, SC 29212

Congregation: St. Michael's

Congregation City: Columbia

Employment/Profession: SC Synod Interim Pastor at Pilgrim, Lexington

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

I serve the SC Synod as a called interim pastor and am now serving my second year at Pilgrim Lutheran in Lexington. In Region 9 of the ELCA, I serve as a consultant and teacher in the ministry areas of preaching and church administration. My on-line ministry provides weekly Bible studies, the Ponder Anew blog, and the You're On Mute podcast. In the Columbia community, I serve as an elementary school reading tutor and as the chaplain at Transitions, the Homeless Recovery Center. I have been a pastor in rural and urban settings in South Carolina and Metro Chicago Synods for the past 41 years.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

As a lifelong Lutheran and a long-time pastor, I have been involved in the life of eleven different congregations at this point in my life. For me, my faith community consists of Lutherans around the globe. I treasure the church we share for the sake of the world. Visiting Bethlehem in Palestine a few years ago, I was overjoyed to see how the passionate efforts of some of my parishioners to support Lutheran Palestinians had borne much fruit in the beautiful new Lutheran university there. I was brought to tears at seeing the signs outside of classrooms thanking the generous stewards who made them possible. There I saw the names of congregations I knew well, friends here in South Carolina, and seminary classmates. Once I retire, my hope is to return to serve as a volunteer at the University.

Committee on Discipline – Lay Man
Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)
Ashley Leaphart
Fred Baus

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Lay Man

Full Name: Ashley R. Leaphart

Email Address: arleaphart@icloud.com

Mailing Address: 411 Bernard St, Leesville, SC 29070-7858

Congregation: Grace **Congregation City:** Gilbert

Employment/Profession: Pharmacist

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- Call Committee
- Church Council (President, Vice President, and Secretary)
- Stewardship Committee (Chairperson)
- South Carolina Synod Communicator
- Worship and Music Committee (Chairperson)

- American Red Cross – Volunteer Blood Donor (1994 – Present)
- Arts on the Ridge - Volunteer (2017 – Present)
- Batesburg-Leesville Chamber of Commerce – Board Member (2023 – Present)
- Batesburg-Leesville Summer Literacy Program – Volunteer Reader (2023 – Present)
- South Carolina Poultry Festival - Volunteer (1987 – Present)

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

In 2007, an older member of our congregation knew that I liked to attend concerts. She called me one evening to see if I was planning to attend the concert of a world-renowned artist who was coming to The Colonial Center (currently known as Colonial Life Arena). Although I had no previous intention to attend the concert, I politely told her that I had not yet purchased tickets while simultaneously asking her if she and her husband would like to go to the concert. She immediately gave an affirmative response to my offer to take them to the concert.

I picked them up at their home and we enjoyed supper at a local restaurant prior to the concert. She was eagerly anticipating seeing and hearing the artist in person that she had only previously seen on SCETV. Although she was in her eighties her enthusiasm was comparable to a teenager at their first official concert. You can only imagine the smile on her face when the artist finally appeared on stage. She and her husband (who was also in his eighties) even danced together in the aisle that night.

She thanked me multiple times afterwards for taking them to the concert. However, I should have honestly been thanking them for the blessing they shared with me that night. It was indeed a blessing to witness their personification of God's love in a simple waltz in the aisle!

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Lay Man

Full Name: Frederick Baus (Fred)

Email Address: fbaus@bellsouth.net

Mailing Address: 302 River Walk Drive, Simpsonville SC 29681

Congregation: St. Michael

Congregation City: Greenville

Employment/Profession: Higher Education Association CEO - retired

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Numerous committees and councils at the congregational level, e.g.,
Congregation Council - Trinity Lutheran Worcester MA, 2004-2006; St Michael Lutheran Greenville SC, current
Stewardship - Trinity LC Worcester MA 2002-2004; St. Michael Greenville SC, current
Strategic Planning Committee - Trinity Lutheran MA 2004-2006
Pastoral Call Committee - Trinity Lutheran MA 2004

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

Perhaps "joyous" is not the right term. During my time at Trinity Lutheran Church in Massachusetts we had gone through an ELCA education program regarding the LGBTQIA issue. When I served on the Call Committee, the Bishop of the New England Synod sent us a candidate who was gay. I had the opportunity to host him in our home for a meal to get to know him and his faith journey and the challenges he faced. Throughout the call process I got to understand the complex issues, both pro and con, that represented congregation members' positions and the call possibility. The committee recommended extending the call unanimously. Approval required a 2/3 majority vote by the congregation. The result was 62 percent for and 38 percent against. It was a divisive issue with many congregants on both sides of the issue leaving the church. While it may not have been a "joyous" experience, it taught me patience and respect for the many ways our faith confronts real issues in a complex world. I would say the experience "energized" my faith journey.

Committee on Discipline – Lay Woman
Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)
Karen Kasting
Shanna Cisson

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Lay Woman

Full Name: Karen Kasting

Email Address: kkasting@ymail.com

Mailing Address: 2026 Harvest Lane #89 Charlotte NC 28210

Congregation: Crossroads

Congregation City: Fort Mill

Employment/Profession: Logistics

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Council VP, Sunday School Leader, Retreat Leader

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

**What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.**

Since my mother's death in 2021, I have been surrounded with a loving faith community that feels like family.

Position Nominated For: Committee on Discipline – Lay Woman

Full Name: Shanna Cisson

Email Address: shanna.cisson@outlook.com

Mailing Address: 414 2nd Avenue South, Trl 43, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

Congregation: St. Philip

Congregation City: Myrtle Beach

Employment/Profession: Community Manager, HOA Properties

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Member of St. Philip congregation since 2/2012; Sunday School teacher, VBS coordinator and Group Leader; Council Member (5 years); Mission and Outreach Committee member; Feeding the Homeless Committee Leader and member; WELCA Leader and participant; Lector; and Sabbatical Committee Leader.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

**What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.**

The first time I walked into St. Philip's, it was Christmas, 2011, with my husband. As we lined up to leave the service, a member of the church turned to me and asked, 'how does it feel to be the youngest person here?'. I honestly had not noticed this because everyone was so friendly and gave us such a warm welcome as we entered. My husband and I both felt at home immediately. Unfortunately, about 2 months later, my husband passed away. I had no hesitation in walking into St. Philip alone because I knew I was welcomed there. It truly is a church family. I have made suggestions in Council meetings and in other church meetings that may have raised some eyebrows, but I was given the "green light" to try them. One suggestion, which has turned out to be quite successful, is Feeding the Homeless once a month in our Fellowship Hall. This program gets the whole church family involved and Pastor Jason Lee has been very instrumental in keeping the program going with online sign-up sheets and preaching from the pulpit the importance of the program. I've been helping to plan Pastor Lee's upcoming sabbatical and am working with the SC Synod on promoting events during his time away. I am currently part owner of a community property management company in Myrtle Beach where we help manage HOA's and their members. Following recorded rules and regulations are key to managing HOA's as well as communicating with the homeowners. I've been doing this type of work for over 10 years, and I feel communicating with others is one of my strongest attributes.

Consultation Committee – Rostered Minister - Man

Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)
Nathan Rice
William Strand

Position Nominated For: Consultation Committee – Rostered Minister - Man

Full Name: Nathan Joseph Rice

Email Address: pastor.nathan@slc.org

Mailing Address: 312 Upshur Ct. Summerville SC 29485

Congregation: St. Luke's

Congregation City: Summerville

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- Coastal Conference Dean: 2020-2023
- SC Synod Assembly Chaplain: 2022
- Summerville Area Churches Thanksgiving Basket Project: 2014-Present
- Home of Hope Board Member (Men's Homeless Shelter - Summerville): 2015-2018
- SC Synod Community Outreach Network: 2013-2020
- SC Synod Public Education Task Force: 2013-2020
- Pastor - St. Luke's Lutheran Church: 2014 - Present
- Pastor - St. Jame's Lutheran Church: 2008-2013
- Pastor - NVSV Lutheran Parish: 2005-2008

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

One of my most joyous memories from serving at St. Luke's happened on Palm Sunday during the pandemic. Following our outdoor worship the congregation voted unanimously to move forward with building our Family Life Center. As a pastor, it was a joy to see the congregation embrace our mission of "Building Disciples Together With God" in the midst of uncertain times. What a faith filled moments by the entire congregation.

Their certainty and faith in the mission we share together has given me strength on numerous occasions when difficult decisions had to be made. I am thankful for their witness.

Position Nominated For: Consultation Committee – Rostered Minister - Man

Full Name: William Strand

Email Address: wstrand001@luthersem.edu

Mailing Address: 9560 Denny Hwy

Congregation: St. Mark's and Corinth Lutheran Churches **Congregation City:** Prosperity

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: **Under 30** 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Intern, Bethlehem and Trinity Lutheran Churches July 2021- June 2022; On-Call Chaplain, St. Mary's Medical Center June 2022- April 2023; Christian Education Coordinator April 2023- July 2023; Pastor, St. Mark's and Corinth July 2023-current

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

My faith community as a whole has been there for me all my life, but in particular, Messiah Lutheran Church (my first church and sending parish) during my candidacy was a constant place of support. They helped me and others pay for seminary, and when I needed to transfer seminaries and go to school online, they gave me a desk in the church library for a quiet place to work. Offering me access to the resources there and, of course, from the other ministers at work in the church. They also supported me as a location to complete my Contextual Education in preparation for the Internship. After a significant life event, I had to leave my post as an on-call chaplain; they gave me a job to help coordinate their youth and prepare them to call a

rostered minister for families. I am blessed to have them and the greater community there for me.

Consultation Committee – Rostered Minister - Woman

Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)

Rachel Connelly

Elise Stringer

Consultation Committee – Lay Man

Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)

Craig Wheatley

Calvin Harmon

Position Nominated For: Consultation Committee – Lay Man

Full Name: Calvin C Harmon

Email Address: charmon@charmonlaw.com

Mailing Address: 2496 Poole Rd., Greer, SC 29651

Congregation: Trinity

Congregation City: Greenville

Employment/Profession: Attorney/Mediator

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Grew up at St. Peter's Lutheran Church (when still ELCA) - confirmed by Pastor Dermon Sox in 1969 - Youth Leader; Later served in various roles in the Episcopal and Methodist Churches; Attended Christ the King Lutheran Church Greenville from approximately 2002 - 2017 — served as Youth SS Teacher several years; served as Lay Leader and Communion Assistant; Served as Habitat for Humanity Leader for approximately 12 years ; served on Church Council; Attended Trinity Lutheran Church from from approximately 2017 - present.

Served on stewardship and outreach Committees, currently serving on Church Council for third year - also serving as Usher and Lay reader (greeter before). Leader of men's Reflection Group for third year - also involved with Habitat for Humanity.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

I take extreme joy every week when I welcome members and visitors to our Church. I am proud to be a church that welcomes everyone (without exception) with a handshake or hug (or kind words). I know that everyone leaves with love for our Lord in their hearts and joy on their faces.

My church is always there for my family and me! I remember attending an ally program one evening not long after I began attending Trinity (when I may not have really understood what loving everyone without exception really meant). An older couple told their story of how their son had been displaying gay tendencies over the past years. They did everything in their power to change their child (spending much money on counselors and doctors to try to “change” their son. Tears rolled down my face as they told their story that ended with their child committing suicide because of his non acceptance by society. They also expressed how it was necessary for them, as parents “to come out” as well! From that night forward, I have felt love for everyone without exception (because you just never know where some one has been, especially those on the margins). I acknowledge that I am a privileged white male (but I also accept all of God’s children as equals).

Consultation Committee – Lay Woman
Term Ending 2030 (Elect 1)
Mary Ann Shealy
Silke Pyrlik

Position Nominated For: Consultation Committee – Lay Woman

Full Name: Mary Ann Shealy

Email Address: Mashealy58@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 2346 Shull’s Fork Road, Gilbert, SC 29054

Congregation: Wittenburg

Congregation City: Batesville-Leesville

Employment/Profession: Organist/pianist, otherwise retired

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

President of Lutheran Church Women of SC (1984-86), Churchwide LCW executive board (1990s), Chairperson of LCA Division for Higher Education and Schools (1990s) first Vice-President of SC ELCA Synod, SC delegate to churchwide assemblies through the years, served as musician for ten Global Mission Events throughout the years, musician for Wittenberg early church service (currently), chairperson of Wittenberg PreSchool Committee (currently), substitute organist (currently).

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

One of my greatest blessings in my entire life is having been born into a pastor's family. I saw first hand what it meant to serve others joyfully, to experience the love and care of congregations that my dad served, to live and grow in a Christ-filled home. It has been my privilege to have been a member of six congregations in my growing up years. Since marrying, I have been a member of that many more congregations. I thank God for these experiences that have nurtured my growth in Him!

Position Nominated For: Consultation Committee – Lay Woman

Full Name: Silke Pyrlik

Email Address: silkepyrlik@clchhi.com

Mailing Address: 96 Mathews Dr., Apt 96, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926

Congregation: Christ Lutheran

Congregation City: Hilton Head Island

Employment/Profession: Director of Spiritual Formation/ Spiritual Director

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- 2007-2009 Christ Lutheran Church Council President
- 2009- ongoing Christ Lutheran Church, Director of Spiritual Formation
- 2017-2019 LTSS Spiritual Direction Certification Program

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

*What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.*

In 2007 I found a home away from home (I am German) when I joined Christ Lutheran Church. Being a part of a church that was so very similar to my home church in Germany was very comforting at a time where I had difficulties adjusting to the (for me) very strange life in the USA. The following years, especially being employed by my church, provided ample opportunity for spiritual growth through good times and bad times.

In 2019 my husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed away 7 months after the diagnosis, our son was still in high school.

My church has been very supportive, understanding and loving throughout the whole process. I had the whole congregation, and especially our then interim pastor Mary Anderson, standing behind me , lifting me up and giving me the time I needed to cope with the tremendous loss. My very strong, never wavering faith and my church carried me through this transformative time and I will be forever grateful.

In the meantime I am remarried and I give God all the glory for the wonderful, caring supportive and loving husband by my side to journey with me through the second half of life.

Mission Endowment Fund Grant Committee – Lay Man
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)
Danny Koon
David Potts

Position Nominated For: Mission Endowment Fund Grant Committee – Lay Man

Full Name: Daniel H. (Dan) Koon

Email Address: Dhkoon100@yahoo.com

Mailing Address: 2272 North Lake Dr. Columbia, SC 29212

Congregation: Bethlehem **Congregation City:** Irmo

Employment/Profession: Retired Deputy Commissioner of the SC Human Affairs Commission

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- SC Synod Mission Endowment Fund 2021-2023
- SC Synod Inclusive Network -2024
- SC Lutheran Retreat Centers Board Member 2003-2008
- Newberry College Alumni Association President and Board of Trustees 2002-2004
- Coordinator of the Midlands Crop Walk Against Hunger 1995-2000
- Midlands Conference of Lutheran Churches Coordinator for Building of 2 Lutheran Habitat for Humanity Homes
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Vice Chair 2023-24
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Worship Assistant, Lay Communion Assistant and member of the Social Ministry, Education and Stewardship Teams- Present

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

While I have many joyous memories of being a part of a faith community, I think the most impactful was attending a Lutheran School, Newberry College. Having the opportunity to study the Bible in a scholarly manner led me to a greater understanding of God's work for social justice and love for all people. The opportunity to look at Old and New Testament teachings through the eyes of wonderful professors who lived their lives of faith, led me to my life long career of promoting social justice at the SC Human Affairs Commission, whose mission is to prevent and eliminate discrimination and to foster good will among all people. The SC Synod supports many wonderful institutions that provide various ministries, and one of those institutions, Newberry College, was there for me.

Position Nominated For: Mission Endowment Fund Grant Committee – Lay Man

Full Name: David W. Potts

Email Address: davepotts311@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 311 Cicle Drive, Townville, SC 29689

Congregation: Trinity

Congregation City: Greenville

Employment/Profession: Retired, HIV physician

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- Synod, Lutheran Family services in 70s
- Church Council twice 90s and 2010
- Multiple Church committees
- Leader Afghan family support team 2022 current
- Active in AID Upstate since its inception in 1988 to current

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

Trinity has been an important part of my life and faith story since the early 80s. Married there, children baptized there, supported by faith family in all aspect of our lives. During time of great stress and depression over issues involving one of our children Trinity with the help of the Lord allowed us to give the issues to the Lord and free ourselves of the day to day anxiety. Both our child and we have done much better.

**Mission Endowment Fund Grant Committee – Lay Woman
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)
Katrina Bernsdorff
Lura Godfrey**

Position Nominated For: Mission Endowment Fund Grant Committee – Lay Woman

Full Name: Lura DiAntonio Godfrey

Email Address: luradg@charter.net

Mailing Address: 313 W Stone Ave Greenville, SC 29609

Congregation: Trinity **Congregation City:** Greenville

Employment/Profession: Architect/Owner- LMG Architects

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

2016 SC Synod Gathering Attendee

Service at Trinity Lutheran Church:

Current- Property Committee, Love Wins Group, GOAL Participant

Past: Church Council 2015-2017; Outreach Committee 2015-2018; Education Committee 2019-2020; Backpack Buddies 2013-2019; Creation Care Team 2016-2019; Interfaith Hospitality Network Volunteer; Women's Bible Study & Fellowship Group; Leader of installation of new church playground 2012

Community Service:

Current- Board Member Rebuild Upstate; Architect for Pickens County Habitat for Humanity; Architect for Homes of Hope; Member of Historic Review Board for City of Greenville; PTA President Greenville Middle Academy; American Institute of Architects

Past- PTA President for Stone Academy; Stone Academy PTA VP of Health and Safety; Coordinator for Safe Routes to School; Health Fair Chair; Book Fair Chair

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

Pre-Covid, my family was actively involved in a ministry called Backpack Buddies at Trinity Lutheran, providing weekend food for kids at our nearby public schools. Pastor Susan Crowell at Trinity new my love of hands on serving, especially in this way, because as a child, my family would pack Christmas bags of food for families through Goodfellows. It didn't feel like Christmas to me until we had packed those bags! As a parent, I was so grateful and excited to assist with the Backpack Buddies program at Trinity. Our family would pack bags once a month with our closest family friends at church. Later that week, some of those bags would be delivered to kids at our boys' school to be taken home over the weekend. Talk about full circle! I am so grateful to have been a part of this IMPORTANT ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church!

**South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers – Rostered Minister
Term Ending 2027 (Elect 1)**

**Rebecca Wicker
David Coffman**

Position Nominated For: South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers – Rostered Minister

Full Name: Rebecca Wicker

Email Address: pastor@summerlutheran.org

Mailing Address: 1609 Milligan Street, Newberry, SC 29108

Congregation: Summer Memorial

Congregation City: Newberry

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Current board member for SCLRC, 2021-present; adjunct professor of Religion at Newberry College, fall 2023 - present; volunteer for Interfaith Community Services, Newberry 2024; former Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) liaison for SC Synod Global Mission Table, spring 2017 - fall 2018

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

This past year, I moved to a new call at Summer Memorial. It's been a joy to get to know the people of Summer and see their willingness to try new things and welcome new ideas. But most importantly, I've seen how the congregation shows up for each other for newcomers and long-time members alike. We may encounter tough times, but there is a trust that we won't go through those times alone. Summer truly embraces that we carry God's presence when we show up for each other.

Position Nominated For: South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers – Rostered Minister

Full Name: David Coffman

Email Address: david.coffman@newberry.edu

Mailing Address: 769 Cold Springs Lane Irmo, SC 29063

Congregation: Pilgrim

Congregation City: Lexington

Employment/Profession: Campus Pastor, Newberry College

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- Newberry College Campus Pastor, 12/22 - present
- Care Coordinator, SC House Calls, 8/22 - 2/23
- Chaplain, AgapeCare/ Agape Hospice 4/12 - 8/22
- Chaplain Resident, 8/11 - 8/12
- Pastor, St. John's Walhalla 11/01 - 1/11

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

Each day is a new day of opportunity to share the grace, mercy, love and peace of God on a rustling, bustling campus. I love to hear students make the connections to other parts of their lives. I love to hear the story of faith shine through them as they serve in the Wolves Pantry or around the community. I love to sit with students, faculty and staff and have regular check-ins about life matters beyond the classroom and see where God is at work in their lives.

I continue to be supported by the imperfect people in the church when other people say I don't belong. I'm shaped by God's unconditional love for me and the whole world as we go about our daily life figuring it out. I've learned to share that immeasurable grace with others and keep moving forward.

**NovusWay
Board Elected, Assembly Ratified
Term Ending 2027**

2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – Lay Man

(Elect 3)

**Neal Fischer
Calvin Harmon
Ron Walrath
Michael Kuhrau
Hunter Prest
Nicholas Caughman**

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Lay Man

Full Name: Neal F. Fischer

Email Address: nealffischer@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 2104 Newberry Landing Circle Newberry SC 29108

Congregation: Pomaria

Congregation City: Pomaria

Employment/Profession: Director of Communications, SC Synod

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

As Director of Communications for the South Carolina Synod, I support the Office of the Bishop, Assistants, Auxiliaries, and congregations with communicating news, information, and stories throughout the synod. I've served the Church since I was fourteen as a musician or communicator. My experience includes:

- * Serving the churchwide communications teams for four Churchwide Assemblies.
- * Three ELCA Youth Gatherings.
- * Presenting at numerous ELCA Synod Communicator gatherings.

In my 15 years as a communicator between the Upstate New York and South Carolina Synods, I have taken calls or assisted 52 of the 65 synods.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

One inspiring memory from my time serving in the Church has to be the feeling of accomplishment following the 2020 Synod Assembly. Our team was terrific, and we pulled off a solid first assembly online. Accomplishing the technical side of things competently and successfully made me feel proud of our team.

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Lay Man

Full Name: Hunter L. Prest

Email Address: hunteralyssa07@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 108 Hanlon Dr. Elgin SC 29045

Congregation: Living Springs

Congregation City: Columbia

Employment/Profession: Student

Age Range: **Under 30** 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Synod Council 2023-present, Youth Ministry Task Force (LCY) 2023-present, GraceWorks Planning team 2020-present, Church Council 2022-present.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

My most joyous memory from being a part of my faith committee is when I went to the National Youth Leadership summit last fall. I was able to interact with and learn from a myriad of diverse peoples and truly understand what it looks like to live in God's love! Never before

have I experienced such a welcoming, inclusive, and uplifting community of believers! I made friends that will last a lifetime, and grew in my faith so much!

My church has been there for me so much through youth group! Weekly youth meetings are a sturdy rock in the desert of life’s struggles. Anytime I’m going through something tough, I know I can lean on my youth group to support me and lift me up!

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Lay Man

Full Name: Calvin C Harmon

Email Address: charmon@charmonlaw.com

Mailing Address: 2496 Poole Rd., Greer, SC 29651

Congregation: Trinity **Congregation City:** Greenville

Employment/Profession: Attorney/Mediator

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Grew up at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church (when still ELCA) - confirmed by Pastor Dermon Sox in 1969 - Youth Leader; Later served in various roles in the Episcopal and Methodist Churches; Attended Christ the King Lutheran Church Greenville from approximately 2002 - 2017 — served as Youth SS Teacher several years; served as Lay Leader and Communion Assistant; Served as Habitat for Humanity Leader for approximately 12 years ; served on Church Council; Attended Trinity Lutheran Church from from approximately 2017 - present.
Served on stewardship and outreach Committees, currently serving on Church Council for third year - also serving as Usher and Lay reader (greeter before). Leader of men’s Reflection Group for third year - also involved with Habitat for Humanity.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

I take extreme joy every week when I welcome members and visitors to our Church. I am proud to be a church that welcomes everyone (without exception) with a handshake or hug (or kind words). I know that everyone leaves with love for our Lord in their hearts and joy on their faces.

My church is always there for my family and me! I remember attending an ally program one evening not long after I began attending Trinity (when I may not have really understood what loving everyone without exception really meant). An older couple told their story of how their son had been displaying gay tendencies over the past years. They did everything in their power to change their child (spending much money on counselors and doctors to try to “change” their son. Tears rolled down my face as they told their story that ended with their child committing suicide because of his non acceptance by society. They also expressed how it was necessary for them, as parents “to come out” as well! From that night forward, I have felt love for everyone without exception (because you just never know where some one has been, especially those on the margins). I acknowledge that I am a privileged white male (but I also accept all of God’s children as equals).

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Lay Man

Full Name: Ron Walrath

Email Address: ronwalrath@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 117 Hunters Blind Drive, Columbia, SC 29212

Congregation: St. Andrew's

Congregation City: Columbia

Employment/Profession: Retired Financial Planner and Retired Officer of Marines

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 46-60 **over 60**

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Stewardship of Life Institute 2009 - 2023, Synod Audit Committee 2020 - 2023, Synod Finance Committee 2023 - current, VP for Development, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary 2007 - 2012, Fundraising Co-leader of St. Andrew's 2022 Capital Campaign.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?

Tell about a time your church was there for you.

A favorite memory is when St. Andrew's decided to fund an entire Tanzania Safe Water Project. The project injected new life into our congregation as we poured ourselves into service on behalf of people we didn't know and would most likely never meet. The effort was truly spirit inspired!

When I was deployed to Iraq in 2003 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During that deployment I received a flood of letters from church friends. My family was embraced with care from the St. Andrew's community. I hope folks know how important and appreciated was their service to me and my family.

2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – Lay Woman

(Elect 2)

Bethany Boyd

Marie Tidwell

Silke Pyrlik

Susan McArver

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Lay Woman

Full Name: Regina Marie Tidwell

Email Address: reginamarietidwell@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 112 Crown Point Road

Congregation: Emmanuel

Congregation City: West Columbia

Employment/Profession: Fulltime Student

Age Range: **Under 30** 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Youth ministry cabinet member 2021 – 2022

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

I have many dear memories from my time in SCLCY, but one that stands out the most for me is my first time as a counselor for Camp HUGG. During that week, I learned a tremendous amount about loving my neighbors despite our differences, and I gained self-confidence in my own abilities as a leader. I often look back on that week when I need a reminder of what I am able to be.

My church has been my rock for years. Every moment of trouble and every moment of joy, my church has been right there with me, uplifting and encouraging me. I remember my Graduation Sunday and my family and friends wrapping me in a hand-made quilt built from childhood T-shirts. I remember the smiles and kind words. I have never felt so supported as I did in that moment.

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Lay Woman

Full Name: Silke Pyrlik

Email Address: silkepyrlik@clchhi.com

Mailing Address: 96 Mathews Dr., Apt 96, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926

Congregation: Christ Lutheran

Congregation City: Hilton Head Island

Employment/Profession: Director of Spiritual Formation/ Spiritual Director

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- 2007-2009 Christ Lutheran Church Council President
- 2009- ongoing Christ Lutheran Church, Director of Spiritual Formation
- 2017-2019 LTSS Spiritual Direction Certification Program

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

In 2007 I found a home away from home (I am German) when I joined Christ Lutheran Church. Being a part of a church that was so very similar to my home church in Germany was very comforting at a time where I had difficulties adjusting to the (for me) very strange life in the USA. The following years, especially being employed by my church, provided ample opportunity for spiritual growth through good times and bad times.

In 2019 my husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed away 7 months after the diagnosis, our son was still in high school.

My church has been very supportive, understanding and loving throughout the whole process. I had the whole congregation, and especially our then interim pastor Mary Anderson, standing behind me, lifting me up and giving me the time I needed to cope with the tremendous loss. My very strong, never wavering faith and my church carried me through this transformative time and I will be forever grateful.

In the meantime I am remarried and I give God all the glory for the wonderful, caring supportive and loving husband by my side to journey with me through the second half of life.

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Lay Woman

Full Name: Susan Wilds McArver

Email Address: susan.mcarver@lr.edu

Mailing Address: 620 Hampton Trace Lane Columbia, SC 29209

Congregation: Incarnation

Congregation City: Columbia

Employment/Profession: Church History Professor - Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

Age Range:	Under 30	30-45	46-60	over 60
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Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

ELCA

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) (2022 - present)

ELCA Church Council (2009-2015)

ELCA Word and Service Task Force (2013-2017)

ELCA Social Statement, "Our Calling in Education" (2003-2007)

Synod

200th Anniversary of South Carolina Synod Committee (2023-present)
Chair, Board of Trustees, James R. Crumley Jr Region 9 Archives (2021-present)
SC Synod Mission Endowment Fund Grant Committee (2023-present)
Florida-Bahamas Candidacy Committee (2005-present)

Regional

Lutheridge CARE leader (1989-2019) and former counselor
Many historical presentations to congregations and synods (1998-present)

Incarnation Lutheran Church, Columbia:

Adult and handbell choirs (all my adult life)
Member WELCA (all my adult life)
Chair of Worship and Music (2020 - present)
Chair 100th Anniversary Committee (2019-2021)
Church Council (2017-2019)
Oktoberfest baker and worker (2012 - present)

Community and Other

President, Lutheran Historical Conference (for historians in ELCA, LCMS and WELS) (2006-2012)
South Carolina State Department of Education Bias Review Assessment Team (2016 - present)
Presenter to various genealogical societies (2015-2017)
Presenter in various settings for the United Methodists and Moravians (2000 - 2017)

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

A joyous memory:

While I have been fortunate to experience a lifetime of joyous memories within my faith community, my participation in the vocal and handbell choirs of my congregation runs as a constant thread in many of those memories, from my childhood to the present.

We may not have always been the greatest musicians in the world, but we have always given it our all, whether it is a festival observance such as Easter or Christmas, or a more contemplative service during Lent or at the close of the day. Singing or playing in a choir is a communal event, which adds to its depth of meaning, as each person's contribution is necessary to create the whole. When the scripture texts of the day, the anthem text, and the music are all beautifully aligned, there is nothing more joyous.

A time when my church was there for me:

My church has ALWAYS been there for me. I grew up in a congregation that took its youth seriously, mentored us conscientiously, and allowed us to ask questions endlessly. Those long-departed, infinitely patient (and long-suffering) Sunday School teachers, confirmation pastors, youth advisors, and campus pastors formed my faith in ways that endured.

“My church” was also present through Lutheridge, which shaped my life and set me on a path to ministry that lasts to this day in my calling as a seminary professor. Decades ago, the South Carolina Synod took a chance and provided the scholarship support that enabled me to go to seminary as a very young student, which might not have been possible otherwise. The larger church itself (back then, the LCA) gave me a vision of what “my church” could do beyond our own little congregation, through synodical and national youth events and through the ministry it conducted through world hunger appeals, refugee resettlement, disaster response, and more. In doing so, the larger church connected me to something far greater than my own local community. I am truly grateful that Christ’s church has always been present for ministry in the world, and even more grateful that it has always “been there” for me.

2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – Rostered Minister - Man

(Elect 1)

Josh Knutson

Christopher Girardeau

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Rostered Minister - Man

Full Name: Joshua Knutson

Email Address: pastor@christcommunityLNC.org

Mailing Address: 221 Baxter Lane, Summerville, SC 29486

Congregation: Christ Community Lutheran

Congregation City: North Charleston

Employment/Profession: Pastor, Mission Developer

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

As a mission developer, one of my primary responsibilities is to be present in our community. Since 2022, I have served on a committee lead by Neighbors Together in Charleston that is

seeking to address homelessness in the Tri-county area. I also began serving on the board of Restoration Chapel Greenwood, a program that offers Christian learning, guidance, and support to those recovering from substance abuse disorder, in 2024. In 2023, I was asked to serve on the SC Synod's Bible Team to address the resolution on unity passed at the 2023 Assembly. I am a strong believer that we cannot understand where Jesus is calling us to serve if we do not know and love the people beyond our walls.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

I am extremely thankful that the two congregations I serve have supported and encouraged me throughout our time together. The event that stands out most in my mind is when my father-in-law passed away. Both congregations cared for my family in ways that were beyond my wildest expectations, especially since we had only been together a few months. That, however, is not my most joyous memory. In North Charleston, there is an old hotel that was converted into transitional housing for veterans emerging from homelessness. We take up year-round collections of food and supplies for that program to ease the residents transitions. Last year, members of SC Lutheran Men in Mission from across the state joined with both congregations to provide a fried chicken dinner to the residents on a Sunday afternoon. They did not just serve a meal--they carried the love of Christ to each person they saw. They ate with the residents, talked with them, laughed with them, and prayed with them. They made sure that everyone got enough to eat and that they had all the supplies they needed. And they did this gladly. They demonstrated what it looked like to serve the forgotten and I was thankful to be a part of that. I continue to find joy in both communities because their hearts are too big to contain inside a church building.

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Rostered Minister - Man

Full Name: Christopher Daniel Girardeau

Email Address: christopher.girardeau@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 1026 E Meadow Dr, Lancaster SC 29720

Congregation: Reformation

Congregation City: Lancaster

Employment/Profession: Pastor

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

MORE Justice Member, Columbia SC (2017—2021); 315th Airlift Wing First Sergeant Council Member, JB Charleston SC (2019—Present); SC Synod Inclusiveness Network (2021—Present); SC Synod Gender and Sexuality Justice Task Force Founder and Chair (2022—Present); SC Synod Nominating Committee (2022—Present); Co-Instructor of "Debunking the Clobber Passages: An Ecumenical Seminar" (2023); Worship Leader: Region 9 First Call Stewardship Retreat (2023); Worship Leader: House Band, 2023 SC Synod Assembly (2023); Worship Leader: Kairos Confirmation Camp (2023); Lutheridge 75th Birthday Capital Appeal, Alumni Gifts Team Member (2024); ELCA Youth Gathering, Community Life Team (2024); Lancaster Rotary Club Chaplain (2024—Present)

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

One of my most joyous memories from my faith community is also one of the most profoundly difficult times as well. In November of 2022, my dad passed away suddenly. I was just on the cusp of my first year anniversary as an ordained pastor and his death felt like the earth disappeared underneath my feet. I was not only at a loss for words and at a loss for what to do. Thankfully, this is where the Body of Christ shows up best.

Instead of feeling frazzled and strained to fulfill my role as a pastor, my congregation immediately jumped into action to cover for me so that I could concentrate on grieving and being with my family.

That, of course, would've been more than enough kindness, but they went above and beyond to care for me and my family—they prayed for us, cooked us meals, offered to do errands, and sent flowers to the funeral; multiple congregation members even drove almost 4 hours, round-trip, to be there at my dad's funeral, offering love and support. I cannot overstate how much I needed and appreciate their kindness and love during that time.

Furthermore, the Body of Christ is not just confined to one congregation; it is truly more ever-present than we can actually realise. The amount of outpoured love that I experienced during that time from family, friends, synodical colleagues, and ecumenical siblings was an integral part of me making it through that time in a healthy way.

It seems that in profound vulnerability, we are able to experience profound love. It seems to me that God is loving relationship itself; and our relationships, necessarily, are where we experience love at its fullest.

Relationships matter. Relationships are everything. Relationships are where we fully experience God.

2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – Rostered Minister - Woman

(Elect 1)

**Sarah Bowers
Maria Miller-Perez**

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Rostered Minister - Woman

Full Name: Sarah Delap Bowers

Email Address: SKDBowers@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 279 Ringer Rd. Pomaria, SC 29126

Congregation: Bethlehem

Congregation City: Pomaria

Employment/Profession: Deacon & Land Steward

Age Range: Under 30 **30-45** 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Served on the ELCA's Always Being Made New Campaign, Young Adult in Global Mission (2011-2012), Director of Youth and Family Ministries at Redeemer Lutheran Columbia, SC (2012-20128), Served on Gamecock Lutheran's Board for 3 years, Creative Director for South Carolina Synod (2021 - present)

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

Wow! While I would say my lifetime has been relatively short thus far, it has had no shortage of incredible ways the church has shown up for me. I think we often look for these massive ways that the church shows up, and those are amazing of course, but sometimes it's in the smallest moments where they show up that really make the difference in our lives.

This Spring I was supposed to officiate my first wedding. It was the wedding of a young woman who was in youth when I worked as a Director of Youth and Family Ministry. I had been looking forward to this for months, the meetings with the bride and groom, the creating of the service, I loved all of it. This couple was not as connected to the church as they once were, so I was finding a way to walk with them, while still being that church presence and respecting where they were now.

Fast forward to the weekend of the wedding, and I was soooooo sick. It was awful and I couldn't get out of bed. I didn't know what to do, except call the pastor of my home church, that was located just down the road from where the ceremony would take place the next day. My pastor walked with me through the process, helped me find someone to step in, and the ceremony went on seamlessly. Did I mention this was Palm Sunday weekend? The start of Holy Week?! For me, this was a mentor and friend walking me through one of the biggest disappointments of my ministry, but even bigger than that, this was a larger church coming around to love and support a couple who maybe doesn't see the point of church anymore, but I wonder what the long term impact of that will be and if they'll ever realize the team effort it took to have the "show go on."

I was thankful on so many levels for the church community that day, and especially the community of rostered leaders, who even during one of the craziest seasons of the church year, was willing to walk with me and show not only myself, but an entire family, the gift the church family really is and how wide it really reaches.

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Rostered Minister - Woman

Full Name: Maria Elena Miller-Perez

Email Address: Pastormem@yahoo.com

Mailing Address: 419 Adams Mill Road Mauldin, SC 29662

Congregation: St. Matthias

Congregation City: Easley

Employment/Profession: Chaplain of Lutheran Hospice-Upstate/Stated Supply Pastor
Augsburg Lutheran Church 2015-Present

Age Range: Under 30 30-45 **46-60** over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

Chaplain for SC WELCA Convention 2003 and 2016, Synod Council 2017-2020, Chaplain for SC Synod Assembly 2020, Foothills Conference Dean 2017-Present, Mauldin High School Band Boosters 2019-2024, Walk to End Alzheimer’s Champion’s Club 2023-Present.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

I have had the pleasure of serving as Stated Supply Pastor for Augsburg Lutheran Church for over 8 years. Augsburg is small (we average 12-16 on a Sunday) but incredibly faithful. We have a 2 year old who attends every week with his grandmother. The congregation wholly embraces him and lives out the promises they made to him at his baptism. Each week he “assists” the member who lights and extinguishes the candles for worship and the usher who collects the offering. It brings joy to my heart every week to see this little one holding the hand of the 80 something year old man as they serve the church together. In moments like these I recognize how faith is passed from one generation to the next and it gives me hope for the future.

2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – Youth/Young Adult
(Elect 1)
Tatyanna Chapman
Jason Costlow

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Youth/Young Adult

Full Name: Tatyanna Nicole Chapman

Email Address: Tatyanna.Chapman@Newberry.edu

Mailing Address: 1003 Weslin Creek Dr

Congregation: Shepherd of the Sea **Congregation City:** Myrtle Beach

Employment/Profession: Student

Age Range: **Under 30** 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

At Shepherd of the Sea, I regularly helped with children's church and acolyting throughout 2015-2022. At Newberry College, I am currently a student leader in the Campus Ministry and help make meals and set up for our weekly meeting.

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

My most joyous memory is sitting with other people at my school who are part of Campus Ministry as well as a nearby church, doing a bonfire and looking at the stars and seeing a shooting star. It was like a sign from God that I was where I was supposed to be.

My school's Pastor is always there for me. Anytime I have a problem or need to rant, he is there to listen. When I need to stop by the Weber Ministry house because I've missed a meal, I can just stop in and make myself something or if I need to do a load of laundry and my dormitory's laundry room is full, I am able to get laundry done at the ministry house.

Position Nominated For: 2025 Churchwide Assembly – Youth/Young Adult

Full Name: Jason Andrew Costlow

Email Address: jacost347@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 18 Double Branch Trail, Mauldin SC 29662

Congregation: Lutheran Church of Our Saviour

Congregation City: Greenville

Employment/Profession: Student

Age Range: **Under 30** 30-45 46-60 over 60

Service in synod, ELCA, interchurch agencies, local congregation, community, etc. Please include dates served.

- Voting member of SC synod assembly: 2021-2023
- Congregation Council: 2020-2023
- VBS volunteer: 2017-2019

- Fellowship committee: 2020-2023
- Assisting Minister: 2020
- Communion assistant: As needed
- Acolyte: As needed
- Newberry College campus ministries: current
- Foothills Conference, SC Synod Young Lutheran Man of the Year for my Eagle Scout Project: 2023

In the past we asked for your resume in regard to your service to your church, community, etc. We place greater value on your faith story. Please take time to answer the following:

***What is your most joyous memory from being a part of your faith community?
Tell about a time your church was there for you.***

As a pastors' (both parents are pastors) kid I have never lived close to my extended family and my congregation has given me the support of the extended family. They have celebrated my milestones with me, most recently--*=--98765e3 my high school graduation and Eagle Scout ceremony last year. During my time at Newberry College, Campus Ministries helped me find a friend group at school.

**2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – Person of Color/Language Other Than English
(Elect 1)
Thulie Beresford
Carl Taylor**

Report of the Bishop 2023-2024
2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

“Like Good Stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received” I Peter 4:10

The 2024 Assembly, “Like Good Stewards,” allows us the opportunity to focus on the variety of gifts God gives us of time, talent and treasure. Good Stewards recognize that all gifts come from God and we are called to use our God given gifts to serve one another, for mutual up building and to speak and act on behalf of those in need. We celebrate that because as God gathers us into Christ’s community we are able to live out these gifts of grace and love together in the name of Jesus as blessings from God through our ministry and mission in the South Carolina Synod and by extension, across the world. In addition to the stories that will be shared as we gather in online Assembly June 8th, this year we can also look forward to a four session Bible Study led by Dr. Mark Allan Powell, 7 p.m. each Tuesday evening in May that is sure to enrich our understanding of the call to be Good Stewards.

January 14, 2024 marked the 200th Anniversary of this South Carolina Synod which was celebrated at St. Michael, Columbia where the earliest leaders gathered to form this Synod. In honor of this milestone in our history, St. Michael’s hosted an Organ Recital and Reception.

The Synod Council named an Anniversary Committee who have been active since late fall planning various ways to lift up the ministries that have formed our mission. Pastor Mark Scott serves as Chair for the Anniversary Committee.

In an introduction to the Celebration of our Anniversary, Dr. Susan McArver wrote:

“If you read the Minutes of the South Carolina Synod for its founding year in 1824, you quickly realize two things: The fledgling Synod of South Carolina and Adjacent States came into existence with few resources and While the beginning of an organization for the Synod occurred during at the beginning of the year, Synod did not fully exist as an ecclesiastical entity until December of that year.

In fact, the history of the South Carolina Synod includes many milestones relating to the history of the Lutheran Church in the United States. And, while this history includes significant controversies, it also includes many developments that took root in the wider mission of the Lutheran Church in this country too. We hope that our celebration of two centuries of ministry will inspire you as leaders and members of congregations. And we pray that God will continue to bless and guide us as we serve into the future God provides.”

Throughout the year ahead you can anticipate receiving various stories and videos which we hope you will share with your congregations, and we will join in a celebration banquet at our 2025 Assembly.

We continue to grow into our new Mission and Vision Statements that were adopted in 2023 and following our Core Values as we walk together in the South Carolina Synod.

Mission Statement: Equipping church leaders to develop impactful faith communities and disciples of Jesus.

Vision Statement: Every person in South Carolina experiences God's love and grace.

Core Values:

1. Living Faith in Jesus as our Cornerstone. (1 Peter 2:4-6)
2. Fostering opportunities for partnership among leaders and communities of faith. (Romans 15:5-7)
3. Walking together in sacred trust as siblings in Christ. (Luke 24:28-32).

Our partnership includes a variety of leadership ministries, events and connections, such as Candidacy, First Call Theological Education, Call Process and Congregational Events; Youth Ministry and Campus Ministry; ministry with Institutional and auxiliary partners; connections through the work of Synod Council, Conference Deans, Interim and Stated Supply Pastors; Region 9; Global Companion Synods of the Lutheran Church in Japan, Tanzania and Colombia; and across the ELCA. Each of these partnerships are incredible relationships that help us resource & equip the people of God and congregations who serve in South Carolina so that together we can be faithful disciples of Jesus in our varied contexts.

Our SC Living Lutheran quarterly online magazine, weekly Enews, and various other video series are all produced by our Director of Communications, Neal Fischer. We are thankful for his skills in technology that allow us to keep telling the stories from across the Synod and the whole church about ways the Spirit is connecting and moving us in mission. Because of technology we have been able to offer online Bible Studies and enrichment courses such as “the Great ReEvaluation,” led by Dr. Mark Tidsworth and “The History and Context of the Israel – Hamas War,” which was taught by the Rev. Bobby Morris. We are blessed by Pastor Emily Hartmann’s video series, “FAQ,” and for her teachings on the basics of Lutheranism. She has built quite a fan base with this series, stretching all the way to Australia where some are using her work for Confirmation Instruction. In the fall of 2023 Pastor James Henricks organized The Ministry ToolBox events which were hosted by Messiah, Mauldin and All Saints, Mt. Pleasant. Many leaders from across the Synod were offered tools for best practices for church councils in Administration, Christian Education, Stewardship, Bible Study and more. People left with lots of resources for doing ministry together today. In the first quarter of 2024 we partnered with GSB and Mike Ward to offer congregational council training. This training has had both in-person and online components between January and May engaging 18 congregational councils from across the State.

Throughout the past year our Inclusiveness Network has found a variety of ways to help us better understand history and to lift up our call to Justice work. Pastor Bruce Kreutzer serves as Chair of the Inclusiveness Network. They have hosted online and in-person book studies featuring several authors every other week. In Spring of 2023 we participated in the Civil Rights Pilgrimage and Tour with the Southeastern Synod traveling through Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma and Birmingham. In October 2023 a group of us visited the new International African-American Museum in Charleston and had lunch and conversation hosted by St. Matthew’s, Charleston. In January Ascension hosted a MLK, Jr. Remembrance and Day of Worship. In February 2024 we took the Columbia Civil Rights Pilgrimage and Tour learning a great deal of history in our own backyard. A few of our Synod Congregations are involved in MORE Justice and Nehemiah Gatherings which are ecumenical community events that lift up and focus on justice issues and needs in community. We continue to have much to learn and invite you to join in with us on this journey of discovery and inclusion.

In 2023 the Assembly adopted the Resolution on *Living into the Unity of the Body of Christ*. Following Assembly, a group of leaders from the South Carolina Synod were gathered to serve as the Synod Bible Team and their task was to collaborate on ways we could fulfill the hope of the Resolution and encourage our congregations to unite in the study of the sacred texts of Scripture. This Bible Team has partnered to create Bible Study materials that can be used with small groups in

any congregation. The first half of the materials were released May 1 and are available as a gift to you. The second half of the materials will be released later this fall.

In August of 2023 we had the distinct pleasure of dedicating the new sanctuary for Cristo Rey Lutheran Church in West Columbia. This was the result of many years and many hearts from across our Synod working together to build a beautiful house of worship. The people of Cristo Rey added their own creative touches to truly make this their own and they always provide a warm welcome so feel free to visit them in worship at any time.

In November 2023 I was able to meet and be reacquainted with our Companion partners in the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, and together to consider ways our two Synods could continue to learn from each other and accompany one another on this faith journey. It was a delightful meeting that promises to bear fruit in the year to come. I am grateful to Bonnie Bouknight who has served as the SC Synod Companion Coordinator for this relationship since 2017. Bonnie has stepped out of the Coordinator role, but expressed her deep love for the JELC and an interest in remaining on this Companion Team. I am happy to share that Pastor Miho Yasukawa and Pastor Tom Cassem will serve as Co-Coordiators for this Companion Relationship. Both bring unique gifts to this leadership role and after gathering a Team they plan to share the stories of our connections with the JELC broadly across the Synod. They are also working on details for highlighting this Global partnership in 2025 when we may be welcoming guests from Japan. If you are interested in serving on this Companion Team or would like to know more about connections with the JELC, please contact Pastor Tom or Pastor Miho.

The opportunity to visit the JELC last fall became possible because of an invitation from the ELCA to participate in the Installation of Bishop Sreyliak, the first bishop of the Lutheran Church in Cambodia on November 9, 2023. It was an honor to be asked to be the preacher for her Installation Service. While there I had the privilege to learn that The Lutheran Church of Singapore, The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, The ELCA and several other world churches helped to form this young church in Cambodia. Their focus is on discipleship, sharing God's Word and supporting healthy agricultural advancement and small farms. In addition to participating in the Installation of the Bishop and the Ordination of four new pastors, I was able to visit the ministry sites, and also to learn about the difficult history of the Cambodian people who still bear the scars from the Khmer Rouge Regime.

Last July (2023) our Companion Team for the SW Diocese of Tanzania had a wonderful visit on the mountain with our partners where they were able to furnish the new Medical Clinic that our Synod helped make possible. They each came home to South Carolina filled with joy and hope for the ways we can continue walking together with these companions. We have completed our Water Mission work in the Diocese, and the Clinic is up and running. Our focus now, as requested by Bishop Nguvula, is to help support their new Agriculture and Irrigation Project to learn about and grow wheat. The Team is excitedly working on what they call the *She Shed* Project. Cathy Milejczak serves as Companion Coordinator for this Team and is happy to share details and answer any questions you may have.

Our partnership with the Lutheran Church in Colombia focuses on relationship building and has included regular conversations via Zoom between women pastors from Colombia, South Carolina, Southeastern Minnesota and Alberta Canada since the fall of 2020. These four Synods across the Americas have been doing ministry together for many years and enjoy building these partnerships. In October 2023 leaders from these Synod met together in Houston at the Latin America Consultation that was hosted by the ELCA. At this Consultation we learned about more ways we can walk together. In April 2024 the four Synods produced and provided a service of worship that included participants and worshippers from both Continents. The bishops of these four synods meet every two months for mutual support and planning, and in August 2024 three of us, Pastor Ginger

Litman-Koon, Pastor Lisa Isenhower and I will be attending the Annual Women's Convention in Colombia. We look forward to that special event and to coming back to share more stories with all of you about this Global Companion relationship.

This spring we have experienced several changes on our Synod Staff. In February Wendy Davidson had surgery on her foot and was out on medical leave. That same month Pastor James and his wife, Christina welcomed their first child. We are delighted that baby and parents are home and doing well. Pastor James is out on paternity leave. Pastor Rick Carter and I, together, are working to be sure that our Mission Developers and Mission Sites are supported, that our Holy Closures are completed faithfully, that our Congregational Vitality Team continues to move forward in their work and that our connections with the ELCA in Development continue to be strong. In March, Deacon Deborah Poole joined our staff as Coordinator for Children and Youth Ministries, and Jenny Spearen, Executive Administrative Assistant resigned to move and take a position with the North Carolina Synod. Jenny served the SC Synod for 16 years and is truly missed by all of us. We wish her all the best in her new position. In May we will welcome Deborah Slice as our next Executive Administrative Assistant and following Assembly we plan to gather with the whole staff to regroup and begin our planning for the fall.

This staff is an amazing group of creative and faithful servants who spend each day looking for the ways to support and partner with you in the SC Synod, and to share the Good News of Jesus with the world. I know you will join me in thanking each of them for their partnership in this ministry and will hold us all in prayer as we continue to move through transition.

I am deeply thankful for each of you, for the congregations and communities you represent, and for the ways you live and move and share the love of Jesus in the communities where you live and serve. *Like Good Stewards*, may we use our God given gifts to bless one another and the world Jesus so dearly loves.

Together in Ministry,

+*Bishop Ginny Aebischer*

Office of the Bishop Official Acts April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

Annual Assembly

November 8, 2022 - Nominating Committee Meeting
May 11, 2023 - COE Pre-Assembly Meeting
May 25, 2023 – Reference & Counsel Committee Meeting
May 30, 2023 – Reference & Counsel Committee Meeting
June 8-10, 2023 – Annual Assembly
June 20, 2023 – Reference & Counsel Committee Meeting with Executive Committee

Calls Accepted

April 1, 2023 – Deacon David Rhyne, Director of Music, St. Michael, Greenville
April 5, 2023 – The Rev. Dan Kirkpatrick, Thomas McAfee Funeral Homes, Director of Grief Resources and Education
April 14, 2023 – The Rev. Kathleen Miko, Interim Minister, SC Synod
May 7, 2023 – The Rev. Rebecca Wicker, Summer Memorial, Newberry
May 8, 2023 – The Rev. Dr. Scott Landrum, St. James, Sumter
May 23, 2023 – The Rev. Nathan Gragg, Development Officer, NovusWay Ministries
July 1, 2023 – The Rev. William Strand, St. Mark, Batesburg-Leesville & Corinth, Saluda
August 1, 2023 – The Rev. Lance Henderson, Union, Leesville
August 1, 2023 – Deacon Chris St. Clair, Joy, Moore
October 1, 2023 – The Rev. Mark Smith, St. John, Lexington
October 22, 2023 – The Rev. Robert Harrell, III, St. John's, Charleston
November 6, 2023 – The Rev. Sue Johnson, Chaplain, Lutheran Homes of SC
November 19, 2023 – Michele Fischer, St. John Lutheran Church, Irmo
January 7, 2024 – The Rev. Ronald Philabaum, Mt. Horeb, Chapin
February 4, 2024 – The Rev. Christi Pursey, Crossroads, Indian Land
March 31, 2024 – The Rev. Angela Jennings, Holy Trinity and Nazareth Parish
April 1, 2024 – The Rev. Greg Van Dyke, Lutheran Church by the Lake

Campus Ministry

August 21, 2023—Interview for new WELCM campus minister
November 15, 2023—Task Force Meeting

Candidacy

April 25-26, 2023 – Candidacy Committee Meeting, Entrance Decisions
June 20, 2023 – Candidacy Hearing, ELCA
October 3-4, 2023 – Candidacy Committee Meeting, Endorsement Decision
December 5-6, 2023 – Candidacy Committee Meeting, Approval Decision
2023 Data
Number of Candidates Entranced: Word and Sacrament – 1 Word and Service – 2
Number of Candidates Endorsed: Word and Sacrament – 2
Number of Candidates Approved: Word and Sacrament – 2 Word and Service – 1

Closing of Congregations

Faith Lutheran Chapel, Pickens – July 18, 2023
Atonement Lutheran Church, Laurens – December 10, 2023
St. John, Johnston – February 25, 2024

Communications

Facilitated Zoom Meetings, Neal Fischer, Director of Communications

April 2023 - 14 Zoom Meeting Sessions
May 2023 - 21 Zoom Meeting Sessions

June 2023 - 16 Zoom Meeting Sessions
July 2023 - 21 Zoom Meeting Sessions
August 2023 - 16 Zoom Meeting Sessions
September 2023 - 18 Zoom Meeting Sessions
October 2023 - 13 Zoom Meeting Sessions
November 2023 - 15 Zoom Meeting Sessions
December 2023 - 7 Zoom Meeting Sessions
January 2024 – 13 Zoom Meeting Sessions
February 2024 - 19 Zoom Meeting Sessions
March 2024 - 11 Zoom Meeting Sessions

Produced Online Worship Services, Neal Fischer, Director of Communications

April 2023 - 5 Online Worship Services
May 2023 - 4 Online Worship Services
June 2023 - 9 Online Worship Services
July 2023 - 5 Online Worship Services
August 2023 - 5 Online Worship Services including the dedication of Cristo Rey
September 2023 - 4 Online Worship Services
October 2023 - 5 Online Worship Services
November 2023 - 4 Online Worship Services
December 2023 - 6 Online Worship Services
January 2024 - 6 Online Worship Services
February 2024 - 5 Online Worship Services
March 2024 - 4 Online Worship Services

Lutheran Living in South Carolina Video Magazine, Neal Fischer, Director of Communications

May 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published
July 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published
September 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published
November 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published

eNews, Neal Fischer, Director of Communications

April 2023 - 4 weekly editions, 2 Assembly editions, and 1 special editions
May 2023 - 5 weekly editions, 2 Assembly editions, and 1 special editions
June 2023 - 4 weekly editions and 1 special editions
July 2023 - 4 weekly editions and 1 special editions
August 2023 - 5 weekly editions and 1 special editions
September 2023 - 4 weekly editions and 1 special editions
October 2023 - 4 weekly editions and 2 special editions
November 2023 - 5 weekly editions and 2 special editions
December 2023 - 3 weekly editions, 1 Assembly edition and 2 special editions
January 2024 - 5 weekly editions, 1 Assembly edition, and 2 special editions
February 2024 - 4 weekly editions, 2 Assembly editions, and 2 special editions
March 2024 - 4 weekly editions, 2 Assembly editions, and 1 special edition

Lutheran FAQ videos, Neal Fischer, Director of Communications and The Rev. Emily Hartmann, Assistant to the Bishop

April 2023 - 2 Recorded, Produced, and Published
May 2023 - 1 Recorded, Produced, and Published
July 2023 - 1 Recorded, Produced, and Published
August 2023 - 3 Recorded, Produced, and Published
November 2023 - 3 Recorded, Produced, and Published
January 2024 - 1 Recorded, Produced, and Published
February 2024 - 1 Recorded, Produced, and Published

Produced Videos (other), Neal Fischer, Director of Communications

April 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published Bishop's Easter Message

May 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published 7 videos shown at Assembly and elsewhere

June 2023 - Streamed and produced Synod Assembly Live including 18 hours of video

June 2023 - Produced and Published 22 Synod Assembly videos for eNews and posting

August 2023 - Produced and Published Promotional video for Gather Midlands and A message from LDR Carolinas for Maui Wildfire Support

September 2023 - Helped Facilitate Regional Training Event for Synod Staffs, produced and published a promotional video for the Ministry Toolbox events

October 2022 - Helped Facilitate Regional Training Event for Synod Staffs, produced and published Ministry Toolbox promotional video

November 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published a 90 minute special video about the history and context of the Israel-Hamas war

December 2023 - Recorded, Produced, and Published Bishop's Christmas Message

January 2024 - Recorded, Produced, and Published promotional video for the 200th Anniversary season.

March 2024 - Produced, and Published Three 200th Anniversary Videos for related to women in South Carolina

Community Outreach

March 18, 2024--MORE Justice Nehemiah Action

Conference of Bishops

May 4, 2023 COB Meeting (Zoom)

May 18, 2023 COB Meeting (Zoom)

June 15, 2023 COB Meeting (Zoom)

September 21, 2023 ELCA Roster Committee Meeting (Zoom)

September 26- 30, 2023 Fall COB Meeting

October 19, 2023 COB Meeting (Zoom)

November 30, 2023 COB Meeting (Zoom)

February 21, 2024 ELCA Roster Committee Meeting (Zoom)

February 27 – March 2, 2024 Spring COB Meeting

Conference of Deans/Conference Meetings

September 14, 2023 – Conference of Deans Meeting

January 30, 2024 – Heartland Conference Leaders Meeting

February 22, 2024 – Conference of Deans Meeting

March 5, 2024 – Midlands Coffee and Conversation Gathering

March 5, 2024 – Saxe-Gotha Coffee and Conversation Gathering

March 21, 2024 – Western Coffee and Conversation Gathering

Congregations that have voted to leave the ELCA & Synod Council Action

St. Paul, Pomaria – First Vote – October 16, 2022, Second Vote – January 29, 2023, Synod Council voted no to Disaffiliation February 27, 2023. St. Paul, Pomaria voted to Dissolve – Fall 2023.

Conversations/ Pastoral Visits with Pastors/Deacons/Council Leaders – General and Call Process Individual Meetings

529 (estimate)

Council Meetings, Call Committee Meetings & Congregational Events

May 9, 2023 – St. John, Charleston, Vestry Meeting

May 15, 2023 – Colony, Newberry, Council Meeting

May 17, 2023 – St. John, Charleston, Call Committee Meeting

May 21, 2023 – Amazing Grace/CrossRoads, Indianland, Congregation Event

May 23, 2023 – Holy Spirit, Charleston, Council Conversation

June 1, 2023 – Grace, Prosperity, Council Meeting

June 27, 2023 - Amazing Grace/CrossRoads, Indianland, Call Committee Meeting

July 9, 2023 – St. Matthew, Pomaria, Council Meeting
 July 12, 2023 – Mt. Horeb, Chapin, Call Committee Meeting
 July 24, 2023 – Nazareth/Holy Trinity, Lexington/Pelion, Call Committee Meeting
 July 25, 2023 – Grace, Prosperity, Council Meeting
 July 26, 2023- Good Shepherd, Walterboro/ Ehrhardt Parish, Call Committee Meeting
 August 6, 2023 – St. Mark, Isle of Palms, Council Meeting
 August 7, 2023 – St. Paul, Gilbert, Call Committee Meeting
 August 9, 2023 – St. John, Irmo/Pomaria, Pomaria, Call Committee Meeting
 August 14, 2023 – Grace, Gilbert, Council Meeting
 September 24, 2023 – Reformation, Columbia Congregation Event
 October 15, 2023 – Pisgah, Lexington, Council Meeting
 September 18, 2023 – St. Matthew's, Charleston, Council Meeting
 November 20, 2023 – Zion, Lexington, Council Meeting
 February 4, 2024 – St. David, West Columbia, Council Meeting
 February 6, 2024 – St. Mark, Isle of Palms, Council meeting
 February 11, 2024 – Grace, Prosperity, Congregational Event
 February 18, 2024 – Grace, Gilbert, Congregational Event
 February 22, 2024 – Peak-Springhill Parish, Chapin/Peak, Call Committee Meeting
 March 5, 2024 – Reformation, Columbia, Call Committee Meeting
 March 19, 2024 – Cedar Grove, Leesville, Council Meeting
 March 20, 2024 – Pisgah, Lexington, Call Committee Meeting

Deaths

July 29, 2023 – Deacon Thomas O'Brien
 September 1, 2023 – The Rev. Henry Brandt
 October 10, 2023 – The Rev. Paul Hirth
 November 13, 2023 – The Rev. Kathy Harris
 November 14, 2023 – Mr. Robert Gay, spouse of The Rev. Mikki Gay
 February 10, 2024 – Jerry Dean Jennings, spouse of The Rev. Angela Jennings
 February 11, 2024 – Dell Merchant Gunter, spouse of The Rev. Rodney Gunter
 February 28, 2024 – The Rev. James F. Shealy
 March 2, 2024 – The Rev. Robert Earl McCombs

Finance

May 9, 2023– Finance Committee Meeting
 August 21, 2023 – Finance Committee Meeting
 September 6, 2023 – Mission Endowment Grant Committee
 November 15, 2023 – Finance Committee Meeting
 January 23, 2024 – Finance Committee Meeting

Global Network

April 18, 2023 – ELCA Tanzania Partners Meeting (Zoom)
 June 6, 2023 – ELCA Tanzania Partners Meeting (Zoom)
 July 9, 2023 – Commissioning of the SC Tanzania Team
 October 11, 2023 – Tanzania Team Meeting
 October 31- November 3, 2023 –ELCA Latin American Companion Consultation, Houston, TX.
 November 5-13, 2023 – Visit with JELC Leadership, Tokyo, Japan and Installation of Bishop Sreyliak, Lutheran Church in Cambodia
 February 9, 2024 – Colombia Partner Bishops Meeting
 March 2024 – Planning for Colombian Partners Spring Worship Service and Summer Women's Retreat

Inclusiveness Network

April 25, 2023—Book Study
 April 28-30, 2023 Civil Rights Pilgrimage & Tour with Southeastern Synod to Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma, Birmingham

May 9, 2023—Book Study
 May 18, 2023--Inclusiveness Network Meeting
 May 23, 2023—Book Study
 June 20, 2023—Book Study
 July 11, 2023—Book Study
 July 13, 2023--Inclusiveness Network Meeting
 July 25, 2023—Book Study
 August 15, 2023—Book Study
 August 29, 2023—Book Study
 September 26, 2023—Book Study
 October 7, 2023—Trip to the International African-American Museum in Charleston
 October 16, 2023—Gender Justice Task Force Organizational Meeting
 October 17, 2023—Book Study
 October 19, 2023--Inclusiveness Network Meeting
 November 7, 2023—Book Study
 November 9, 2023—Inclusiveness Network Meeting
 January 14, 2024—MLK Jr. Day worship at Ascension, Columbia
 January 25, 2024—Inclusiveness Network Meeting
 February 6, 2024—Book Study
 February 10, 2024 – Columbia Civil Rights Pilgrimage & Tour
 February 20, 2024—Book Study
 February 22, 2024—Inclusiveness Network Meeting
 March 5, 2024—Book Study
 March 18, 2024—MORE Justice Nehemiah Action Gathering, Columbia
 March 19, 2024—Book Study
 March 21, 2024—Inclusiveness Network Meeting

Indigenous Peoples Accompaniment Network

May 7, 2023--Network Meeting
 May 26, 2023—Synodical Accompaniment Group Meeting
 July 23, 2023—Network Meeting
 September 14, 2023—Synodical Accompaniment Group Meeting

Installations

July 23, 2023 – Deacon Dr. David Rhyne, St. Michael Lutheran Church, Greenville. Installed by Bishop Virginia Aebischer.
 July 30, 2023 – The Rev. Sue Johnson, Lutheran Church by the Lake. Installed by the Rev. Maria Miller.
 August 13, 2023 – The Rev. Timothy Scott Landrum, St. James, Sumter. Installed by Bishop Virginia Aebischer.
 September 17, 2023 – The Rev. Lance Henderson, Union, Leesville. Installed by The Rev. Lisa Isenhower.
 September 24, 2023 – The Rev. William Strand, St. Mark & Corinth. Installed by The Rev. Lisa Isenhower.
 October 8, 2023—Deacon Chris St. Clair, Joy, Moore. Installed by The Rev. Emily Hartmann.

 January 7, 2024 – The Rev. Michele Fischer, St. John, Irmo and Pomaria, Pomaria. Installed by The Rev. Emily Hartmann.
 January 7, 2024 – The Rev. Sue Johnson, Heritage at Lowman, Chaplain. Installed by The Rev. Michele Fischer.
 January 28, 2024 – The Rev. Mark Smith, St. John Lutheran Church, Lexington. Installed by The Rev. Wade Roof.
 March 10, 2024 – The Rev. Robert Harrell, St. John Lutheran Church, Charleston, Installed by The Rev. Virginia Aebischer

Institutional & Auxiliary Partnership Meetings/Events

May 4, 2023 – NovusWay Board Meeting
May 10, 2023 – LTSS Baccalaureate Service
May 18, 2023 – Lutheran Homes of South Carolina Board Meeting
June 17, 2023 – LCY Convention Presiding Minister for Worship
August 4-5, 2023 – SCLRC Board Meeting
August 8, 2023 – LTSS Advisory Council
August 17, 2023 – Lutheran Homes of South Carolina Board Meeting
September 11, 2023 – LTSS Curriculum Committee
December 14, 2023 – NovusWay Board Budget Planning Meeting
January 14, 2024 – SC LMM Meeting
January 17, 2024 – NovusWay Board Meeting
January 18, 2024 – LTSS Opening Worship, Preacher
February 16-17, 2024 – SC LMM Convention
February 20, 2024 – LTSS Bishops of Region 9 Roundtable Conversations
February 23, 2024 – LTSS Advisory Council
February 26, 2024 – LTSS Alumni Council
March 12-13, 2024 – LTSS Advisory Council

Interim Pastors

The Rev. Dr. Mary Anderson, Pilgrim, Lexington
The Rev. Mike Shackelford, St. Matthew, Pomaria
The Rev. Beth Neubauer, Crossroads, Indian Land & Amazing Grace, Waxaw
The Rev. Judy McGuire, Crossroads, Indian Land & Amazing Grace, Waxaw
The Rev. Mark Scott, St. John's, Charleston; St. Peter's, Pawley's Island
The Rev. Christi Pursey, Ehrhardt Parish, Ehrhardt
The Rev. Kevin Ogilvie, St. Mark/Corinth, Leesville; Cedar Grove, Leesville
The Rev. Matthew Lash, St. Paul, Gilbert
The Rev. Jane Mitcham, Grace, Prosperity
The Rev. Linda Anderson, Mt. Olivet, Chapin & Mt. Hermon, Peak
The Rev. Steve Counts, Nazareth, Lexington
The Rev. Craig Boehlke, Good Shepherd, Walterboro
The Rev. Art Turfa, Faith, West Columbia
The Rev. Bill Ebener, Union, Leesville
The Rev. Mark Buchan, St. John, Irmo
The Rev. Pat Riddle, Mt. Horeb, Chapin
The Rev. Leroy Cannon, Reformation, Columbia
The Rev. Karen Hawkins, Summer Memorial, Newberry; Grace, Gilbert
The Rev. Christine Parham, St. James, Sumter; Our Saviour, West Columbia
The Rev. Wayne Young, Lutheran Church by the Lake, McCormick
The Rev. Jim Glander, St. James, Summit
The Rev. Kathleen Miko, Zion, Lexington
The Rev. Gary Brandenburg, Mt. Calvary, Johnston
The Rev. Jan Setzler, Colony, Newberry

Leadership Meetings/Events

April 5, 2023 – Planning Meeting for Council Training
April 17, 2023 – The Great Re-Evaluation Course
May 8, 2023 – The Great Re-Evaluation Course
May 15, 2023 – Planning Meeting for Council Training
May 15, 2023—Design Thinking Cohort
May 17, 2023—Congregational Vitality Event
May 22, 2023 – The Great Re-Evaluation Course
June 5, 2023 – The Great Re-Evaluation Course
June 26, 2023—Design Thinking Cohort
July 12, 2023 – Compensation Guidelines Team Meeting

July 17, 2023—Design Thinking Cohort
 July 20, 2023 – Staff Development Day
 July 24, 2023 – Synod Council Retreat Planning
 August 14, 2023 – Planning Meeting for Council Training
 August 16, 2023 – Portico Meeting with Staff
 August 21, 2023—Design Thinking Cohort
 August 22, 2023 – Unity Bible Team Meeting
 August 22, 2023 – Compensation Guidelines Team Meeting
 August 23, 2023 – Shepherd of the Sea, Garden City, Leadership Meeting
 September 12, 2023 – St. Mark, Isle of Palms, Leadership Meeting
 September 13, 2023 – Trinity, Greenville, Leadership Meeting
 September 18, 2023—Design Thinking Cohort
 September 19, 2023 – Compensation Guidelines Team Meeting
 September 19, 2023 – Unity Bible Team Meeting
 October 5, 2023 – Compensation Guidelines Team Meeting
 October 12, 2023 – Compensation Guidelines Team Meeting
 October 16, 2023—Design Thinking Cohort
 October 16, 2023 – Unity Bible Team Meeting
 October 18, 2023 – Retiree Luncheon
 October 23-25, 2023 – Convocation, Lutheridge, Arden, NC
 October 28, 2023 – SC Synod ToolBox Workshop Day, Messiah, Mauldin
 October 31 – November 3, 2023, ELCA Latin American Consultation, Houston, Texas
 November 16, 2023 – Cedar Grove, Leesville, Bishop's Consultation in Disaffiliation
 November 18, 2023 – SC Synod ToolBox Workshop Day, All Saints, Mt. Pleasant
 November 19, 2023 – Bishop's Listening Team Meeting
 November 26-27, 2023 – Bishop's Listening Team Meetings
 December 3, 2023 – Cedar Grove, Leesville, 1st Vote on Disaffiliation (did not pass)
 December 4, 2023 – Unity Bible Team Meeting
 December 6, 7 & 11, 2023 – Staff Annual Reviews
 December 11, 2023 – Executive Council meeting with Legal Counsel
 December 12, 2023 – Meeting with Leaders in Charleston
 December 13, 2023 – Staff Development Day
 December 17, 2023 – Leadership Meeting
 December 18, 2023—Design Thinking Cohort
 January 15, 2024—Design Thinking Cohort
 January 16, 2024 – Mutual Ministry Committee meeting
 January 18, 2024 – LR Board Leaders Meeting
 January 24, 2024 – Call Process update Team Meeting
 January 25, 2024 – Messiah, Mauldin, Leadership Meeting
 January 27, 2024 – Congregational Council Training Event Kick-off with GSB
 January 28, 2024 – ELCA Mission Meeting Upstate
 January 29, 2024 – Unity Bible Team Meeting
 January 31, 2024 – Anniversary Team Meeting
 February 6, 2024 – Leadership Meeting
 March 11, 2024 – Unity Bible Team Meeting

Ordinations

William F. Strand – July 10, 2023 – Ordained by Bishop Virginia Aebischer at Messiah Lutheran Church, Madison, AL

Region 9 Meetings/Events

April 13, 2023 – Region 9 Bishops
 April 25, 2023 – Region 9 Council Meeting
 May 18, 2023 - Region 9 Bishops
 June 29, 2023 – Region 9 First Call Consultation
 July 2-7, 2023 – Region 9 Bishops Annual Retreat

August 10, 2023 – Region 9 Bishops
August 22, 2023 – Region 9 Bishops
September 14, 2023 – Region 9 Bishops
October 20-22, 2023 – Virginia Synod Bishop Installation Weekend
December 14, 2023 – Region 9 Bishops
February 14, 2024 – Region 9 Bishops and Assistants BIE Assessment

Resigned from the Roster

September 13, 2023 – The Rev. Steven B. Counts

Resignations

April 13, 2023 – The Rev. Kathleen Miko, Lutheran Homes of SC
April 19, 2023 – The Rev. Nathan Gragg, Zion, Lexington
July 1, 2023 – Deacon Ashlyn Cox, Holy Spirit, Charleston
July 30, 2023 – The Rev. Emily Mooneyhan (Ordained Ecumenical Partner), Mt. Pleasant, Saluda
July 31, 2023 – The Rev. Lance Henderson, Our Saviour, West Columbia
August 31, 2023 – The Rev. Mark Smith, Mt. Calvary, Johnston
October 22, 2023 – The Rev. Sue Johnson
November 19, 2023 - The Rev. Michele Fischer
February 29, 2024 - The Rev. Angela Jennings

Retirement

December 31, 2023 – Deacon Deborah Poole

Stated Supply Pastors

The Rev. Reggie Cruse, St. Peter, Batesburg-Leesville
The Rev. Rus Stilwell, St. Andrew, Blythewood
The Rev. Colin Kerr, Ecumenical Partner, St. Barnabas, Charleston
The Rev. Paul Williams, St. John, Clinton; St. Timothy, Whitmire
The Rev. Greg Martin, Trinity, Georgetown
The Rev. Jann Boyd, Enon, Leesville
Deaconess Laura Sharpe-Waites, Bethany, Newberry
The Rev. Ozzie Herlong, Bethany, Lexington
The Rev. Carroll Robinson, Holy Trinity, Pelion
The Rev. Art Hallman, Bethlehem, Pomaria
The Rev. Floyd Sides, Bachman Chapel, Prosperity
The Rev. Maria Miller, Augsburg, Union
The Rev. John Stoudemayer, Silverstreet
The Rev. Pam Turfa, Sandy Run, Swansea

Synod Council

April 19, 2023 – Executive Council Meeting
April 24, 2023 – Synod Council Meeting
June 5, 2023 – Executive Council Meeting
August 8, 2023 – Executive Council Meeting
August 26, 2023 – Synod Council Retreat
October 26, 2023 – Executive Council Meeting
November 13, 2023 – Synod Council Meeting
February 8, 2024 – Executive Council Meeting
February 26, 2024 – Synod Council Meeting
November 29, 2023 – Lifeline Distribution Team Meeting

Stewardship

Rev. Ozzie Herlong, Director for Stewardship
May 23, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Kickoff
June 5, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Meeting

August 2, 2023 – Steward Leader's Network Meeting
 August 21, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Meeting
 August 23, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Meeting
 September 7, 2023 – Building a Culture of Generosity Meeting
 September 13, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Meeting
 October 17, 2023 – Building a Culture of Generosity Meeting
 October 17, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Meeting
 October 28, 2023 – Ministry Toolbox, Finances as Faith Formation, All Saints, Mt. Pleasant
 November 8, 2023 – Steward Leader's Network Meeting
 November 13, 2023 – Building a Culture of Generosity Meeting
 November 14, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Meeting
 November 18, 2023 – Ministry Toolbox, Finances as Faith Formation, Messiah, Mauldin
 November 27, 2023 – Building a Culture of Generosity Meeting
 November 29, 2023 – Lifeline Distribution Team Meeting
 January 9, 2023 – Stewardship for All Seasons Meeting
 January 25, 2024 – Stewardship for All Seasons, Storytelling Track
 January 25, 2024 – LTSS/Region 9 Council for Stewardship Education
 January 19, 2024 – Stewardship Consultation, Grace, Prosperity
 March 5, 2024 – Stewardship for All Seasons, Storytelling Track
 March 6, 2024 – Steward Leader's Network Meeting
 March 15-16, 2024 – Senior Class Symposium at LTSS with Portico and Mission Investment Fund

Transfers Granted

June 30, 2023 – The Rev. Steve Cooper, Transfer to Southeastern Synod
 December 5, 2023 – The Rev. Doug Graul, Transfer to The Episcopal Church – The Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina
 February 2,
 March 3, 2024 – The Rev. Kara Stewart, Transfer to North Carolina Synod

Transfers Received

July 12, 2023 – The Rev. Jenny Pratt, Transfer from Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
 August 1, 2023 – Deacon Chris St.Clair, Transfer from Southwestern Texas Synod
 February 11, 2024 – The Rev. Ronald Philabaum, Transfer from North Carolina Synod
 February 15, 2024 – The Rev. Clarence K. Derrick, Transfer from North Carolina Synod
 March 5, 2024 – The Rev. Gary Soop, Transfer from Southeastern Synod

Worship Celebrations and Special Events

April 2, 2023 – St. John, Charleston, Officiate at Holy Communion
 April 16, 2023 – St. James, Summit, 150th Anniversary, Preach
 April 16, 2023—Summer Memorial, Newberry, Bring greetings and attend worship for remembrance of Rev. Dr. Martti Saarinen
 April 23, 2023—Faith, Batesburg. Preach and Preside.
 May 4, 2023 – Live Oak AME, Vance, National Day of Prayer Worship Leader
 May 7, 2023- Christ the King, Greenville, Worship Leader and Preacher
 May 28, 2023 – Zion, Lexington, Preach and Preside
 June 9, 2023 – Mt. Hermon, West Columbia, Commissioning of Tanzania Team
 June 29, 2023- Camp HUGG Closing Program
 July 16, 2023 – Faith, Pickens, Holy Closure
 July 16, 2023—University, Clemson. Preach and Preside.
 July 23, 2023 – St. Michael, Greenville, Installation Deacon David Rhyne
 July 30, 2023 – Pomaria, Pomaria and St. John, Irmo, Preach and Preside
 August 1, 2023- St. Stephens, Lexington, O'Brien Funeral
 August 12, 2023 – Cristo Rey, West Columbia, Dedication
 August 13, 2023 – Cedar Grove, Leesville, Worship Leader and Preacher
 August 13, 2023 – St. James, Sumter, Installation Pastor Scott Landrum

August 27, 2023—Bethlehem, Pomaria. Preach and Preside.
 September 10, 2023 – Mt. Hebron, Leesville, 125th Anniversary Preacher
 September 17, 2023—Mt Olivet, Chapin. 150th Anniversary Presider
 September 17, 2023—Grace, Rock Hill, 50th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration
 September 24, 2023—St. Thomas, Chapin, Homecoming Preacher
 October 8, 2023 – Bethel, White Rock, Homecoming Preach and Preside
 October 8, 2023—Joy, Moore. Preach and Install Deacon Chris St. Clair
 October 20, 2023—Incarnation, Columbia. Tapped the keg for Oktoberfest.
 October 22, 2023—Providence, Lexington, Preach and Preside
 October 29, 2023 – Christ, Hilton Head, 50th Anniversary Preacher
 November 9, 2023 – Installation of Bishop, Lutheran Church in Cambodia, Worship leader and Preacher
 November 17, 2023—Funeral of Bob Gay. Attended.
 December 2, 2023—Funeral of Pr. Kathy Harris. Assisted.
 December 10, 2023 – Atonement, Laurens, Holy Closure
 January 7, 2024 – St. Luke, Summerville, Celebration of 10th Anniversary of Pastors Rice
 January 7, 2024—St. John's, Irmo, and Pomaria, Pomaria. Preached and Installed Pr. Michele Fischer
 January 14, 2024 – St. Michael, Columbia, 200th Anniversary of Synod Organ Recital
 February 16, 2024 – St. James, Newberry, Mrs. Gunter Funeral
 February 17, 2024—Reformation, Columbia. African-American History Month Service. Led prayer.
 February 25, 2024 – St. John, Johnston, Holy Closure
 March 3, 2024 – St. John, Pomaria, Pastor James Shealy Funeral
 March 3, 2024—Hope, Vance, Preacher
 March 8, 2024 – Shepherd of the Sea, Garden City, Rathe Funeral
 March 10, 2024 – St. John, Charleston, Installation Pastor Robb Harrell
 March 21, 2024—St. Matthias, Easley. Preacher and presider.

Youth

Various one on one meetings with youth leaders
 April 23, 2023—Grace Works Planning Meeting
 May 16 and 21, 2023—ELCA Youth Gathering Team Meetings
 May 21 and 30, 2023—ELCA Youth Gathering Info Sessions
 June 1 and 6, 2023—Lutheran Church Youth Executive Team Meeting
 June 17, 2023—Youth Ministry Visioning Event
 June 24-30, 2023—Camp HUGG
 July 17-21, 2023—GraceWorks Columbia
 August 22 and 24, 2023—ELCA Youth Gathering Team Meetings
 September 7, 2023—Youth Ministry Leadership Team Meeting
 January 17-21, 2024—Youth Ministry Extravaganza, New Orleans, LA
 February 2, 2024—ELCA Youth Gathering Info Session

Report of the Vice President, Deacon Lexanne Graves 2023-2024 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

Your South Carolina Synod Council gathered in August 2023 in person (Woo Hoo!!) around our new Synod Mission and Vision Statements and Core Biblical Values. It was a huge blessing to be able to meet with one another instead of staring at screen with little faces in boxes on it. It was invigorating to have Mike Ward from GSB Consulting with us who helped us integrate our values and statements into our DNA as church leaders. This intentional time together was invaluable and help bring unity among our diverse council church leaders. Now each time we gather subsequently we dig deeper into our statements and values to ensure that we are all working towards these goals in mind.

One of the gaps I felt needed to be addressed as a council operating on your behalf between synod assemblies was engagement and brainstorming between our synod council leaders. You see, we only meet 4 times a year to handle the Synod business and I felt we were missing a huge opportunity of communication in between meetings. So we are doing a “holy experiment” and using an online platform called BaseCamp for Non-Profits which I believe is an investment that has paid for itself over and over again. BaseCamp is a secure online platform whereby our Synod Council leaders can message one another, ask questions whenever desired, engage in innovative idea sharing, share real-time information from Synod/Churchwide/Church Council, and so much more. Instead of having to wait until the next meeting or send multiple emails, everything we need to lead and discern is in one place and can keep our leaders engaged in synod business/communication daily! Our prayer is that this online opportunity will foster enhanced communication and sharing that we were missing.

While our Synod indeed faces many challenges, we also have a lot for which to be grateful. I am grateful for a Mission Statement that is clear and concise: ***Equipping church leaders to develop impactful faith communities and disciples of Jesus.*** I am grateful for a Vision Statement that gets to the core of what God seeks in our synod: ***Every person in South Carolina experiences God's love and grace.*** I am grateful for core value biblical texts that ground us:

- **Living Faith in Jesus as our Cornerstone (I Peter 2:4-6)**
- **Fostering opportunities for partnership among leaders and communities of faith (Romans 15:5-7)**
- **Walking together in sacred trust as siblings in Christ. (Luke 24:28-32)**

God continues to speak through your 22 elected Synod Council members and its four officers throughout the year. Here is a list highlighting some of the amazing work our SC Synod is doing with and alongside our 142 congregations. We are truly blessed to be a blessing!

- + Gave financial freedom to Rostered Ministers through our SC Lifeline Distribution Fund who have been saddled with large educational and seminary debt;
- + Engaged in fruitful conversations on racial reconciliation each time we gather as a synod council;
- + Maintained the Rosters of both Ministers of Word and Service (Deacons) and Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Pastors) who are active, retired, interim and on leave from call;
- + Improved Compensation Guidelines for rostered ministers based on feedback from last year's assembly, (specifically in the areas of family/bereavement leave and increased compensation to address inflation) designed to promote healthy conversations AND healthy rostered ministers about defined compensation;
- + Encouraged congregations to tell God's Amazing story of what the Spirit is doing in our congregations!; and,
- + Participated in the Synod wide “Ministry Toolbox” Event that taught us about faith formation, innovative youth ministry, a new way to look at our constitutions, and our social media presence online as Lutheran Christians.

I ASK you all to start now considering what gifts you think a Synod Vice President needs to have in order to lead our Synod in the coming years. We will be voting on a new Synod Vice President at our upcoming Synod Assembly in June 2025. I know you want someone who can keep confidence and be transparent. You want someone who can carry out the Fiduciary Duties--Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty and Duty of Obedience. You also want someone who can communicate effectively among all Three Expressions of our Church—Congregation, Synod, and Churchwide. Our Constitution only provides a few things about the Synod VP (must be a layperson elected by assembly, not receive a salary, chair Synod Council meetings, and a voting member in good standing in their congregation), but I encourage you to ponder what gifts of the Spirit this person needs to lead our Synod in its highest elected lay position in our Synod.

The Spirit continues to amaze me in the provision of gifts needed among our Synod Staff & Synod Council who serve on your behalf. I am grateful to the fellow disciples who serve on our Synod's Networks & Task Forces by being God's hands and feet out in our communities. It is the Lord's wisdom I seek daily to fulfill this role and I am constantly returning to the Lord for strength as Nehemiah teaches. Thank you for our partnership together!



Report of the Secretary 2023-2024 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

It is an honor to serve as secretary of the South Carolina (SC) Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In this role, as the SC Synod celebrates the 200th anniversary of the founding of the synod in 2024, I see how this synod is walking together in Christ with congregations, lay persons, rostered ministers, and the Churchwide Organization for the sake of the world. Being thankful for one another and for our relationship as church together is important right now.

Bishop Virginia Aebischer; The Rev. Richard Carter and The Rev. Emily Hartmann, Assistants to the Bishop; The Rev. James Henricks, Director for Evangelical Mission; Deacon Lexanne Graves, Vice-President; and Raymond Hendrix, Treasurer give us able and faithful leadership as the South Carolina Synod moves forward in God's mission. This office is assisted by a dedicated support staff that carries out many details: Neal Fischer, Charlene Fink, Wendy Davidson, and Deacon Sarah Bowers. Wendy Davidson, Administrative Assistant, and Kelley Mintz have ably prepared the *Directory and Minutes of the South Carolina Synod 2023* and the *Bulletin of Reports* for voting members of this assembly, respectively. I extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to these persons for all their good work. The duties of this office include the recording of the minutes of the Synod Council meetings and the Synod Assemblies. Other duties of this office include correspondence on Synod Council actions, providing for the archives and communication with the Churchwide organization. I am also serving as Chair, Constitution Committee.

In order to better preserve the history and heritage of the SC Synod, congregations are encouraged to use the James R. Crumley Jr., Archives, a Region 9 Southeast and Caribbean ELCA Ministry dedicated to the preservation of Lutheran History, located in the Lineberger Memorial Library at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia. Congregations are encouraged to collect records and publish historical information. As secretary, assisted by synod staff and volunteers, I am responsible for the continuing assessment, retention and transfer of archival materials. The archive is a good site for older and original parish registers; micro-film copies of current parish registers or older parish registers; copies of congregational histories and anniversary booklets (especially in 25-year increments); and photographs of church buildings. Preserving historic records is about preserving stories of God's people. Go to <https://www.crumleyarchives.com/> for more information.

Each year, the statistics of the congregations of this synod are collected and compiled by the Office of the Secretary, ELCA. This data provides a detailed picture of statistical trends for each congregation and for this synod. There were 114 congregations out of 143 congregations that filed reports at the end of December 31, 2022 (*the latest year that statistics were available at the time this report was written.*) The baptized membership decreased by 1,678 persons from 38,770 to 37,092 at the end of 2022. The average size of a congregation in this synod is 261 baptized members. Regular giving by members in congregations increased by \$225,197 from \$33,210,647 to \$33,435,844. Average giving per confirmed member increased in 2022 by \$59.60 from \$1,256.49 to \$1,316.09. The average weekly worship attendance per congregation was 75 persons (on-site) and the average weekly worship attendance per congregation was 71 persons (on-line). Source: *Summary of Congregational Statistics* are available on the synod website. Go to <https://scsynod.com/about/> and download the 2023 *Directory and Minutes*, pp. 311ff.

In accordance with S7.32.A20.f. of the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the South Carolina Synod, ELCA, I recommend that two copies of the *Minutes of the 2023 South Carolina Synod Assembly*, which have been certified by the bishop and the secretary as the official protocol of that assembly, be approved and deposited in the archives.

Rev. W. Osborne Herlong Jr., Secretary
ELCA Synod of South Carolina

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Year Ended January 31, 2024

Referred to as 2023-24

It is a privilege and honor to serve as treasurer of the SC Synod. I would like to thank Charlene Fink, Synod Accountant, and the other staff members for making my job so enjoyable.

Mission Support

Below is a summary of mission support from our congregations for the year 2023-24 as compared to 2022-23:

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2022-23</u>
Mission Support Budgeted	\$2,380,000	\$2,470,000
Mission Support Received	\$2,260,405	\$2,318,729

We received less mission support in 2023-24 than the prior year. We are hopeful giving will increase in 2024-25. Thanks to all of you for your contributions. They are greatly appreciated. In addition to mission support, the Synod received \$370,121 in 2023-24 for other funds (ministries) such as World Hunger, World Relief, Domestic and International Disaster Relief, Missionary Support, various institutions, etc. Mission support from the 147 congregations is presented in the schedule on the following pages.

Expenditures

Below is a summary of expenditures for the year 2023-24 as compared to 2022-23:

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2022-23</u>
Mission Benevolence	\$ 819,894	\$1,005,340
Institutions	\$ 182,200	\$ 183,000
Rostered Ministry	\$ 65,645	\$ 75,984
Congregations & Lay Leaders	\$ 94,834	\$ 88,046
New Leader Development	\$ 174,481	\$ 152,091
Connections/Resources for Synod Ministries	\$ 264,839	\$ 278,350
Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 895,548</u>	<u>\$ 843,989</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$2,497,441</u>	<u>\$2,626,800</u>

The ELCA support for 2023-24 was 35% of unrestricted mission support. For a comparison of expenditures with the budget, see the following financial statements.

Mission Funding/Spending Plan

The Mission Funding/Spending Plan (The Plan) approved by the Synod Assembly for 2024-25 is \$2,445,000 with support for the ELCA at 30%. The Plan approved by the Synod Council to be recommended to the 2024 Synod Assembly for 2025-26 is \$2,458,500 with support for the ELCA at 22%.

To fund these Plans, the Synod is asking each congregation to give a minimum of 10% of their offering annually. As congregations depend on some members to give more than others, the Synod also depends on some congregations to give more than other congregations. Malachi 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this" says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will be not be room enough to store it."

Investment Income

Investment income for the operating fund for the year ending January 31, 2024 was \$110,379 in comparison to the investment loss of \$85,350 for the year prior year.

Other Items

The SC Synod acquired the property of Faith Lutheran Chapel (Pickens) following the closing of that congregation. The upkeep of this property is under the property committee.

"GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS."

We are all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America and as members we worship in our individual congregations, support local ministries, and support joint ministries through the SC Synod and the ELCA. I believe that the work we do together is a great benefit to God's people.

Raymond L. Hendrix, Jr., Treasurer

South Carolina Synod, ELCA					
Mission Support, SC Synod Support & Other Funds					
February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2024					
	Organization	Mission Support	SC Synod Support	Other Funds	Total
1	All Saints 07396, Mt. Pleasant	\$59,580.32	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$59,580.32
2	Ascension 05596, Columbia	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
3	# Atonement 05658, Laurens	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
4	Augsburg 05648, Union	\$1,185.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$1,335.00
5	Bachman Chapel 05640, Prosperity	\$7,145.00	\$0.00	\$2,528.00	\$9,673.00
6	Beth Eden 05628, Newberry	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
7	Bethany 05627, Newberry	\$8,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,800.00
8	Bethany 05721, Lexington	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$365.00	\$4,365.00
9	Bethel 05620, White Rock	\$18,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,000.00
10	Bethlehem 05608, Irmo	\$18,763.92	\$0.00	\$1,907.00	\$20,670.92
11	Bethlehem 05637, Pomaria	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$877.00	\$10,877.00
12	Bethlehem 05703, Leesville	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
13	Cedar Grove 05705, Leesville	\$17,324.50	\$0.00	\$220.00	\$17,544.50
14	Christ 07329, Hilton Head	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
15	Christ Community 31261, N. Charleston	\$4,800.00	\$0.00	\$28,336.00	\$33,136.00
16	Christ the King 16415, Greenville	\$1,440.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$1,590.00
17	Christus Victor 07571, Columbia	\$18,307.41	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,307.41
18	Colony 05630, Newberry	\$7,887.38	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,887.38
19	Corinth 05724, Saluda	\$0.00	\$3,750.00	\$12,375.00	\$16,125.00
20	Cristo Rey 30851, Lexington	\$1,880.55	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,880.55
21	Cross and Crown 07503, Florence	\$5,332.00	\$0.00	\$1,283.02	\$6,615.02
22	Crossroads 30706, Fort Mill	\$12,892.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$13,392.00
23	Ebenezer 05598, Columbia	\$40,318.00	\$0.00	\$1,729.97	\$42,047.97
24	Ehrhardt Memorial 05677, Ehrhardt	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
25	Emmanuel 05614, West Columbia	\$25,224.78	\$0.00	\$700.00	\$25,924.78
26	Enon 05704, Leesville	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
27	Epiphany 30081, Rock Hill	\$10,281.25	\$0.00	\$3,011.17	\$13,292.42
28	Faith 05615, West Columbia	\$14,499.96	\$0.00	\$1,200.00	\$15,699.96
29	Faith 05631, Newberry	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
30	Faith 05683, Johns Island	\$5,620.00	\$0.00	\$660.00	\$6,280.00
31	Faith 05696, Batesburg-Leesville	\$3,221.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,221.00
32	# Faith Lutheran Chapel 30683, Pickens	\$1,700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,700.00
33	Good Hope 05727, Ward	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
34	Good Shepherd 05600, Columbia	\$43,725.00	\$0.00	\$2,730.17	\$46,455.17
35	Good Shepherd 05612, Swansea	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
36	Good Shepherd 05692, Walterboro	\$10,220.00	\$0.00	\$3,526.00	\$13,746.00
37	Grace 05611, Rock Hill	\$72,035.93	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$72,035.93
38	Grace 05643, Prosperity	\$11,949.07	\$0.00	\$2,895.38	\$14,844.45
39	Grace 05698, Gilbert	\$13,008.00	\$0.00	\$2,561.00	\$15,569.00
40	Holy Communion 05659, Spartanburg	\$1,960.00	\$0.00	\$4,616.20	\$6,576.20
41	Holy Spirit 30725, Charleston	\$18,496.12	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,496.12
42	Holy Trinity 05651, Anderson	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,453.00	\$17,453.00
43	Holy Trinity 05722, Pelion	\$1,250.00	\$0.00	\$2,910.00	\$4,160.00
44	Hope 30080, Vance	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,050.00	\$3,550.00
45	Immanuel 05657, Greenwood	\$34,833.00	\$0.00	\$75.00	\$34,908.00
46	Incarnation 05601, Columbia	\$10,250.04	\$0.00	\$1,743.00	\$11,993.04
47	Joy 30418, Moore	\$55,040.29	\$0.00	\$5,025.00	\$60,065.29
48	King of Glory 07449, North Myrtle Beach	\$3,985.57	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,985.57
49	Living Springs 07829, Columbia	\$54,583.29	\$0.00	\$10,406.98	\$64,990.27
50	Lord of Life 30351, Bluffton	\$16,316.00	\$0.00	\$1,463.60	\$17,779.60
51	Lutheran Church by the Lake 30369, McCormick	\$11,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,888.00	\$13,388.00

South Carolina Synod, ELCA					
Mission Support, SC Synod Support & Other Funds					
February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2024					
	Organization	Mission Support	SC Synod Support	Other Funds	Total
52	Macedonia 05644, Prosperity	\$0.00	\$11,250.00	\$12,070.00	\$23,320.00
53	Martin Luther 05668, Charleston	\$11,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,800.00
54	Messiah 05663, Mauldin	\$24,000.00	\$0.00	\$575.00	\$24,575.00
55	Messiah 05687, Hanahan	\$10,969.28	\$0.00	\$3,597.00	\$14,566.28
56	Mt. Calvary 05701, Johnston	\$4,416.67	\$0.00	\$2,421.26	\$6,837.93
57	Mt. Hebron 05706, Leesville	\$12,000.00	\$3,647.00	\$0.00	\$15,647.00
58	Mt. Hermon 05616, West Columbia	\$14,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,523.23	\$19,523.23
59	Mt. Hermon 05636, Peak	\$10,200.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00	\$11,400.00
60	Mt. Horeb 05589, Chapin	\$54,191.83	\$0.00	\$8,779.00	\$62,970.83
61	Mt. Olivet 05650, Chapin	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$11,000.00
62	Mt. Pilgrim 05625, Prosperity	\$620.00	\$0.00	\$325.00	\$945.00
63	Mt. Pleasant 05678, Ehrhardt	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$220.00	\$6,220.00
64	Mt. Pleasant 05729, Saluda	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
65	Mt. Tabor 05617, West Columbia	\$58,160.91	\$0.00	\$4,269.00	\$62,429.91
66	Mt. Tabor 05626, Little Mountain	\$21,655.36	\$0.00	\$2,717.00	\$24,372.36
67	Nazareth 05710, Lexington	\$840.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$840.00
68	Nuestro Salvador 31098, Greenville	\$1,800.00	\$0.00	\$1,800.00	\$3,600.00
69	Orangeburg 05688, Orangeburg	\$4,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,800.00
70	Our Saviour 05618, West Columbia	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$615.00	\$5,615.00
71	Our Saviour 05654, Greenville	\$24,974.00	\$0.00	\$4,025.00	\$28,999.00
72	Parroquia el Mesias, 31362, Mauldin	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
73	Pilgrim 05712, Lexington	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
74	Pine Grove 05684, Lone Star	\$5,200.00	\$0.00	\$515.00	\$5,715.00
75	Pisgah 05713, Lexington	\$37,500.00	\$0.00	\$23,718.00	\$61,218.00
76	Pomaria 05638, Pomaria	\$8,749.95	\$0.00	\$1,250.00	\$9,999.95
77	Providence 05711, Lexington	\$15,751.15	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,751.15
78	Redeemer 05623, Columbia	\$54,067.36	\$0.00	\$1,850.00	\$55,917.36
79	Redeemer 05633, Newberry	\$7,042.00	\$0.00	\$2,110.00	\$9,152.00
80	Redeemer 05669, Charleston	\$25,550.92	\$0.00	\$645.00	\$26,195.92
81	Redeemer 05730, Greer	\$5,752.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,752.50
82	Reformation 05602, Columbia	\$18,700.00	\$0.00	\$275.00	\$18,975.00
83	Reformation 05610, Lancaster	\$13,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,300.00
84	Restoration Chapel 31394, Greenwood	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
85	Resurrection 05665, Cameron	\$19,894.60	\$0.00	\$2,836.97	\$22,731.57
86	Sagrada Familia 31073, Columbia	\$805.29	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$805.29
87	Sandy Run 05613, Swansea	\$7,800.00	\$0.00	\$5,860.00	\$13,660.00
88	Shepherd of the Sea 07420, Garden City	\$33,888.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$33,888.00
89	Silverstreet 05647, Silverstreet	\$2,400.00	\$0.00	\$109.00	\$2,509.00
90	Springs of Grace 30443, Inman	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,614.00	\$4,114.00
91	St. Andrew 05585, Blythewood	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00
92	St. Andrew's 05604, Columbia	\$51,227.00	\$0.00	\$5,691.50	\$56,918.50
93	St. Barnabas 05671, Charleston	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
94	St. David 05619, West Columbia	\$54,087.84	\$0.00	\$6,281.00	\$60,368.84
95	St. James 05590, Sumter	\$2,086.00	\$7,459.90	\$274.00	\$9,819.90
96	St. James 05629, Newberry	\$3,155.00	\$0.00	\$1,290.00	\$4,445.00
97	St. James 05700, Graniteville	\$17,499.96	\$0.00	\$8,199.96	\$25,699.92
98	St. James 05708, Summit	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
99	St. James 05715, Lexington	\$12,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,100.00	\$13,600.00
100	St. Johannes 05672, Charleston	\$6,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,300.00
101	St. John 05609, Irmo	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
102	St. John 05642, Pomaria	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00

South Carolina Synod, ELCA					
Mission Support, SC Synod Support & Other Funds					
February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2024					
	Organization	Mission Support	SC Synod Support	Other Funds	Total
103	St. John 05653, Clinton	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
104	St. John 05661, Spartanburg	\$54,000.00	\$0.00	\$850.00	\$54,850.00
105	St. John 05662, Walhalla	\$33,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,145.00	\$34,145.00
106	St. John 05702, Johnston	\$2,739.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,739.00
107	St. John 05714, Lexington	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
108	St. John's 05664, Beaufort	\$43,733.33	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$43,883.33
109	St. John's 05673, Charleston	\$9,000.00	\$10.00	\$6,327.00	\$15,337.00
110	St. Luke 05605, Columbia	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
111	St. Luke 05622, Florence	\$35,500.00	\$0.00	\$10,789.74	\$46,289.74
112	St. Luke 05646, Prosperity	\$21,645.00	\$4,331.00	\$24,725.50	\$50,701.50
113	St. Luke 05691, Summerville	\$14,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$14,000.00
114	St. Mark 05725, Batesburg-Leesville	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$9,445.00	\$9,445.00
115	St. Mark's 05690, Isle of Palms	\$1,365.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,365.00
116	St. Matthew 05639, Pomaria	\$8,900.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,900.00
117	St. Matthew 05666, Cameron	\$2,472.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,472.00
118	St. Matthew 05716, Lexington	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,326.00	\$6,326.00
119	St. Matthew's 05674, Charleston	\$84,988.96	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$84,988.96
120	St. Matthias 07330, Easley	\$1,475.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,475.00
121	St. Michael 05606, Columbia	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,035.00	\$2,035.00
122	St. Michael 05655, Greenville	\$50,070.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$50,570.00
123	St. Michael 05694, Moncks Corner	\$4,300.00	\$0.00	\$33,129.50	\$37,429.50
124	St. Nicholas 05680, Fairfax	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
125	# St. Paul 05641, Pomaria	\$1,433.33	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,433.33
126	St. Paul 05695, Aiken	\$55,464.90	\$0.00	\$1,250.00	\$56,714.90
127	St. Paul 05699, Gilbert	\$8,855.04	\$0.00	\$3,439.00	\$12,294.04
128	St. Paul's 05607, Columbia	\$36,200.00	\$0.00	\$7,400.00	\$43,600.00
129	St. Paul's 05685, Mt. Pleasant	\$3,990.00	\$0.00	\$1,810.00	\$5,800.00
130	St. Peter 05697, Batesburg-Leesville	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$3,500.00
131	St. Peter's 07693, Pawleys Island	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
132	St. Philip 05634, Newberry	\$0.00	\$15,370.00	\$0.00	\$15,370.00
133	St. Philip 05686, Myrtle Beach	\$8,580.00	\$0.00	\$1,974.93	\$10,554.93
134	St. Stephen's 05718, Lexington	\$57,750.00	\$0.00	\$2,688.85	\$60,438.85
135	St. Thomas 05593, Chapin	\$10,421.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,421.00
136	St. Timothy 05587, Camden	\$14,288.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$14,288.00
137	St. Timothy 05649, Whitmire	\$1,830.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,830.00
138	Summer Memorial 05635, Newberry	\$16,525.00	\$0.00	\$3,779.00	\$20,304.00
139	Transfiguration 05588, Cayce	\$30,696.00	\$0.00	\$2,470.00	\$33,166.00
140	Trinity 05656, Greenville	\$76,958.33	\$0.00	\$20,360.00	\$97,318.33
141	Trinity 05679, Elloree	\$1,396.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,396.00
142	Trinity 05681, Fairfax	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$3,558.00	\$4,058.00
143	Trinity 05682, Georgetown	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
144	Union 05707, Leesville	\$13,154.91	\$0.00	\$1,464.20	\$14,619.11
145	University 05652, Clemson	\$44,100.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$44,300.00
146	Wittenberg 05709, Leesville	\$26,025.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$26,025.00
147	Zion 05719, Lexington	\$39,289.93	\$0.00	\$613.28	\$39,903.21
	Grand Total:	\$2,210,586.73	\$47,817.90	\$370,121.41	\$2,628,526.04
Note: The Synod and congregational figures may differ due to the closing of the Synod year and the congregational year.					
	# Deactivated Contributors at FYE				



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

The South Carolina Synod Treasurer's Letter

March 20, 2024

To the Synod Council
South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in America
Columbia, South Carolina

The accompanying unaudited financial statements of the South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the Synod) have been prepared by the Treasurer's office of the Synod for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2024. These statements are being distributed for your information.

The Synod is in the process of having an audit on the financial statements, and the Auditor's letter will be issued at a later date. We do not expect any material differences in these unaudited financial statements and the audited financial statements.

Raymond L. Hendrix, Jr., Treasurer

**SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

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AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED JANUARY 31, 2024

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SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN RESTRICTED NET ASSETS

FOR SYNOD COUNCIL DESIGNATED AND FOR DONOR RESTRICTED

**SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
January 31, 2024**

Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,085,336.98
Investments	3,388,531.64
Prepaid Expenses	5,731.49
Property Available For Sale	1,155,417.50
Land, Building & Equipment, Net of Depreciation	2,528,521.28

Total Assets	8,163,538.89
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Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts Payable	183,294.47
Deferred Income	2,000.00
Notes Payable, Secured by Property	385,850.00
Discount on Notes Payable	(29,433.00)

Total Liabilities	541,711.47
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Net Assets

Donor Restricted	1,462,489.05
Undesignated	
Council Designated	1,615,981.47
Unrestricted - Operating	4,543,356.90

Total Net Assets	7,621,827.42
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Total Liabilities and Net Assets	8,163,538.89
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Unaudited - See Synod Treasurer's Letter

**SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN OPERATING NET ASSETS - BUDGET VS ACTUAL
January 31, 2024**

	Budget	Actual
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Congregational Mission Support	2,300,000	2,212,587
Congregational SC Synod Support	80,000	47,818
Assembly Fees	55,000	54,420
From Restricted Funds	0	53,148
Rental Revenue	0	12,400
Investment Income	60,000	110,379
Trust Fees	11,500	10,325
Miscellaneous Income	21,000	8,125
From Fund Balance (S15.14)	36,054	0
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2,563,554	2,509,201
EXPENSES		
Support Programs		
ELCA Support	805,000	774,405
Region 9 Support	11,000	11,000
Archives Support	6,000	5,920
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	5,000	413
Synod Min Support	28,138	18,155
Regional Gift Planner - ELCA	10,000	10,000
Institutions	182,200	182,200
Total Support Programs	1,047,338	1,002,094
Synod Programs		
Category One	95,350	65,645
Category Two	109,700	94,834
Category Three	193,616	171,426
Category Four	287,150	264,839
Total Synod Programs	685,816	596,744
Administration and Operating Expenses	830,400	895,548
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,563,554	2,494,386
Increase in Net Assets Before Transfers and Other Changes	0	14,816
Transfers and Other Changes in Net Assets		
Non Cash Donation		121,318
Transfers to Council Designated		(1,130,175)
Capitalized Assets from Restricted		1,169,753
Discount On Note Payable		3,624
Transfers from Restricted		1,127,413
Increase (Decrease) in Transfers and Other Changes		1,291,932
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets		1,306,748
Net Assets Beginning Balance		3,236,609
Net Assets Ending Balance		4,543,357

Unaudited - See Synod Treasurer's Letter

**SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN SYNOD COUNCIL DESIGNATED NET ASSETS
YEAR ENDED JANUARY 31, 2024**

Accounts	Net Asset Balance 2/1/23	Income	Net Investment Income	Net Assets Released from Restrictions Transfers/ Expenditures	Net Asset Balance 1/31/24
Campus Ministry - Principal	160,000.00				160,000.00
Capital Improvements Reserve	138,286.34		11,469.56	21,548.48	128,207.42
Synod Endowment Fund	397,331.79		34,639.57	25,589.40	406,381.96
Computers Upgrade	6,456.64			4,589.07	1,867.57
Cristo Rey - Building Donation	367,091.10			367,091.10	0.00
Synod Vitality Endowment	699,138.35		39,314.22		738,452.57
SC Synod Ministries Support	58,339.33	1,350.00		9,689.33	50,000.00
Synod Staff Salaries	25,000.00				25,000.00
COVID-19 Congregation Grants	49,000.00			49,000.00	0.00
Discipleship/Stewardship	26,000.00	2,761.56		6,020.18	22,741.38
Other Properties Maintenance	102,734.47			19,403.90	83,330.57
Total Council Designated Net Assets	2,029,378.02	4,111.56	85,423.35	502,931.46	1,615,981.47

Unaudited - See Synod Treasurer's Letter

**SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN DONOR RESTRICTED NET ASSETS
YEAR ENDED JANUARY 31, 2024**

Funds	Net Asset Balance 2/1/23	Transfers/ Offerings/ Receipts	Net Investment Income	Net Assets Restrictions Transfers/ Expenditures	Net Asset Balance 1/31/24
Trust Accounts	210,627.97	3,779.55			214,407.52
Growing in God's Mission Appeal	261,240.69	1,000.00		(218,326.73)	43,913.96
Water/Agricultural Project-Tanzania	133,421.43	9,253.76			142,675.19
Mission Congregations Accounts	832,715.86	358,411.04		(843,557.21)	347,569.69
Special Contributions - Received & Remitted Hunger, Disaster, Institutions, etc.	0.00	275,940.05		(275,940.05)	0.00
Synod Lifeline Fund	2,175.01	42,528.80		(7,150.00)	37,553.81
Youth Ministry Accounts	33,470.58	7,394.03		(5,000.00)	35,864.61
Stewardship	6,782.44	19,700.00		(20,154.38)	6,328.06
Mission Director	30,374.42	10,452.68		(8,807.10)	32,020.00
Rami Moody Holy Land Fund	14,104.00	12,005.00		(10,000.00)	16,109.00
Global Missions Accounts	39,219.95	50,976.90		(67,927.82)	22,269.03
Trust Income Accounts	350,833.92	82,262.66		(123,019.65)	310,076.93
Campus Ministry	20,732.11	5,160.70		(1,850.00)	24,042.81
Candidacy Scholarship Support	56,031.38	10,846.73		(346.73)	66,531.38
Resurrection Youth Fund	80,109.84	6,984.30		(2,227.00)	84,867.14
Resurrection Seminarian Debt Reduction	30,000.00			(23,000.00)	7,000.00
Discounted Notes Payable	33,057.00			(3,624.00)	29,433.00
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	12,121.19	700.00		(174.49)	12,646.70
Fall Convocation	12,133.22	24,667.50		(31,320.63)	5,480.09
Others Funds (19 Funds)	15,164.32	16,658.22		(8,122.41)	23,700.13
Total Donor Restricted Net Assets	2,174,315.33	938,721.92	0.00	(1,650,548.20)	1,462,489.05

Unaudited - See Synod Treasurer's Letter

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL
Bulletin of Reports
South Carolina Synod, 2023-2024

Preface: Meeting Dates and Organization of Synod Council Committees

- I. Appointments
- II. *Proposed 2024 Compensation Guidelines
- III. Congregations
- IV. Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions
- V. Financial Matters
- VI. Personnel
- VII. Institutions and Agencies
- VIII. Synod-Authorized Worshiping Communities
- IX. 200th Anniversary of the South Carolina Synod
- X. Synod Assembly
- XI. Synod Council Meeting Dates
- XII. Synod Office Holiday Schedule
- XIII. *Proposed Budget South Carolina Synod 2025-2026

NOTE: Items marked with an asterisk (*) require action by the SC Synod Assembly. All other items are reported as information. † Provisions are common to all synods of the ELCA.

PREFACE

Since the 2023 South Carolina (SC) Synod Assembly, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Synod Council has met on the following dates: August 26, 2023; November 13, 2023; February 26, 2024; and April 22, 2024. The Synod Council organized itself into the following committees:

- Executive:** The officers of this synod and two members of the Synod Council: Mr. Tex Davis (at large) and Rev. Joanna Gragg (at large).
- Constitution:** Rev. W. Osborne Herlong Jr., chair; Mr. Daniel Crofts, Rev. Gregg Hoffman, Mr. Jeffrey Stringer, Ms. Gail Buchanan, Ms. Becky Koch, Mr. William Newmyer, and Rev. Henry M. Moody, Jr., advisory.
- Finance:** Ms. Cindy Davis, chair; Mrs. LaTynia Taylor; Mr. Raymond L. Hendrix Jr., Treasurer; Rev. W. Osborne Herlong Jr.; Ms. Charlene Fink, Synod Accountant; Ms. Donna Poulnot; Mr. Ron Walrath; and Ms. Sheila Caughman.
- Personnel:** Rev. Rachel Hoffman, chair; Ms. Kathy Hendrix; Rev. Joshua (Josh) Kestner; Mr. LaVone Griffin; and Rev. Carl Taylor.
- Property:** Ms. Beth Trump, chair; Mr. Larry Rathe, Property Manager; Mr. Al Estee; Mr. Randy Fellers; and Rev. Rusty Kehl.

I. APPOINTMENTS

1. Appointed conveners of tables in accord with S10.07.05. *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

Deepening Discipleship Table: Rev. Megan Lineberger, Convener

Communications and Technology Table: Rev. Matthew B. Titus, Convener

Community Engagement Table: Rev. Emily Hartmann, Interim Convener

2. Appointed the following persons as Synod Council liaisons to tables in accord with *S10.07.B14*.
Deepening Discipleship Table: Rev. Joanna Gragg, Liaison
Community Engagement Table: Mrs. Kathy Riggan, Liaison
Communication and Technology Table: Deacon Katie Justice, Liaison
3. Appointed the Mr. Tex Davis, as judicatory representative to the Board of Directors, South Carolina Christian Action Council.
4. The Executive Committee appointed the following people to the Mutual Ministry Committee: Ms. Diane Wicker, Convener; Rev. Bobby Morris, Synod Council; and Mr. Mike Hartzog.
5. Appointed the following persons to the South Carolina Synod Assembly Nominating Committee for a term of two-years, 2024-2025: Ms. Silke Prylik, Christ, Hilton Head, Amelia Conference; Mr. Elliot Cox, St. Mark, Isle of Palms, Coastal Conference; Ms. Linda Albert, St. Philip, Myrtle Beach, Epiphany Conference; Mr. Richard Delap, Trinity, Greenville, Foothills Conference; Mr. Zach Lindler, St. Thomas, Chapin, Heartland Conference; and Deacon Deborah Poole, Pisgah, Lexington, Saxe Gotha Conference.

Those persons serving 2023-2024 terms include: Rev. Carl Taylor, Living Springs Columbia, Midlands Conference; Rev. Christopher Girardeau, Reformation, Lancaster, Upstate Conference; Mr. Robert Epting, Wittenberg, Leesville, Synod Council, Western Conference; Deacon Katie Holland, Redeemer, Charleston, Eastern Area; Ms. Mary Maercklein, Redeemer, Newberry, Northern Area; and Deacon Sandra Holland, St. Andrew, Columbia, Central Area.
6. Appointed Deacon Sandra Holland as chair, 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly Nominating Committee.
7. Appointed Mr. Henry Fulmer and Mr. Edward M. Woodward Jr. to the Board of Trustees, James R. Crumley Jr. Archives, Region 9 ELCA, for the calendar years 2024 and 2025.
8. Appointed Mrs. Virginia Herlong, Synod Council, to the Audit Committee.
9. Appointed Mr. Brian Teusink to the Audit Committee for a three-year term expiring 2026.
10. Reappointed Rev. Pattie Sue Burton-Pye, as chair of the Audit Committee for the calendar year 2024.
11. Appointed a South Carolina Synod Lifeline Distribution Team for family education debt re-payment for rostered ministers and stewardship education to include the officers of the South Carolina Synod, one lay person from the Synod Council and one rostered minister; and to appoint Ms. Joyce Rose-Harris, and Rev. Joanna Gragg, respectively.
12. Reappointed Mr. Larry Rathe as Property Manager, South Carolina Synod, for a one-year, renewable term beginning April 2023.

II. PROPOSED 2025 COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

***RECOMMENDATION FOR ASSEMBLY ACTION ON 2025 COMPENSATION GUIDELINES**

Recommends the 2025 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers, South Carolina Synod, for adoption by the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly.

The *2025 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers* will be found on the documents page of the South Carolina Synod Assembly Web site under Recommendations and Notices. All documents to be used at assembly will be live at <https://scsynod.com/assembly/documents/>

The *2025 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers* will be moved, upon approval by the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly, to the Call Process and Compensation page of the South Carolina Synod Web site. After adoption by the assembly the document will be live at <https://scsynod.com/call-process/>

III. CONGREGATIONS

1. Approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the properties of Our Shepherd, Hartsville and Faith Lutheran Chapel, Pickens have been received by the South Carolina Synod through Holy Closure, and

WHEREAS, there is a contract between Faith Lutheran Chapel, Pickens and ViaSat, provider of high-speed satellite broad band services and secure network systems; therefore, be it

Resolved, to list and place the properties on the market; and be it further

Resolved, to honor the contract between ViaSat and Faith Lutheran Chapel, Pickens to ensure proper disclosures and rights of first refusal are followed with the listing; and be it finally

Resolved, that Larry Rathe, Property Manager, be authorized to enter maintenance contracts, choose a realtor, and negotiate the selling of church properties received through Holy Closures and approved for sale by the Synod Council and upon the recommendation of the bishop or the bishop's appointee.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, August 26, 2023

2. Approved the following resolution:

Under the authority of †S13.24.c. of the Synod Constitution, to appoint the following Officers of the South Carolina Synod as trustees to take charge and control of the property of St. John, Johnston: Bishop Virginia S. Aebischer; Deacon Lexanne Graves, Vice President; Pr. W. Osborne Herlong, Secretary; Mr. Raymond Hendrix Jr., Treasurer, and

To authorize Pr. James Henricks, Director for Evangelical Mission, South Carolina Synod, to move toward Holy Closure in consultation with the Synod Council-appointed trustees. This action is appropriate because the remaining members at St. John, Johnston, have decided that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation; and

To move forward with Holy Closure when a written request is received, in accord with *S13.24. Synod Constitution that the remaining members at St. John, Johnston, have decided that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

IV. CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

1. ASSEMBLY: PROCEDURES AND ELECTIONS

The *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* provides the following constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions to guide the procedures and elections in the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly:

Bold = Constitutional Provisions

Lightface type = Bylaws

Italics = Continuing Resolutions

Chapter 7.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

†S7.01. **This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

S7.01.01. The following committees shall be appointed by the bishop from the voting members of the Synod Assembly at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the assembly:

- a. Committee of Reference and Counsel. The duties of the Committee of Reference and Counsel shall be to report to the assembly with its recommendations all resolutions submitted to it. Resolutions of a general character which are not germane to pending questions or reports shall be submitted on no more than one page of 8 ½ x 11- inch paper to the synodical secretary no later than 15 days prior to the formal opening of the assembly. The committee shall provide copies of all resolutions to the voting members of the assembly. Other duties of the committee shall be to recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives, to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary, and to give such assistance to the bishop as the bishop may desire in the course of the assembly.
- b. Committee on Conduct of Elections. The duties of the Committee on Conduct of Elections shall be to distribute and collect at the direction of the bishop ballots for all elections, to supervise the tellers in the counting of ballots, to report the results of all elections to the assembly, and to give such assistance to the bishop as the bishop may desire in the course of the assembly.

S7.01.A23. *In reviewing proposed memorials, resolutions, and main motions, the Committee of Reference and Counsel may edit, prepare an alternative memorial, resolution, or motion, or consolidate into a single proposed action multiple memorials, resolutions, or main motions on the same or similar subjects. Whenever the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends an edited or alternative memorial, resolution, or motion, the report to the assembly shall also contain the original maker's text.*

S7.01.B23. *The Committee of Reference and Counsel shall report its recommendations on memorials, resolutions, and main motions to the Synod Assembly. Such recommendations do not require a second. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends approval, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends the adoption of a substitute or alternative motion, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends referral, the committee's recommendation shall become the main motion before the assembly. When the Committee of Reference and Council recommends that the assembly decline a proposed memorial, resolution, or main motion, the recommendation shall be reported to the assembly. If the author or another voting member wishes to bring the declined proposed memorial, resolution, or main motion to the floor, the voting member may move the matter, and it shall become the main motion before the assembly, and the committee's recommendation shall be received for information.*

S7.01.C11. *Resolutions which could not have reasonably been submitted before the 15-day deadline may be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel after the opening of the assembly. A signer of the resolution, preferably its primary author, shall meet with the Committee of Reference and Counsel at the time appointed in the Rules of Procedure adopted for that assembly. Regardless of the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, the consideration of such resolutions by the assembly shall require the approval by a two-thirds vote of voting members to place the resolution before the Synod Assembly. If a resolution is received after the deadline of 15 days prior to the formal opening of the assembly, the resolution shall be processed according to the provisions of this continuing resolution.*

†S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.

S7.11.01. The Synod Assembly shall meet annually. The time and place shall be fixed by the assembly before adjournment or by the Synod Council.

S7.11.02. Voting members shall attend meetings of the assembly.

- S7.11.03. The secretary shall distribute the *Bulletin of Reports* for the Synod Assembly to the voting members at least 15 days before each regular assembly.
- S7.11.04. At the regular annual meeting, the Synod Assembly shall approve a budget for the following fiscal year.
- S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.**
- a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
 - b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod.**
- S7.14. One-half of the voting members registered for the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.**
- †S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:**
- a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
 - b. All ministers of Word and Service, under call, on the roster of this synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly.
 - c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men.
 - d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- †S7.21.01. Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Synod Assembly.
- †S7.21.02. If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation through the Congregation Council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.A21. *Each congregation of this synod shall be entitled to at least two lay voting members. Each congregation having 300 to 649 baptized members shall be entitled to one additional lay voting member. Each congregation having 650 to 999 baptized members shall be entitled to two additional lay voting members. Each congregation having 1000 or more baptized members shall be entitled to three additional lay voting members. Baptized members shall be based on the annual congregational report of each congregation for the year preceding the assembly. Each congregation of this synod shall be entitled to one additional lay voting member who is under the age of thirty at the time of the assembly. Each congregation of*

this synod shall be entitled to one additional lay voting member who is a person of color or whose primary language is other than English.

- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.22.01. All retired ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service on the rosters of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
- S7.22.02. All ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service granted disability status on the rosters of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
- †S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.
- S7.23.01. All ministers of Word and Sacrament on leave from call and all ministers of Word and Service on leave from call, who are on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
- S7.24.** Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly as long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership.
- †S7.25.** Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.26.A20. *Each authorized worshiping community of this synod shall be entitled to two lay voting members, one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman.*
- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S7.27.01. A minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in attendance at the Synod Assembly who has complied with the provisions of S14.15. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the synod assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this synod. The bishop shall certify to the secretary at least 30 days before assembly those ministers of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, serving in an ELCA congregation of this synod who are eligible to be voting members.

S7.28. Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.

†S7.31. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.

S7.32. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

S7.32.A20. The following rules of procedure shall be in force at meetings of the Synod Assembly:

- a. Unless otherwise determined by vote of the assembly, all speeches in general discussion shall be limited to two minutes and no member shall be permitted to speak the second time on the same subject when others desire to speak.*
- b. A resolution of a general character which is not germane to the pending question or report shall be given by the proposer to a Committee of Reference and Counsel.*
- c. All reports published in the Bulletin of Reports shall be received as information by the assembly by virtue of that fact without vote.*
- d. All other reports shall be in writing and in such form as the assembly or the Synod Council may determine.*
- e. The minutes of each assembly shall be submitted to the Synod Council for approval.*
- f. The bishop and secretary shall, after making any necessary corrections therein, certify two copies of the printed minutes of each assembly as the official protocol of said assembly, and shall submit the same to the next regular assembly for approval and deposit in the archives.*
- g. Holy Communion shall be administered at each assembly with the exception of assemblies held online or in regard for the safety of voting members.*

S7.33. "Ex-officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

†S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of at least seven persons and not more than 12 persons who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating

Committee. The size of the Nominating Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's continuing resolutions.

- S9.03.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect voting members of the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA on the basis approved by that body. The Nominating Committee of this synod shall nominate twice the number of nominees for the places to be filled. In its nominations the committee shall seek to have equitable representation by the various geographic areas of this synod. After the regular voting members have been elected, rostered ministers, lay women, and lay men nominees receiving the next highest number of votes respectively shall constitute the alternates. If any voting member be unable to attend the assembly, they shall inform the bishop of this synod who shall fill all vacancies from the alternates in the order of the votes received.
- S9.03.02. The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that all persons nominated for any position possess the necessary competence and experience for the position. The committee shall, insofar as possible, insure that all geographic areas of this synod are represented among the nominees.
- S9.03.03. Any nominations from the floor shall meet the same criteria as required for the position for which nominated.
- S9.03.04. Terms of service for members of the Synod Council and for persons elected by this synod to boards of trustees of the institutions to which this synod is related shall be limited to two consecutive terms of three years each. Terms of service begin at the conclusion of the Synod Assembly at which they are elected. Terms of service end at the Synod Assembly at which their successors are elected. Should the constitution of any institution or agency specify a term of office for board members other than three years, the constitution of the institution shall take precedence over this bylaw as far as length of term is concerned. In computing eligibility for continued membership on the Synod Council, boards on which the synod is entitled to representation, or other organizational units where applicable, at the conclusion of a full term, service which preceded such term without interruption shall be disregarded if its duration was shorter than half a term.
- S9.03.05. Any qualified person shall be eligible for election to and simultaneous service on one board and one committee. No person, except the bishop of synod, shall be eligible to serve simultaneously on two elective boards. No elected member of the Synod Council shall serve simultaneously on any other elective board or committee.
- S9.03.06. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a ballot in accord with †S6.04. for Synod Council elections to assure Synod Council membership includes: at least one man and one woman who are persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English; and nine geographic seats in accord with S9.03.02.; S12.01.20.; S12.01.21.; and S12.01.22. with three persons serving from each of the three geographic areas. A rotating basis for the election of lay men, lay women, and rostered ministers from each of the three areas shall be established for the Synod Council members elected from the areas with one lay man, one lay woman and one rostered minister elected each year; and nine at-large seats open to persons from across the territory of the South Carolina Synod, including one lay man, one lay woman, and one rostered minister to be elected each year; and one youth serving a two-year term.
- S9.08. All elections shall be by ballot. In all elections, other than for the bishop, vice president and the secretary, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.**

S9.09. The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.

†S9.10. When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.

(End of constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions to guide the procedures and elections in the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly)

2. Amended the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod*, by adding continuing resolutions, S7.01.A23. S7.01.B23. and recodify S7.01.A11. as S7.01.C11.

Chapter 7. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

†S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S7.01.01. The following committees shall be appointed by the bishop from the voting members of the Synod Assembly at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the assembly:

- a. Committee of Reference and Counsel. The duties of the Committee of Reference and Counsel shall be to report to the assembly with its recommendations all resolutions submitted to it. Resolutions of a general character which are not germane to pending questions or reports shall be submitted on no more than one page of 8 ½ x 11-inch paper to the synodical secretary no later than 15 days prior to the formal opening of the assembly. The committee shall provide copies of all resolutions to the voting members of the assembly. Other duties of the committee shall be to recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives, to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary, and to give such assistance to the bishop as the bishop may desire in the course of the assembly.
- b. Committee on Conduct of Elections. The duties of the Committee on Conduct of Elections shall be to distribute and collect at the direction of the bishop ballots for all elections, to supervise the tellers in the counting of ballots, to report the results of all elections to the assembly, and to give such assistance to the bishop as the bishop may desire in the course of the assembly.

(Rationale: To adopt a continuing resolution to provide additional authority for authorizing editing by the Committee of Reference and Counsel)

Additions are underscored
Deletions ~~are struck through~~ in the previous text

S7.01.A23. In reviewing proposed memorials, resolutions, and main motions, the Committee of Reference and Counsel may edit, prepare an alternative memorial, resolution, or motion, or consolidate into a single proposed action multiple memorials, resolutions, or main motions on the same or similar subjects. Whenever the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends an edited or alternative memorial, resolution, or motion, the report to the assembly shall also contain the original maker's text.

(Rationale: The synod's rules of organization and procedure should also address how the Committee of Reference and Counsel reports to the Synod Assembly and the status of its recommendations. To adopt

a continuing resolution that addresses the status of recommendations of the Committee of Reference and Counsel)

Additions are underscored
Deletions are ~~struck through~~ in the previous text

S7.01.B23. The Committee of Reference and Counsel shall report its recommendations on memorials, resolutions, and main motions to the Synod Assembly. Such recommendations do not require a second. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends approval, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends the adoption of a substitute or alternative motion, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends referral, the committee's recommendation shall become the main motion before the assembly. When the Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that the assembly decline a proposed memorial, resolution, or main motion the recommendation shall be reported to the assembly. If the author or another voting member wishes to bring the declined proposed memorial, resolution, or main motion to the floor, the voting member may move the matter, and it shall become the main motion before the assembly, and the committee's recommendation shall be received for information.

S7.01.AC11. Resolutions which could not have reasonably been submitted before the 15-day deadline may be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel after the opening of the assembly. A signer of the resolution, preferably its primary author, shall meet with the Committee of Reference and Counsel at the time appointed in the Rules of Procedure adopted for that assembly. Regardless of the recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, the consideration of such resolutions by the assembly shall require the approval by a two-thirds vote of voting members to place the resolution before the Synod Assembly. If a resolution is received after the deadline of 15 days prior to the formal opening of the assembly, the resolution shall be processed according to the provisions of this continuing resolution.

3. The Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met in August 2022 and approved required provisions for the Constitution for Synods. Sections of the Constitution for Synods marked by a dagger [†] are required provisions. In accordance with provision †S18.11., amendments are automatically incorporated into the constitutions of individual synods upon formal certification by the secretary of this church. The required amendments have been duly incorporated into the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod*.

4. Rescinded the action on April 24, 2023, to propose to the 2023 Synod Assembly the amendment to S7.14.

V. FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Received the Report of the Audit Committee, August 22, 2023, and refer the recommendations to the Finance Committee:

- All disbursement requests should be reviewed for accuracy before being approved.
- Travel and expense reimbursements should include travel location detail sufficient to support the number of miles requested as well as the reason for the travel. The blue Synod Travel/Expense form or a spreadsheet facsimile is recommended.
- Lost or missing receipts should be documented by noting the vendor, amount and reason for purchase, the fact that the invoice was lost and should be approved with the request for reimbursement.
- All reimbursement requests should be made monthly.

2. Approved the recommendations of the South Carolina Synod Mission Endowment Fund Grant Committee to award grants for the year 2023-2024 in the amount of \$22,000 to:

Colony Evangelical Lutheran Church, Newberry	\$2,550
Partnership Consultation Expenses for Mission Statement, Core Values, & Strategic Goals	
Lutheran Disaster Response Carolinas	\$7,400
Disaster Preparedness and Response Projects \$2, 950 and \$4,450	
Split between Mission Development and Special Expression of God's Love in the World	
South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers.....	\$1,000
Capital Campaign: New Entryway into Camp Kinard	
Matthew 2540.....	\$2,050
Guatemala Land and Facility for School, Daycare and Vocational Studies	
Security Wall to prevent gangs from threatening students, staff, and mission teams.	
James R. Crumley Jr. Archives.....	\$4,500
Documentary Film: Black Leaders and Congregations in the South Carolina Synod	
NovusWay Ministries	\$4,500
Expansion of Lutheroad Day Camp for underserved and/or unchurched youth.	
Partnership St. John's, Walhalla & St. Paul, Mt. Pleasant, Day Camp for underserved youth.	

Minutes of Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

3. Approved the amendments to the Internal Control Policy made by the Audit Committee, which assists the Audit Committee to fulfill its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external processes as provided in *S11.05 and *S15.31., *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

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4. Approved the proposal for Scott and Company to serve as independent auditors for the South Carolina Synod of the ELCA for the years ending January 31, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029.

Minutes of Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

5. Treasurer Hendrix reported the completion of the External Audit by Scott and Company as of and for the year ended January 31, 2023, and that the audit was clear.

Scott and Company
October 17, 2023

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, (the "Synod") (a nonprofit organization), which comprise the statement of financial position as of January 31, 2023, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Synod as of January 31, 2023, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

A copy of the audit was sent to the members of the Synod Council and will be made available on the South Carolina Synod Web Site.

Scott and Company also issued a letter of Required Communications which was also sent to the members of the Synod Council.

Minutes of Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

6. Approved the following resolution:

Resolved, that the following amounts are hereby designated as housing allowances for the Rostered Ministers serving on the synod staff of the South Carolina Synod and the Rostered Ministers serving as mission developers; and be it further

Resolved, that the designation of housing allowances shall apply to calendar year 2024.

Rev. Virginia S. Aebischer	\$13,000
Rev. Richard T. Carter	\$45,000
Rev. Emily Hartmann	\$24,000
Rev. Jorge A. Leone	\$12,000
Rev. Joshua R. Knutson	\$22,000
Rev. Martin Lopez-Vega	\$20,250

7. Approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the following funds have not been used due to lack of a program or need or have not been utilized in 12 months or longer:

Acct # 3020305-1 Spouse Retreat	\$ 371.00
Acct # 3020334-1 Lifelong Faith Formation	\$ 365.00
Acct # 3020363-5 SC COVID-19	\$ 620.00
Acct # 3020347-1 Ventures	\$ 79.38
Acct # 3020336-1 Cultivating Leadership/Vitality	\$ 2,682.18
Acct # 3020336-3 Grace & Gigabytes Webinar	\$ 30.00
Acct # 4810482-1 COVID-19 Congregation Grants	\$ 49,000.00

therefore, be it

Resolved, that the funds listed above become unrestricted in accord with 4B.3, *Gift & Bequest Policy*; and be it finally

Resolved, that these balances be adjusted to become miscellaneous income in the current fiscal year, February 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024.

8. Approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Synod Council, meeting in regular session on November 13, 2023, undesignated the following formerly designated account balances, and to redesignate as a part of Account # 4810483-1 Disciples/Stewardship-Resurrection:

Acct # 3020347-1 Ventures	\$ 79.38
Acct # 3020336-1 Cultivating Leadership/Vitality	\$2,682.18

therefore, be it

Resolved, that the account balances listed above become part of Account # 4810483-1 Disciples/Stewardship-Resurrection.

9. Increased the previously designated housing allowance of \$12,000 to \$20,000 for the calendar year 2024 for The Rev. Jorge Leone.

Minutes of Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024

10. Approved the Bylaws of the Synod Vitality Endowment Fund.

BYLAWS
Synod Vitality Endowment Fund - South Carolina Synod
Managed by Thrivent Financial

The Synod Council, South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in regular session on August 27, 2022, approved a *Resolution on Establishing a Synod Vitality Endowment Fund* [The Fund]. To effectively manage and use this fund for its intended purposes, the following bylaws are established:

- 1) Withdrawals from The Fund shall be based on a three-year rolling average of The Fund's value, based on the January 31 value of The Fund for the current year and previous two years;

- 2) The Finance Committee shall review The Fund's investment performance, preferably with the Financial Advisor managing The Fund's investment portfolio, at a regularly called meeting of the Finance Committee. Said review shall take place not less frequently than annually;
- 3) The Finance Committee, in a regularly called meeting and based on the afore mentioned rolling three-year average, is authorized to make spending withdrawals based on a percentage of The Fund's average value as described above;
- 4) The maximum annual withdrawal rate from The Fund shall not exceed 4%;
- 5) Because withdrawals are to be used for internal operations, an administrative fee shall not be leaved against The Fund by the Synod;
- 6) Funds withdrawn from The Fund will be placed in a temporarily restricted account and directed toward the Fund's stated objectives of supporting new starts, innovations, stewardship, and congregational vitality within the South Carolina Synod;
- 7) Unused funds may accumulate for up to two years after which time they will be re-invested in The Fund if not allocated;
- 8) Bylaws of The Fund shall be amended, as necessary, by the Synod Council in a regularly scheduled meeting; and
- 9) Bylaws of the Synod Vitality Endowment Fund shall be included in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the South Carolina Synod.

Minutes of Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024

11. Redesignated the Growing in God's Mission account from Safe Water Tanzania to a general fund account, Water & Agriculture Projects -Tanzania; and included in this account water for drinking, bathing, irrigation, and for other sustainable agricultural needs.

Minutes of Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024

VI. PERSONNEL

1. Granted on-leave-from-call status for Deacon Ashlyn S. Cox beginning July 2, 2023, The Rev. Mark J. Smith beginning September 1, 2023, and The Rev. Michael R. Sherman Jr beginning January 8, 2024.
2. Voted to continue on-leave-from-call status for the second year The Rev. Thulisiwe N. Beresford.
3. Granted family leave for The Rev. Jamie Reising beginning January 21, 2024, and The Rev. Rebecca Lord-Phillips beginning February 12, 2024.
4. Voted to continue family leave for the second year Deacon Mandi Whitley and Deacon Shelley M. Allen, and for the sixth year Deacon Lexanne Graves.
5. Requested the Conference of Bishops, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, extend family leave beyond six years for The Rev. Kristoffer K. Cox. The Conference of Bishops approved, as provided in bylaw 7.31.07.d. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, extension of on-leave-from-call status, renewable by the Synod Council on an annual basis up to a maximum of two years, for The Rev. Kristoffer K. Cox.
ELCA Conference of Bishops, Actions Regarding Rosters, March 1, 2024.
6. Requested the Conference of Bishops, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, extend family leave beyond six years for Deacon Lexanne Graves. The Conference of Bishops approved, as provided in bylaw 7.61.08.d. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, extension of on-leave-from-call status, renewable by the Synod Council on an annual basis up to a maximum of two years, for Deacon Lexanne Graves.
ELCA Conference of Bishops, Actions Regarding Rosters, March 1, 2024.
7. Continued to list Deacon Deborah E. Poole on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church as retired December 31, 2023.

8. Renewed a Call to Interim Ministry, South Carolina Synod, to The Rev. Mary W. Anderson beginning January 1, 2024, for a term of two years, in accord with 7.41.01.c. *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA.*
9. Renewed the Call to Interim Ministry, South Carolina Synod, to The Rev. Linda L. Anderson beginning April 15, 2024, for a term of two years, in accord with 7.41.01.c. *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA.*
10. Extended a Call to Non-Congregational Service to Deacon Barbara Hoy Rowell as Hospice Chaplain, Spiritual Care and Education Department, Prisma Health, Columbia, beginning February 19, 2024.
11. To extend to Pr. Sue Eld Johnson a Call to Non-Congregational Service as Chaplain, The Heritage at Lowman Active Life Center (The Heritage), Lutheran Homes of South Carolina, beginning November 6, 2023.
12. The Rev. Steven B. Counts resigned from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on September 13, 2023. As required when a rostered minister is removed from the roster, the files and records of Pr. Counts have been sent to the Office of the Secretary, ELCA.
13. Bishop Virginia S. Aebischer reported that The Rev. Michael R. Sherman resigned from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on March 23, 2024. As required when a rostered minister is removed from the roster, the files and records of Pr. Sherman have been sent to the Office of the Secretary, ELCA.

VII. INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

1. Ratified the action of the Lutheran Homes of South Carolina Board of Trustees on May 18, 2023, to amend sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the by-laws of Lutheran Homes of South Carolina.
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, August 26, 2023
2. Ratified the action of the Boards of Lutheran Services for the Aging and Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas, on September 11, 2023, to elect The Rev. Leroy Cannon to each of the respective Boards of Trustees, to a three-year term beginning September 2023 and ending September 2026.
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023
3. Designated April 28, 2024, as Synod-wide Newberry College Sunday and to invite the congregations of the South Carolina Synod to participate.
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023
4. Designated September 22, 2024, as Lutheran Services Carolinas Sunday in the South Carolina Synod and to invite congregations to participate.
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024
5. Ratified the action of the respective Boards of Trustees of Lutheran Services for the Aging and Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas in electing Ms. Eunika Simons to each of the respective Boards of Trustees to a three-year term beginning September 2024 and ending September 2027.
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, April 22, 2024

VIII. SYNOD-AUTHORIZED WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

1. Redesignated Restoration Chapel, Columbia, formerly a Synod-Authorized Worshiping Community Exploration, as a Synod-Authorized Worshiping Community; and redesignated Pr. Amanda Burke, formerly Exploration Leader, as Leader.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

2. Approved the following Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities on the territory of the South Carolina Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, for the calendar year 2024.

Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities

Columbia, Sagrada Familia (Holy Family)
Columbia, Restoration Chapel
Gaston, Cristo Rey
Greenville, Nuestro Salvador (Our Saviour)
Mauldin, Parroquia El Meslas (Church of the Messiah)
North Charleston, Christ Community
Pelion, Cristo Rey
West Columbia, Cristo Rey (Christ the King)
Greenwood, Restoration Chapel

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024

IX. 200th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD

1. Approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina and Adjacent States was established in January 1824; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Synod Council authorize the Executive Committee to appoint a Planning Team to observe the 200th Anniversary of the South Carolina Synod; and be it further

Resolved, that the celebration kickoff at the South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 8, 2024; and be it finally

Resolved, that the culmination of the celebration of the 200th Anniversary takes place at the South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 12-14, 2025, Columbia.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, August 26, 2023

X. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

1. The Synod Council, meeting in regular session on April 4, 2022, fixed the time and place for Synod Assemblies, in accord with S7.11.01., *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod*:

2025 – June 12-14 (Thursday through Saturday), Columbia SC

2026 – June 11-13 (Thursday through Saturday), Columbia SC

2027 – June 12 (Saturday), Online

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, April 4, 2022

2. Received the annual review of Synod Assembly elected committees by the Executive Committee on August 8, 2023, and reported that the persons on the synod assembly elected committees are available and current; and accepted the review of the Executive Committee as satisfying the annual review required by the Synod Council.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, August 26, 2023

3. Approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS, a *Resolution on Living Into the Unity of the Body of Christ* was adopted at the South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 8-10, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the resolution resolved that the bishop's office will provide to the conferences and congregations resources to help facilitate this intentional one year study, including opportunities for partnering and individuals to help lead study and discussion;
WHEREAS, the resolution resolved that a report be given to the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Synod Council receive the *Resolution on Living Into the Unity of the Body of Christ* adopted by the South Carolina Synod Assembly; and be it further

Resolved, that the Synod Council affirm the plans for implementation developed by Bishop Virginia S. Aebischer and the Office of the Bishop; and be it finally

Resolved, that a progress report be given in each of the meetings of the Synod Council beginning November 13, 2023, with the goal of bringing a report to the South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 8, 2024.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, August 26, 2023

4. Approved the *Minutes of the South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 8-10, 2023*, in principle, and allow Secretary Herlong and Bishop Virginia S. Aebischer to make editorial changes for publication in the *2023 Directory and Minutes of the South Carolina Synod, ELCA*.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, August 26, 2023

5. Designated August 15, 2025, as the beginning date of the term of the newly elected vice president following election at the 2025 South Carolina Synod Assembly in accord with ¶8.52. Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

6. Approved the registration fee of \$75.00 per person for the South Carolina Synod Assembly, June 8, 2024.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

7. Designated the offerings received at the worship services of the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly to the Campus Ministries in the South Carolina Synod.

Food insecurity is a real issue for a lot of students and the feeding ministries of our Campus Ministries is vital. Sharing a meal is a powerful means of welcoming people and creating community and life-giving work. We hope all congregations will find a special way to gather their assembly offering and send it to be a part of the very important ministry of feeding the young adults on our college campuses across South Carolina.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024

8. To receive the Report of the Task Force [Bible Team] on Resolution on Living into the Unity of the Body of Christ with gratitude and to request that Secretary Herlong present the report to the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly in *Recommendations, Notice and Report from the Synod Council*.

South Carolina Synod receiving Curriculum Gift for 2024-2025

The SC Synod Bible Team began meeting in the summer of 2023 to consider ways to fulfill the work of the Resolution on Living into the Unity of the Body of Christ that was passed at the 2023 Synod Assembly. This Bible Team includes Josh Kestner, Josh Knutson, Shelley Allen, Steven Gallego, Kevin Ogilvie, Lisa Isenhower, Bobby Morris, Joanna Gragg, Libby Bedenbaugh, Arden Hallman, Heather Apel, Deborah Poole, Wayne Kannaday, Ginny Aebischer. For a time, it also included Mark Buchan. This team meets together monthly to explore options for how to best resource and support the work of Bible Study and to gather the SC Synod together in Unity around God's Word. Updates on our activity has been shared at each meeting of the SC Synod Council. Now we are happy to share the results of our work with all of you.

We are excited to share that this team is writing a curriculum that is being offered as a gift to the entire Synod for use in Sunday School classes or with small groups. We have divided the curriculum into two sections. Section 1 will be sent to all congregations in early May and can be used in August, September, October, November, December and January. Section 2 will be released later in the fall

and is intended to be used between March 2025 through August 2025. The material will come as units of study that can be used over a period of several weeks but are not dated because we wanted to make it user friendly and allow each of you to determine when you wish to use each part, and to give you freedom to explore the topics for the weeks that your group needs. In Section 1 topics include: "Introduction to What the Bible is and What the Bible is not," "The Gospel of Luke," "Advent," "Christmas," "Revelation". This Bible Team is also working to produce the same topics in a version that could be used with youth classes. Be on the lookout for the first half of this gift in early May. Many thanks to the Bible Team for offering this to everyone in the SC Synod. In addition, this Bible Team is working on a video concept that we hope to produce this spring using short clips to explore various Biblical questions as Food for Thought and an opportunity to Feast on Faith. This part of our work is, indeed, a work in progress. We hope to produce these short videos for use on social media and anticipate that you will see some of this in the near future. In the meantime, keep reading the Scriptures together and living God's Word in the world.

*The Rev. Virginia S. Aebischer, Bishop
ELCA South Carolina Synod
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024*

XI. SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Approved the following meeting dates and times of the Synod Council 2024-2025:

August 24, 2024..... 10:00 a.m. Synod Council Retreat In-Person
November 11, 2024 3:00 p.m. Online
February 24, 2025 3:00 p.m. Online
April 28, 2025..... 12 Noon In-Person (April 21, 2025 is the Monday after Easter)

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

XII. SYNOD OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Approved the synod office holiday schedule for 2024-2025:

January 1..... New Year's Day
January 15..... Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
March 28 Good Friday (Thursday is taken off)
May 27..... Memorial Day
June 10-11* Post-Synod Assembly Compensation Days
July 4 Independence Day
September 2..... Labor Day
November 27-28..... Thanksgiving Day (the preceding Wednesday is taken)
December 24-January 1 Christmas Eve through New Year's Day

*The Synod Office is closed on the two days following Synod Assemblies. All staff members receive one additional Synod assembly day off to be taken by July 31.

Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting, November 13, 2023

XIII. PROPOSED BUDGET SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD 2023-2024

***RECOMMENDATION FOR ASSEMBLY ACTION**

1. Recommends the "Mission Funding and Spending Plan [Budget] Procedures" to guide the adoption of the 2025-2026 Mission Funding and Spending Plan for adoption by the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly.

Mission Funding and Spending Plan [Budget S10.04] Procedures

Should a 2024 SC Synod Assembly [Assembly] voting member desire to propose amendment of 2025-2026 Mission Funding and Spending Plan [Budget S10.04] [The Plan], the following procedures will be followed for a proposed amendment to be considered “properly submitted.”

- a. Any proposed amendment to The Plan that increases a current program’s expense allocation, or that adds a new current program expense allocation proposal to The Plan, must include a corresponding decrease in some other current program proposal in the same amount; or identify an increase in revenues to offset the proposed expense.
- b. Proposed amendments to The Plan must be submitted to the secretary of the synod by 9:00 a.m. on June 5, 2024.
- c. Each proposed amendment or resolution to amend must be submitted using the synod’s on-line form.
- d. Each proposed amendment or resolution to amend must be cosponsored by not fewer than ten additional 2024 Assembly voting members. The voting member submitting the proposed amendment or resolution to amend must provide the name and telephone number of each cosponsor.
- e. The Synod Finance Committee shall meet at 11:00 a.m. on June 5, 2024, to consider each properly submitted amendment proposal. Synod Finance committee shall prepare a recommendation concerning each properly proposed amendment after considering the implications of said amendment if adopted by the voting members of the Assembly.
- f. During the consideration of The Plan by the Assembly, the Treasurer or Finance Committee shall report on the implication of each properly proposed amendments or resolutions to amend The Plan. This report will contain a recommendation from the Synod Finance Committee to the Assembly voting members.

**Regarding Votes to Appropriate Funds not Approved by Synod Council:
Chapter S10.04.**

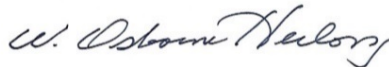
Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

*Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, South Carolina Synod
Minutes of Synod Council Meeting, February 26, 2024*

***RECOMMENDATION FOR ASSEMBLY ACTION**

2. Recommends a Mission Funding and Spending Plan [Budget] in the amount of \$2,458,500 for the fiscal year February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026, for adoption by the 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly.

See attached 2025-2026 Proposed Budget and Pie Chart Documents



Rev. W. Osborne Herlong, Secretary
South Carolina Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

South Carolina Synod, ELCA
Proposed Mission Funding/Spending Plan 2025-2026

	Approved Mission Funding/Spending Plan <u>2024-2025</u>	Proposed Mission Funding/Spending Plan <u>2025-2026</u>
Mission Support and Other Revenue		
Congregational Support Synod-Churchwide (1)	2,360,000	2,310,000
Fees-Assembly	13,000	54,000
Investment Income	50,000	50,000
Other Income	22,000	22,000
Carryover/Constitution Provision S15.14. (2)	0	22,500
Total Revenue	2,445,000	2,458,500
Benevolence and Expenditures		
Mission Benevolence		
ELCA Support (1)	690,000	495,000
SC Synod Ministries Support	115,000	94,886
Joint Ministries Region 9 Support	11,000	11,000
Bishop's Discretionary Fund	5,000	4,000
Archives	6,000	6,098
ELCA Regional Gift Planner	10,000	10,000
Southern Seminary	77,000	77,000
SC Lutheran Retreat Centers	54,000	59,000
NovusWay	12,800	14,000
Newberry College	12,800	10,000
Lutheran Homes	12,800	10,000
Lutheran Services Carolinas	12,800	13,000
Totals	1,019,200	803,984
Ministries		
Category 1-Rostered Ministry	101,250	105,375
Category 2-Congregations & Lay Leaders	109,000	100,500
Category 3-New Leader Development	195,441	222,791
Category 4-Connections & Resources for Ministry (3)	135,474	315,550
Totals	541,165	744,216
Operating Expenses		
Salaries, Benefits and Related (4)	793,000	819,000
Operating Expenses	91,635	91,300
Totals	884,635	910,300
Total Benevolence and Expenditures	2,445,000	2,458,500

Note #1 ELCA support for 2024/25 is 30% of unrestricted congregational support.
ELCA support for 2025/26 is 22% of unrestricted congregational support.

Note #2 S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16% of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synod causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

Note #3 The 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets for the annual assembly of \$52,000 (online) and \$230,000 (in person) [respectively] are included in Category 4 - Connections & Resources for Ministry.

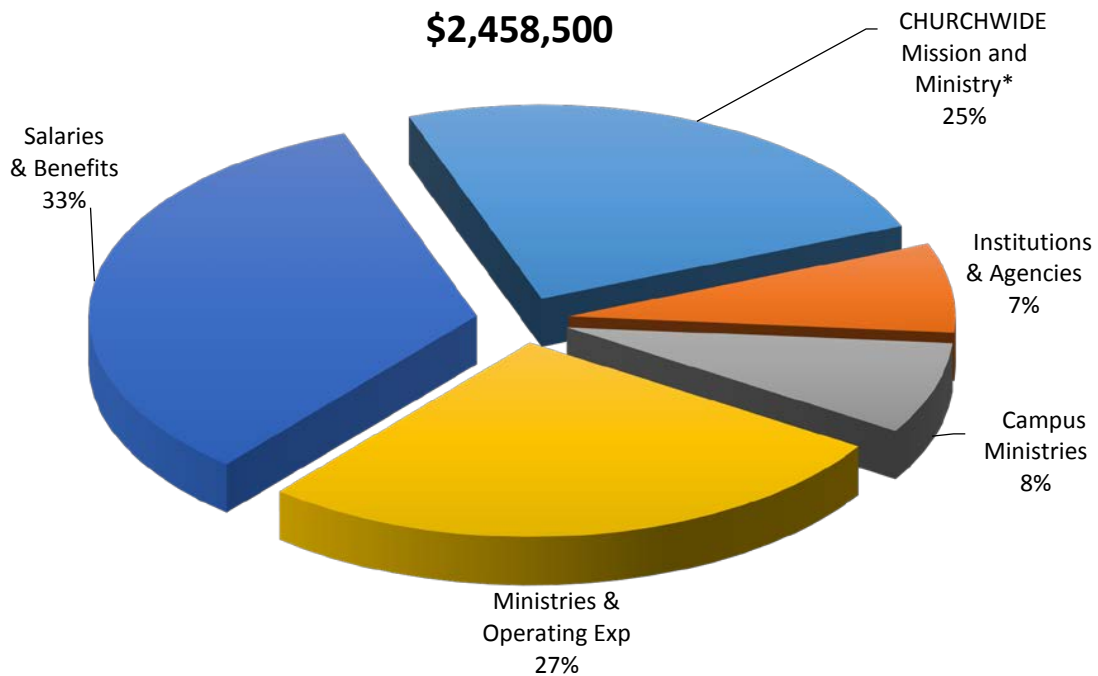
Note #4 The 2025/26 budget for salaries includes a 3.2% cost of living increase for the non-rostered staff. Rostered staff will be at or above compensation guidelines.

South Carolina Synod, ELCA 2025-2026 Proposed Mission Funding/Spending Plan

\$600,886	Churchwide Mission and Ministry
\$183,000	Institutions & Agencies
\$187,791	Campus Ministries
\$667,823	Ministries & Operating Expenses
\$819,000	Salaries & Benefits

\$2,458,500	

Mission Support from Congregations to Synod and Churchwide Ministries \$2,458,500



Ministries & Operating Expenses

Category One

Rostered Ministry

Category Two

Congregations & Lay Leaders

Category Three

New Leader Development

Category Four

Connections & Resources for Ministry

Discretionary Fund/Archives/ELCA Gift Planner

Operating Expenses

Campus Ministries

The Citadel

Clemson University

College of Charleston

Converse College

Lander University

Medical University of South Carolina

University of South Carolina - Spartanburg

University of South Carolina - Columbia

Winthrop University

Wofford College

Institutions & Agencies

SC Lutheran Retreat Centers

Lutheran Homes of SC

NovusWay Ministries

Newberry College

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

Lutheran Services Carolinas

*ELCA Support for 2025-2026 is 22% of unrestricted congregational support

Report of Lutheran Services Carolinas 2023-2024 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

Dear Friends,

The year of 2023 was a year of expansion and growth for Lutheran Services Carolinas, your health and human services social ministry of the South and North Carolina Synods of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

Last year, more than 2,500 LSC teammates, along with 2,429 donors and 4,125 advocates improved the lives of thousands of Carolinians. In South Carolina:

- Dedicated foster parents and case workers served 193 children.
- LSC's New Americans Program assisted 3,473 people on their path to new lives in the U.S., including 935 new arrivals in SC.
- The Transitional Foster Care for Unaccompanied Children program helped 103 children.
- The Day Services for Youth Program opened and served 96 foster youth.
- LSC's disaster services team gave hope and assistance to 27 households in SC.
- LSC's recovery services programs (Kinard Manor, WeCo Cottage, and Trinity Recovery) combined helped over 3,000 individuals; by either giving them a safe and sober home to overcome substance use disorder or providing them with the tools to assist a loved one.

LSC's New Americans Program LSC increased the number of refugees served throughout the year with offices now in Columbia, Greenville, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach.

LSC's Transitional Foster Care for Unaccompanied Children program, based in Columbia, continued to serve a very vulnerable population of children, and expanded the number of children it can serve from 12 to 24.

LSC's regular South Carolina foster care program remained busy, and the new Day Services for Youth Program got up and running. Through a partnership with the South Carolina Department of Social Services, the program offers foster youth a safe place to learn and grow during the day.

LSC also continued to serve through its recovery services programs, assisting people of all ages in SC to overcome substance use disorders. LSC is the only organization in the state with a collegiate recovery home, WeCo Cottage.

In fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, LSC had a solid financial performance. A positive bottom line is essential to strong overall financial health, which will allow the organization to continue to serve where the need is greatest in challenging times. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Yours in Christ,



Ted W. Goins, Jr.
LSC President



MISSION

Believing in the presence of God, the value of human life and the dignity of the individual, the mission of Lutheran Homes of South Carolina, as a ministry of the church, is to promote the well-being of older adults by providing residential, healthcare and hospice services.

- All LHSC campuses and programs were in good standing during the year from a regulatory standpoint and continue to recover operationally from the effects and challenges of the COVID virus.
- Lutheran Homes of South Carolina provided employment for 1,000 full or part-time TeamMates to fulfill our Mission serving our older adult resident, patient and client Priorities.
- Residential and healthcare services were provided for 2,804 independent, assisted living, memory support, skilled nursing long-term residents and short-term rehabilitation patients across our five continuing care retirement communities:
 - Franke at Seaside, Mount Pleasant
 - the Heritage at Lowman, White Rock
 - Rice Estate, Columbia
 - RoseCrest, Inman
 - Trinity on Laurens, Aiken
- LHSC's annual satisfaction survey received very high marks from our residential and healthcare resident and patient Priorities and family members about their perception of aspects that affect life at their residence such as direct care and services, staff, meals, life enrichment activities, buildings and grounds. 90.5% of survey respondents would recommend LHSC to others.

The Heritage at Lowman initiated Phase 2 of the 18 unit expansion of the Courtyard pocket neighborhood apartments in the fall of 2022. Development plans are also underway for the addition of 18 new Courtyard apartments at RoseCrest to be built concurrently with a multi-purpose wellness center and dining expansion which also will include dedicated chapel space. Rice Estate completed renovations for both assisted and independent living dining rooms.

- Rice Estate and the Heritage at Lowman Rehabilitation and Health Care Center received High Performing short-term care ratings as recognized as the Best Nursing Homes from US World & News Report. RoseCrest Rehabilitation and Healthcare maintained a Five Star Rating from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services throughout the year.
- Lutheran Hospice supported 559 patients and over 1,667 family caregivers during their end-of-life journey. The program ranked higher than the national averages for all quality measures and 90% of patients and families were willing to recommend Lutheran Hospice to others.
- Across the state, BeWell Home Services caregivers helped 151 clients remain at home with non-medical, supportive services through its Midlands/Aiken, Lowcountry, and Upstate offices.
- BeWell@Home provided continuing care at home wellness programs for 111 members.
- Due to the generosity of 1,791 donors in 2022, the Lutheran Homes of SC Foundation:
 - Provided \$431,186 to help subsidize the care of residents, clients and hospice patients served in our ministries of care.
 - Funded \$980,825 in capital improvements to enhance and expand facilities, and \$665,153 to support community programs and services.

As always, we remain most grateful for your partnership in ministry,

Mr. Jack Balling
Chair of the Board

Mr. Frank T. Shepke
President and CEO

How are the Wolves? The Wolves are well! As a college, we approach the concept of an interconnected community. When one hurts, we all hurt. When one wins a conference championship, we all win. We are interconnected as the faculty, staff, and coaches, making a difference in the lives of our 1,400 students. We continue to combat food insecurity on campus through the Wolves Pantry, and our campus is expanding its physical footprint as well as program offerings. We are connecting with students' spiritual journeys with a spring emphasis on the Beatitudes. We sincerely thank our church partners for their continued support, including \$37,183 in synodical giving this past fiscal year, as well as Bishops Aebischer, Strickland, and Suarez for continued support of Newberry College. May we continue to see Jesus in each other.

— The Rev. David Coffman '97, campus pastor

Campus landscape continues to expand

In the past year, Newberry College celebrated the grand opening of two major capital campaign projects. The Darby Nursing & Health Science Center opened its doors in August 2023. The 11,000-square-foot facility is the state-of-the-art home to the college's growing health care programs. Adjoining the facility is a daytime health clinic operated by Newberry County Memorial Hospital. The clinic opened in September and serves as an urgent care center for the community, as well as a prime location for student nurses to gain hands-on experience. In September, the College cut the ribbon on Founders Federal Credit Union Field House. The 18,000-square-foot field house provides well-needed space for growing Wolves athletics. Along with new east-side seating, the facility comprises the second of three phases of renovations to the college's athletic stadium. In addition to these two buildings, construction is underway on the College's ninth residence hall with an estimated opening of fall 2024.

Newberry rises as a leader among southern colleges

Newberry College took its place among the South's top 10 colleges in multiple categories, according to last year's rankings by U.S. News & World Report. Newberry rose in three categories – value, social mobility, and overall best – and crested a fourth, having been named in ideal college for veterans. The College was recognized in the following categories:

Best Regional Colleges – South: No. 10

Best Value – Regional South: No. 3

Social Mobility – Regional South: No. 4

Best Colleges for Veterans – Regional South: No. 2

This was the first time Newberry reached the top 10 among Best Regional Colleges in the South.

Newberry adds third master's program

In January, the College launched its third graduate-level program; a Master of Arts in criminal justice. The 100% online program can be completed in as few as 12 months and coursework can be completed anytime, anywhere. Criminal justice is a vast field, including policing, corrections, security, judicial administration, and social services. As the field continues to grow and evolve, Newberry College's master's degree is designed to prepare criminal justice practitioners with knowledge of modern demands and dynamic changes. Students are invited to enroll in the Master of Arts in criminal justice program six times a year, with new classes beginning every eight weeks.

Newberry launches online professional certification programs

Newberry College now offers a host of online professional credentialing through a new partnership with MindEdge. The programs are available to anyone and enrollment is open 24/7. The course offerings cover a wide variety of subjects and are "a la carte," with clients able to choose individual courses, learning resources, and certification programs to fit their needs. The courses are designed for adult learners and combine exercises, videos, and practical examples in coursework. To learn more, visit newberry.edu/certifications.

Historic MacLean Gymnasium takes on new life

MacLean Gymnasium has fortified the Newberry College skyline and its campus community since its construction in 1923. One hundred years since it first opened its doors, the gymnasium underwent a comprehensive restoration. The iconic playing floor was refinished, repainted, and damaged boards were replaced, new windows were installed, and heating and air conditioning were added. The playing floor has also been named in honor of legendary men's basketball coach Nield Gordon. The renovated building will serve as a refreshed practice space for cheerleading, the Newberry College Dance Team, the women's acrobatics & tumbling team, intramurals, and other student events.

College raising funds to repair Wiles Chapel organ

After 57 years of commencements, weddings, funerals, concerts and much more, the College is raising funds to repair Wiles Chapel's majestic pipe organ. Equipped with 35 ranks and 1,994 pipes, the organ was built in 1967 by the Schantz Organ Company. The grand instrument was designed for the space by longtime College organist and music professor Darr Wise (1929-2021), who commanded its keys for three decades until his retirement. Today, due to a number of factors, the organ's functionality has become limited. The College is raising \$350,000 to not only restore playability, but also to outfit the instrument for many more decades of holy harmonies. To give, please visit newberry.edu/give or scan the QR code, and enter "Wiles Chapel Organ" in the designation box. You can also send a check made payable to Newberry College to 2100 College St. Newberry, SC 29108, with "Wiles Chapel Organ" in the memo line.





2024 Report to Synod Assemblies/Gatherings

The Mission of NovusWay Ministries is to provide experiences for all people in God's creation that inspire faith, build relationships, and transform lives. Our Vision for this mission is, "Trusting in God's promises, lives are transformed to love and serve as part of inclusive communities." In fulfillment of this vision, the following Values are central: inclusion, renewal, stewardship, hospitality, formation, and discipleship.

- In 2023, we welcomed over 2,000 youth campers and nearly 650 family campers for summer camp programs at our four sites. These camper numbers represent our largest summer of camp since before the pandemic. We are excited that more youth and families are experiencing this transformational ministry.
- We also welcomed nearly 1,100 youth and adult participants to year-round programs in 2023. Retreats for confirmation students, women, men, and families provided time away for learning, fellowship, worship, and renewal. We celebrate the Spirit's movement among those who experienced camp all year long.
- Nearly 200 young adults served on the summer staff at one of our camps in 2023 where they learned to share their faith and be servant leaders among campers and in the wider world.
- Hosted ministry at Lutheridge, Lutherock, Luther Springs, and Lutheranch continues to be a significant part of our ministry. In 2023, hundreds of hosted ministry groups spent time on one of our NovusWay sites for a wide variety of events including quilting programs, business meetings, council retreats, festivals, and family reunions.
- NovusWay faced some financial challenges in 2023 including a significant budget shortfall. Through the leadership of interim Co-CEOs Mitzie Schafer and Mike Ward, a new financial roadmap is in place which includes a balanced budget in 2024. We are grateful for the generosity of those who love camp and have responded in ways that are strengthening the ministry for the future.
- Camp Lutheridge will celebrate its 75th Birthday in 2025. In celebration of this ministry milestone, the Lutheridge 75th Birthday Capital Campaign will launch in 2024. The gifts received through this campaign will provide upgrades to the Lutheridge facilities and pay off internal debt to the benefit of all four NovusWay camps. An important Lutherock project will also be included in the campaign.
- The greatest impact of NovusWay is in the lives of children, youth, and adults who continue to have life changing experiences at camp. The gifts of individuals, congregations, and synods empower ministry that embodies some of our deepest hopes and joys as the church. At camp, children of God are growing in faith, young leaders are being formed for service in the church and the world, and all people are experiencing the peace of Christ and the blessing of Christian community.

Thank you for your generous prayers and support
for Lutheridge, Lutherock, Luther Springs, and Lutheranch and for all we serve!



2023 Annual Report to the Synods

***Wartburg College is dedicated to challenging and nurturing students
for lives of leadership and service as a spirited expression of their faith and learning.***

Guided by our vision, we are answering the call to prepare resilient leaders of positive change for service in a complex world. This will be realized by building on our distinctives and embracing new opportunities to be the leading institution in educating the whole person.

Enrollment

- Fall 2023 enrollment was 1,472 students from 41 U.S. states and 44 countries, which includes 196 U.S. students of color and 92 international students. More than 20 Christian denominations and several world religions are represented. Our enrollment saw its largest year-to-year percentage increase since 2016.
- The five majors with the highest enrollment are business administration, biology, exercise science, elementary education, and psychology.
- The online Master of Arts in Leadership program enrolled a new cohort of eight students as well as one pursuing the Graduate Leadership Certificate.

Strategic Positioning

- After almost two years of research and planning, the college announced the Wartburg Commitment, a new pricing model and value proposition designed to help students consider, afford, and experience Wartburg College. Starting in Fall 2024, the comprehensive program includes a new competitive price, reduced financial barriers for lower- and middle-income families, and funding to increase access to immersive experiences.
- A new Wartburg brand, Experience More, was launched in conjunction with the Wartburg Commitment. Extensive research found the distinctive experiences students have at Wartburg involve a nurturing community, connection, and engagement. These common threads of the Wartburg experience resonate with students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

- The first 15 students to earn a master's degree from Wartburg College graduated in May with a Master of Arts in Leadership. The students came from as far away as Ohio and California and represented an array of work sectors, including business, K-12 and higher education, public administration, the military, and faith communities.
- In January 2023, Wartburg faculty approved a new THRIVE General Education curriculum to be implemented in the 2024-25 academic year. THRIVE stands for Thinking Critically, Human Culture, Reasoning, Information Fluency, Vocation, and Effective Communication.
- Dr. Ethan Blass was inducted into the newly established Herbert and Mildred Kleinfeld Professorship in German Language and Culture. The professorship, provided through the generosity of Gerald Kleinfeld in honor of his parents, will support teaching and learning in the German Department.
- As a member of the Iowa Private Transfer Collaborative, Wartburg received a three-year grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and Teagle Foundation to make the experience of transferring from an Iowa community college more transparent.
- The college launched Knights to Know, an educational web series that introduces influential alumni to the greater Wartburg community. The first year's theme is Women of Wartburg and has featured women in STEM and leaders in service.

Report of South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers 2023-2024 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

It is with great joy and gratitude that we celebrate the past year here at South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers. This year has been filled with blessings, growth, and transformation as we continued our mission of "Providing holy spaces for God to change lives."

Despite the challenges posed by the aftermath of the global pandemic, we have seen a growing demand for our retreat centers and we were delighted to see an increased usage at both sites over the previous year. Individuals and groups from across South Carolina and beyond have sought refuge and renewal in the serene landscapes and sacred spaces of Camp Kinard and Coastal Retreat. Through our various offerings, including youth camps, family retreats, and spiritual gatherings, we have witnessed countless lives being touched and transformed by the power of God's presence.

At Camp Kinard, nestled amidst the tranquil beauty of nature, campers have experienced moments of joy, wonder, and spiritual growth. From hiking trails to campfires under the stars, every experience is an opportunity for connection and discovery. Similarly, at Coastal Retreat, with its breathtaking views of the ocean, guests have found solace and inspiration in the rhythmic sounds of the waves and the gentle sea breeze. These holy spaces have become sanctuaries for those seeking refuge from the busyness of life, allowing God to work in their hearts and minds.

One of the highlights of the past year has been the completion of our new, fully accessible swimming pool at Camp Kinard. We were excited to "Make a Splash" at the dedication, which included the inaugural swimmers Pastor Rebecca Wicker, Pastor Matt Titus, Pastor David Coffman, Bill Newmyer, Elliott Cox and Nevin Rodgers. This project has been a labor of love, and we are thrilled to announce that it is now open to all, providing a refreshing and inclusive space for relaxation and recreation. This new addition not only enhances the physical amenities of Camp Kinard but also reflects our commitment to accessibility and inclusivity in all aspects of our ministry.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we are excited about the plans to further enhance our facilities. We look forward to finishing the area where the old pool was filled, adding amenities such as volleyball, gaga pit, tetherball, and a gathering/worship area. Additionally, we will be moving forward with long-awaited plans for a new chapel and a new entrance at Camp Kinard. These projects will not only improve our physical spaces but also provide more opportunities for spiritual growth and community building.

In addition to the spiritual growth and transformation we've witnessed, we are also pleased to report that giving to the South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers has increased approximately 14% from the previous year, highlighting the continued support and commitment of our community to our mission.

As we reflect on the past year, we are humbled and inspired by the countless stories of transformation and renewal that have taken place on the grounds of these retreat centers. Lives have been changed, relationships have been deepened, and faith has been strengthened, all thanks to the grace of God and the support of our community.

In conclusion, we are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to serve as stewards of these sacred spaces. We are committed to continuing our mission of providing holy spaces for God to change lives, and we invite you to join us on this journey of faith, hope, and love.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in ministry. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Deacon Dallas J. Shealy
Executive Director

Jane G. Holmes
Board Chair

Report of South Carolina Women of the ELCA 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

As South Carolina Women of the ELCA, we are a community of women called to discipleship in Jesus Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and as a response to God's love and grace, we act boldly on our faith, as we engage in ministry and action. We strive to grow our relationships with God and grow our relationships with each other so that we can be God's voice, hands, and feet here on earth.

Convention 2023

On June 23-23, 2023, we held our 35th annual convention at Zion Lutheran Church in Lexington, SC. The theme was *"Just Love One Another"*. As John 15:12 says *"This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you"*. As Christians we are called by God to love all people, take care of those who are in need and be His disciples to spread the "Good News" to those who need to know Christ.

We heard from our many partners within the SC Synod who shared their exciting news about their organizations. Pastor Emily Hartmann, Assistant to the Bishop brought greetings from the SC Synod. Keynote speakers were Ms. Dallas Shealy Executive Director of SC Lutheran Retreat Centers and Ms. Cathy Milejczak, SC Synod Coordinator for the SW Diocese of Tanzania. Both speakers gave us updates of their projects and news from their organization. Devotions and worship service were led by Vicar Emily Whitlow (St. John's Walhalla) and Rev. Dr. Rachel Connelly (St. John's Walhalla).

Elections were held resulting in President Risse Snelgrove being elected for a second term. Also, Rachel Quesada was elected as Treasurer and board members Christie Gardner, Joy Derrick, LaTynia Taylor, Merri Lewis were elected for 2 year terms and Sallie Folk for a one year term. After the convention, our Vice President resigned resulting in Christie Gardner being appointed by the Board as Vice President. Sallie Folk moved into the 2-year term and Sarah Cheesmen was appointed for a one-year term.

2023 SC WELCA Projects and Donations

- **Camp Kinard Improvement Project:** \$10,607.46 was raised for a new fence for the new pool at Camp Kinard Retreat Center.
- **Tanzania Hygiene Kits:** 1069 Hygiene Kits were created and delivered to the Convention from units in the SC SWO.
- **Tanzania Project:** \$1740.50 (\$585 from Convention and \$1157.50 from St. John's Spartanburg).
- **ELCA Good Gifts:** \$6882.92 (\$6571.92 Joy Offerings, Camp Kinard Retreat Offering \$210 and 3 Congregational Units \$311)
- **Newberry College Wolfe Food Pantry:** \$1000.00
- **Women on a Mission:** \$1000
- **National Woman of the ELCA:** \$13,204.50 (\$12,915.50 60% of our regular offerings and Thankoffering \$289)
- **SC Disaster Relief:** \$200
- **LTSS Scholarship Fund:** \$619.76
- **Conference Gatherings:** \$4223.90 (Offerings from Conference Gatherings/Meetings that were donated to many local projects in their communities. This includes Newberry College Nursing Scholarship, CASA Family System, Salt & Light, Lutheran World Relief, The Palmetto Place, LaVie Pregnancy Care, Falcon's Children's Home, Fresh Start Healing, Sunshine over Sorrow, SC Synod, Jasmine Road, LTSS, The Period Project, The Fifth Gospel, and Gamecock Lutheran)
- **Other Designated Gifts:** \$1920.75
- **Total Giving for SC WELCA:** \$41,399.79

Triennial Convention & Gathering: Five women were elected to attend and represent SC WELCA at the National WELCA Convention in Phoenix AR this past September. Voting Members were Christie Gardner, Cindy McManus, LaTynia Taylor, Sarah Cheesman, and Pat George.

Teen Suicide Prevention Resolution: SC Women of the ELCA presented a resolution to the National Triennial Convention for a vote. The resolution was regarding Advocating, Educating and Awareness on how to prevent Teenage Suicide. This resolution passed at our own convention in June and at the Triennial Convention.

The ELCA Lutheran Women in South Carolina are a blessing to our Synod and the SC Synodical Women's Organization. They are strong bold women who love Jesus Christ and give generously from their hearts to help those in need. We will continue to do God's work here on earth.

We thank Bishop Ginny and the SC ELCA Synod Council for the support they provide our organization.

Together in Christ.

Risse Snelgrove, President, SC Women of the ELCA

Report of the Director of Communications for 2023

Nine years. Time flies. I am continuously blessed to work with deeply spiritual and highly skilled colleagues. Thank you to the Bishop, Synod Council, and members of the South Carolina Synod who continue to support the development of a top-tier, modern communication program.

I am working to update the website. The website's infrastructure was approaching three full years of data, slowing and making the site less effective. The website continues to grow in visitors, and we continue to see a growth in mobile users. The new website will focus on mobile users' ease of use.

Our eNews list continues to perform well. More people than ever are opening our emails and clicking through to the content.

Our social media presence has been a beacon of growth for us. Since my tenure began, we've nearly quadrupled our page likes. I sincerely thank all who have joined us on this journey. Instagram has been an excellent platform for growth. The use of imagery and video is critical. If you're active on social media and still need to follow our accounts, I invite you to join us.

<https://facebook.com/scsynod>
<https://instagram.com/scsynod>

<https://twitter.com/scsynod>
<https://pinterest.com/scsynod>

Speaking of video, the growth of our YouTube channel has been phenomenal. We've doubled our subscribers and quadrupled our watch time this year. The videos that have led the way include:

- A History and Context for the Israel-Hamas War | Rev. Bobby Morris
- Our Lutheran F.A.Q. series with The Rev. Emily Hartmann, Assistant to the Bishop
- Regular viewership of our Sunday messages in Spanish with The Rev. Jorge Leone and The Rev. Mark Buchan
- Our Synod Assembly Live Streams
- Lutheran Living in South Carolina Video Magazine

Again, I invite you to subscribe to our channel for exciting and educational content.

<https://youtube.com/@scsynod>

Late in the Summer of 2022, I completed digital marketing certification programs from the Digital Marketing Institute and the American Marketing Association. My education continues. Recently, Newberry College has started offering online certification classes. I am now working on a Certification in Business Communications.

Our investment in equipment and software continues to connect leaders and members from around the synod. Zoom continues to be a handy tool for meetings and events (e.g., the Inclusiveness Network Book Study). Our ability to have the needed equipment helps to bring more engagement through high-quality audio and visual content. I continue to study and update our technology plan to meet our current and future needs within our budget effectively.

Respectfully submitted,
Neal F. Fischer, Director of Communications

Report of the Director for Stewardship 2023-2024 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

God calls us in Holy Baptism to be disciples. Everyone who goes to the font is called to discipleship. One of the ways we live out our discipleship is stewardship. Stewardship is about all the ways we live out belonging to God. "The goal of our Stewardship ministry is to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to them (*us*)."

(*Ask, Thank, Tell* by Charles R. Lane, page 11)

Stewardship Education for Congregations

South Carolina (SC) Synod stewardship strategies focus on stewardship education, annual response, year-round planning, mission interpretation, missional spending plan and the encouragement to individuals and families to participate in planned giving. Here are a few of the resources available:

- 1) *Rediscover Macedonia* theme materials for education, response and living the mission were launched as a website in July 2012, and are available to all congregations at no cost at www.elca.org/macedonia
- 2) *Stewards of God's Love* is a tool produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for doing year-round stewardship ministry in your congregation. Copies of this resource are available at <http://resources.elca.org> or www.ELCA.org/growingstewards.
- 3) *Embracing Stewardship: How to put stewardship at the heart of your congregation's life* by Charles R. Lane and Grace Duddy Pomroy, published in 2016, can be ordered at embracingstewardship.com.
- 4) *Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity* by Mike Ward, Fortress Press [2020]
- 5) *Church Finances for Missional Leaders: Best Practices for Faithful Stewardship*, by Bonnie Ives Marden, Wesley's Foundry Books, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church [2019]
- 6) *Six Weeks of Money* is an ELCA stewardship resource that helps people grow a healthier relationship with money. It's for people of all ages and situations.
<https://start.sixweeksonmoney.com/courses/elca>

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Region 9 Council for Stewardship Education

The Senior Class Symposium for graduating seniors and rising interns was held on March 15-16, 2024, in-person and livestreamed, which offered seminarians first call orientation, an opportunity to learn about the benefits available from Portico Benefit Services and Stewardship Resources available through the Mission Investment Fund. There were seven seniors and interns participating, seven were in person and there were no participants online. Pr. Cathy Schibler, Deacon Jerry Johnson and Pr. Danielle DeNise served as presenters.

Joint Ministries of Region 9 and the LTSS/Region 9 Council for Stewardship Education collaborated to offer two Financial Management Education Workshops, one for Candidates for Rostered Ministry and one for First Call Rostered Ministers in Region 9 led by Kim Miller of LSS Financial Counseling.

Networking Congregations for Growing Stewards

Building a Culture of Generosity guides congregations through fall stewardship appeal

The purpose of offering *Building a Culture of Generosity* (BCG) is to walk along with congregations with a basic stewardship resource led by GSB consultant, Mike Ward between August and November 2024. While the total cost is \$600, the synod provides \$300 to each congregation participating. The following congregations participated in 2023: St. Paul, Columbia; Colony, Newberry; St. Peter, Pawley's Island; Redeemer, Charleston and St. James, Graniteville.

Mission Interpretation 2024 Mission Support Video

The theme of the 2024 Mission Support Video is *Like Good Stewards* based on I Peter 4: 10 "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."

The video features three stories: 1) Pathways to Leadership tells the story of some of the paths to rostered ministry; 2) Partnerships tells the story of Christ Community, N. Charleston, St. Michael, Moncks Corner, and the South Carolina Lutheran Men in Mission; and 3) Lutheran Disaster Response tells the story of The Rev. Ruth and Ray Sipes, Coordinators for the Carolinas.

The video was sent in January 2024 to rostered ministers and Congregation Council presidents and vice presidents along with a Mission Moment devotion. Link to *Like Good Stewards* YouTube Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBp_MxmBhvE

2023 South Carolina Synod Ministry Toolbox

The South Carolina Synod offered two sessions of Ministry Toolbox. Pr. Ozzie Herlong conducted a workshop titled *Finances as Faith Formation*, at All Saints, Mt. Pleasant, on October 28, 2023, and at Messiah, Mauldin, on November 18, 2023.

Lifeline Fund

Through a “scaling” grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., synods in Region 9 are participating in the *Faith + Finance + Freedom* initiative. This is a part of the *National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders*. The SC Synod entered this partnership in June 2019, appointed a distribution team and agreed to collaborate by raising matching funds.

As of November 29, 2023, the South Carolina Synod has paid \$203,673 to education lenders and eliminated 93 years of education debt for eleven rostered ministers and a significant portion of the debt of four other rostered minister. The Lifeline Distribution Team, meeting on November 29, 2023, set aside in reserve \$25,576.00 for four rostered ministers to be awarded in 2024.

Phase 3 of *Faith + Finance + Freedom* in Region 9 was completed on December 31, 2023. Beginning in 2024 the South Carolina Synod will present to the Synod Council a proposed Lifeline Fund Sustainability Plan to continue the work of education debt re-payment for rostered ministers. The proposed plan calls for raising at least \$25,000 a year. In March 2024 a gift of \$10,000 was received from an individual donor toward the \$25,000 goal. The South Carolina Synod has entered a contract in 2024 with Pr. John Mocko as Program Coordinator. Pr. Mocko receives applications, makes available to applicants Financial Management Education through LSS of Minnesota, and make payments to education lenders.

One rostered minister wrote: “I am writing with a humble heart filled with gratitude for receiving the Lifeline debt reduction grant. My soul is rejuvenated by this generous opportunity to be given a fresh new start in a new call, new state, and new opportunities to grow in faith and generosity too. God has provided generous givers to the Lifeline Fund and for that I am eternally grateful.”

The application for Lifeline Fund education debt repayments is found on the North Carolina Synod website under *Faith + Finance + Freedom* at this link: <https://form.jotform.com/200215181602035>

New Consecration Sunday

New Consecration Sunday offers congregations an effective financial response method to build a culture of generosity. This approach to financing the operational ministries of a congregation teaches stewardship from a spiritual perspective. Directed toward raising the level of stewardship rather than toward raising the church budget, *New Consecration Sunday* (NCS) focuses on the question, “What is God calling me to do?” rather than on the question, “What does the church need in order to pay its bills?”, *New Consecration Sunday*, Program Book, by Herb Miller. The SC Synod provides some financial support to congregations who use a Guest Leader and incorporate a catered Celebration Luncheon.

Planned Giving, ELCA Foundation

The South Carolina Synod is in partnership with the ELCA Foundation, Ms. Stephanie Burke, *Regional Gift Planner for the Carolinas*, to strengthen the financial health of our congregations, institutions, and the synod. View the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qE8YZ5uz24k>

Stewardship for All Seasons

The South Carolina Synod offers to partner with congregations in *Stewardship for All Seasons* (SAS). This process is about Guiding Congregations into Year-round Stewardship Development.

The returning congregations in covenant with the synod during May 2023 to April 2024 included: Sixth Year - St. Matthew, Charleston; Fifth Year - St. John, Beaufort; Fourth Year – Grace, Rock Hill; Fourth Year - Ebenezer, Columbia and Second Year – St. Michael, Greenville.

The first-year congregations in covenant with the synod during May 2023 to April 2024 included: Pisgah, Lexington; St. John, Walhalla; Zion, Lexington; Pilgrim, Lexington; Redeemer, Newberry; and Pilgrim, Lexington.

The new congregations in covenant with the synod during May 2024-to April 2025 include Bethlehem, Irmo; St. Paul, Aiken; Holy Spirit, Charleston; and St. David, West Columbia.

Because of the partnership with the South Carolina Synod the cost is reduced for first year congregations and returning congregations. A congregation entering the first year can expect 50% of the cost to be paid by the synod. Congregations participating in the second year and beyond can expect one-third of the cost to be paid by the synod. Congregations are asked to contribute back to the synod through Mission Support. Working with other congregations not only makes it more affordable, but also brings energy to the process. A covenant between the synod and the congregation is available on the synod website. Congregations approve participation in March and April and select teams. Congregations began May 16, 2024. and continue through April 2025. Use this contact for more information: Rev. Ozzie Herlong Cell: (803) 360-1877 or Email: ovherlong@aol.com

Rev. Mike Ward is the leader for Stewardship for All Seasons. Mike is the author of *Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity*, Fortress Press [2020]. For several years the South Carolina Synod has partnered with congregations. This is an opportunity to hear about Stewardship for All Seasons (SAS) and consider thinking about stewardship development in your congregation. In SAS congregations form clusters and cohorts which facilitate learning and make it more affordable? To learn more about Stewardship for All Seasons view this interview with Mike Ward: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvjnUH4p0c>

Lutherans Restoring Creation

A part of the strategy of the Stewardship Network includes the *Caring for Creation Task Force*. This task force seeks to foster the concept and application of creation stewardship within our synod. Working with Lutherans Restoring Creation, the team aims to offer resources and generate dialogue from a Lutheran perspective with the SC Synod, its congregations, and individuals. The Rev. Kris Litman-Koon, Pastor, All Saints, Mt. Pleasant, serves as convener for the task force.

Bible Study

Dr. Mark Allen Powell, author of *Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Living a Generous Life*, presented a series of bible studies on the 2024 assembly theme, *Like Good Stewards*. The first session on May 7th was recorded and shared online. Dr. Powell presented additional interactive studies via Zoom on May 14, 21, and 28.

Thank You

First, we give thanks for those with whom we share faith in Jesus Christ. Second, we give thanks to God for your 2023 Mission Support. Mission Support is the portion of your regular giving by members that your congregation shares with your synod and churchwide ministries. God is making a difference in the lives of our neighbors, congregations, synod ministries and people around the world through your Mission Support dollars.

I am available to congregations to assist in equipping steward leaders in year-round stewardship, conducting an annual response, developing a missional spending plan or meet with pastors to share the best stewardship practices and principles.

For additional stewardship resources, go to the South Carolina Synod website, www.scsynod.com. Select *Deepening Discipleship Table* and choose *Stewardship*.

Rev. Ozzie Herlong, Director for Stewardship
South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ovherlong@aol.com

Report of the Director of Evangelical Mission 2023-2024 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

It has been wonderful being your DEM this past year. Anything I report is thanks to the many hands that make it all possible and through your support. Some highlights from this past year include:

Our Mission congregations. Thanks to your continued support, the mission developers serving in our synod have worked building new communities of faith where people are finding life-changing relationships with God. The work they do is truly amazing.

Our Congregational Vitality Team. Over the past year, our congregational vitality team has held several events, ranging from having better council meetings to how to leverage online tools to get more people to your church's events.

Outreach and evangelism. I've worked with several congregations on their outreach strategies for the communities around them (and, shameless self-plug, I'd love to work with your congregation, too). We've seen new community events and new visitors to the congregations I've worked with, thanks to the work and commitment of the congregations' volunteers and their openness to new things.

Congregation reports. Nobody loves filling out forms A and C, but this past January each pastor and congregation should have received a report with some information based on last year's form A. Thanks to great feedback, it'll look different next year, but I plan to continue making sure the information you give us comes back to you in a meaningful and useful way.

Innovation cohorts. A group of pastors and I connected with the ELCA innovation lab to learn, reflect, and apply what we had learned to specific projects in our congregations.

Ministry Toolbox Days. In October and November, we held events for congregations full of presentations on different topics helpful for ministry in the congregation. Over 100 people attended between the two events, and we are hopeful these kinds of events will continue into the future.

As always, I'm available for conversation. I'd love to walk with you and/or your congregation as you meet the people who have a church home with you, but just don't know it yet.

Pastor James Henricks

**James R. Crumley Jr Archives
2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly**

Administration

Personnel and Hours of Operation

The Archives employs five part-time workers: Shannon Smith, director and archivist; Trudy Bouknight, office manager; Scott Reeves, assistant archivist; Ashley Ragland, archivist aide; and Margaret Mancuso, project specialist.

Accessions

New and reoccurring accessions from Region-9 synods, congregations, and individuals are deposited in the Crumley Archives and are processed by staff.

Special Projects:

“Unsung: A Chronicle of Black Lutherans”

The Crumley Archives, under the direction of Dr. Harvey Huntley and Scott Reeves, is producing another feature film entitled, “Unsung: A Chronicle of Black Lutherans”.¹ Filming began with pastors and laity from the S.C. and S.E. Synods who shared their stories and memories. This film is based upon the scholarship of Dr Huntley, who for more than two years has sought to compile and catalog congregation, mission, and personal records related to African descent Lutherans. These records are preserved in the Crumley Archives. Filming will involve each synod in Region-9. Please check our website for updates as segments are produced.²

If you have a story or record to share, please contact Shannon Smith at crumleyarchivist@gmail.com.

Archives Relocation

After LRU's decision to move the Seminary to the Hickory campus, the Archives has begun investigating possibilities for its relocation. Discussions among the Crumley Archives board of directors and synods are active and ongoing.

Friends of the Archives Banquet

This year's banquet will be held in Columbia, S.C. and will honor the Rev. James and Mrs. Celie Addy; St. Michael's Lutheran Church (Irmo), and the S.C. Synod. It will be held Friday, Sept. 20. Details will follow. Please contact Shannon Smith at crumleyarchivist@gmail.com for more information.

Shannon L. Smith

¹ See trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SobFCVCcF0I>

² Crumley Archives: www.crumleyarchives.com

Inclusiveness Network Report 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

The Inclusiveness Network was very active during 2023 and early 2024.

In April 2023, four members of the Network participated in a Civil Rights Pilgrimage in Georgia and Alabama with the Southeastern Synod.

Book studies on *The Color of Compromise*, *How to Heal our Divides, (Volume 2)*, and *Dear Martin*, led by various people via Zoom and live. Pastor Leroy Cannon brings together a group roughly every other Tuesday that includes AME and Lutheran Christians for conversation and fellowship.

Orangeburg Lutheran Church has been hosting viewings of movies about racial reconciliation. The Inclusiveness Network advertised for and participated in a viewing of *Four Little Girls* there along with members of the SC State and Orangeburg communities. Pr. Rick Mason has made deep connections in the community there that are opening up healing conversations.

About 30 folks visited the International African-American Museum in Charleston on October 7. We met for conversation afterward at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. The stories of African-American contributions to agriculture, religion, arts, and the cultural life of United States were well told and moving to all who went.

Support for a Watch Night Service on December 31 at Reformation Lutheran Church. This African-American tradition of watching for the new year to begin was a great celebration for all who attended.

The Network participated in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day Service at Ascension Lutheran Church on January 14, 2024. Worship was led by Pr. Jackie Utley and members of the Church of God in Christ.

Took a Civil Rights Walking tour in Columbia (February 10, 2024). This was coordinated through USC's Civil Rights program and Columbia63. About 15 people participated in this tour, which looked at local monuments and sites in downtown Columbia as well as an exhibit at the Columbia Art Museum. Even long-time South Carolinians learned history that they hadn't been exposed to before.

Pastor Christopher Girardeau approached the Inclusiveness Network this year about starting a task force discussing gender justice. That team has met a few times and plans to start a book study in the near future.

Over the last year, the Inclusiveness Network has shown growth in diversity, in numbers, and in experiences. We are grateful to God for these blessings and are eager to see what the Lord has for us in the future. If you'd like to get involved, please reach out to me at pastorbrucekreutzer@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,

Pr. Bruce Kreutzer

Lutheran Disaster Relief Carolinas 2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly

We began our work in both North and South Carolina Synods early in 2023 by introducing ourselves and the work of LDR Carolinas at large group events with a display table, a survey form, and the opportunity for many personal conversations. We attended the Lutheran Men in Mission annual gatherings, Women of the ELCA annual gatherings, and synod assemblies in both NC and SC.

The congregational disaster preparedness survey forms that we received at these events helped us to learn about congregations and individuals, particularly their current levels of preparedness, interest in more information, and desire to help others after a disaster.

After several of those large gatherings, we planned meetings with conference leaders, especially in coastal areas of both synods, to talk with them about our ministry and offer to visit with individual congregations.

We have also been meeting with congregations and congregational councils who want to learn more about disaster preparedness and/or response. Sometimes that has involved temple talks about the work of Lutheran Disaster Response and LDR Carolinas, preaching for a worship service, meeting with an adult forum to talk about individual preparedness, or meeting with congregational leaders who are interested in developing or updating a congregational preparedness plan. We encourage congregations to discuss ways that they are interested in responding to disaster in their communities and beyond.

We have been in contact with conference deans and rostered leaders following events in their congregations or communities from an apparent heart attack during worship to a shooting on the UNC Chapel Hill campus. We responded to the EF3 tornado in Eastern NC by applying for and receiving an LDR Solidarity Grant to assist affected members of the community with unmet short term needs not covered by insurance or other resources.

We have participated in quarterly meetings of both NC & SC VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) to develop relationship with other organizations and individuals providing disaster services. We participated in called meetings before and after major events, including the EF3 tornado in eastern NC in July, Hurricane Idalia, and Tropical Storm Ophelia. We are also serving on the National VOAD Preparedness Committee.

We have shared information with others via our website www.ldrcarolinas.org which includes a resource page and a blog. We also have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/ldrcarolinas which we have used to post information about events and response to disasters, and a YouTube page www.youtube.com/@LDRCarolinas with recordings of our online network meetings and book study.

With financial assistance from the NC Synod Heilig Resource Center, the NC Synod Michael Peeler/Virginia Casey Grant Fund, and the SC Mission Fund, we have planned projects and events for 2024, including a book study on **A Ready Hope**, work to upfit the NC Synod trailer for disaster response, a service trip to assist Craven County (NC) Disaster Recovery Alliance with ongoing recovery work following Hurricane Florence in 2018, congregational preparedness mini-grants, and more.

The Revs. Ray & Ruth Ann Sipe

Planning Team: 200th Anniversary of the South Carolina Synod
South Carolina Synod Assembly
2024

On a cold day in January of 1824, four Lutheran pastors in the Midlands of South Carolina determined they would begin a new Synod for the congregations that had emerged during the previous decades. “Gathering at St. Michael’s Lutheran Church, now in Irmo, to form an independent Synod of their own – the Synod of SOUTH Carolina – and Adjacent States . . . The meeting was opened with “singing and prayer,” exactly as we open our Synod Assemblies today, 200 years later. They elected the Rev. Godfrey Dreher as the first President of the Synod until the next meeting – what we today, would call, a bishop.” (From Dr. Susan McCarver’s presentation for the 175th Anniversary of the South Carolina Synod in 1999)

These facts summarize the rather inauspicious beginnings of our Synod. However, by the end of 1824, Pr. John Bachman of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Charleston had agreed to serve as President of the new Synod and the number of congregations in the Synod had also grown by several hundred percent. In the Synod minutes from 1824, the record showed that the Synod budget was \$34. Much of it came as single dollar contributions, but Pr. Bachman was listed as having given \$20 of that amount. (No wonder they elected him President of the Synod).

During the last two centuries, the South Carolina Synod would grow to include more than 150 congregations and more than 50,000 members. More importantly, by the end of the 19th century, the ministry of the Synod would reach Japan and beyond. God’s actions in this state also resulted in significant social changes in the state and the growth of a wide variety of institutions that would address the needs of education, care for society, environment, elderly people and a host of other issues and concerns. The 20th century brought many these institutions to maturity. And the last decade of that century also brought the Synod into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

So many things have happened during the last 200 years of ministry that celebrating them all will take more than a year. And our celebration will culminate during the Synod Assembly of 2025. To address the needs of storytelling and history celebration, the Synod Council formed a committee for the 200th Anniversary of the South Carolina Synod. This committee has been diligent during 2024 in planning how we will address the 200-year story the South Carolina Synod and its members throughout the state. Already the planning team has produced a logo and “History Moments” released on eNews, *Lutheran Living*, SC Synod. An Introduction to the 200th Anniversary Year [1824-2024] was released in January. This was followed in February with an African America Focus, and in March “History Moments” on Ladies Sewing Society (1825), Women’s Memorial Lutheran Church, and Woman’s Home and Foreign Missionary Societies. A video will be a part of the South Carolina Synod Assembly on June 8, 2024, featuring interviews with The Rev. Dr. James Aull, The Rev. David Donges, The Rev. Dr. Herman Yoos, and The Rev. Ginny Aebischer. These four bishops have served the South Carolina Synod since the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Because it is so multi-faceted, the story of the South Carolina Synod is not an easy story to tell. Nevertheless, telling it will enable us to find inspiration and hope for our future. Truly the South Carolina Synod has been blessed in many ways. God has been working in our state as we have shared together in witnessing to our faith. And, most importantly, the last two centuries have provided a tremendous foundation for the ministry that will unfold in this century and beyond.

We give thanks for all of God’s blessings and pray that our life together will grow stronger through our celebration events during the coming year.

Yours in Christ,
Th Rev. Dr. Mark Scott
Chair
The 200th Anniversary Committee of the South Carolina Synod



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:

The Reverend David C. Shank, CFRE
David.Shank@elca.org
410-716-4204

8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631 • 800-635-3522 • Foundation.ELCA.org



South Carolina Synod Fund for Leaders (9C) 2024 Annual Report

Thank you to the people of the South Carolina Synod for making an investment in the future of the church through the ELCA Fund for Leaders. We are grateful for your partnership!

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the ELCA Fund for Leaders provided scholarship assistance of more than \$3 million in support of nearly 350 future pastors and deacons. Thank you for your role in ensuring that these future leaders will be freed from the burden of student debt so that they can go and serve as the church needs and the Holy Spirit leads.

Students supported in 2023-2024: Total \$9,696

• Joel Antley	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
• Ben Bernstein	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
• Olga-Maria Cruz	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
• Laura Henrickson	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
• Zachary Lindler	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
• Jace Martinez	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
• Paula Perry	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
• Emily Whitlow	\$1,212	Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

Additional Information about your fund

Total awarded since inception: **\$67,329.00**

South Carolina Synod Fund for Leaders, E271592

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$278,459.97**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$1,350.00**

Total amount available for you to award for 2024-2025: \$11,400*

*This number is calculated with a 10% holdback to ensure that all promised scholarships can be paid during both semesters, even if the market fluctuates. Please issue awards in whole dollars.

Documents

2024 Guidelines for Synods

2024 FFL Synod nominations

2024 Instructions for Synod or
Congregation nominees

Process and Timeline

This document contains eligibility criteria and notes on the selection process and timeline.

Synods submit nominee information to FFL by May 1, 2024 using this Excel template.

Synods send to each nominee by May 15. This document assists students registering/applying in ELCA GrantMaker.

Students register and apply: **May 15 - June 5, 2024.**

Students accept the grant agreement online in **July 2024.**

For more information, please visit [ELCA.org/fundforleaders](https://elca.org/fundforleaders) or call 800-638-3522, ext. 2936.

Benefits Making a Difference

At Portico we strive to offer benefits that make our plan members' lives better, so that they can fulfill their mission of helping others live their best lives. Here is a visual recap of what our community of 45,000+ members experienced in 2023.

94
Marriages



3,012
Medical Visits Via Text

By ELCA-Primary health plan members using 98point6, our text-based primary care service



142
Births & Adoptions

83%
Very Satisfied

With Portico's award-winning Customer Care Center



535
Changes of Call

2,354
Pounds Lost

By ELCA-Primary health plan members using the Omada prevention program, with 18,116 lbs. lost since 2018

\$152K
Debt Paid Off

By members via LSS of Minnesota Financial Counseling, with over \$2.2M paid off since 2008

15.8%
Of Member Income

Saved for retirement, on average, by members sponsored in the Traditional Benefits Program, thanks to employer and member contributions

605
Retirements



45
Beginning Disability Benefits

60
Divorces

905
Age 65+ Members

Participated each month, on average, in the SilverSneakers Fitness Program via ELCA Medicare-Primary health benefits



\$212M
Annuity Payments

Received by members in the ELCA Participating Annuity

Our mission is to serve those who serve — financially, emotionally, and physically. We do this by securing quality, cost-effective, and useful benefits that make a difference for our members and sponsoring organizations. With each new year we continue to grow our pool and affirm the value and importance of church together.

Note: Unless a specific benefit program is mentioned, these numbers and percentages were drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.

**Report of the Necrologist
2024 South Carolina Synod Assembly**

FOR ALL THE SAINTS

Carolyn Crooks Bishop, born April 12, 1934, age 89, died July 17, 2023
Wife of Rev. Henri Bishop

Deacon Thomas Joseph O'Brien, born November 15, 1939, age 83, died July 29, 2023

Rev. Henry N. Brandt, born November 20, 1930, age 92, died September 1, 2023

Rev. Paul Allen Hirth, born October 22, 1938, age 84, died October 10, 2023

Robert Frederick Gay, born May 11, 1946, age 77, died November 14, 2023
Husband of Rev. Mikki Gay

Rev. Kathy Elaine Hall Harris, born August 21, 1957, age 66, died November 13, 2023

Rev. Dr. Carl M. Fischer, born February 4, 1933, age 90, died November 17, 2023

Dell Merchant Gunter, born September 17, 1947, age 76, died February 11, 2024
Wife of Rev. Rodney Gunter

Jerry Dean Jennings, born October 4, 1946, age 77, died February 10, 2024
Husband of Rev. Angela Jennings

Rev. James F. Shealy, born November 3, 1939, age 84, died February 28, 2024

Rev. Robert Earl McCombs Jr., born March 23, 1929, age 94, died March 2, 2024

Rev. James Rudolph (Fox) Fuchs, born July 10, 1931, age 92, died April 1, 2024

Faith Caroline Bunger Connelly, born June 16, 1932, age 91, died April 16, 2024
Wife of the late Rev. James R. Connelly

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Rebecca G. Wicker