

**LUTHERAN SERVICES CAROLINAS**  
**2025 South Carolina ELCA Synod Assembly**

Dear Friends,

The year of 2024 was a year of expansion and growth for Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC), your health and human services social ministry of the South and North Carolina Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Last year, more than 2,500 LSC teammates, along with 2,421 donors and 4,359 advocates, improved the lives of thousands of Carolinians. In South Carolina:

- Dedicated foster parents and case workers served 219 children.
- LSC's New Americans Program assisted 3,310 people on their path to new lives in the United States, including 1,135 new arrivals in South Carolina.
- The Foster Care for Unaccompanied Children program helped 98 children as they awaited reunification with their families or guardians.
- LSC expanded its Day Services for Youth program to Clinton, South Carolina. The program launched in Columbia, South Carolina in 2023 through a partnership with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SC DSS). In 2024, it served 334 of South Carolina's highest-risk foster youth.
- LSC's disaster services served 3,300 individuals with the help of partners.
- LSC's recovery services programs – including Kinard Manor, WeCo Cottage, and Trinity Recovery – helped 233 South Carolinians with sober housing or tools to assist a loved one in their recovery. Trinity Recovery distributed 3,696 items at events including fentanyl test strips, clothing, and hygiene kits. LSC is the only organization in South Carolina that has a collegiate recovery program (WeCo Cottage).

LSC began helping documented immigrants navigate the complex immigration system through its Legal Immigration Services program, which served 227 individuals, and began an Intensive Foster Care program for youth with greater needs.

LSC also created a new Emergency Bed program in partnership with SC DSS. The new program served 65 foster youth.

During the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, LSC achieved strong financial results. Maintaining a positive bottom line is crucial for overall financial stability, enabling the organization to continue providing services where they are most needed during difficult times. We appreciate your prayers, partnership, and support. We are the church together!

Yours in Christ,



Ted W. Goins, Jr.  
LSC President



***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***

In 2024, 91% of residents and families said they would recommend **Lutheran Homes of South Carolina**—affirming our commitment to quality care and community life.

South Carolina served 4,027 individuals—ranging in age from 39 to 113—through a full continuum of care including independent living, assisted living, memory support, skilled nursing, and rehabilitation across our five Continuing Care Retirement Communities.

**Franke at Seaside** (Mount Pleasant), received High Performing recognition for long-term care by the *U.S. News & World Report*. Many Oakside rental apartments were renovated with modern finishes for Active Lifestyle independent living.

**Rice Estate Rehabilitation & HealthCare** (NE Columbia) earned High Performing recognition for short-term care by *U.S. News & World Report* and re-opened the renovated Evergreen Way Assisted Living Suites.

**RoseCrest** (Inman) celebrated the completion of its 18-unit Courtyard pocket neighborhood expansion, including new cottage-style rental apartments, a multi-purpose community center, dining room, and a chapel. The Rehabilitation & HealthCare Center maintained its Five-Star Rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and earned High Performing recognition for short-term care by the *U.S. News & World Report*. Assisted living earned a deficiency free score from the SC Department of Public Health.

**The Heritage at Lowman** (Chapin), earned Best of Columbia from *Columbia Metropolitan Magazine* for Assisted Living and construction began for a new active lifestyle home, with plans for additional new home floor plans.

**Trinity on Laurens** (Aiken) received a deficiency-free score for their SC Department of Public Health assisted living survey and a Five Star Rating as a Trusted Community by AssistedLiving.org, recognizing excellence in senior living.

**BeWell Home Services** achieved a deficiency-free Department of Public Health inspection and delivered 86,573 hours of support to 135 clients—empowering older adults to thrive safely at home.

**BeWell@Home** offered wellness support to 131 members through its Continuing Care at Home program.

**Lutheran Hospice** earned a 5-star CMS rating, with all quality measures exceeding state and national averages. In 2024, hospice served 590 patients and supported over 1,770 family caregivers, and 94% would recommend our care. Services also expanded with a new office at Bethany Lutheran Church's former parsonage in Newberry.

Thanks to the 1,650 generous donors, the **Lutheran Homes of South Carolina Foundation** provided:

- \$621,278 in charitable support to subsidize care for residents and hospice patients.
- \$1,906,670 toward capital improvements across our communities.
- \$381,801 to enhance various programs and services

Together, these achievements reflect our unwavering commitment to serving with excellence, faith, and compassion. View our extended annual reports at <https://www.lutheranhomessc.org/annual-report>

***We deeply appreciate your ongoing partnership in our ministry,***

Mr. Jack Balling, Chairman of the Board - Mr. Frank T. Shepke, President and CEO



## 2025 Report to Synod Assemblies

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 2024, we welcomed 1,700 youth campers and 550 adult and family campers for summer camp programs at Lutheridge, Lutherock, and Luther Springs. Through summer camp ministry, people of all ages experience God and Christian community in new ways, deepening their understanding of who they are as children of God and strengthening them to serve as disciples of Jesus every day.
- We also welcomed over 1,000 youth and adult participants to year-round programs in 2024. Retreats for confirmation students, women, men, and families provide time away for learning, fellowship, worship, and renewal. We celebrate the Spirit's movement among those who experienced camp all year long.
- Hosted ministry at Lutheridge, Lutherock, and Luther Springs continues to be a significant part of our ministry. In 2024, many groups spent time at one of our NovusWay sites for a wide variety of events including quilting programs, business meetings, council retreats, festivals, and family reunions.
- In May of 2024, we launched the Lutheridge 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Capital Campaign to provide needed updates to the Lutheridge facilities, build new spaces for campers and guests, and reduce internal debt. The response from congregations, Lutheridge staff alumni, and other long-time supporters has been inspiring. We are on our way to meeting and surpassing our \$3.6 million campaign goal. For more information, please visit [Lutheridge.org/Campaign](https://Lutheridge.org/Campaign).
- Hurricane Helene caused significant damage at Lutheridge and Lutherock. We are grateful to those who responded during our season of need by sharing financial support and volunteer time. A large amount of cleanup work remains, but we have made great progress and are happy to be open for camp. Through partnerships with Lutheran Disaster Response and other local organizations, we are providing housing and program support for those serving in long term recovery work in North Carolina.
- In November of 2024, following a time of study and discernment, the NovusWay Board of Trustees made the difficult decision to suspend the operation of Lutheranch and sell the camp property. Proceeds from this sale will support ongoing youth ministry and leadership development opportunities in the Southeastern Synod and across NovusWay.
- The ministries of NovusWay continue to provide transformational faith experiences for children, youth, and adults. We are grateful for the gifts of individuals, congregations, and synods which empower this ministry we share. Thank you for your generous prayers and support for Lutheridge, Lutherock, Luther Springs, and for all we serve!

## South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers

The South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers (SCLRC) celebrates another year of growth and service at Camp Kinard and Coastal Retreat. With God's guidance and the generous support of congregations, volunteers, and donors, our ministry continues to provide sacred spaces for renewal, fellowship, and transformation. Below are some highlights from the past year:

### Retreat Ministries

- **New and Ongoing Programs**  
In addition to offering retreat and camp space for hundreds of groups, we provided robust programming, including Alive Again, Coastal Crafting, and Bread of Life. Each retreat fostered spiritual growth, creativity, and meaningful fellowship.
- **Community Impact**  
Our programs drew diverse and ecumenical groups—from families and youth ministries to adult fellowship circles—strengthening faith and relationships in the beauty of God's creation.

### Facility Improvements

- **Camp Kinard Pool**  
This year was our first full season enjoying the new pool at Camp Kinard, quickly becoming a favorite among guests of all ages.
- **Accessibility Enhancements**  
We installed automatic doors at both Camp Kinard and Coastal Retreat, ensuring a more welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone.

### Expanded Usage & Partnerships

- **Weekday Reservations**  
We saw a significant increase in Monday–Friday usage, including both day and overnight reservations, serving ecumenical groups, school field trips, and more.
- **Multi-Group Hosting**  
Both locations effectively hosted simultaneous events, accommodating a variety of needs and ministries at the same time.
- **Pool Day-Use**  
The Camp Kinard pool attracted local recreation programs, congregations, youth groups, and families, emphasizing community connection and summertime fun.

### Financial Health & Volunteers

- **Land Sale**  
We sold 10 acres to secure our property's perimeter, closing off a gas line "attractive nuisance" and enhancing safety for all who visit.
- **Stability & Generosity**  
Thanks to strong usage and the faithful support of donors, our finances remain healthy. Volunteers have been indispensable—contributing their time, talents, and energy in countless ways.

### Looking Forward

We have updated our plans for a new chapel at Camp Kinard, finalized the site, and cleared the area. We are now ready to move forward with our capital campaign, trusting that this sacred space will further enrich our ministry and hospitality.

We praise God for these blessings and thank the South Carolina Synod for your continued prayers and support. Together, we look forward to another year of faithful ministry and abundant hospitality at Camp Kinard and Coastal Retreat.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deacon Dallas Shealy, Executive Director

Rev. David Coffman, Board Chair



## 2025 Report to the Synod Assemblies of Region 9

Greetings from Hickory, in the name of the Holy Trinity!

Since my last report to Synod Assemblies, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary has had a truly historical year. There is far too much to recount in one Synod Assembly report, but I will summarize it with a simple word of gratitude. Thank you. I give thanks for the students who are now enjoying *vibrant formation* on campus in Hickory, for the faculty who are creating new rhythms for *innovative teaching and learning*, for university colleagues helping establish *dynamic partnerships*, and to the Advisory Council, Alumni Board, alumni and friends across Region 9 for helping to *tell our story* in a new era of theological education for LTSS.

While a few decisions remain related to the sale of the Columbia property and the relocation of the Flentrop organ, the move has been as successful as one could have hoped. The Lineberger collection is installed and operating in Rudisill Library, faculty, staff and students are at home in the Russell House at the heart of our beautiful campus, Grace chapel hosts worship every day in person and online, and we look forward to welcoming a new class of students in the fall. In the light of God's grace, the future of theological education for LTSS and the Lutheran tradition of higher education at Lenoir-Rhyne university is full of promise.

### First Week Formation

This semester marked the seventh First Week gathering and the first in Hickory. We enjoyed fellowship among the student body, faculty and staff in venues across campus, including President Whitt's home, the new Rectory, Bear's Club Pavillion, Cromer Center, and Moretz Stadium. We worshipped, learned, and convened a community workshop and faculty panel focused on the historical and theological interpretation of Christian Scripture and traditions. We are grateful to local congregations in Conferences of the NC Synod for providing meals and coming to build relationships with LTSS!

LTSS benefits from a grant from the Bolick Foundation that covers the costs of First Week. We welcome more financial support from those who would like to sustain this significant experience of vibrant formation.

### Curriculum

Already this year we have two curricular revisions working their way through university committees. One is a new Accelerated Masters Program by which students can complete the requirements for a BA in Religious Studies and the MDiv in six years. This innovation is made possible through our collaboration with the LRU college of Humanities and Social Sciences and will open new pipelines for undergraduates who have already discerned a vocation to Ministry, and mature students who do not yet have an undergraduate degree. The second establishes a research project component for our Master in Theological Studies that strengthens the academic requirements of our MTS program.

We continue to offer Explore courses that allow students and alumni to take one-hour interdisciplinary courses. We are encouraged by the partnership with the Region 9 Stewardship Council that created a nine module Explore course on Stewardship. This course is led by experts from across the ELCA who engage students and alumni in a sustained study of our faithful relationship to money, management, use of church property, care for creation, mutual aid and partnerships for ministry. This Region 9 Partnership is a significant upgrade to the stewardship symposium and will be a gift to the wider church for years to come.

This year, LTSS partnered with the LRU Lutheran Student Movement, and drew on the Marple Funds to host a Spring Break immersion in international ecumenism. We led a group of 10 undergraduate students and seminarians to Geneva, Switzerland to encounter the programs and staff the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, worship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geneva, tour United Nations

organizations, and spent an ecotheologically focused day immersed in the beauty of the Swiss Alps. And yes, we ate a significant portion of fondue.

We are expanding our Lifelong Learning Program in the areas of continuing education and formation events for alumni and the general public. We are continuing our Public Safety Chaplaincy, our Spiritual Direction Certification Program, launching an eight week training for Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers in collaboration with United Lutheran Seminary as the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries, and building our online offerings through the ELCA Womanist Initiative and the Richard Stewart Lifelong Learning Certificate in cooperation with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL). In these and other ways, we realize the four main initiatives of our strategic plan: (1) innovative teaching and learning, (2) vibrant formation, (3) telling our story and (4) creating dynamic partnerships for learning.

### **Special Events**

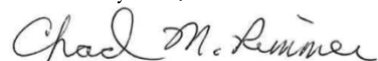
By the time you receive this report, LTSS will have hosted our annual Alumni Day and Yost Lecture. It was a time for Alumni and the entire church to gather for the Yost Lecture, which welcomed Ms Savanna Sullivan, Program Executive for Youth of the Lutheran World Federation on the theme of Intergenerational Justice. The day included a faculty led session of Theological Jazz, campus tours, a barbecue lunch on the quad, and a town hall forum on the future of theological education, hosted by Dr Rimmer and Bishop Eaton.

### **Gratitude for the past, present and future**

We are grateful to our Bishops for their ministry among us. We are grateful for the financial support of your Synod, faithful congregations and individuals in Region 9 and beyond. And we are grateful to you who encourage the faithful to consider their vocation to public ministry.

We invite you to visit your seminary in our new home on the beautiful campus of Lenoir-Rhyne University. And now that this part of our pilgrimage is complete, we turn our faces towards 2030, which will be the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LTSS and the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. Embedded on this campus with a rich history of Lutheran higher education, LTSS is positioned to be a flagship in the future of theological education, as we continue to nurture, educate and form leaders for public ministry for generations to come.

Peace be yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chad M. Rimmer".

How are the Wolves? The Wolves are well! Another year has passed since our last assembly and Newberry College continues to do well. We continue to honor our Lutheran tradition as we raise awareness over justice issues hosting regional conferences for human trafficking awareness (April '25) and food insecurity (September '25). The Wolves Pantry offers food, toiletries, feminine hygiene products, laundry supplies and school supplies to over 40 students a week on our small campus as we recognize and make a difference in the lives of our 1,400 students. We are connecting with students' spiritual journeys with a spring emphasis on being clothed in God's love from Colossians 3. We sincerely thank our church partners for their continued support, including \$52,330 in synodical and congregational giving last year. We thank Bishops Aebischcher, Strickland, and Suarez for continued support of Newberry College. — The Rev. David Coffman '97, campus pastor

## Campus opens ninth residence hall

In September 2024, Newberry College opened the doors to its ninth residence hall, Midlands Hall. Located next to the Alumni Music Center, the hall has 100 beds, providing much needed housing for our sophomore students.

## Newberry rises as a leader among southern colleges

Newberry College continues to stand among the South's top colleges in multiple categories, according to last year's rankings by U.S. News & World Report. The College celebrated its ninth consecutive year in the region's overall top 20, maintaining its rapid rise as a leader among southern institutions. Newberry was recognized in the following categories:

**Best Regional Colleges – South:** No. 15

**Best Value – Regional South:** No. 4

**Social Mobility – Regional South:** No. 8

**Best Colleges for Veterans – Regional South:** No. 4

## Newberry adds fourth master's program

This spring, the College will launch its fourth graduate-level program; a Master of Education in teaching, learning, & curriculum. The program is designed for certified teachers and educational leaders who are interested in taking their careers to the next level. The base curriculum provides learning opportunities in innovation, critical thinking, leadership, problem-solving and meeting the needs of diverse populations of students. The program includes two relevant and popular concentrations from which students can choose: multilingual learner education and literacy leadership. Like Newberry's other graduate degrees, the program will be offered online and asynchronously, meaning students can complete coursework anytime, anywhere. The program can also be completed in as few as 12 months.

## Newberry addresses social justice issues

Newberry College is leading the way to address several social justice issues. First, the College is once again hosting a series of events throughout April in observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, calling attention to the prevalence and prevention of sexual assault and human trafficking. The programming is presented by the Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences in collaboration with campus organizations and area nonprofits and businesses. Also during the month of April, the College hosted its second annual Shedding Light on Human Trafficking & Exploitation Conference. The conference featured sessions covering every aspect of human trafficking and provided resources on how to recognize and deal with exploitation in a variety of circumstances. Finally, on September 27, Newberry College

will host the Carolina Colleges Food Insecurity Summit. The summit will cover a variety of topics such as food pantry best practices, partnering with local food banks, and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program.

## Newberry awarded grant for bariatric simulation lab

At the beginning of the fall 2024 semester, the Division of Nursing & Health Sciences launched a new bariatric simulation lab that trains students in providing care to patients struggling with obesity. Funding for the lab was made possible through a grant from the BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation, an independent licensee of the BlueCross® BlueShield® Association. Equipped with male and female bariatric manikins, a bariatric hospital bed, pediatric and adult simulation suits, a 3D obesity display, and a pediatric care simulator, the lab provides nursing students with hands-on learning experiences to recognize direct correlations between obesity and potential health risks.

## College raising funds to repair Wiles Chapel organ

Newberry College continues to raise funds to repair Wiles Chapel's majestic pipe organ. The College is raising \$350,000 to not only restore playability, but also to outfit the instrument for many more decades of beautiful music. So far, generous donors have contributed \$53,160 to the organ fund. To give, please visit [newberry.edu/give](https://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.



## Newberry College mourns the passing of President Maurice W. "Morrie" Scherrens

On April 6, 2025, the Newberry College Board of Trustees announced the passing of President Maurice W. "Morrie" Scherrens. President Scherrens served Newberry College since 2012 with passion, vision, and unwavering commitment. His leadership left a lasting mark on our institution, and his loss will be felt across our campus and beyond. We are forever grateful for President Scherrens' devoted service to the Newberry College family and community. To ensure the College's continued stability and momentum, the Board appointed Dr. David Harpool as Interim President. Dr. Harpool has served the college since 2022 and was serving as Acting President due to Dr. Scherrens' illness, brings a deep understanding of Newberry's mission and operations.





## 2024 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 and Student Success

- Fall 2024 undergraduate enrollment was 1,452 students from 38 U.S. states and 39 countries, which includes 184 U.S. students of color and 70 international students. More than 20 Christian denominations and several world religions are represented. Twenty-one students are enrolled in the online Master of Arts in Leadership.
- The five majors with the highest enrollment are business administration, biology, exercise science, elementary education, and music education.
- To amplify focus on the first-year experience as a key indicator in student persistence and success, Wartburg partnered with Credo, a higher education consulting firm, to participate in a five-year initiative called Moving the Needle. With the support and guidance of the Credo team, Wartburg faculty and staff will identify, further develop, and implement impactful practices to improve student retention.
- Alumni & Career Connections, a new partnership between Wartburg's Advancement and Student Life divisions, will optimize alumni engagement toward student success. Ignited by a \$1 million gift from Mike and Marge McCoy, the initiative includes a new mentoring platform, Knight Nation, and intentional programming to help students explore opportunities for their future while leveraging our alumni base.

### Strategic Positioning

- Starting in fall 2024, the college launched the Wartburg Commitment, a new pricing model and value proposition designed to help students consider, afford, and experience Wartburg College. 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.
- Wartburg received a \$2.3 million gift from the John Sauer '78 estate to grow the Knight's Experience Fund, a new endowed fund that helps offset the cost of experiential learning opportunities for all Wartburg students.

### Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

- Wartburg was one of 25 schools and the only one in Iowa to earn a Carnegie Elective Classification for Leadership for Public Purpose. The classification acknowledges colleges and universities that have committed to campuswide efforts to advance leadership in pursuit of public goods such as justice, equity, diversity, and liberty. The designation is presented by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the American Council on Education, and the Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University.
- Wartburg announced two new online graduate programs in health and human performance — a Master of Science in sport science and data analytics and a Master of Science in high performance — beginning fall 2025. The programs, which build on the college's reputation for excellence in undergraduate health sciences programs and athletic dominance, will produce students ready to lead and serve in athletic and nonathletic venues.
- Wartburg received a \$185,000 grant from the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust to help transform technology in more than 60 classrooms and advance the college's vision of becoming a fully wireless campus by 2030. The five-year initiative will begin in 2025 and will equip faculty with advanced tools for effective teaching, promoting innovation and creativity in addition to creating a more engaging and interactive learning environment.



- In fall 2024, Wartburg faculty implemented a new General Education curriculum – THRIVE – which stands for Thinking Critically, Human Culture, Reasoning, Information Fluency, Vocation, and Effective Communication.
- The Wartburg-Waverly Sports & Wellness Center (The W) was renamed in honor of former president Jack Ohle and his wife, Kris. The Board of Regents approved the change in spring 2024, and the rededication of the Ohle Wartburg-Waverly Sports & Wellness Center (The W) was held during Homecoming 2024 festivities.

### **Spiritual Life and Campus Ministry**

- Spiritual Life and Campus Ministry supports students in their journey to find connection, presence, and purpose in their life at college. We seek to meet the spiritual and religious needs of our diverse campus community while also building bridges of compassion and understanding through interfaith/ecumenical engagement. Spiritual Life and Campus Ministry oversees over 19 student groups and programs.
- Wartburg College received an \$8,100 Northeastern Iowa Synod Community Engagement Grant to help engage religiously diverse students, employees, and community members as well as grow religious literacy on campus. This grant supplements funding for our Bridge program, which equips students with skills in bridge building across differences, and is executed by our Interfaith and Religious Diversity Council.
- Kelly Sherman-Conroy, an indigenous educator, church leader, and scholar, received the 2024 Graven Award. The annual award for Christian vocation highlights the powerful and positive effect of a strong sense of Christian vocation as it interfaces with service to the community, the church, and the world.
- Nathaniel Knutson '24 received the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Fund for Leaders Direct Full-Tuition Scholarship, which will help him continue his education at Wartburg Theological Seminary.
- Dr. Caryn Riswold, professor of religion and the McCoy Family Distinguished Chair in Lutheran Heritage and Mission, published her fourth book, "ReEngaging ELCA Social Teaching on Abortion."

### **Recognition**

- Kirk Kleckner '81, Mike Mallaro, Matthew Petersen '06, and Gordon Sween '89 were elected to the Board of Regents. Kleckner of Bradenton, Fla., is founder and former president of ValuationUSA; Mallaro of Cedar Falls, Iowa, is executive chairman of the board for VGM Group; Petersen of Denver, Colo., is a partner at Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP; and Sween of Minneapolis, Minn., is a retired health care executive.
- The Wartburg Medal was presented to professor emeriti Gloria Campbell and Dr. Lynn Olson in December 2024. The Wartburg Medal recognizes individuals who have provided significant service to the college over a sustained period and who have a personal commitment to the college's mission, quality, and character.
- Boboya Gabu '26, a Davis United World College Scholar from South Sudan, received a \$10,000 Projects for Peace grant to carry out a summer humanitarian effort empowering individuals living with HIV/AIDS with marketable skills.
- Georgia Nissen '24 received the prestigious R.J. McElroy Graduate Fellowship, designed to encourage persons of accomplishment, intelligence, integrity, and leadership ability to pursue challenging academic careers.
- Dr. Mike Bechtel '94, associate professor of science education, received the Engaged Campus Award for Emerging Innovation from the Seed Coalition, formerly Iowa and Minnesota Campus Compact, for his work with sustainable agriculture. Also honored were Bethany Christians '24, who received the Presidents' Student Leadership Award, and Krystal Madlock, associate dean for inclusive community, who received the Presidents' Civic Engagement Leadership Award.
- Dr. Rebecca Nederhiser, conductor of the Wartburg Community Symphony, was a finalist for the American Prize's Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award in Orchestral Programming.

Wartburg continues to find focus in a vibrant mission that transforms the entire college community as we learn, work, and serve together. Thank you for your prayers and support as we share in the work of strengthening the Lutheran traditions of higher education and Christian vocation.

**Dr. Rebecca Ehretsman, President**



**FUNDACIÓN CAMINO DE EMAÚS**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF COLOMBIA**

# 2024 Annual Report



## CORE VALUES

- \* Education
- \* Leadership
- \* Generosity





### ***Beloved Mission Friend(s):***

As we reflect in specific mission outcomes which God has accomplished thanks to your trust and generosity, gratitude is indeed what fills our hearts. In this ever-new spirit of heartfelt gratitude, we joyfully share our 2024 Annual Report.

This year 2024 we were blessed with the visit of Bishop Regina Hassanally and Kathy Chatelaine from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, a Companion Synod of the Lutheran Church of Colombia and Fiscal Agent for Fundacion Camino de Emaus. Our mission relationships with the Southeastern Minnesota Synod span 30 fruitful years. Thank you for walking with us in mutually transformative mission! Our gratitude is also extended to the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission for their generosity in support of formal education in Colombia. **Thank you in the name of Christ!.**

Besides the mission outcomes shared in this report, we are passionately engaged in cultivating a culture of mission generosity within Colombia. Thanks to this intentional commitment, we gratefully acknowledge a generous response by congregations and national ministries of the Lutheran Church of Colombia. The same is true regarding professional students who have graduated thanks to the support of the Foundation. As the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia, we also celebrate the significant mission impacts we had in other vital ministry areas such as the CELCO Lutheran Schools, The National Senior Ministry and the National Evangelism Ministry. **Yes! It all happened thanks to your generosity! From our home to yours, Blessed Advent and Christmas Seasons!.**

**From our Board President:** With ever-new joy & thanksgiving, we share the mission outcomes which your trust and generosity made possible in the areas of formal education, Christian leadership, strategic communications and senior ministries. Having transitioned into our brand-new logo, we are passionate about our Christian identity and fully committed to mission sustainability and environmental responsibility. As Board of Directors, we celebrate our logo's core values of **EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP & GENEROSITY!.**

We are equally passionate about securing sustainable initiatives for the Foundation's ongoing mission. One specific initiative is the LIZWAN ENDOWMENT FUND which is administered by the Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest. Current gifts in any amount may be made to the LIZWAN ENDOWMENT FUND. Please make check payable to Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest, noting LIZWAN ENDOWMENT FUND on the memo line and mail it to Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest, 103 12th St., Suite 201, Pflugerville, TX, 78660.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to the LIZWAN ENDOWMENT FUND is also possible. Such distribution MUST BE MADE through the ELCA Foundation. For more information on considering a QCD, please contact (800) 424-0447. The LFSW office will have a gift planner contact you. Your LFSW gift planner will guide you through the entire process. **Secured online and tax-deductible giving is available at [www.fundacioncaminoemaus.org/en](http://www.fundacioncaminoemaus.org/en).**



**Holistic Mission Impacts 2024:** Entrusted with your generosity, Fundacion Camino de Emaus positively impacted opportunities for formal education in 21 communities throughout Colombia where the Lutheran Church of Colombia is present. This colorful kaleidoscope of mission outcomes happens because of you.

**Formal Education Scholarship Program:** 287 students, ranging from elementary school to university, were blessed with formal education in 2024. Your life-giving generosity as mission companions in Colombia and outside Colombia, made it possible the graduation of 44 elementary and high school students. A female indigenous student from the Kogui Community in northern Colombia graduated with a Degree in Education being one of the first to lead the way in her own community. Two other university students graduated with Degrees in Tourism and Hotel Administration and Graphic Design.



**Training Seminars on Life Skills:** Training seminars on self-knowledge, emotional intelligence, assertive communication, interpersonal relationships and creative thinking were offered to 162 high school students and their parents. Through these seminars we strengthen leadership skills, one of our new logo's core values.

**Support to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia:** as Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, besides the area of formal education, Fundacion Camino de Emaus shares strategic alliances which impact other ministries and four Lutheran Schools. This year 2024, your generosity made it possible to financially support the True Vine Project, a community of 20 cognitively challenged people who received training in motor and working skills. Working with leather and synthetic materials, this community developed small enterprises to support their families.



Our gratitude to **GIVOLOGY** (New York) and **PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH** (New Braunfels, TX) for their grants for the CELCO Lutheran School in El Cocuy. Thanks to these grants and the strong leadership of the local community in El Cocuy, the school is making significant progress toward sustainability. 33 students were blessed with high quality education as well as with practical training to be environmental agents.

**Senior Ministry Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia:** Working collaboratively with a Coordinating Team of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, Fundacion Camino de Emaus continues to be instrumental in this recently established National Ministry. From its very beginning, we are committed to laying solid foundations for its sustainability. The fruits of this collaboration will allow the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia to serve holistic needs of seniors within its congregations and missions.

**Bilingual Communication - Good Shepherd Senior Center:** Thanks to the generosity of the Synod of Alberta & the Territories of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, 40 vulnerable seniors in Soacha enjoy holistic services such as nutrition, recreation, home visits and spiritual support. Fundacion Camino de Emaus facilitates bilingual communication between the Lutheran Church of Colombia, the USA and Canada.

**Triumphant Love Lutheran Church, Austin TX:** Our heartfelt gratitude to Triumphant Love Lutheran Church for their joy in sharing English school books with the Lutheran Schools of Colombia. Thank you, Pastor Natanael, for transporting them to Colombia in such a heavy suitcase! Fundacion Camino de Emaus is so excited and passionate about the Lutheran Schools gradually becoming bilingual schools.

**Global Voices Virtual Broadcasts:** These broadcasts involve voices by our network of supporters in USA and Canada. These broadcasts celebrate the empowering generosity of our mission companions.

**Growing National Sustainability:** Our 3rd National Campaign "Ora y Colabora " (Pray & Give Campaign) aimed at socializing the work of the Foundation and to invite national generosity toward scholarships for 10 new elementary school students in 2024. Our gratitude to individuals, families and Churches in Colombia who donated precious resources to make possible elementary education for children.

**Endowment for Formal Education in Colombia:** We are grateful to IELCO-Finland Scholarship Program for its foundational gifts to this growing endowment in Colombia. The more this endowment grows, the more sustainability it will provide for the mission of Fundación Camino de Emaús.

**LIZWAN Endowment Fund in the USA:** This growing endowment administered by the Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest welcome gifts of any amount and at any time, including legacy gifts at the end of life. Specific information about how to give to this Endowment is found on the message from Pastor Natanael. **Heartfelt gratitude to the Okerson Family for the generous legacy of sustainability already made to this Endowment through their Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).**

**Tax-deductible ways to give:** If giving by check, make it payable to Southeastern Minnesota Synod, include Emmaus Road Foundation in the memo line and mail it in attention of Kathy Chatelaine at 418 Sumner Street East – Suite 200, Northfield, MN 55057. **Secured online giving is available at [www.fundacioncaminoemaus.org/en](http://www.fundacioncaminoemaus.org/en). Select Fundacion Camino de Emaus for your gift.**





Bishop Atahualpa Hernández

*I greet you on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia and its ministries. As we celebrate another year of the Foundation's significant outcomes in formal education, leadership formation, evangelizing initiatives, mission relationships, Casa Emaus and Senior Care Ministries. We praise God for all and each one of you our beloved mission companions. These mission outcomes truly are the fruits of your empowering generosity!.*

*To the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM), to the Foundation's network of supporters in the USA, to our Companion Synods in Southeastern Minnesota, South Carolina and Alberta (Canada) our heartfelt gratitude. Working together, we continue to weave the rich and colorful tapestry of God's mission here in Colombia. Yes! Together! Together we are strengthening the missional and evangelizing capacity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia. From our homes to yours, a grace-filled Advent and Christmas Seasons!.*



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## Beloved friend(s)

Someone has said that “the most beautiful reality in the world is to see someone happy because of you”. **Because of you, joy is very real for families, communities, CELCO Schools, seniors, cognitive challenged people, and hundreds of students. It is in this ever-new spirit of joy that we share our 2024 Annual Report.**

To celebrate the transforming power of mission relationships and generosity, we share the story of Lilia, an Indigenous Kogui woman whose photo is shown on the front page. Lilia belongs to the Indigenous Kogui community, a tribe who lives at the mountaintop of the city of Santa Marta in northern Colombia. Lilia is married to Elias and together they have a one-year-old baby. Lilia and Elías studied Early Childhood Care at the Technical Institute of Santa Marta. To accomplish their education, they needed to travel every Saturday to Santa Marta to attend classes. During the week they attended virtual classes while their little baby was cared for by Lilia's mother.

Having recently graduated, Lilia hopes to work for the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare, which is the Colombian entity for the protection of children. Because of you, Lilia scholarship provided necessary resources to pay tuition for her education, transportation expenses, studying materials, a laptop, a backpack, Office software and antivirus.

Lilia's educational accomplishments represent a significant milestone not only for Lilia and her family but also for the whole Kogui tribe. Lilia's personal example and leadership will resonate throughout her own community and inspire other young women to pursue higher education, become agents of social transformation and break the cycle of material poverty.

These empowering outcomes do happen thanks to your generosity and your passionate commitment to formal education as a passport to a dignified and fruitful life. The story of Lilia is only one among hundreds of life-transforming stories which you continue to make possible in Colombia. For additional stories of transformation and leadership please visit our website [www.fundacioncaminoemaus.org/en](http://www.fundacioncaminoemaus.org/en). **From our home to yours, a Blessed Advent & Christmas Seasons!**

**With joy and thanksgiving,**



Stella Lizarazo, Executive Director



Pr. Natanáel Lizarazo, President Board of Directors

**Educación - Liderazgo - Generosidad**

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Celebrating the transforming power of relationships and generosity!

