



Bulletin of Reports

SA.2026 — Last update: 1 June 2026

West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, ELCA

Table of Contents

- 1. WV-WMD Synod 38th Annual Assembly 5**
- 2. WV-WMD Synod Office Information..... 6**
- 3. Assembly Venue Information..... 7**
- 4. Assembly Organization 9**
 - 4.1. Program & Agenda..... 9
 - 4.1.1. Workshops..... 13
 - 4.2. Rules of the Assembly..... 14
 - 4.3. Assembly Committees and Staff..... 17
 - 4.4. Churchwide Representative 19
 - 4.5. Synod Assembly Members, Visitors, and Exhibitors 19
- 5. Reports of Officers 21**
 - 5.1. Report of the Bishop 21
 - 5.1.1. Report of the Bishop, Part II (Introduction to the Workshops) 25
 - 5.2. Report of the Vice President..... 27
 - 5.3. Report of the Treasurer 28
 - 5.3.1. Proposed Budget for FY2027-2028 28
 - 5.3.2. Understanding the Synod Budget..... 31
 - 5.4. Report of the Director of Evangelical Mission 37
- 6. Reports of Standing Committees 43**
 - 6.1. Report of the Nominating Committee (Part 1)..... 43
 - 6.1.1. Nominee Information (Report of Nominating Committee, Part 2) 44
 - 6.1.2. Floor Nominations (Report of the Nominating Committee, Part 3) 45
 - 6.2. Report of Reference & Counsel..... 47
 - 6.2.1. Resolution #1: To Rescind “A Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-
Western Maryland Synod (2025)” 47
 - 6.3. Report of the Resolutions Committee 48
 - 6.4. Report of the Bylaws Committee 48
- 7. Reports from the ELCA 56**
 - 7.1. Message from Presiding Bishop Curry..... 56
 - 7.2. Candidacy and Leadership Manager for ELCA Regions 7 and 8..... 56
 - 7.3. Young Adult Network Synod Representative 58
- 8. Reports from Separately Incorporated Ministries of the ELCA..... 59**
 - 8.1. ELCA Federal Credit Union 59
 - 8.2. ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planning Partnership 60
 - 8.3. Mission Investment Fund..... 61
 - 8.4. Portico 62

9. Reports from Synodical Affiliates	64
9.1. Camp Luther	64
9.2. Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center	65
9.3. Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.	69
9.4. Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU.....	69
9.5. Tri-Synod Archives.....	71
9.6. WV-WMD Women of the ELCA	73
10. Communications from Others.....	75
10.1. Seafarers International	75
11. Directory	78
11.1. Synod Assembly Registrants.....	78
11.1.1. Voting Members.....	78
11.1.1.1. Clergy Voting Members.....	78
11.1.1.2. Lay Voting Members — Congregational	81
11.1.1.3. Lay Voting Members — Synod Council	85
11.1.2. Advisory Members	86
11.1.3. Visitors.....	86
11.1.4. Exhibitors.....	87
11.2. Synod.....	88
11.2.1. Officers and Staff of the Synod	88
11.2.2. Synod Council.....	90
11.2.2.1. Synod Council Officers and Members	90
11.2.2.2. Synod Council Committees (Appointed).....	91
11.2.3. Synod Standing Committees Elected by Synod Assembly.....	92
11.2.4. Other Synod Commissions, Committees, and Directorates.....	94
11.2.5. Boards of Directors/Trustees.....	95
11.3. Conferences & Deans	98
11.4. Anniversaries	99
11.4.1. Congregation Anniversaries	99
11.4.2. Rostered Leader Anniversaries	99
11.5. Affiliated Agencies.....	100
11.5.1. Camps	100
11.5.1.1. Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center	100
11.5.1.2. Camp Luther.....	100
11.5.2. Campus Ministries	101
12. Parliamentary Aids	102
12.1. Parliamentary Etiquette	102
12.2. Parliamentary Procedure — Common Motions	103
12.3. Germane and Nongermane Business	106
12.4. On Reports.....	108
12.5. Guide to Assembly Committees.....	110

12.5.1. Committee on Elections	110
12.5.2. Committee on Minutes	111
12.5.3. Committee on Reference & Counsel	112
12.5.4. Committee on Resolutions	114
12.5.5. Ushers & Pages	115
12.6. Governing Documents, Policies, and Guidelines	117
13. Errata & Addenda	118
13.1. Errata	118
13.2. Addenda	119

1. WV-WMD Synod 38th Annual Assembly

! The *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* is now officially published (ten days before the assembly convenes). Additional material may be posted; such post-publication materials will be listed in the addenda section.

Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports
Thirty-Eighth Annual Assembly
of the
West Virginia – Western Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



5-6 June 2026

Monongalia County Extension Services & 4-H Center
Mylan Park
270 Mylan Park Lane
Morgantown, WV 26501



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

Last modified: 27 May 2026

2. WV-WMD Synod Office Information

West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, ELCA

%St. Paul Lutheran Church
309 Baldwin Street
Morgantown, WV

Telephone: (304) 363-4030

Email: Office@wv-wmd.org

Web Site: www.wv-wmd.org

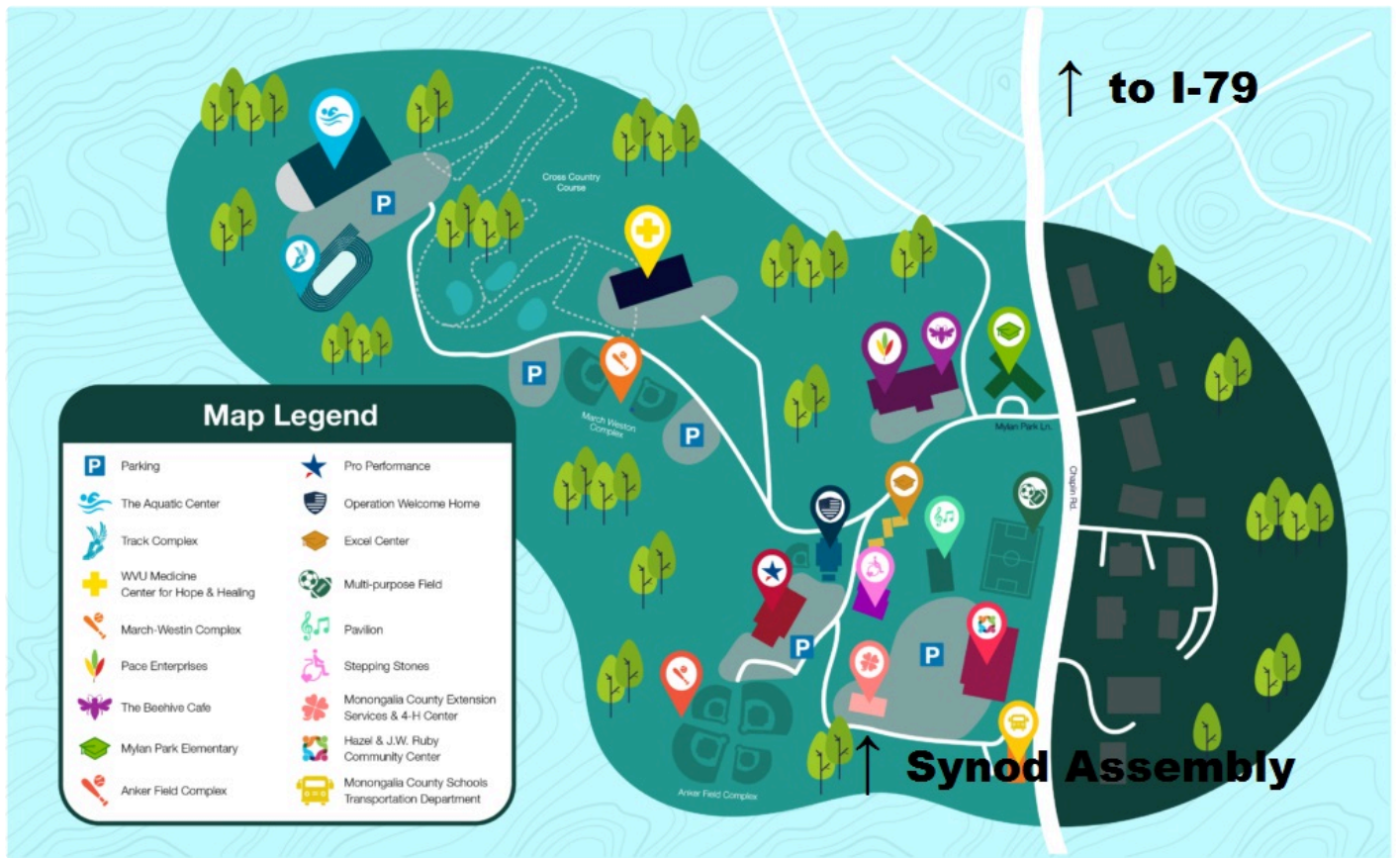
Last modified: 1 June 2025

3. Assembly Venue Information

Monongalia County Extension Services & 4-H Center
 Mylan Park
 270 Mylan Park Lane
 Morgantown, WV 26501

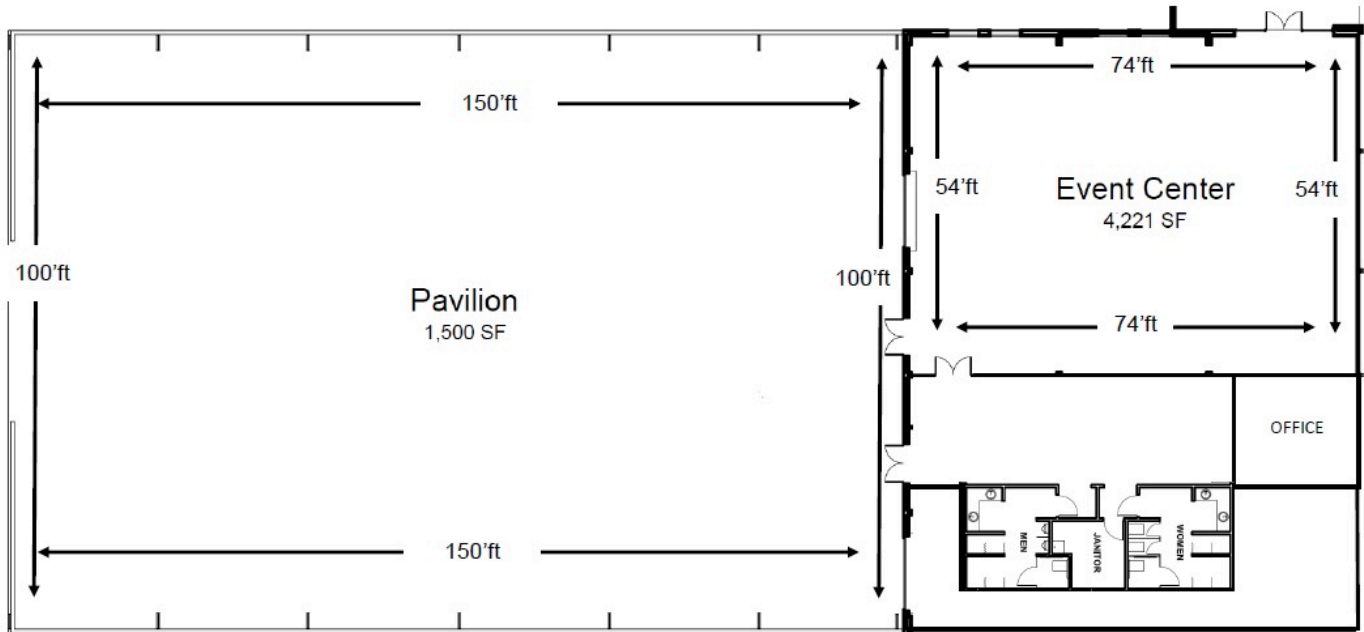
Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/FY7K29sLziuoxjGn8>

Nearest Interstate Exit: I-79, Exit 155 (after exit, head west on Chaplain Road; Mylan Park is 2 miles ahead)



Monongalia County Extension Services & 4H Center and Pavilion

Parking



The primary location for our business meeting will be in the *Event Center*, a 4,221 sq. ft. indoor space.

Registration, beverage service, alternate dining, and exhibition will be in the *Pavilion*, a 15,000 sq. ft. space (incorrectly listed on the diagram as 1,500 sq. ft.).

The Synod Assembly Office will be down the hallway accessible in the Event Center.

Restrooms are accessible from both the Event Center and the Pavilion.

Both the dining guide and the lodging guide are available on our [Synod Assembly 2026](#) page.

Last modified: 21 April 2026

4. Assembly Organization

Last modified: 1 June 2025

4.1. Program & Agenda

! Important explanation, especially for first-timers, on how this works is under the heading *Understanding the Program & Agenda* immediately after tables. Additionally, this is a draft of the proposed agenda is subject to change.

Program — 5-6 June 2026

Friday, June 5	11:30 a.m.	Registration Opens
	12:30 p.m.	Opening Worship: Preparatory Service
	1:00 p.m.	Business Meeting 1
	3:15 p.m.	Workshop 1
	4:45 p.m.	Business Meeting 2
	5:00 p.m.	Dinner Adjournment
	7:00 p.m.	Assembly Mass at St. Paul, Morgantown
	8:15 p.m.	After Mass Reception
Saturday, June 6	9:00 a.m.	Business Meeting 3
	10:30 a.m.	Workshop 2
	12:00 p.m.	Lunch Adjournment
	1:00 p.m.	Business Meeting 4

Agenda

Special Orders

Friday, June 5	3:00 p.m.	Adjourn to 4:45 p.m.
	4:45 p.m.	Reconvene for Business Meeting 2
	4:45 p.m.	General Ballot
	5:00 p.m.	Adjourn to Saturday, 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, June 6	9:00 a.m.	Reconvene for Business Meeting 3
	9:00 a.m.	Report of the General Ballot Second Ballot (if necessary)
	9:45 a.m.	Report of the Churchwide Representative
	10:15 a.m.	Adjourn to 1:00 p.m.
	1:00 p.m.	Reconvene for Business Meeting 4
	5:00 p.m.	Adjourn <i>sine die</i>

Order of Business — Beginning Friday, June 5

<p>Call to Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Committee on Registration and Attendance • Rite for the Opening of a Convention
<p>Organization of the Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements • Consideration of the Rules of the Assembly • Consideration of the Agenda of the Assembly • Introductions
<p>Report of the Nominating Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominations from the Floor
<p>Report of the Bishop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions of New Clergy • Anniversaries of Congregations • Anniversaries of Ordinations
<p>Report of the Vice President</p>
<p>Report of the Secretary</p>
<p>Report of the Treasurer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the Budget for FY2027-2028
<p>Report of the Director of Evangelical Mission</p>
<p>Reports of Churchwide and Regional Representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churchwide Representative — superseded if special order is adopted for report of the Churchwide Representative • Madagascar Network • Young Adult Network
<p>Report of the Bylaws Committee</p>
<p>Report of the Committee on Reference & Counsel</p>

Report of the Committee on Resolutions
Reports from Affiliates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Luther • Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Conference Center • Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU • ELCA Foundation • Portico • Women of the ELCA • Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.
Unfinished Business
New Business
Adjournment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rite for the Closing of a Convention

Understanding the Program & Agenda

Program for the Synod Assembly

The *program* of the Synod Assembly is the overarching schedule of events connected with our gathering. The business meetings are part of that overarching schedule. We also gather for worship and meals. In addition to these usual features of Synod Assembly, we sometimes gather for education, entertainment, and fellowship as well. Because there are many different and interdependent actors involved in providing meals and worship, the program of an assembly is set in advance by the Synod Assembly Planning Committee (SAPComm) under the oversight of the synod officers and Synod Council.

Agenda for the Synod Assembly

The *agenda* of the Synod Assembly is the schedule that governs the business meetings of the Assembly. While the program is set by SAPComm (as authorized and within the parameters set by the Synod Council), the agenda is wholly owned by the assembly, *i.e.*, the assembly sets the order of business and times at which special orders take place within the parameters of the governing documents and the parliamentary authority. Consequently, the assembly is provided with a *proposed* agenda, but it is free to adopt, amend, or reject the proposed agenda.

An agenda features two classes of order: (1) the order of business and (2) special orders. The *order of business* is the sequence in which business is handled. There are no specific times assigned to any of the items in the order of business (except for the call to order). The Assembly simply moves from one item to the next as each item is either completed or set aside by the Assembly for consideration at a later time. *Special orders* have assigned times, and a special order may interrupt the flow of business, suspending the flow of regular business until the special order is dispensed with. Once the special order has been dispensed with, the business resumes where it left off. If the chair neglects to proceed to special orders at

the time appointed, any member can compel the chair to do so by *calling for the orders of the day*.

Four notes about unscheduled items (*i.e.*, items that do not appear on the agenda):

- Recesses can take place whenever the assembly determines that it needs a break. The chair will, from time to time, order a recess at his/her discretion. A recess can be ordered by the assembly as well.
- The report of the Elections Committee may take place as soon as it is ready. When that report is ready depends upon the time it takes to count ballots. When runoff elections are required, the assembly may set a special order for such if it wishes. Likewise, the assembly may set as a special order the first general ballot after floor nominations have been received.
- Reference & Counsel, if it has been assigned work beyond its regular report, may report at its earliest convenience or at a time appointed by the assembly.
- Resolutions Committee, if it has been assigned work beyond its regular report, may report at its earliest convenience or at a time appointed by the assembly.

When the agenda is presented to the assembly, the chair will ask for a motion to adopt the agenda (*i.e.*, the order of business and special orders). As mentioned, the agenda may be amended (like any other motion) as part of its consideration. Once approved, the agenda may be amended under the same rules used for amending something previously adopted. New special orders may be created by the assembly throughout the course of the session.

Adjournment


Adjournment often confuses people. You'll note that there are different types of adjournment mentioned in the special orders and order of business. Under special orders, there is an adjournment rendered, "Adjournment to 4:45 PM." This means that we are stopping business and reconvening for more business at 4:45 p.m. It is called an adjournment and not a recess because the members are free to disperse (and the length of time is significant). If it were just a short break and members were expected to remain near the assembly chamber, it would be called a *recess*.

At the end of the order of business, "adjournment" is listed without a qualifier. When adjournment is moved without qualifier, it is assumed to be a motion to *adjourn sine die*, a motion that closes the session without any plan to reconvene. In other words, we are done, we are really done, and we are going home.

There is always a chance that the Assembly may be of the opinion that there is more work to do but that such work cannot be done at the moment. What was done for the evening and lunch adjournments can be done in such a circumstance, the Assembly setting a point in the future to reconvene that still precedes the convening of the next regular assembly (and within a quarterly interval). The next meeting would be an *adjourned meeting*, and the assembly would pick up its work where it left off.

Finally, when the agenda is exhausted, *i.e.*, when all matters before the house have been disposed of and no member raises new business, the chair simply adjourns the assembly *sine die*, no motion to adjourn being necessary.

4.1.1. Workshops

 You may want to read the bishop's [Introduction to the Workshops](#) in [Bishop's Report, Part II](#) in preparation for the workshops.

At this year's Synod Assembly, two workshops will be held, each lasting about 90 minutes.

The general theme for the workshops is lay leadership. The first workshop will focus on lay leadership in worship, the teaching of the faith, and the care of souls. The second workshop will focus on ecclesiastical temporalities (i.e., the organizational and business aspects of church life).

The approach is not intended to be didactic (in other words, this is not supposed to be a lecture by an expert). Instead, attendees at the assembly will be asked to share their own experiences.

The general format of each workshop is as follows:

1. The sharing of select stories from around the synod (to get things started);
2. Small group conversations;
3. Plenary conversation.

In preparation, think about what is happening in your context. Ask these questions:

- In what ways are laity leading or serving with respect to the topic of the particular workshop?
- What sort of training was needed?
- What has gone well?
- What, if any, were the challenges?
- What might the next steps be?
- Is there an area where you might see new possibilities?

You might have your own questions. Feel free to bring them, especially to your small group.

In preparation, consider the following areas. Every person doesn't have to tackle them all. Select the ones that most interest you, and maybe divide them up among the folks in your delegation.

In the first workshop, think about following:

- Under worship
 - Liturgical leadership
 - Preaching (or reading of the sermon)?
 - Type of service (e.g., antecommunion v. morning prayer/matins v. service of the Word)
- Under education
 - Catechetical instruction
 - Bible study (and other topics)
- Under visitation ministry
 - Regular shut-in calls

- Hospital visitation
- Other visitation
- Spiritual care in general

For the second workshop, think about the following:

- Council membership
- Chairing the council
- Keeping the minutes (and records)
- Keeping the books (finances)
- Committees
- Visioning

Last modified: 29 May 2026

4.2. Rules of the Assembly

For the consideration of the Synod Assembly

The following are the proposed convention standing rules for the 38th Annual Synod Assembly of the WV-WMD Synod. In order to have force, the assembly would need to adopt them as *Convention Standing Rules*. The assembly may amend them prior to adoption. The assembly is free to not adopt any or all of them. The assembly may suspend, rescind, or amend them once adopted.

1. Each voting member, or those persons accorded the privilege of seat and voice, when recognized by the chair, shall state his/her name and his/her congregation/institution/office. Persons speaking from the floor shall use the floor microphones (if they are provided) and shall address and speak to the chair.
2. In debate, a speaker shall be limited to five (5) minutes for each question the first time he or she speaks to it. A speaker may speak to the same question a second time on the same day with a time limit of three (3) minutes provided no one who has not yet spoken wishes to do so. (*Cf. RONR* [12th ed.] 43:12 and 43:8)
3. When three speakers have spoken in a row on one side of a question and no speaker rises on the other side, debate shall be closed.
4. The chair may, at the chair's discretion, employ and manage a speaker's list.
5. When balloting for elections:
 - a) Registration shall be temporarily closed ten minutes before the appointed time for the election and reopened when the balloting is completed;
 - b) The assembly chamber shall be sealed during balloting unless a ballot box has been ordered with a window for balloting.
6. All amendments to the governing documents of the synod (i.e., constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions) shall take effect at the end of this session unless specified otherwise.
7. For all committees appointed under B7.03, the bishop of the synod may declare the seat vacant for reason of resignation, absenteeism, or refusal to serve and make vacancy appoints at his/her discretion.

8. During new business, an original main motion shall be considered germane if offered in connection to any report published in the *Bulletin of Reports* that has not already come before the assembly as a matter of business in the course of the session.
9. An oral report, unless given time in the agenda, shall be received only by permission of the Synod Assembly.
10. Oral reports shall be no longer than 10 minutes; the reading of a report submitted in writing shall result in immediate forfeiture of the time remaining.

For the information of the Synod Assembly

The following rules for the Synod Assembly have been established in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of this synod. They do not need to be adopted. Note well the following:

- The assembly cannot suspend a constitutional provision. It may amend or rescind constitutional provisions through the processes outlined in †S18.12 and †S18.13.
 - Bylaws provisions cannot normally be suspended, but they can be rescinded or amended, following the procedure outlined in †S18.21. A bylaw, however, in the nature of rule of order may be suspended per *RONR* (12th ed.) 2:21.
 - Continuing Resolutions may be rescinded or amended, following the procedure outlined in †S18.31. A continuing resolution may also be suspended, following the provision for suspension of rules found in *RONR* (12th ed.) 25:14 or 25:15, depending upon its nature.
1. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly. (S7.32)
 2. There shall be a division between the voting members and the others on the assembly floor, which shall be indicated by a marker(s). Voting members and those persons accorded privilege of seat and voice shall seat themselves in the section in front of the marker(s). All others shall be seated behind the marker(s). (B7.06)
 3. A majority of those members registered as attending shall constitute a quorum. (S7.14)
 4. When a voting member is unable to serve, the alternate voting member shall be seated when the Committee on Registration and Attendance has been provided with the necessary information and the alternate has been given a voting member's card. (B7.07)
 5. 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 assembly. (S7.28)
 6. All retired clergy on the roster of the synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members provided that the voting membership of the Assembly is still 60% laypersons. (B7.08)
 7. An ordained minister on leave from call on the roster of this synod shall be granted voting membership in the Synod Assembly upon consent of the Synod Council; such consent shall be applicable to the Synod Assembly in question; such consent may be renewed. (CR2.01)
 8. Prior to each Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall consider and, at its discretion, seat with voice and vote in the immediate Synod Assembly those Ministers of Word & Sacrament (or the equivalent) who are serving synod congregations and who also belong to church bodies with which the ELCA has full-communion. (CR2.02)

9. Prior to each Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall consider and, at its discretion, seat with voice but without vote in the immediate Synod Assembly those Ministers of Word & Sacrament (or the equivalent) who are serving a synod congregation but have not been otherwise enfranchised. (CR2.03)
10. Chairs of committees, commissions, and task forces who are not otherwise voting members of the assembly shall be seated with voice but without vote. (CR2.04)
11. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly. (S7.31)
12. When a nomination is made from the floor, the nominator may provide copies of the completed nomination form (as defined by the nominating committee) to the secretary of the synod for distribution. (B9.07)
13. The Committee on Elections shall have power to appoint and dismiss tellers for those elections under its oversight. (CR7.01)
14. All motions, resolutions, amendments and nominations shall be submitted in writing and on proper forms available from the secretary of synod or the assembly pages. This provision may be waived by the secretary. (B7.10)
15. A resolution of a general character which is not germane to the pending question or report shall be given by the sponsor a Committee on Reference and Counsel, which shall report thereon to the assembly with its recommendations. Other duties of the committee shall be: a) to recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives, b) to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary, and c) to give such assistance to the bishop as may be desired in the course of the assembly. (B7.16)
16. Every congregation shall have the right to memorialize the assembly of this synod. (B7.05)
17. Memorials and Resolutions not germane to assembly business shall be submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel twenty (20) days prior to the assembly. (CR7.02)
18. Resolutions submitted to Reference & Counsel shall be sponsored by at least two voting members of the Synod Assembly, a voting member being limited to sponsoring a maximum of five resolutions. For the purposes of this rule, when submission is in anticipation of the annual meeting of the Synod Assembly, verified registration as a voting member shall delineate standing. (CR7.03)
19. For both resolutions and memorials reviewed by Reference & Counsel under B7.16 or CR7.02,
 - a) When Reference & Counsel has recommended the adoption of the resolution/memorial, the committee's recommendation and text of the resolution/memorial shall be the main motion before the assembly;
 - b) When Reference & Counsel has recommended the adoption of a substitute for the resolution/memorial, the committee's recommendation, including the committee's text, shall be the main motion before the assembly;
 - c) When Reference & Counsel has recommended referral of the resolution/memorial, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.
 - d) When Reference & Counsel has recommended that the assembly decline to consider a proposed resolution, the voting member's resolution, if then moved by that voting member and seconded, shall be the main motion and the committee's recommendation shall be received as information.
 - e) When Reference & Counsel has recommended that the assembly decline to consider a proposed memorial, the memorial, if then moved by a voting member who is also a voting member of the memorializing body and seconded, shall be the main motion and the committee's recommendation

shall be received as information. (CR7.04)

20. The Committee on Resolutions, except in cases where a report has been assigned to another committee or the committee is ordered otherwise by the assembly or the Synod Council, shall review all published reports and oral reports submitted to this Assembly. The committee may offer at its discretion such resolutions in response as seem appropriate. (CR7.05)
21. All reports published in the bulletin of reports shall be received by the assembly by virtue of that fact without vote. (B7.17)
22. 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. (S10.04)
23. The bishop of the synod shall appoint the following convention committees:
 - Committee on Elections
 - Committee on Minutes
 - Committee on Reference and Counsel
 - Committee on Registration and Attendance
 - Committee on Resolutions (B7.03)

Last modified: 27 April 2026

4.3. Assembly Committees and Staff

Committee on Minutes	David Finney, Chair The Rev, Darick Biondi Rick Crummitt The Rev. Douglas Knupp The Rev. Sherry Miller
-----------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Committee on Elections	Pam Pritt, Chair Marvin Beckman Dinah Courier Michelle Erfurt William Rogers
-------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Tellers Pool: The Rev. Wm. "Curtis" Black, Andrea Brock, Judy Hinnerichs, Phyllis Hinterer, Roger Hughes, The Rev. Angela Lambert, Paula McDonald, Sandra Sheatsley, Rebecca Stickling

Committee on Reference & Counsel	The Rev. Dr. Doug Dyson, Chair Daniel Beals Annette Strawser
---------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

Committee on Resolutions	The Rev. Devin Ames, Chair Linda Fisher
---------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

	Howard O’Cull
--	---------------

Committee on Registration & Attendance	The Rev. Susan Claytor, Chair Jerry Bouquot The Rev. Karen Erskine-Valentine Natalie Gangler Denise Porter Laura Robinson
---------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Parliamentary Team	The Rev. John Unger, Assembly Parliamentarian The Rev. Tim Spence, Resource Parliamentarian
---------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Ushers & Pages	Ken Pritt, Warden Diana Knoll John Knoll The Rev. Rick Egtvedt Beverly McDonald Dan Laufer Eli Reid
---------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Hospitality Team	Community Lutheran Partners Synod Council
-------------------------	----------------------------------------------

Tech Team	The Rev. Tim Crummitt, Photographer Steve Gabbert Mike Noll
------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------

Assembly Office	
Clerk of the Assembly	Tamara Riegel
Muscle	Rick Losh Nancy Weeks

Worship Team	The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel, Chair Christopher Durigg Nick Kiger Bob Kleeb, Organist Teresa Johnson
---------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Nominating Committee

Conference	Clergy Member	Lay Member
MVMC	The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle, Chair	Cindy Murphy
OKVC	The Rev. Patrice Weirick	James Sheatsley
PC	The Rev. Sally Bartling	Rick Losh
UOVC	The Rev. Devin Ames	Richard Niehaus

Many thanks to all Assembly Committee members for their work that makes the annual Assembly possible.

✿ The duties and organizational descriptions for some of these committees and teams are found in the [Guide to Assembly Committees](#) section of this bulletin.

Last modified: 1 June 2026

4.4. Churchwide Representative

Nick Kiger

Nick Kiger is the Director for Mission Support with the ELCA churchwide expression. Nick lives and works in Columbus, OH where he is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. He is married to Misty and they have a ten year old daughter, Kara and a six year old son, Cameron. Nick received his Bachelor of Arts in religious studies from Otterbein University and his Master of Theological Studies degree from Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Nick feels blessed to get to experience the many different settings of the church. His work has taken him to oil fields, prisons, Native American reservations, store front churches, Latine congregations in the deep south and rural congregations in the Midwest. In all these places he has heard the stories of this church, the stories of how the generosity of all expressions of the ELCA (congregations, synods and the churchwide organization), through Mission Support, have made an impact on the ministries we engage in together. Outside of work Nick is an avid trail and ultrarunner, enjoys travel and playing bass guitar.



Last modified: 8 May 2026

4.5. Synod Assembly Members, Visitors, and Exhibitors

For rosters of Synod Assembly members and visitors, click the desired link below or go to the *Directory*

listed in your table of contents.

- [Voting Members](#)
 - [Clergy Voting Members](#)
 - [Lay Voting Members — Congregational](#)
 - [Lay Voting Members — Synod Council](#)
- [Advisory Members](#)
- [Visitors](#)
- [Exhibitors](#)

Last modified: 26 May 2026

5. Reports of Officers

Last modified: 1 June 2025

5.1. Report of the Bishop

Bishop's Report to Synod Assembly 2026

1776

One of my favorite musicals is *1776*, a delightful theatrical retelling of the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. As a child, I would watch this with my father and younger brother every time it came around on broadcast television, as patriotic seasonal specials were wont to do in those days at this time of year. I loved it for its humor and its drama, from the jocular “But, Mr. Adams” to the wrenching “Molasses to Rum.” Not so many years ago, we were caught up in “Hamilton Fever,” many amazed that American History could be so popular in a popular medium, but *1776* proved that it could be done more than forty-five years before. My appreciation of *1776* is not surprising. I like a good story. I like history. A good story about history is a good combination, and throwing in some catchy tunes just adds to the enjoyment.

I've found myself repeatedly using *1776* as an example of the work of an *ad hoc* drafting committee, especially when trying to explain to the appointees to the Synod Assembly's Committee on Resolutions what exactly it is that they are supposed to do: someone has an idea; that person is not sure how to word it; give the job to a committee. Let's be honest: a hundred people trying to write a resolution together is a crazy and well-nigh impossible job. A smaller group can work more quickly, and as for expertise, they can always ask people to help advise them. The Continental Congress wanted a resolution on independence; they assigned the task of drafting it to Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Livingston, and Sherman, that committee then asking Jefferson to take the first crack at it. The committee made several clarifying and stylistic edits to Jefferson's draft, following which they presented it to the Congress for debate. The Congress made roughly 40 changes, removing about a quarter of the draft submitted by the committee (which had already tempered Jefferson's verbosity).

This same process is within the rights of the Synod Assembly (and our Synod Council and all our deliberative assemblies). As I describe it: the Committee on Resolutions is to help the Assembly find its voice. In terms of parliamentary process, ours is not an expert assembly. Most of our membership does not think about *Robert's Rules* on a regular basis. As a consequence, we are somewhat hobbled. There may be ideas floating around in the ether that never take on form. People have approached me after Synod Assembly is over with this or that concern, idea, or praise, and I have asked, “Why didn't you bring that up on the floor?” The two most common answers I receive are “I didn't know how” and “I didn't think anyone would be interested.” As for the former concern, the chair, the parliamentarian, and the other parliamentary works in the room would be more than happy to help; just ask them. As for the latter concern, a solitary opinion, that is, the opinion of one person, is the opinion of one person. It's not something particularly actionable because, for all we know, ninety-nine people hold the exact opposite opinion. Resolutions (and motions in general) are the means by which we determine whether an opinion is held by the body or just one person. Making a motion to instruct the Committee on Resolutions to draft something is a means for

testing whether your opinion is shared by others. Of course, it may not be (or, at least, not shared by the majority of members). Then again, you might have the brilliant idea, and no one will know unless you offer it.

As I've aged, I've also gained greater appreciation for the ways in which *1776* depicts a pretty typical deliberative assembly with a broad membership. There are differences of opinion, there are different sorts of personalities (those personalities playing no small part in the way people engage the deliberative process), there are competing interests, and there are human needs. The work of such an assembly is *deliberative*. It is ironic that terms like *debate* and *argument* have taken on such thoroughly odious connotations. *Argument* is the way in which a person shows forth what is *good*, the reasons for pursuing the *good*, and means by which the community might secure the *good*. *Debate* is the communal enterprise by which competing notions of the *good*, the rationale for the *good*, and the means to the *good* are tested against each other. This is what it means to *deliberate*, and this is what it means to be a *deliberative assembly*.

I could make numerous other references to *1776*. I could also cite other great writings in American political thought. Aristotle and Plato are equally at hand. I could also refer to the writings of Philipp Melanchthon (Luther's Wittenberg colleague); in addition to being a theologian, he was a political theorist (among many other things). As this is a report to an ecclesiastical body, I will instead suggest that Holy Scripture has something to say, for in the first chapter of Isaiah, the LORD invites, "Come now, let us reason together...." It might sound crazy, but God is inviting humanity to deliberate with Him. Think too on Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre debating with God over Sodom and Gomorrah, or Moses on Sinai debating with God to spare the people. For Luther, the very creation of humanity involved divine Trinitarian deliberation:

Here again Moses adopts a new phraseology. The divine expression is not in this place, "Let the sea be moved," or "Let the earth bring forth grass" or "fruits." But the remarkable Word of God here is, "Let us make, or form, or fashion, or fabricate man." Wherefore this expression implies manifest deliberation and counsel; the like of which is found not in the creation of any former creatures. In those cases God says simply without any deliberation, counsel or particular design of mind, "Let the sea be moved;" "Let the earth bring forth," etc. But here where God wills to create man, he turns himself as it were to deep thought and enters into profound counsel and deliberation (Luther, Commentary on Genesis, Lenker ed. (1904)).

I would be so bold as to suggest that this divine Trinitarian deliberation impresses itself upon the creature thereby created, making it a creature that deliberates. Aristotle wrote that the human is a *political animal*, but I believe Holy Scripture testifies to this more profoundly than the Philosopher's observation. If God deliberates, creates us as creatures that deliberate, and then invites us to deliberate with Him, how can we be so adverse to deliberating in the church? Are we not created to test what is good and seek it? Are we not to take disparate wills and form through our deliberations a common will to exert a common effort to secure a common good?

2026 and After

Why should I care so much about deliberation, especially deliberation in the church (and particularly in this synod)? I expect this synod to be dissolved by the ELCA and its congregations parceled out to neighboring synods. I expect action to that effect at either Churchwide Assembly 2031 or Churchwide Assembly 2034. There is an outside chance that it could be as early as 2028, but given the speed at which these sorts of deliberations move at the Churchwide expression, that seems unlikely. You may ask: why should WV-WMD

be dissolved? Are we insolvent? No. Are we unable to discharge our basic responsibilities? No, though it sometimes takes longer. Are we transgressing against the norms of the faith and its practice? No. Are we the naughty synod? I don't think so. So why would we be dissolved?

Simply put, there are more than few who believe that there are too many synods. It seems to me that the root of such thinking is an ideological commitment to the proposition that an economy of scale is the norm by which polity should be judged. I have repeatedly argued that no discussion of economies of scale is complete without a recognition of the diseconomies of scale. Bigger is not always better, and sometimes the whole can be less than the sum of its parts. Do we not have some things because we are a small synod? Yes, we lack some things that bigger synods have, but we also have some things that bigger synods do not have. Many of these things we possess are intangible, but not all things in life that matter can be reduced to a balance sheet.

Synod Council has had some frank conversations about my projections. In those conversations, I have tried to emphasize that I do not personally favor the dissolution of this synod. I have also been clear that I think that there is nothing we can do to stop it. Unless prevailing thought patterns change across the denomination, dissolution is an inevitability. It seems foolish to me to expend resources to fight the inevitable, and contrary to what has from time to time been said, this synod does not own itself. It is a creature of the Churchwide Assembly, its boundaries and very existence determined by a paragraph in a bylaw in the *Constitution of the ELCA*. On the other hand, it seems eminently reasonable to expend our resources, human and fiscal, in preparing the congregations and clergy of the synod for a future without the WV-WMD Synod. I do not want to go gentle into that good night, but neither do I want to rage against the dying of the light. If we can in the upcoming years strengthen our congregations and pastors to be more and more the church of Jesus Christ (in a Lutheran key), we will have fulfilled our purpose.

Determining what the Lutheran church should be in these mountains and valleys, where exactly we should expend our resources, and how the work should be accomplished is the deliberative task before us. I offer for your consideration the following as areas of possible work:

- strengthening congregations through
 - the cultivation of piety in devotion (private and corporate), in the reading of Scripture and edifying spiritual writings, and in the practice of the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints;
 - the cultivation of clergy and laity work in the care of souls, preaching, teaching, and worship leadership with special efforts being made to raise up clergy through the TEEM program and Synodical Lay Worship Leaders;
 - the cultivation of laity leadership in the management and oversight of the temporalities of the church; and
 - the cultivation of the bonds of Christian fellowship between congregations;
- fiscally stabilizing valued affiliated ministries that would likely be orphaned in the dissolution of this synod through a development manager to support non-ecclesiastical fundraising;
- continued retooling of our polity and fiscal operations to support transition; and
- increased investment in the education of clergy and laity.

We have made progress in some of these areas.

- We have entered into conversation with Go Tell It in the Mountains, a preaching improvement program jointly run by the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, the Upper Susquehanna Synod, and the Allegheny Synod. We have received word that while we are in negotiations, we have been granted by GTIitM full access to their resources.
- Negotiations are underway on the question of the development manager position to support Camp Luther, LCMWVU, and CLPi. You will see a recommendation from Synod Council to set aside funds for that project should an agreement be reached among the parties.
- On the polity front, the Bylaws Committee continues to develop alternatives to the ways in which we have always done things so that the synod might do things better. The proposal to create a Finance Board is the next step in the ongoing work of better managing synodical resources.

Others areas will require a refocus of attention and the adoption of new measures.

- The cultivation of piety poses the greatest challenge. Unfortunately, the war against Pietism was all too successful. I am convinced that the lack of piety left us particularly unable to cope well with the pandemic. I am equally convinced that the rebirth of vibrant and vital piety would be the most salutary thing could happen among us.
- The value of TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) as a program to train future pastors for the underserved sections of Appalachia should be apparent to all—unfortunately, many have never heard of TEEM.
- While we have held workshops for new Synod Council members, equipping congregations to better manage their business affairs will become more and more pressing as both the number of both clergy and lay leaders continues to decrease.
- Building fraternal relations between congregations should not be ignored; in a future with a more distant synod office, relying on one's neighbors could prove salutary.

Education is one area in which this synod leads. I regularly hear from people outside this synod (even other bishops) that our education offerings are some of the best in the church. We frequently see clergy and laity from other judicatories in attendance at our Synodical Clergy Continuing Ed Events, LARCUM, and SCALD. Expanding our offerings to include items mentioned above is within our reach, though it will require some additional managerial support. By the way, our recent LARCUM on the Devil had 56 in attendance—a record. Next year's LARCUM will focus on theological anthropology under the title "Fearfully & Wonderfully Made: Can We Be Human?"

Of course, all the above is my offering; the synod may have other ideas about our future and how we go about entering it.

The routine stuff of synod continues. It has not been an easy year, but we are the church. Being made of people and being a people under constant attack by the Unholy Trinity (Sin, Death, and the Devil) means more than a few rough spots in the road and even the periodic wrong turn. Nevertheless, we know our destination, and that destination is neither the WV-WMD Synod nor the ELCA; it is Jesus Christ, and

I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realms of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths—nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:38-39).

5.1.1. Report of the Bishop, Part II (Introduction to the Workshops)

When planning for Synod Assembly 2026, the Synod Council considered a two-day assembly an opportunity to hold one or more workshops. Lay leadership quickly presented itself as a theme.

Any congregation that has entered vacancy in recent years has become aware of the clergy shortage. Well, maybe aware is too strong a word. They know that it is taking longer and longer to find suitable candidates; they may not see the spreadsheets I see, spreadsheets that show fewer and fewer graduates from our seminaries and more and more congregations asking for first-call candidates. They may not see the location preferences and restrictions of those first-call candidates, and they may not see the general increase in the number of congregations that cannot afford a full-time compensation package for a first-call pastor. Even those congregations simply looking for a pastor to supply on Sunday morning have encountered difficulty.

Shortage, however, is not an objective concept. Shortages are in relationship to something: *demand*. Given a static *supply*, a shortage only exists when demand exceeds supply. We don't have enough clergy to fill all the pulpits that congregations would like to have filled. Well, let's be clear: to fill those pulpits in the way in which congregations would like to have those pulpits filled. We do have enough clergy to fill all the pulpits for preaching on a weekly basis if congregations would worship at times other than Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. On the other hand, we need to be honest and ask how many preachers want to run from congregation to congregation throughout the week. See, it is complicated. It is not just about spreadsheets; spreadsheets are simple. It is also about human desire and expectations; human beings are not simple.

St. Johannes Lutheran Church was founded the last Sunday of December 1852. St. Johannes did not call its first pastor until 1 January 1924—seventy-one years (plus a few days) of not having a pastor under call. During that time, the faithful in St. Clara (and Leopold) in Doddridge County saw a pastor once per year (twice if it was a really good year). Often taking the train from as far away as Wheeling, WV, and then traveling nearly twenty miles by horse and carriage, pastors would come for a few days, lead a communion service, bless graves, confirm, baptize, and marry. More importantly, for the purposes of our conversations, what did the congregants do? They gathered every other Sunday for worship: the prayers were said, hymns were sung, Holy Scripture was read, a sermon was read from a book (three books over this course of time because they wore out two of them). They read their Bibles (and other spiritual books), they joined in family prayers, they recited their Catechism, they visited the sick (often with a meal being brought), they buried their dead, and they consoled one another with the Words of Christ. Seventy-one years!

At the end of the American Revolution, there were 7.5 pulpits for every one Lutheran pastor in this new nation. Knowing that the larger, well-heeled congregations could engage a pastor full-time, the math suggests that many congregations were dealing with a much worse ratio. If I remember correctly, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was at one point serving thirteen congregations simultaneously across multiple counties while traveling on horseback (but that was before the Revolution).

Even as the nation expanded, frontier areas always faced challenges. A friend recently shared that Tonseth Norwegian Lutheran Church, Erhard, MN, sometime after their 1888 establishment, elected its first pastor who was required to conduct 12 worship services annually, eight on Sundays and four on weekdays (thank you, Pr. Ryan Stoudt, for this historical nugget). Some parts of central Appalachia continued to reflect frontier conditions well after places west of the mountains boomed in population. Other communities have returned to those conditions following the collapse of the extractive industry economy.

So, *demand* is as subjective a concept as *shortage*. St. Paul's, Aurora, is an example of *demand* being significantly different in that place compared to most of our other congregations, as Aurora has opted for the regular Sunday morning services of a pastor on a monthly rather than weekly basis (in addition to having other limited expectations for pastoral service).

I have mentioned to previous Assemblies that the number of congregations is decreasing at a much slower rate than the number of congregants decreases. This is often attended with challenges in the areas of fiscal and human resources. If the number of clergy is a fixed percentage of the total membership of the denomination, it stands to reason that the ratio of congregations to clergy will increase (n.b.: I did not just write "ratio of clergy to congregations"). In fact, the ratio of clergy (not counting retired clergy) to the total membership of the denomination is decreasing.

One way to put a pastor in every pulpit—that's hyperbole—is mass merger, consolidation, and closure of congregations (in other words, decrease the demand such that the supply is adequate). That is not something the synod can do, as our polity leaves the existence of congregations largely in the hands of the congregations—you can all breathe a sigh of relief. Or can you? Just as much as the synod cannot close congregations (except in very rare cases), the synod cannot manufacture clergy out of thin air, and the synod can most certainly not compel clergy to work for less than a living wage in places they might not want to live.

So, a congregation that is in a challenged position with respect to securing clergy has a choice (more than one, actually). It can consider the economies and diseconomies of merger, consolidation, or multi-point cooperation in a bid to secure clergy, or it can consider how it will do what a congregation must do as a congregation without the benefit of full-time or regular clergy.

There was a time when we talked about empowering lay leadership in the terms of the priesthood of all believers (not infrequently reinterpreted through a quasi-erastian egalitarianism). Now, we need to talk about lay leadership in the way that frontier churches did. I almost used the term *necessity*, but *necessity* suggests that we do not have a choice. We have choices. If, however, we choose to maintain the pulpits we have, in light of the supply available, a new approach (which is actually the really old approach) to lay leadership will be in order.

This lay leadership is not just about worship—we tend to fixate on worship (for obvious reasons). Confirmation ministry and the cure of souls (spiritual care) needs to be part of the conversation. At the same time, more and more, I hear of congregations challenged in managing their temporalities, especially when it comes to finding treasurers, secretaries, and even council [vice] presidents. Consequently, the workshops will deal with these two areas.

I could lecture on history, sharing with you how our ancestors did it, but I suspect the last thing anyone

wants is that. Instead, the workshops that we will be holding as part of our Assembly, inspired by the telling of stories of ministry from around our synod during my last report to you, invites those already doing it to share their stories. We'll probably do better learning from each other and, from that, imagining for ourselves what is possible.

Caveat congregationes grandes: Large, fiscally sound congregations that currently have a pastor are not immune to the challenges posed by the clergy shortage. Vacancies happen, and during what will be longer and longer vacancies, lay leadership will prove critical.

✠ Riegel

✿ To access information about workshops (including format and guiding questions), look at the [Workshops](#) section under the Program & Agenda.

Last modified: 29 May 2026

5.2. Report of the Vice President

Vice President's Report:

Time moves so very quickly. It doesn't seem possible that another year has come and gone. I continue to learn more about the Synod's mission each time Synod Council meets, in conversations with the Bishop and from spending time with individuals across our territory. While the curve continues to be a steep climb, it has been one filled with support and encouragement from many folks. My appreciation and gratitude go out to Bishop Riegel for his willingness to answer questions (even the silliest ones) and to provide advice, to my fellow synod council members and to each of you.

A few weeks after Synod Assembly the WV-WMD delegation left to attend Church Wide Assembly in Phoenix, Arizona. We learned many things regarding the polity of our church, and participated in the election of Bishop Curry and Secretary Mills. While there were indeed times of disappointment, we were blessed to have the guidance of Bishop Riegel and to see him in action serving the WV-WMD Synod with grace and integrity.

Once again, I was blessed to attend both a fall and spring continuing education event at the St. John XXIII Conference in Charleston. The fall session was entitled "Spirits, Angel and Demons in the Bible" with the Rev. Dr. Reed Carlson as the presenter. LARCUM (Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and United Methodist) in mid-May was entitled "Deliver Us From the Evil One" with presenters from each denomination represented. Truly a blessing to engage in thoughtful, prayerful conversation around such relevant topics in today's world.

Sadly, due to a scheduling conflict I was unable to attend the Region 8 meeting of Bishops and Synod Vice Presidents in Gettysburg. I look forward to attending once again this fall. I do, however, continue to participate in the monthly zoom meetings with Synod Vice Presidents in the ELCA. I was able to rejoice at the dedication of the new roof on LCM Chapel. It was certainly an exciting day. Thank you to all who worked

diligently on this project.

This year Synod Council continued to meet quarterly to address the needs of our territory. Our focus continues to be on what is God calling us to do and how we can best spread the Good News of the Gospel to all people. We continue to plan for the 2027 Synod Assembly and the election processes required. During this assembly, you will be asked to consider multiple issues and recommendations we believe essential to the future of our synod. Workshops will focus on the role of “Lay” leadership not only in your own congregation but across our synod. We believe lay leadership to be critical to our future and desire to be responsive to your needs. Conversation is currently underway with Community Lutheran Partners, Lutheran Campus Ministry and Camp Luther regarding the employment of a Development Manager. As such, you will be asked to approve set aside funding to assist with this position over the next three years in hopes that each of these ministries can become financially sustainable and independent.

Finally, let me close by saying this has been an amazing year! I am honored to serve as YOUR vice president. I want to thank all our Council members for their faithful work this past year. Their input has been invaluable as we chart our course for the future. I pray that our Gracious God would continue to provide guidance, strength and blessings to the work of our Bishop, DEM, Synod Council, and all our congregations in the WV/WMD Synod.

Your Servant in Christ,

Nancy Weeks

WV/WMD Synod Vice President

Last modified: 15 May 2026

5.3. Report of the Treasurer

Last modified: 28 May 2026

5.3.1. Proposed Budget for FY2027-2028

 For a line-by-line narrative of the budget, read [Understanding the Synod Budget](#).

	FY2024-2025 Actual (unaudited)	FY2025-2026 Budgeted	FY2026-2027 Proposed
MISSION SUPPORT			
From Congregations	371,810.99	420,250.00	420,254.31
CWO Proportional Share Percentage	29.83%	30%	30%
CWO Proportional Share Nominal	110,926.85	126,075.00	126,076.29

Synod Share Nominal	260,884.14	294,175.00	294,178.02
INCOME			
Mission Support Synod Share Nominal	260,884.14	294,175.00	294,178.02
Mision Support Synod Only	35,891.00	22,000.00	25,000.00
Interest	15,322.99	9,000.00	10,000.00
Total Income (for Synod)	312,098.13	325,175.00	329,178.02
EXPENSE			
Polity			
Synod Assembly	350.00	500.00	-
Snyod Council	2,074.28	3,000.00	3,000.00
Region 8	-	1,000.00	810.00
Tri-Synod Archives	500.00	3,000.00	2,120.00
West Virginia Council of Churches	3,000.00	4,000.00	5,000.00
Planned Giving	-	-	-
ELCA Shared Risk Fund	-	-	1,000.00
Subtotal	5,924.28	11,500.00	11,930.00
Synod Program			
Operational Committees	-	1,000.00	1,000.00
Candidacy Committee	-	2,000.00	2,000.00
Seminarian Aid	-	1,000.00	1,000.00
Pastoral Care	-	1,000.00	-
Pastoral Counseling	-	1,000.00	-
Pastoral Care & Counseling	-	-	2,000.00
Rostered Leader Debt Reducation	2,957.00	3,173.24	3,291.78
Rostered Education	-	-	-
FCTE	-	2,000.00	2,000.00

BLWL/SLWL	-	-	-
ELCA Mandate		1,500.00	-
LARCUM	2,428.87	1,500.00	2,000.00
Grants to Congregations with Speical Needs	-	-	-
Tri-Synod Planned Giving Officer	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Subtotal	6,385.87	15,173.24	14,291.78
Synod Operations			
Office			
– Rent (including utilities)	6,068.76	6,500.00	6,210.00
– Telecommunications	-	3,000.00	-
– Software & Applications	8,321.59	4,000.00	-
– Software, Applications, Telecommunications	-	-	7,510.00
– Supplies	545.62	750.00	1,000.00
– Equipment	-	3,000.00	3,000.00
– Postage	-	150.00	200.00
– Financial Fees	140.00	360.00	400.00
– Insurance	2,537.13	4,500.00	4,000.00
Professional Services			
– Bookkeeping	11,400.00	12,000.00	12,000.00
– Clerical Support	277.50	5,000.00	5,000.00
– Event Planning	-	200.00	400.00
– Professional Services	375.20	1,500.00	1,500.00
– Legal Services	261.32	300.00	300.00
– Audit	-	10,000.00	10,000.00
Travel	16,640.55	15,000.00	20,000.00
Subtotal	46,567.67	66,260.00	71,520.00
Staff & Personnel			

Defined Compensation	-	-	-
– Salary	92,758.56	86,113.41	88,499.57
– Housing	15,000.12	19,800.00	19,800.00
– Social Security Allowance	8,910.84	8,773.55	8,921.51
Benefits (Pension, Medical, etc.)	59,830.68	63,654.00	66,200.16
Workman’s Compensation	428.00	750.00	550.00
Continuing Education Allowance	-	2,000.00	2,000.00
Subtotal	176,928.20	181,090.96	185,971.24
Grants			
United Lutheran Seminary	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,050.00
Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU	25,300.00	25,300.00	26,565.00
Campus Ministry Grants on Territory	-	-	-
Caroline Furnace	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,100.00
Camp Luther	9,250.00	9,250.00	9,712.50
Community Lutheran Partners	5,750.00	5,750.00	6,037.50
Subtotal	43,300.00	43,300.00	45,465.00
Unbudgeted / Miscellaneous Expense			
Extended Theological Education	1,181.30	-	-
Subtotal	1,181.30	-	-
Total Expense	280,287.32	317,324.20	329,178.02
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	31,810.81	7,850.80	-

Last modified: 28 May 2026

5.3.2. Understanding the Synod Budget

What follows is a line-by-line discussion of the budget proposal for FY2027-2028 with supporting details including the approved budget for FY2026-2027 and the actuals for FY2025-2026.

MISSION SUPPORT

The Mission Support section is neither income nor expense so far as the budget (properly speaking) is concerned. It is a mistake to think of congregational mission support as synod income and the share submitted to the Churchwide Organization (CWO) as expense. Mission support is what is given by parishioners for the work of all three expressions. One can imagine it as if a parishioner were cutting three separate checks: one to the congregation, one to the synod, and one to the CWO. Rather than doing exactly that, the congregation acts as receiver for all three expressions, keeping for its own work its portion and passing the shares for the other two expressions to the synod. The synod, in turn, keeps its own share and passes on to CWO its share. To convey this, mission support is presented as a section unto itself.

From Congregations	That which the congregations pass on from their receipt of unrestricted regular giving.
CWO Proportional Share Percentage	The amount set by the synod in consultation with the CWO to pass on to the CWO. Historically, this was set by a Churchwide continuing resolution at 55%. You will note that the actual for FY2025-2026 is short of the 30% mark. Pending a fiscal confidence review, any confirmed shortage will be transmitted to the CWO.
CWO Proportional Share Nominal	The nominal dollars, based upon the percentage of the expected mission support remittance from congregations, to be transmitted to the CWO.
Synod Share Nominal	The amount in nominal dollars retained for synod use. This line carries down to the income section.

INCOME

Mission Support Synod Share Nominal	Carried down from mission support section.
Mission Support Synod Only	Some congregations have indicated that they do not want their giving to go to the CWO. This began after the adoption of HSGT (2009).
Interest	Interest income.
Draw from Reserves	At one time, our budget worksheet included a line for a draw from reserves. Arguably, this was never income. Prior to 2000, it was common that we had a draw from reserves built into the budget to balance it. We have not needed to draw from reserves to fund budgeted operations for several years.

EXPENSE

Expense is divided into several subsections.

Polity

These expenses relate to polity functions (e.g., Synod Council)

Synod Assembly	We have a fund for SA, and it has several thousand dollars in it. Because we have been frugal (especially with having a one-day assembly), we've been able to draw upon this fund to keep the assembly free to registrants. Historically, the Synod Assembly line was a few thousand dollars. It was used to ensure sufficient funds to place down payments on facilities and meals and to partially subsidize the assembly. We have, with SA2026, figured costing to cover anticipated expenses associated with SA. We should no longer need to fund this line unless it is desired to subsidize.
Synod Council	Covers room & board and incidental expenses. At one time, it also covered mileage for participants. Covering mileage was dropped several years ago. This could be reinstated. N.B.: doing so would require an increase to what is proposed. What is proposed is based upon an estimate for meals and lodging for one retreat. Some room & board associated with Synod Council was charged to travel in FY2025-2026.
Region 8	This line largely supports the part-time employment of our Region 8 staff person, the person who does the grunt work that keeps Region 8 programs moving. The amount is based upon baptized membership. There were several years in which no levy was asked by Region 8. The estimate is based upon the request for FY2026-2027 with inflation factored in. The amount for FY2025-2026 was an overestimation based upon pattern before the most recent recalculating of per capita apportionment.
Tri-Synod Archives	According to the constitution, we must maintain an archive. We do this in cooperation with SWPA and NWP. The Tri-Synod Archives has requested support at \$40 per congregation per annum through 2030 for operations. At 53 congregations, this comes to \$2120. This amount is less than was anticipated in the budgeting for the current FY. Tri-Synod Archives also asked for \$100 per congregation per annum for its endowment fund through the same period of time. Finance Committee did not recommend providing this until the three bishops reach an agreement on the matter and, then, using other sources (e.g., closing congregations or an appeal) to fund it. There is money set aside by SC for major upgrades to the Tri-Synod Archives following years of under funding.
WVCC	While the West Virginia Council of Churches could be considered a grant recipient, the synod is a voting member on the council, and support of the council represents our constitutional commitment to ecumenical work. An increase is asked because a new executive director has been hired, and additional support will contribute to stability in that regard. We are still not at the level of support that existed prior to the financial challenges of the late 2000s early 2010s.
Planned Giving	This line was moved to the program subsection in the budget. The line (where it appears here) will be eliminated this year or next.

ELCA Shared Risk Fund	This fund is easier to explain in conversation than writing. It relates to disciplinary action against clergy in which compensation during time of temporary suspension is provided from a joint fund of the synods and the CWO. This is being reinstated, but no dollar figure has been set yet. \$1000 is a guess.
-----------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Synod Programs

These expenses relate to activities of the synod that are not back office operations or payroll and also not grants to agencies and institutions.

Operational Committees	At one time, the synod had several committees. Most of these were eliminated in the mid-2000s. Some few persist in various states of activity. When there were several committees, this line was usually in the mid-\$1000s and handled as a block with the Committee for Coordination and Evaluation charged with parceling out the funds to the committees (rather than each committee having its own line in the budget). This line also paid for travel and meals at what was called All-Committee Day. The recommendation is to retain the line at \$1000 in case one of the few remaining committees is in need of support for a project.
Seminarian Aid	We have traditionally provided \$1000 per annum to each seminarian enrolled full-time. We have no seminarians at this time, but we never know when we will get one.
Pastoral Care Pastoral Counseling Pastoral Care & Counseling	Pastoral Care was a fund used primarily for clergy in need. It has been used in the past for emergency financial assistance for prescriptions etc. Pastoral Counseling was at one time used to pay for the psych eval for seminary applicants. It was also used in those rare cases when a pastor was remanded for counseling for career evaluation. FinComm recommends combining these lines into a new Pastoral Care & Counseling line.
Rostered Leader Debt Reduction	Established by order of Synod Assembly, 1% of the expense budget funds this line which in turn funds a fund (which receives gifts from other sources as well). Clergy with educational debt from first-degree theological education can apply for distributions from the fund.
Rostered Education	Like the Synod Assembly Fund, a surplus is in the fund that this line supported. This line was a subsidy for the biannual synod clergy cont. ed event. Changes in that program, namely the clergy running their own program, suggested the elimination of synodical funding. This line is scheduled for elimination.
FCTE	First Call Theological Education is the synod's share of the Region 8 FCTE Plenary Event and supplemental funding for FCTE activities with just the synod cohort. Meal expenses that should have associated with this line for FY2024-2025 were charged to travel.
BLWL/SLWL	Our lay worship leader programs once had required training sessions. They have not for several years. At this point, it is unclear whether any funding will be necessary to support the programs. It is recommended that the line be kept but unfunded in case the program shifts in this year.
ELCA Mandate	This was a category created a in the late 2010s. It was meant to be an umbrella category for

	a variety of expenses required by the ELCA, but it is better for our budgeting purposes to isolate and identify each line.
LARCUM	Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic-United Methodist Conference is one of the biggest education events in which we participate. It is also one of the more expensive. Costs have varied wildly some years, reaching almost as much as \$3000 to as low as \$0. To deal with these fluctuations, we have created a LARCUM fund. This line will fund the LARCUM fund which will load balance across the years.
Grants to Congregations...	This line has not been used in over ten years. It is time to eliminate. It was once used to provide small grants to struggling congregations.
Tri-Synod Planned Giving...	This is part of our partnership with the ELCA Foundation to employ a specialist in planned giving for both the synod and our congregations. No increase in expense is anticipated.

Synodical Operations

This is the back office.

Rent	Rent is paid to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Morgantown, for an office on the lower level of its educational wing. Basic utilities are included (water, heat, electric). The move in 2019 resulted in a 67% reduction in rent and additional savings from not having to maintain a land line, our own internet, and additional utilities.
Telecommunications Software & Applications Software, Applications, Telecomm	Pretty much everything has become web-based except for the cell phone (which is currently a line off the bishop's personal phone). Combining them makes sense as it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell the difference between software, subscription services, and telecomm.
Supplies	This is stuff like paper, ink, folders, etc. We had an oversupply of many of these things that we have been using up. We've largely reached the end of that surplus. Coffee was also under this line, but no one in the office drinks coffee now.
Equipment	This was once two different lines, one for things like office equipment (computers etc.) and office furniture (chairs, filing cabinets, etc.). We are looking at a computer purchase for this year and possible another for next year. The one computer is at least 13 years old. It is suspected that the purchase of a printer in the spring of 2024 was accounted to software & applications. Awaiting verification.
Postage	We have very little postage expense. In FY2025-2026, postage was charged to supplies.
Financial Fees	This would be fees charged for having a business account at our bank and for other financial processing services (e.g., a wire of funds to Europe). The current budget amount is a hangover from the days those fees were higher because of services that have since been dropped.

Insurance	Last year's budget overestimated.
Bookkeeping	With the reconfiguration of the Synod Office following Synod Assembly 2019, the Office Manager position was eliminated and a bookkeeping service engaged on a contractor.
Clerical Services	A few years after the Synod Office reconfiguration, it was determined that period clerical support was needed. This supports contracting clerical support on a project basis.
Event Planning	Also part of the Synod Office reconfiguration, this line was funded to contract event planners. While not used to date, it is expected to be used in the future to improve human resources allocation.
Professional Services	Payroll services have been charged to this line, but other professional services that might be contracted could be as well.
Legal Services	We hope never to have major legal expenses, and this line, at its level of funding, would certainly be insufficient. As a synod of the ELCA, we have an annual payment to CT Corporation for its services.
Audit	We need to keep this in place for when we do get an audit done.
Travel	Travel is much more than than mileage. Mass transit, vehicle rental, and parking are included. Also included is room & board and hospitality. Because this line has so many things associated with it, some lodging and meals that were chargeable to other lines (e.g., Synod Council and FCTE) where charged here in FY2025-2026.

Staff & Personnel

The only staff listed here is the bishop. The D.E.M. is funded by a non-budgetary grant. Bookkeeping, clerical support, etc. are all contracted services listed under *Synodical Operations*.

Salary Housing Social Security	Figured according to the approved clergy comp package for 2026 with 32 years seniority at 150% for bishop differential and a projected 2.8% COLA increase.
Benefits	Calculated on a presumed increase of 4%. No one really knows what the increase will be.
Workman's Comp	Based upon projection for next year. This year's budget will likely prove to be an overestimation.
Continuing Education	This follows guidelines.

Grants

Our grant recipient agencies include

- United Lutheran Seminary
- Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU

- Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center
- Camp Luther
- Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.

For all entities on the list with any money currently designated, a 5% increase is recommended. The grants for campus ministry on territory supported things like Pr. Sally Bartling's Work at Potomac State. No one has asked for support for this in several years.

Misc Expense

The only miscellaneous expense in FY2025-2026 was the funding for a synodical young adult to attend the Lutheran World Federation Wittenberg Seminary for Lay Leaders.

Last modified: 28 May 2026

5.4. Report of the Director of Evangelical Mission

Director of Evangelical Mission Report to the West Virginia – Western Maryland Synod Assembly June 2026

(Understanding the role of the DEM and the relationship with the Synod is at the end of the report.)

***“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...
Ecclesiastes 3:1”***

As I was preparing my report for the 2026 WV-W MD Synod Assembly, this verse kept speaking to me. It speaks a truth that I encounter as I travel in the mountains and valleys of our Synod. Many of the churches which I visit are in different seasons of their lives. Some are strong and flourishing in ministry and membership while others wonder if it is time to close their doors due to the dwindling numbers of their active members. There is joy and there is grief. There is hope and there is quiet resignation.

No matter where your congregation finds itself, perhaps it is good to remember Ecclesiastes 3:11, *“God has made everything suitable for its time; moreover God has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from beginning to the end.”* As much as we humans like to think we are in control, this verse reminds us that we cannot fully know what God is up to. Just as the Holy Spirit has guided us in the past, we are guided now and will be into the future. Perhaps this is the crux of our dilemma...trusting that God will continue to work through all time, whether we are here or not. While we are grateful to be invited into what God is doing, it is important to remember it is God who is the doer. Trusting in that, may we find peace in whatever our circumstances are knowing God's promise of salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus will have the last word.

So, that said, if God is the doer and we are being invited into the doing, what does that look like for us in the WV-WMD Synod? To answer that, let's look at where we are so that we can discern where we may be being led.

It could be easy to look at the situation in which our synod finds itself and give up hope. Fourteen of our congregations are without a called pastor. Several of those are being served by long-term interims for whom we are very grateful. Most of the vacancies are such that it is unlikely they will ever issue a call to a pastor or deacon. In the next 3-5 years, more of our pastors are planning to retire. The WV-W MD Synod is not unique. The reality is many Synods in the ELCA are facing the same challenge; there simply aren't enough pastors to fill all the calls that are available.

Yet, the Gospel still needs to be carried out to those who have yet to hear it. What's a synod to do? Perhaps a better question is, what is God doing? This is where it gets exciting!

Perhaps, the answer is to look at the life of Jesus and see what he did with the disciples... **TRAIN, EQUIP, SEND.**

While the challenges can seem daunting, they are also full of possibilities. It begins with developing a strong program to raise up lay leaders who take a more active role in leading worship and sharing the Gospel. Since 2020, I have noticed a strong desire in many lay people to share their faith story. I witness more and more lay folks stepping up and wanting to be trained to share God's Word with others. This is what God is doing! The Holy Spirit is breathing new life into the church, and it's starting in the pews. The question then becomes, how can your synod support you as you start to live into your baptismal calling in this new way? That's where the training and equipping come into play.

Over the next year, we hope you will take advantage of some of the trainings that will be offered.

PARTICIPATE IN BIBLE STUDIES

The first and possibly most important step in deepening your Christian witness is to find a Bible Study in which to participate!

CHECK OUT THE SYNOD WEBSITE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION EVENTS

[WV-WMD | Education for Clergy & Laity](#)

(The list that follows is included on the Synod continuing education page. These are some I want to highlight.)

GO TELL IT IN THE MOUNTAINS (GTIITM)

The Go Tell It IN the Mountains Initiative is a ministry of the Upper Susquehanna, Northwest Pennsylvania, and Allegheny Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Steering Committee approved the request of the WV-W MD Synod Council to join the initiative at their April 2026 meeting.

The Go Tell It IN the Mountains Initiative is focused on three primary goals (From their website):

1. Ordained and lay preachers will be equipped to utilize traditional and non-traditional techniques

including different modes of delivery to develop skills and practices that will make the gospel message more compelling.

2. Aspiring preachers will be recruited and engaged in a variety of compelling preaching strategies that educate, empower, and support competency in their ministry.
3. Existing members of congregations and new community audiences within our three Lutheran partner synods will respond to compelling preaching opportunities and content by integrating the gospel message into their attitudes, actions and ministries in daily life.

WV-WMD Synod Lay Worship Leaders Program (From Synod Website)

The West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod (ELCA) has developed the Synodical Lay Worship Leaders (SLWL) program to formalize and expand opportunities for laypeople to lead worship within congregations and synod events. In February 2021, the Synod Council adopted the SLWL policy, which establishes four distinct lay preacher licenses:

- Reader – leads worship and reads a sermon selected with a supervisor.
- Apprentice Preacher – leads worship and prepares their own sermon with supervisor guidance.
- Journ Preacher – independent leader preparing and preaching their own sermons.
- Master Preacher – supervises Readers and Apprentice Preachers

KINDLING FAITH THROUGH ULS (From Website)

“At its heart, Kindling Faith affirms that learning never ends. We exist to nurture lifelong theological reflection, spiritual formation, and faithful leadership—for pastors, deacons, lay leaders, and engaged laity. Our mission is to cultivate deeper faith, stronger community, and meaningful engagement with pressing issues of justice, resilience, and care for the world.” Throughout the year, Kindling Faith offers workshops and trainings open to those looking to deepen their understanding of theological issues and wanting to equip themselves with skills to function more effectively in a congregational setting.

TEEM

The **Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM)** is a leadership formation program for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) designed to prepare individuals for ordained ministry in congregations that are “emerging” — meaning they are difficult to staff or serve due to size, location, or special needs

TEEM is for folks who have been recognized by their congregation (ministry) as having the gifts for ordained ministry and who have been identified by their synod bishop as candidates for ordination. It is not for those seeking a degree (MDiv) but for those committed to serving in ministries that may not have a traditional pastor, such as:

- Ethnic-specific or multicultural congregations
- Rural or small urban congregations
- New mission starts or redevelopment ministries
- Ministries serving people with disabilities

TEEM is non-residential and contextual-educational, meaning students:

- Serve in their current ministry while studying

- Meet with professors and local mentors regularly
- Attend campus sessions 3 times a year

The ULS program typically includes:

- 15 core courses in theology, biblical studies, pastoral care, and ministry leadership
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for pastoral care formation
- Internship in an approved ministry setting (internship is in the congregation to which you have been called)

If you feel called to enter the TEEM Certificate Program, please contact Bishop Riegel or Pastor Sherri.

Other opportunities for training and equipping that are offered through the Synod include:

Synod Continuing Education Events: These are held twice a year, usually in October and February. While these are primarily geared towards the rostered leaders in the Synod, they are occasionally open to lay leaders.

LARCUM (Lutherans, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and United Methodists): This is an annual gathering which chooses a topic on which representatives from the different church bodies are invited to speak.

LISTENING WITH LOVE: Rev. Marti Unger and Rev. Dr. John Unger designed this program to help you deepen your listening skills to provide compassionate care in your congregation. It is an 8-hour workshop that will change how you relate to those for whom you care. Please visit their website for more information on how to schedule a workshop for your congregation/conference.

[Listening with Love](#)

One last workshop that I would like to recommend is one that I lead called:

SAFE CHURCH: Creating Safe Spaces for all to Encounter the Love of Christ.

Working with congregations around the Synod, I realize that one of the biggest catalysts for conflict between pastor and congregation is a lack of awareness of pastoral and congregational boundaries. This workshop is developed to help congregational leaders understand the boundaries that are suggested for pastors to function in a healthy way.

“Why”, might you ask “is this a focus for the DEM?” My answer, “Having healthy relationships in congregations is crucial to evangelism.”

While it is impossible to think we will ever eradicate all conflict between members and members and their pastors, I feel we must give some effort to creating spaces in which that conflict is handled in ways that bring healing to the Body of Christ.

Woven into the material in the workshops are topics on:

- Understanding Definitions and Guidelines (an ELCA document that guides pastors in conduct)
- Understanding roles of pastors, congregations, and councils through the lens of the congregation’s constitution

- Safeguarding God's Children: How to put policies and procedures into place to protect the ministries of the congregations and volunteers from sexual misconduct Implications and cautions of AI on ministry today

If you have any questions about the opportunities listed above, please contact the Bishop or your DEM. We are here to help as you discern your call to where the Spirit is leading you.

AND, NOW FOR THE REST OF THE STORY

Following is a description of the responsibilities of the DEM and an explanation of why/how you have such a person on Synod staff...

From where does the funding for the Director of Evangelical Mission (D.E.M.) come?

The position of the D.E.M. is supported through your mission support to the ELCA. In order to coordinate the partnership between the ELCA's churchwide ministries and the 65 synods of this church, Directors for Evangelical Mission serve in positions shared by both of these expressions of this church. They are fully churchwide staff who are fully embraced by synods. My position in the Synod is 0.5FTE.

What is the role of the Director of Evangelical Mission?

The 4 areas of focus for a Director of Evangelical Mission include, but are not limited to:

- Missional vision and planning for the synod
- Mission development or "new starts"
- Congregational renewal or "redevelopment"
- Mission Support and stewardship

DEMs are a key resource for congregations and leaders seeking tools and counsel for starting a new ministry or revitalizing existing ministries, as well as how to identify, develop and equip leaders for mission and ministry.

The ELCA provides these services to the WV-W MD Synod through a "Purchase of Services" agreement. I serve under the direction of the Bishop and Synod Council.

Given the 4 areas of focus, here is a summary of my activity for 2025-2026

- Missional vision and planning for the Synod: Bishop and I have been discussing the mission and vision statements for the WV-W MD Synod. With the help of Synod Council, we will discern if we need to clarify the role (mission) of the Synod and better articulate its vision in this time. The current mission statement adopted in 2003 is: *"Saved by grace, assembled by faith, we journey to make Christ known."* The current vision statement was adopted in 2000 and is: *"Our vision as Lutherans is to be Christ-like servants of hospitality sent to share God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ in the community of Appalachia".*
- Mission development or "new starts": There are no "new starts" under development in the WV-W MD Synod.
- Congregational renewal or "redevelopment": This is where most of my time is spent as your DEM. Many weekends, I am on the road providing pulpit supply for one of the 14 congregations without a

called pastor. I also fill in for pastors on vacation or when invited to be a guest speaker. Each visit is also a check-in to see how I can help them discern how God is calling them going forward.

- Mission Support and Stewardship: Thank you to each of you for the offering of your time, talent, and treasure to support the ministries of your congregation, synod, and the larger church. I am always available to talk about stewardship with your congregation. Please contact me if I can help you develop a stewardship plan.

In conclusion, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Director of Evangelical Mission. I am grateful to Bishop Riegel for our partnership in serving the congregations of the WV-W MD Synod.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Sherri Schafer
Director of Evangelical Mission
WV-W MD Synod, ELCA

Last modified: 12 May 2026

6. Reports of Standing Committees

Last modified: 1 June 2025

6.1. Report of the Nominating Committee (Part 1)

WV-WMD Synod Assembly 2026 Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominations Committee would like to thank everyone who is willing to run for office this year. It is your willingness to serve that witnesses to the gospel. These positions are a witness, and all are important parts of the whole Body of Christ.

The Nominations Committee had an easier job this year than last. This was due to the small number of open positions. In the future, please consider serving your synod and, please, keep your eyes and ears open for those who have the gifts to faithfully serve the church. Do not be afraid to nominate yourself for positions, even if the required nominees for the position have been fulfilled. Sometimes a nominee does not meet the minimum criteria to run for the position to which he/she has been nominated.

Per B9.04 of the Synod Bylaws, the Nominating Committee submits the following nominations:

- for Synod Council — At-Large — Laity, **AJ Beckett** and **David Whitacre**;
- for Synod Council — Youth, **Jane Basile** and **Eli Reid**;
- for Discipline Committee — Clergy, **Deacon Mary Sanders** and **Pr. Sean Smith**;

The candidate information required under B9.05 of the Synod Bylaws follows in the Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports as [Part 2 of the Report of the Nominating Committee](#).

The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle, Chair



In addition to the nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee, the nominee for Synod Secretary is submitted by the Synod Council, that nominee being David Finney. The information for the nominee is included in Part 2 of the Report of the Nominating Committee.



Nominations may be made from the floor for all positions to be elected by the Synod Assembly with the exception of the election of a bishop (which employs an ecclesiastical ballot). For rules and required forms related to making a nomination from the floor, review the information under [Floor Nominations](#).

6.1.1. Nominee Information (Report of Nominating Committee, Part 2)

Nominee Information

Position: Synod Council – At-Large – Laity

Candidate: AJ Beckett

Congregation: Grace, Wheeling, WV

Residence: Wheeling, WV

I have been a part of the Synod Council ever since I was elected youth member in 2021/2022. Once I turned 18, I then became a Laity at Large member of the Council. The time has now come for me to run for re-election and I believe I have served the Synod Council faithfully as pointed out by my fellow Councilors and I want to continue my service and being a part of the church body.

Candidate: David Whitacre

Congregation: Fairview Chapel, Gore, VA

Residence: Winchester, VA

Whitacre is a life-long member of Fairview Chapel, Gore, VA, one of four member congregations of the Capon-North River Parish. He has served as treasurer of the parish along with being a key lay leader in his congregation. He is well-acquainted with the blessings and challenges of small rural congregations and multi-point parishes in the Ridge and Valley Province on the edge of the Shenandoah Valley. In this, he would bring a perspective not currently represented on the Synod Council. He is also familiar with life in proximity to an urban center, living on the rural-urban interface. He served faithfully on Synod Council in the '00s (or maybe the late '90s). He is well-versed in the core markers of Lutheran theology and practice and is committed to a Lutheran presence in Appalachia. He is recently retired.

Position: Synod Council – Youth

Candidate: Jane Basile

Congregation: St. John's, Davis, WV

Residence: Davis, WV

Jane is a member of St. John's in Davis. She is very active in the congregation. Jane serves where needed and is a great helper. She is a faithful worship assistant and a gifted member of the bell choir. She has been a worship assistant since the age of 9. Jane was confirmed in November 2025. She loved learning Luther's Small Catechism and lots of church polity. She is eager to serve on Synod Council and to get her feet wet serving the wider church.

Candidate: Eli Reid

Congregation: First, Parkersburg, WV

Residence: Parkersburg, WV

Eli is an active member of First Lutheran Church in Parkersburg. He has a love for serving God and his community. Currently, he serves the church as an acolyte and volunteers for other duties on an as needed basis. Eli is recently confirmed.

Position: Discipline Committee – Clergy

Candidate: The Rev. Deacon Mary Sanders

Congregation: St. John's, Redhouse, MD

Residence: Redhouse, MD

Deacon Mary has been active in our synod for years. She has a background of working with the WVDNR as a water specialist. She is not afraid of conflict or confronting those who need to be confronted.


Candidate: The Rev. Sean Smith

Congregation: Lutheran Cooperative Ministries

Residence: Wheeling, WV

Pastor Sean would be great on the Discipline Committee. He is well-known and respected in the synod. He is knowledgeable in church polity and policy. He follows rules well and works well with others.

Position: Secretary

 The Synod Council nominates for Synod Secretary and is required to submit only one nominee. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

Candidate: David Finney

Congregation: St. Paul, Morgantown, WV

Residence: Fairmont, WV

David Finney served as secretary of the Allegheny Synod, 2012-2024. He began serving as secretary of the WV-WMD Synod under vacancy appointment by the Synod Council in December 2025. Educationally, Finney holds a Master of Public Policy & Management, a Master of Business Administration, a Diploma in Horticulture, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Professionally, Finney worked in the golf industry in various supervisory positions from 1984 to 2012. He was the Supervisor of Campus Grounds, University of Pittsburgh – Johnstown Campus, Johnstown, PA, 2014 – 2024. Since 2009, he has served as an adjunct professor at four different institutions of higher education.

Last modified: 26 May 2026

6.1.2. Floor Nominations (Report of the

Nominating Committee, Part 3)

Floor nominations are allowed under the synod's rules. Those wishing to make a floor nomination should review the [Report of the Nominating Committee](#) (which contains the list of positions to be elected and the coordinate names of those being nominated by the Nominating Committee). Review also the information found on the [Nominations & Elections webpage](#) prior to the assembly.

The nominator is responsible for completing the Floor Nomination Form (downloadable below), producing and providing 125 copies for distribution to Synod Assembly voting members at the time the nomination is made on the floor. When the nomination is made, present the copies to the secretary.

In addition, submit to the secretary three additional copies, at the time the nomination is made, of the "Floor Nomination Form" (downloadable below) with the following additional information written on the form:

- nominee's phone number,
- nominee's email address, and
- nominator's phone number.

You may nominate yourself.



Only voting members on the floor of the assembly while in session may make floor nominations.

Downloads

[Floor Nominee Information Form](#) (PDF)

[Floor Nominee Information Form](#) (MS-Word)

If unable to download,

If you are unable to download a Floor Nominee Information Form, ask your congregation office for help or complete a sheet with the following information, making the copies explained above.

- Position for which the person is nominated
- Nominee's name
- Nominee's congregation of membership
- Church service and/or experience, training, and education
- Nominator's name

Last modified: 26 May 2026

6.2. Report of Reference & Counsel

* The Report of the Committee on Reference & Counsel is given during the assembly. Review our [Parliamentary Aids, Guide to Assembly Committees, Committee on Reference & Counsel](#) to learn more about its work and procedures. What immediately follows are the resolutions and memorials submitted for review by Reference & Counsel.

Membership

Committee on Reference & Counsel	
Clergy	Laity
The Rev Doug Dyson	Daniel Beals
	Felicia Niehaus

Resolutions and Memorials Received

- Resolution #1: [To Rescind the “To Adopt a Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod” \(a.k.a. Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted\) adopted at Synod Assembly 2025.](#)

Last modified: 13 May 2026

6.2.1. Resolution #1: To Rescind “A Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (2025)”

To Rescind “A Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod” (a.k.a. Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted) adopted at Synod Assembly 2025.

Whereas, the resolution “To Adopt a Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod” put forth options to explore flexibility in the synod but fell short by focusing upon the needs of the candidates for bishop over the needs of the synod; and

Whereas, any determination of the time needed for a bishop should begin with the needs of the synod; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the 2026 West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod Assembly rescind the resolution “To Adopt a Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod” (a.k.a. Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted).

Sponsors

Devin Ames

Matt Holbert

Timothy Crummitt

Pam Pritt

Last modified: 14 May 2026

6.3. Report of the Resolutions Committee

 Section reserved in stabilized PDF version for future use.

Last modified: 26 May 2026

6.4. Report of the Bylaws Committee

Report of the Bylaws Committee Synod Assembly 2026

The Bylaws Committee met several times over the course of more than six months, beginning soon after Synod Assembly, to consider matters related to

- Synod Assembly 2025's adoption of the resolution "To Adopt a Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod" (a.k.a. *Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted*),
- Synod Council's referral of the resolution "On Improving Appropriations Process" (a.k.a. *Smith-1*),
- Synod Council's referral of questions related to Synod Council's quorum and persistent absenteeism,
- amendments to the *Constitution for Synods* made by Churchwide Assembly 2025, and
- routine review of the synodical governing documents.

The work related to *Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted*, proved the most complicated in that it required research into the *status quo*, as defined by the Churchwide Organization, for the engagement of a bishop and the creation of processes that would fulfill the intent of *Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted*, while working within the constraints of an episcopal election. A lengthy discussion is included in the rationale for the proposed amendments to the bylaws that will permit implementation of *Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted*.

The work related to Synod Council's quorum and persistent absenteeism required a deep dive into parliamentary theory and comparative study of state codes.

The remainder is the relatively routine work of the Bylaws Committee. Though relatively routine, none of it is thoughtless. Theory and practicality are weighed. Other approaches are examined. Intra-committee debate is not absent, but it is always reasoned.

The Bylaws Committee, as it began its work in this cycle included The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel, The Rev. Daniel Collins, Michelle Erfurt, David Finney. The Rev. Daniel Collins, having transferred to the Delaware-Maryland Synod, left the Committee in the fall.

The remainder of this report is in two main sections:

- Proposed amendments of the *Constitution of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod*
 - Those proposed amendments requiring notice — 4 proposed amendments
 - Those proposed amendment not requiring notice — 6 proposed amendments
- Proposed Amendment of the *Bylaws of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod* — 2 proposed amendments

When reviewing the following material, note the following:

- The provision to be amended is in **bold**.
- *Italic* indicates a proposed insertion of text.
- ~~Strikethrough~~ indicates a proposed deletion of text.
- The explanatory material frequently follows the listing of a proposed amendment. This explanatory material is not to be considered part of the proposed amendment.

Proposed amendments of the *Constitution of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod*

Amendments requiring notice per †S18.13(b).

†S18.13(b). [Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:] The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.

Notice was duly served on 2 December 2025 (prior to the required deadline) by *Bishop's Roadshow*, email to congregations, and posting on both the synod's website and Facebook page. *Other amendments* contrasts these provisions that are either entirely unique to the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod or deviate in some way from the language in the *Constitution for Synods* from the required provisions in the *Constitution for Synods* or the exact language of its non-required provisions.

Recommendation #1

~~S10.09~~ **S10.10.** A majority of the members, excluding the youth member, of the Synod Council shall constitute a quorum. *The members who attend a meeting that has been previously adjourned for one or more periods aggregating at least 6 days because of an absence of a quorum, although less than a quorum as fixed by this provision, shall nevertheless constitute a quorum for the purpose of acting upon any matter set forth in the notice of the meeting if the notice states that those members who attend the adjourned meeting shall nevertheless constitute a quorum for the purpose of acting upon the matter.*

Rationale: The proposed appendment provides a path for Synod Council to conduct business (to the degree limited by the notice for the meeting) when it has failed twice in a row in the same session to secure

quorum. This proposed appendment is modeled on 15 PA Cons Stat §5756(b)(2) (2024) — The West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. There have been times when quorum has not been achieved, a consequence not uncommon to volunteer boards spread across significant distances. An alternative discussed was the lowering of quorum for all meetings to something less than a majority, but this was deemed unwise by the Bylaws Committee. It is permissible, under 15 PA Cons Stat §5727(a) (2024), to codify in our bylaws (including our constitution) provisions related to quorum that deviate from the general principal of a majority; this is also permissible according to our parliamentary authority, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (12th ed.).

Originally numbered S10.09 in the *Constitution of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod*, this local provision (i.e., a provision note found in the *Constitution for Synods*) was adopted by WV-WMD before the Churchwide Assembly adopted S10.09 in the *Constitution for Synods*. This creates a numbering problem in that two provisions would have the same number. In the past, it was considered an editorial change to fix such enumeration problems.

Recommendation #2

S10.11. The Synod Council may by a two-thirds vote declare vacant the seat of a Synod Council member (other than that of an officer whose removal is governed under †S8.57) who a) has been judicially declared of unsound mind, b) has been convicted of an offense punishable by imprisonment for a term of more than one year, or for any other proper cause which the constitution and bylaws may specify, c) does not accept the office either in writing, within 60 days after notice of election, or by attending a meeting of the board of directors, or d) has been persistently absent in the judgment of the Synod Council by failure to 1) attend in-person meetings, 2) attend meetings by electronic means (under †S10.09.01), or 3) acknowledge mail ballots (under B10.08).

Rationale: Though the *Model Constitution for Congregations* contains a provision for removal of a Congregation Council member for absenteeism, the *Constitution for Synods* does not. Though infrequent, it has happened more than once in the history of this synod that persons elected to Synod Council have persistently absented themselves, creating challenges for the securing of quorum in addition to withholding their potential contributions to the governance of this synod. The proposed provision is modeled on 15 PA Cons Stat § 5726(b) (2024).

Recommendation #3

~~S11.04. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.~~ A Mutual Ministry Advisory Board shall be appointed jointly by the vice president and the bishop. Term of office on the board shall be 2 years, with 3 members to be appointed from the voting membership of the congregations of this synod each successive year, without term limitation. The vice president or his/her designee, who shall be a member of Synod Council, and the bishop shall be members ex officio of the board. The Mutual Ministry Advisory Board shall function as a board of this synod, adopting for itself such bylaws (subject to ratification by the Synod Council) and rules as best facilitate the fulfillment of its purpose. The duties of the Mutual Ministry Advisory Board shall be defined by continuing resolution.

Rationale: This synod, by formal action of the Synod Council, has sought for several years the freedom to restructure the Synodical Mutual Ministry Committee along the lines found in the *Driesen Manual*, restructuring being prevented until this past Churchwide Assembly by a required provision in the

Constitution for Synods. The proposed amendment redefines the very nature the Mutual Ministry Committee and provides greater flexibility in purpose and *modus operandi*.

Recommendation #4

S11.06. The Finance Board of this synod shall consist of three to six members, not including the treasurer who shall be a member ex officio. The Finance Board members shall be appointed by Synod Council for a term of two years and be eligible for re-election without term limitation. The terms of the Finance Board members shall be staggered. The Finance Board may adopt its own bylaws subject to ratification by the Synod Council. The Finance Board shall be responsible for the management of the synod's reserves and investments with authority to hold, invest, and liquidate investment within the parameters set by Synod Council and shall perform such other duties as may be committed to it by Synod Council or the governing documents of this synod.

Rationale: It has been the practice in this synod that the Synod Council hold regular meetings 3-4 times per year. This is less than desirable for management of synodical investments. This proposed amendment creates a board that can focus with greater expertise on financial matters and respond more nimbly to investment opportunities and threats even as it is constrained by general parameters set by Synod Council. It is expected that the said Finance Board shall be invested, at least in the short term, with those matters normally associated with a budget and finance committee.

Amendments not requiring notice per †S18.12.

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended any non-required provision of the Constitution for Synods, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the Constitution for Synods shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

Those amendments made by *Churchwide Assembly 2025* to the required provisions found in the *Constitution for Synods* were entered into our governing documents immediately upon notification (per †S18.12). The following represent those proposed amendments that conform in all ways to the language of the non-required provisions in the *Constitution for Synods*.

Recommendation #5

†S8.51.c. [The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:] The treasurer of this synod shall be ~~elected~~ appointed to a term of 4 2 years and may be ~~re-elected~~ reappointed. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

Rationale: Churchwide Assembly 2025 provided a new option for this required provision: formerly the treasurer had to be elected; now the treasurer may be appointed or elected, the language in the *Constitution for Synods* being rendered, "The treasurer of this synod shall be [elected] [appointed] [elected or appointed] to a term of _____ years and may be [re-elected] [reappointed] [re-elected or reappointed]." An appointment process will better serve the complexity of the treasurer's duties, the increasing need for expertise, and the constraints of geography. Note well: the four (4) is being struck and replaced with two (2); because of

typesetting, the strikethrough on the 4 is difficult to see. Shortening the term is recommended to assist in recruitment of capable candidates and relieve burden.

Recommendation #6

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (~~plus ties~~) who receive the greatest number of legal votes (*including ties in the final qualifying position*) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (~~plus ties~~) who receive the greatest number of legal votes (*including ties in the final qualifying position*) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (~~plus ties~~) who receive the greatest number of legal votes (*including ties in the final qualifying position*) on the previous ballot.

Rationale: An attempt by Churchwide Assembly 2025 to remove ambiguity.

Recommendation #7

S10.05. ~~No elected member~~ *Elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for ~~such~~ their service as council members.*

Rationale: An attempt by Churchwide Assembly 2025 to improve language.

Recommendation #8

~~S10.06~~ S10.07. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

Rationale: Renumbering by Churchwide Assembly 2025.

Recommendation #9

~~S10.07~~ S10.08. The composition of the Synod Council, the number of its members, and the manner of their selection, as well as the organization of the Synod Council, its additional duties and responsibilities, and the number of meetings to be held each year shall be as set forth in the bylaws.

Rationale: Renumbering by Churchwide Assembly 2025.

Recommendation #10

S10.09. *Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.*

Rationale: Though not necessary, as the parliamentary authority of our synod assembly (*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* [12th ed.]) specifies that a subordinate body is under its superior body's parliamentary authority (unless stated otherwise), the inclusion of this provision heads off misunderstandings.

Proposed Amendment of the *Bylaws of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod*

†S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

Recommendation #11

S8.11.01. Upon dispensation by the Synod Council, the bishop shall be engaged for less than full-time service.

Recommendation #12

S8.11.02. Usual perquisites and honoraria shall not be denied the bishop, but both volunteer and compensated service beyond the terms of engagement shall be subject to review and approval by the Synod Council.

Rationale: The Bylaws Committee prepared these two proposed bylaws (*supra*) to enable the implementation of the operatives found in the Synod Assembly 2025 adoption of Reference & Counsel's substitute for the Setley-Holbert-Ames resolution, "To Adopt a Future, Part-time Option for the Bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod." Additionally, the Bylaws Committee drafted supporting actions that may be codified as continuing resolutions or as rules specific to the next election, work that may be undertaken by Synod Council should the proposed bylaws be adopted by the Synod Assembly.

The Bylaws Committee offers the following observations, findings, and concerns with respect to the Reference & Counsel substitute to Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted, as adopted by Synod Assembly 2025.

- The final operative (resolving paragraph) identifies the Synod Council as the calling entity. Per *CBCR/ELCA 7.44.A24(2.1)*, the calling entity is the Synod Assembly. Synod Council negotiates and approves the definition of compensation, benefits, and responsibilities within the parameters of other rules and orders (e.g., the adopted budget and the governing documents of the synod and ELCA more generally). The intent, despite the flaw, is clear, and though the paragraph is null and void as written, the Synod Council can execute the intent.
- The penultimate operative is non-actionable in terms of notification to "all bishop-nominees." Notice cannot be given to this class 28 days in advance of an upcoming episcopal election because the nominees for bishop are determined by the results of a first ballot not yielding an election (i.e., after the balloting has begun). While not explicit in our parliamentary authority, the principle of severability suggests that the remainder of the paragraph is legal, as a case cannot be made that the two classes depend upon each other.
- The prescribed models called for in the first operative will be difficult for Synod Council to develop in detail (and perhaps a useless exercise) because each candidate may have different ideas and requirements (as may the Synod Council) as to how part-time engagement should be structured. Synod Council may want to develop only the most cursory of plans. The Bylaws Committee recommends leaving the discussion more open so that the candidates might give statements as to their preferred arrangement.

The following is noted with respect to the proposed enabling bylaws.

- The Bylaws Committee examined *ELCA/CBCR* S8.11.01 and determined that it would satisfy neither the conditions nor the intent of Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted. It should be noted that this synod never incorporated *ELCA/CBCR* S8.11.01 into its own bylaws, the language of the provision as follows: “*ELCA/CBCR* S8.11.01. When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.”
- The bylaws proposed (*supra*) enable implementation of the conditions and intent of Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted, without being overly specific, thus allowing greater flexibility in drafting continuing resolutions, special rules of order, and standing rules of convention.
- The bylaws proposed (*supra*) require additional supporting rules.

It is the opinion of this committee that the bylaws proposed (*supra*) are illegal in that they go beyond S8.11.01. Secretary Boerger, in advising Churchwide Assembly 2019 on the advancement of S8.11.01 for consideration by that Assembly, rules that the office of bishop is full-time, a bylaw dispensing a bishop from full-time engagement being necessary. The Bylaws Committee maintains that the codification of S8.11.01 in the Constitution for Synods, even if not adopted by this synod, precludes the adoption of similar bylaws that are outside the scope of S8.11.01.

- The Bylaws Committee recommends that the Secretary of the ELCA be asked to rule on the legality of the bylaws proposed (*infra*).
- If the Secretary of the ELCA rules such that S8.11.01 sets (and limits) the parameters for part-time episcopal engagement, the adopted substitute to Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted, may be null and void *in toto*. At best, secular and semi-retired arrangements would be precluded while retaining only service to the other expressions. Furthermore, S8.11.01 allows dispensation from full-time engagement “to address special circumstances,” and what is envisioned in the adopted substitute to Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted, is not a special circumstance; it is a regular configuration.
- The Synod Assembly is free to adopt S8.11.01 as it appears in the *Constitution for Synods* without notice provided the wording is exactly as it appears in the *Constitution for Synods*.

The following are additional concerns on the part of the Bylaws Committee that do not directly relate to the establishment of rules facilitating implementation of the adopted substitute to Setley-Holbert-Ames, substituted.

- The duties of the bishop, as enumerated in †S8.12 cannot, in the opinion of the Committee, be successfully fulfilled with a staffing configuration of less than one FTE (fill-time equivalent). By office configuration, we include the bishop and any support staff (executive or clerical). Engaging a part-time bishop will require engaging additional staff to cover the duties enumerated in †S8.12.
- Synod Council will have to determine whether it will delineate which duties are performed immediately by the bishop and which are performed by support staff. Alternatively, the Council may leave that the bishop, exercising more or less oversight.
- Clear communications will be needed between the bishop and support staff to a higher degree than found in most staff-supported situations because the bishop will be only part-time (there already being

many times when the bishop will be required to be on the road and away from the office).

- It will have to be determined how a part-time bishop segregates on-duty vs. off-duty time.
- It must be noted that, regardless of configuration, a call is issued by the Synod Assembly. One only becomes bishop by accepting the call issued by Synod Assembly. As no rostered minister may hold more than one call at a time, any other call that might be held at the time of election must be resigned. There would be no guarantee that the entity that had issued the call being resigned would continue the engagement of the new bishop.
- In short, the Bylaws Committee has advised the Synod Council that part-timing the bishop's position is unwise and will not serve this synod well even if constitutional hurdles can be cleared.
- The Bylaws Committee reserves the right to provide a supplemental report in this regard.

Last modified: 27 April 2026

7. Reports from the ELCA

Last modified: 1 June 2025

7.1. Message from Presiding Bishop Curry

The Rev. Yehiel Curry

The Rev. Yehiel Curry is the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Elected at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix, Ariz., on July 30, 2025, Presiding Bishop Curry began this role on Oct. 1, 2025.

Previously, he served as bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod, where he led a synod staff and 160 congregations by providing pastoral care, preaching, teaching, administering sacraments, and overseeing ordinations and installations. He was elected synod bishop in 2019 and reelected in spring 2025. During that time, he chaired the ELCA Conference of Bishops, fostering ecumenical relationships and theological engagement across the Lutheran communion.



Prior to his role as bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Presiding Bishop Curry served as the mission developer (2007–2012) and pastor (2013–2019) of Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church in Riverdale, Ill. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Lewis University in Romeoville, Ill., and a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He and his wife, LaShonda, are the proud parents of three daughters.

Presiding Bishop Curry has provided his video message, *A Connected Church*, for the 2026 synod assemblies: https://youtu.be/wxWz_IMmV9s .

Last modified: 8 May 2026

7.2. Candidacy and Leadership Manager for ELCA Regions 7 and 8

Candidacy and Leadership Regions 7 and 8 2025 Annual Report to Synod Assembly

*Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;
I'll tell everybody about you wherever I go:
you alone are our life and our peace and our love.*

Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.

— Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus and L’Arche Community. “Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song.”
Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 2006, #808, v. 1

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace to you and peace as you meet in synod assembly. I write to you with greetings from my Candidacy Team Colleagues on Churchwide Staff and my home synod of New Jersey.

The ministry of Candidacy is one of accompanying, evaluating, and assessing the readiness of people who discern a call to pastoral or diaconal ministry. Each synod has a committee that does this confidential and prayerful work on behalf of the whole church. The committee includes clergy and lay members, a seminary representative, and synod staff or Bishop. Your synod has a committee that has met in the past year to do this work. You can read more about their ministry elsewhere in this bulletin of reports. I have the honor of working with these committees in the northeast and mid-Atlantic as they listen to candidates, ask questions, and consider how God is calling people to serve.

In 2022, a Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group (CLDWG) was convened to start reenvisioning candidacy ministry in the ELCA. Since my report to you a year ago, the work of this group has changed. After years of surveys, planning, and dreaming, the work has shifted from the CLDWG to churchwide staff to begin the rollout of a launch for a new candidacy process. Of the 65 synods in the ELCA, 10 are “candidacy launch synods” who will be working with applicants and candidates in these next few years under a newly proposed candidacy process. These launch synods will also provide valuable feedback so that a new candidacy process can be finalized for the whole church. Synods that are not “candidacy launch synods” will continue with the current candidacy process until 2028 or 2029 when we anticipate a rollout of the new candidacy process across the ELCA.

Main elements of this new candidacy process include:

- Accompanier with candidates throughout the process
- Discernment as a more intentional and robust time prior to meeting for an Entrance Interview * Annual Reviews with candidates instead of an Endorsement
- Competency based emphasis for meeting milestones throughout candidacy
- Continuing to honor both MDiv and Certificate pathways for candidates

While we continue in the ministry of accompanying and assessing potential deacons or pastors in the ELCA, we appreciate your prayers. The church needs leaders who are equipped, called, and prepared to serve the church. If you are sensing a call to serve as a deacon or pastor in the ELCA, please contact your synod staff person for candidacy for further conversation.

In Christ,

The Rev. A. Rebecca Resch (she/her)

Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Regions 7 & 8

becky.resch@elca.org

Region 7: ~ New Jersey Synod ~ New England Synod ~ Metropolitan New York Synod ~ Upstate New York Synod ~

~ *Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Slovak Zion Synod ~*

Region 8: ~ Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod ~ Allegheny Synod ~

~ Lower Susquehanna Synod ~ Upper Susquehanna Synod ~ Delaware-Maryland Synod ~

~ Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod ~ West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod ~

Last modified: 16 April 2026

7.3. Young Adult Network Synod Representative

Young Adult Network Synod Representative

Beginning in August of 2025, I (Pastor Devin Ames) was appointed as the Young Adult Network Synod Representative. In this role, I am in contact with representatives from other synods and leaders in the Young Adult Network of the ELCA regularly. I am tasked with staying up to date with offerings for young adults across the ELCA, as well as working to support and engage in young adult ministries within this synod. As this is a new position both within the church and within our synod, there is not currently much of a framework for what this will look like. The purpose of this brief report is to inform you that this role exists, that I am serving in it, and to let you know that if there are any young adults (age 18-35) that you know of that are interested in some sort of information and/or connections, you can send them my way. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions. Pastor Devin Ames

Last modified: 12 May 2026

8. Reports from Separately Incorporated Ministries of the ELCA

Last modified: 1 June 2025

8.1. ELCA Federal Credit Union

ELCA Federal Credit Union

Faithful financial services for ELCA members and ministries

The ELCA Federal Credit Union (ELCA FCU) provides a full range of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. **As the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals**, the Credit Union offers savings and checking accounts, CDs, loans and lines of credit, credit cards, home mortgage loans for purchases or refinances, as well as home equity loans and lines of credit.

The ELCA FCU serves ministries through federally insured deposit accounts, a flexible corporate credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 to support smaller projects such as building repairs and purchases. In addition, the Workplace Banking program allows ministry organizations and congregations to offer ELCA FCU Credit Union products and services, along with other exclusive perks, to their employees.

A new cohort joined the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, **designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds**. Through this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts. The Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA matches those deposits up to an established amount. Together, **more than 700 rostered ministers** have been served, collectively depositing more than \$1 million in emergency savings.

A strong online presence means members have access to funds with an ELCA Federal Credit Union Mastercard Debit Card at more than 30,000 surcharge-free ATMs. The ELCA FCU also offers account-to-account (A2A) transfers, person-to-person (P2P) payments (similar to Venmo and Zelle), remote deposit, bill pay and more.

Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

- **The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship.** We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries
- **As a not-for-profit financial cooperative chartered to serve our church, we offer socially responsible banking solutions often priced more competitively** than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our members.
- **With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values.**

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, <https://elcafcu.org/>, or call us toll free at 1-800-715-1111.

Last modified: 28 April 2026

8.2. ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planning Partnership

REPORT OF THE ELCA FOUNDATION

Submitted by: Ryan Ebner, Regional Gift Planner

We are the ELCA Foundation, a financial ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We walk alongside faithful people and organizations — helping them turn generosity into legacy, and legacy into ministry. We believe generosity is more than a financial act; it is a testimony of faith, gratitude and hope. With \$1.5 billion in donor-designated gifts and invested assets entrusted to our care, we partner with individuals and organizations to thoughtfully steward these resources and maximize their impact.

We serve as a bridge between individual generosity and the shared mission of the ELCA — from congregations and synods to seminaries, outdoor ministries, and churchwide ministries such as ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Every planned gift we steward is an investment in the church's life — now and into the future.

What we do

We offer guidance that is both spiritually grounded and financially sound, ensuring every gift reflects the heart of the giver and the needs of the church.

- **Gift Planning Services:** Our regional gift planners accompany individuals and families through faithful, personalized planning — helping them create charitable legacies through bequests, trusts, charitable gift annuities, real estate, retirement assets and more.
- **Ministry Growth Fund:** A socially responsible investment option that supports endowments and ministries across the ELCA, balancing fiduciary excellence with faithful stewardship.
- **Resources and Tools:** From our online Planning Library and free Personal Estate Planning Kit to our partnership with Giving Docs, we provide easy, trustworthy ways to start planning today.
- **Ministry Partnership:** We help ELCA ministry leaders grow a culture of generosity without adding more to their workload, offering training, templates and direct support to strengthen local ministry.

In 2025, the ELCA Foundation's gift planning network walked alongside 190 donors/families in developing faith-focused gift plans that reflect their passion and purpose.

We were able to secure

- \$79.9 million in future planned gift commitments
- \$6.9 million in currently funded gifts
- \$105.4 million in existing gift commitments stewarded and updated

Let's continue the conversation

The ELCA Foundation has gift planning tools for every situation and professional staff throughout the U.S. ready to walk with you every step of the way. All of our gift planning services are made available to individuals and congregations without obligation. Contact your gift planner to get started:

Ryan Ebner
 Ryan.Ebner@elca.org
 814-823-3285

Last modified: 16 April 2026

8.3. Mission Investment Fund

The Mission Investment Fund: Helping ELCA congregations bring ministry to life

The Mission Investment Fund (MIF), a financial services ministry of the ELCA, has been a steady and reliable financial partner for congregations, ministries and individuals for more than 150 years. Through times of growth and uncertainty alike, MIF has remained committed to strengthening ELCA ministries and communities — delivering customer-first- support backed by flexible financing solutions.

In 2025, MIF continued to support ministry growth across the ELCA. Your investments helped expand worship spaces, rebuild congregations after fires and natural disasters, provide spaces for people to age with dignity, start green projects and support accessibility remodeling for community spaces. Each project strengthens ELCA ministries, ensuring that they stay vibrant, inclusive and fully prepared to support the communities they serve.

By the numbers:

- **Total Loans Outstanding:** \$614,967,000
- **Total Assets:** \$779,189,000
- **Total Investment Obligations:** \$551,452,000
- **Net Assets & Capital Ratio:** 27.4%

What makes MIF unique?

- **Proven stability:** With more than a century and a half of experience, MIF has weathered changing economic and political landscapes, maintaining financial strength for ELCA ministries.
- **Deep expertise in church and ministry financing:** We understand the unique needs of faith communities and have longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects.
- **Competitive rates and terms:** Our financial offerings are structured to support ministries of all sizes.

- **A full suite of financial services:** In partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union, we provide a range of financial solutions for congregations, ministries and individuals.
- **Faithful stewardship:** Investments in MIF directly support loans that fund hundreds of capital projects across the church.

MIF continues to enhance our tools and financial services to better support ELCA ministries. And even as we look ahead with fresh vision and innovation, our foundation remains the same: enduring trust, time-tested stability and commitment woven through generations. In every chapter, we journey with ELCA members and ministries, united in faith — a steadfast partner supporting God’s work in the world.

MIF at work in the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (as of December 31, 2025): • \$2,293,522 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact The Rev. Kent Peterson: 276-698-7970 kent.peterson@elca.org

Mission Investment Fund | 8765 West Higgins Road | Chicago, IL 60631 | 877-886-3522 | Web: <https://mif.elca.org/>

Last modified: 28 April 2026

8.4. Portico

Your Calling + Our Benefits

Portico Benefit Services’ Report to 2026 Synod Assemblies

Your calling is to serve. Ours is to support you. As the ELCA’s benefit ministry, Portico provides benefits that nurture holistic health, so you can live out your calling and serve with confidence and grace. Here’s a visual recap of what our community of more than 52,000 plan members experienced in 2025.

52K Members were served by Portico.	2,829 Text/Virtual Visits to 98point6®, with an estimated cost savings of \$263 per visit.	205 Births & Adoptions
\$157K Debt Paid Off by members via LSS of Minnesota Financial Counseling, with over \$2.6 million paid off since 2008	\$232M Made in Annuity Payments and 533 retirements.	1,1702 Sword Health Enrollments and nearly 42K total sessions in their Thrive, Move, and Bloom digital physical therapy and mobility programs.
1927 Members Made Roth After-tax Contributions to their retirement plans *	11th Consecutive Year Of our Customer Care Center being named a Center of Excellence by Benchmark Portal.	16% of Member Income saved for retirement, on average, by members sponsored in the Traditional Benefits Program, thanks to employer and member contributions.*
32 Beginning Disability	4214 Members worked with	Nearly 10% of our 10K Medicare-Primary

Benefits and 619 Changes of Call *	a Portico Financial Planner, with a cumulative 95.5% satisfaction rate.*	Plan Members participated in the SilverSneakers program.*
-------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------

We design our benefits to align with the needs of the church, pooling resources through a community benefits plan to deliver stable, sustainable support that enhances everyday life and brings value to those who serve. Follow us on social media @PorticoBenefits.

*Source: Traditional Benefits Program. All other numbers and percentages are drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.

Last modified: 16 April 2026

9. Reports from Synodical Affiliates

Last modified: 1 June 2025

9.1. Camp Luther

Camp Luther report to the Assembly 2026

Greetings from Camp Luther!

Camp Luther 2026 is staffed and preparing for what promises to be an amazing week of camp! Our LOM curriculum theme this year is “Wear Love” and the theme text is Colossians 3:12-14, ¹² *Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.* ¹³ *Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.* ¹⁴ *Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

The daily themes are:

We wear love with kindness through acts of love, big and small.

We wear love through humbleness by putting others before ourselves.

We wear love through calmness by practicing self-care to build resilience and trust.

We wear love with steadfastness by not giving up in the face of challenges.

We wear love through forgiveness by embracing the freedom to share God’s love in the world.

Registration is online again this year thanks to a cooperative relationship with Camp Caroline Furnace. Our Registrar is being kept busy with all the forms being submitted. We are excited to share the love of God through worship and study, adventures and nature, crafts and creativity, and a whole lot of play and silliness. The staff is busy planning activities and experiences that will grow faith and build community.

We are continuing our efforts to increase our camper numbers through an increased social media presence. We are grateful to a few of our staffers for their enthusiasm and diligence in this area. No matter the number of campers, the Spirit will be present, and campers will be loved and encouraged, the way of Jesus will be taught and lived out, and God will be praised.

The Board of Directors has been meeting throughout the year under the leadership of Bishop Riegel. We are addressing financial concerns, bylaws have been written and approved, and we are looking to the future of camp. The board has taken some of the challenging decisions off the shoulders of the director and the business and administration of Camp Luther has become more of a community effort. This year the board made the difficult decision to cut staff numbers back and CL2026 staff reflects that decision. The registration fee for 2026 was set at \$500 with a \$50 scholarship offered to all campers. Our registration fee is still significantly lower than other comparable camps and we remain committed to keeping Camp Luther as affordable as possible. The board also approved and announced the next CL director, Pastor Timothy Crummitt!

We appreciate the support of the synod and of the congregations that send campers and staff. Camp Luther is truly a ministry of love that has nurtured the faith of many. I invite you to join us in the ministry through your prayers and with your influence. Spread the word and send a young person that you know and love to camp! The link to registration can be found on the website at camplutherwv.com.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve God and the church as director of Camp Luther, and I appreciate the affirmation and encouragement I have received from the Camp Luther community and the synod at large during my years in this position. With great joy and complete confidence, I will hand over the reins to Pastor Tim for Camp Luther 2027.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Erskine-Valentine
Serving Director, Camp Luther

Camp Luther
Registrar & Director's Office
c/o Shepherdstown Lutheran Parish
P.O. Box 2008
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Last modified: 28 April 2026

9.2. Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center

Caroline Furnace Camp and Retreat Center Annual Update Spring 2025

Wear Love: Summer 2026

Consider your favorite piece of clothing—the well-worn flannel, cozy sweater, or lucky jersey. Behind each garment is a story: the fibers, the hands that crafted it, and the care required to stay in your wardrobe. Love, much like clothing, has a journey. Rooted in God's love, it's woven into our lives, connecting us to others and guiding our actions. As Paul writes to the Colossians, love binds us together through virtues like kindness, humbleness, calmness, steadfastness, and forgiveness. These qualities strengthen our relationships, reflecting God's love in every interaction and aligning us with the values that create the good life God wants for all of us.

Our theme for Summer 2026 of **Wear Love** explores this idea as campers discover stories of individuals embodying Christ-like virtues that illustrate God's love in action. They will find space to wonder what it looks like for them to put on the all-purpose garment of love at camp, in their home lives, and in the world. As God's love weaves us together, strengthening us even when we feel worn down, campers can also name that wearing love has its challenges. We will practice how to share love sustainably and passionately. Daily themes and bible studies will dive into various aspects of what it means to wear love in our daily life.

Part of our expression of the **Wear Love** theme at Caroline Furnace will be a renewed focus on the Bread Tag Club. A longstanding tradition, the Bread Tag Club grew out of Caroline Furnace's first Director, Pastor Wayne William's, frequent reminders to staff and campers to always "leave it better than you found it." Campers in the 1970s, 80s, and early 90s who were found exhibiting these behaviors of picking up trash on property and leaving things in good shape for those who came to use them next were initiated into the "bread tag club." Members of the club were given a plastic bread tag which was worn on the laces of shoes and boots as a visual reminder of their pledge to continue their habits of care for God's earth and those around them. The bread tag club has as much importance today as in its earliest years, as we focus on sustainability and the importance of caring for the creation God has entrusted to us.

As you visit camp this summer, keep your eyes open for bread tags on boots as well as the acts of kindness, humbleness, calmness, steadfastness, and forgiveness in our everyday interactions as a community rooted in God's grace and a commitment to **Wear Love**.

2025 In Review

Expenses: \$467,232 **Revenue:** \$517,852

Total Volunteers: 215

Estimated Volunteer Hours: 4,238

Value of Volunteer Hours: \$54,540

Value of In-Kind Donations: \$9,850

Growth in Gifts from Congregations & Individuals

Annual gifts continue with growth in new and returning gifts from individuals, organizations, and congregations. You met and exceeded our giving goals for 2025 that provided resources for over two thousand six hundred and eight people (2,608) – five hundred new people. Fulfilling our missions we were able to provide unforgettable experiences by educating 1048 students and scouts, renewing and retreating with 1,076 guests, and faith building with 484 campers and guests.

Property Updates & Improvements 2025

Just before summer camp we installed new ceiling fans in Moyer Lodge Dining Hall and made repairs and updates to our lower ropes course elements. The solar pavilion is complete and ready for final inspections with the soffit and end caps installed, the stage lights and projector installed, and the exterior flood lights installed. The small twin bridge was reset and a ramp put in place after an early summer rain, the ramp to the staff room at the lodge was repaired and a railing installed, the bell at Sukkah Village was remounted, benches and picnic tables repaired and painted, culverts dug out, lake bathroom roof repaired, and the new lake sitting dock was completed.

Retreats in 2025

We had 99 events this year with small and large retreat groups, schools, and outdoor enthusiasts. Potomac Appalachian Trail Club returned this year with the Volunteer fest and the Sierra Club of Virginia returned after 15 years. We also continued our third year of Conservation Day for youth from FFA and 4-H clubs

partnering with local non profits and conservation agencies to include Friends of the North Fork, Department of Soil and Water Conservation, Department of Forestry and more... Bring your family, friends, nonprofit or church groups and experience the comfortable adult space available in the Apartment/Loft, Farmhouse, and Cabins 7 and 8.

Leadership & Staff Updates in 2025

Board Members Annabelle Allard, Bert Roepe, and Lorrie Runion completed their terms of service. We welcomed new Board Members Eric Valentine, Rev. Angela LaTourette Dunn, Cedric Wilson, and Staci Rijal. In September 2025, we celebrated 11 years of leadership and service by Rev. Heidi David-Young, who spent four years as a Board Member (2014 to 2018), three years as part time staff (2018-2021) and four years as full-time staff (2021 to 2025). In October 2025, we welcomed Melody Stachour to our year round staff. Melody brings experience in inclusion advocacy, adult education, and people leadership gained from her 21 years in the Navy Reserve and consulting. We also welcomed Lindsay Owen as Director of Summer Camp. Lindsay serves with us part time through the year and full time during summer camp sessions.

Growing in Our Efforts for Inclusion

In keeping with our 2026 theme of Wear Love, our Board of Directors decided one way to help our whole organization to Wear Love on a more consistent basis is to make Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion a permanent standing committee of the Board. Born from the task force supporting Total Inclusion efforts, this standing committee gives us the chance to live more deeply into the welcome statement we adopted in 2020. As we continue on this journey, we are exploring ways we can work together to combat the various forms of racism, whether seen or unseen, that can contribute to a lack of inclusion; calling us to raise our own awareness and finding ways in which our administrative structures may continue to be barriers. We believe in the importance of partnerships and looking beyond our own knowledge and experience to ensure we are truly being welcoming to all. As part of this work, we are excited to announce our recognition as a Reconciling In Christ partner! Caroline Furnace has been taking steps in this direction for many years, from our efforts to be a Brave Space through the Total Inclusion work that we have done in partnership with Lutheran Outdoor Ministry. These partnerships meld with our own efforts here to live into our new statement of vision as "A mighty refuge in the peaks and valleys." As part of this partnership recognition, we want to note that this doesn't mean that we've finished the work of inclusion. This milestone commits us to continue to learn and grow, as part of an effort that will last throughout our lives and the life of the ministry of Caroline Furnace.

New for Summer 2026

Programs. Our age groups and names remain the same: Explorers, Voyagers, Pathfinders, and Mountaineers offer targeted experiences for every camper age. Shenandoah River Camp returns in June as its own camp session for middle and high school. We are introducing Land Exploration to provide a larger variety of options to explore the ecology surrounding our fauna and forests. Family Camp is now offered Wednesday to Saturday to provide specific quality programming and lower barriers for working parents.

Introducing Tiered Pricing! As part of our efforts for equity and inclusion, we are excited to introduce tiered pricing for summer camp. This new pricing structure is designed to lower barriers to attendance by

allowing participants to choose our standard rate or one of our tiers with a lower price. We never want finances to be the reason anyone does not attend. Our new tiered pricing structure, in addition to available scholarships for campers, are a concrete action step we are taking to increase inclusion and access for all families. For the first time in decades, we have a large source of scholarship funds and we truly want those who would benefit from them to please apply.

Get Involved! Summer & Beyond

It takes a village! We are excited to continue to offer programmed retreats and host groups and events through the winter and spring but we need your help! We are looking for folks interested in volunteering their weekend time to help with hosting retreat groups, support in the kitchen, and other additional program aspects. If you are interested in sharing your gifts and time, please contact Melody Stachour, office@carolinefurnace.org or 540-449-0018.

Additional Ways to Give Back

- **Stock Shares** Did you know there are tax advantages to donating shares of stock to a nonprofit such as Caroline Furnace? Contact your financial advisor to learn more.
- **Legacy Giving** Let us refer you to a trusted financial consultant who can help you set up Legacy Giving through your will, trust, retirement account, insurance, property, and more. Invest in your own legacy; your beneficiaries may not support the same organizations you do. Just 10% of your estate can support your favorite nonprofit for years to come.
- **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)** If you have an individual retirement account (IRA), you can choose to give up to \$100k per year to a nonprofit. This donation is pre-tax, can be done at any time of year, and counts toward your minimum. Requirements vary by plan but may begin upon retirement, at age 70 1/2, or within one year of inheritance. Contact your financial advisor to learn more.
- **Gifts of Hope** A ministry of the Metro D.C. Synod, Gifts of Hope helps connect donors with nonprofit organizations. We receive donations for camper scholarships and program equipment during their Advent campaign.
- **Thrivent Financial Action Teams & Choice Dollars** Eligible members of Thrivent may apply for up to two Action Teams per year, which provides \$250 in starter funds for a project. These are perfect for Work Weekends and retreat group service projects! Choice Dollars are tier-based and 2024 funding may be designated until March 31st. If you haven't designated yours yet, log in and update your account today!
- **Corporate Matching Check** with your employer to see if you are eligible for matching gifts to a 501©3. Tax exemption form available upon request.
- **Kroger Community Rewards** Enroll your Kroger Plus card online and support Caroline Furnace. Our code is VL934. Every time you shop, Kroger donates to Caroline Furnace!
- **In-Kind Donations** We have an ongoing wish list for in-kind donations, if you prefer to donate supplies or equipment. Many new items are added each spring in preparation for Summer Camp, in addition to other ongoing projects. Contact us to learn more about a specific item listed.

Caroline Furnace Camp & Retreat

Growing Community in a Sacred Place

2239 Camp Roosevelt Rd., Fort Valley, VA 22652 | (540) 449-0012 | <https://carolinefurnace.org/>

Last modified: 28 April 2026

9.3. Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.

Greetings, fellow workers in Christ!

Thank you for your continued support of Community Lutheran Partners! I thank God for you and the many gifts you bring us and your communities. CLP would be nothing without you. Your prayers and financial gifts bless us and neighbors around the Synod.

It has been a busy and interesting year. The Coalition Against Domestic Violence approached CLP to help work on an initiative to increase awareness and support of domestic violence survivors in faith communities. Our congregations stand at an intersection where they could do much good and/or also much harm to these survivors. How are we a blessing rather than a curse?

CLP continues in partnership with United Methodist Committee on Relief, Mennonite Disaster Services and WV Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as well as the podcast Creepalachia to build a bridge in MacDowell County. The town of Gary, one of the communities hit by devastating flooding in February 2025, took major infrastructure damage to roads, bridges and waterlines. One of those bridges was built by United Steel and never conveyed to the town or state. The loss of this bridge means 3 families are driving along, and in, the riverbed to get in and out of their homes. This bridge may be a first in that a non-profit may be formed to assume responsibility for it.

Emotional and Spiritual Care continues to be a persistent need. CLP, the synod's continuing education committee, the churches and long-term recovery folks of Wheeling brought in Lutheran Disaster Response to offer MESS (Mental Emotional and Spiritual Support) in Wheeling. As CLP has a long-standing relationship with LDR, we can bring it to another part of the Synod if so desired. Let me know!

Another persistent need across the region is long-term recovery case managers. If you want more information or wish to volunteer as one, please contact me. Another one of our partners, Catholic Charities is offering training and attempting to compile a list of those able to serve.

I continue to desire to meet with your congregations, groups and communities to prepare and plan for disasters, to learn, network and share resources, to better serve Appalachia. Please pray for us as we move forward with projects to hopefully make us more self-sustaining. Please continue to support us financially as we look to the future and its ministry.

Deacon Mary Sanders

Last modified: 28 April 2026

9.4. Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU

Thirty-Six and Then Some

a witness from your Lutheran Campus Ministry at West Virginia University

They come with questions, laptops, and doubt,
with ramen on the stove and essays due out.
They come (thirty-six, on an average week!)
not counting the ones who just stop by to eat.

We gather for worship, for study, for bread,
for someone to say "I'll sit with you instead."
The table gets crowded, we pull up a chair,
community forms in the grace that is shared.

These students are learning, not only their majors,
but how to be leaders, how faith becomes neighbors,
how to speak up, show up, serve, and be still,
how to carry each other up these Mountaineer hills.

We should mention: we now have a new roof.
(The old one, let's say, had a leak, but it's proof
that the Spirit is present through puddles and all,
and that sometimes the church answers God's call.)

Lutheran Mountaineer bonds don't end at graduation;
they stretch across states and across every vocation.
A campus is soil, and we are tending the seed
of people who'll go where the world has great need.

So pray for them please, these students of Word,
whose hunger is real and whose worship is heard.
Speak of this work, and let this story be told.
Thirty-six weekly. And counting. Behold!

Pastors Ben + Courtney Erzkus, chaplains
Lutheran Campus Ministry at West Virginia University
Mailing: PO Box 655, Morgantown, WV 26507
Street: 1497 University, Ave, Morgantown, WV 26505
chaplain@lutheranmountaineer.org
<https://lutheranmountaineer.org/>

Last modified: 28 April 2026

9.5. Tri-Synod Archives

Report of the Tri-Synod Archives

The Tri-Synod Archives came into being in 1988 as a result of the merger that formed the ELCA and divided the former Western Pennsylvania Synod into three successor bodies. The present structure and manner of operation was approved in its present form in 1993, and so the Tri-Synod archives is now in its 33rd year of existence.

During that time, the Archives Center has continued to grow and expand to attempt to meet the needs of the constituent Synods. For example, since its founding in the 1850's the predecessor of the Tri-Synod Archives grew to include 392 items shortly after its centennial in 1962. In the next twenty-five years, between the formation of the ULCA and the formation of the ELCA in 1988, the archives collection grew nearly ten-fold to include over 3,000 documents.

Thirty-five years later, it is estimated that the amount of material has tripled to nearly 10,000 documents and other items, including bound volumes, artifacts, personal papers, journals, and other historical resources, including a brick from the original Passavant Hospital from Pittsburgh's North Side location and four African hunting spears.

To date, more than 720 congregations have been identified as having some connection with one of the three constituent Synods or their predecessor bodies, including mission congregations in more than six states and two Canadian provinces. The Center now holds records from over 250 congregations.

Consider another way of looking at the collection: One way archivists measure the amount of material an archives contains is by the linear foot of documents and records. It is currently estimated that, if all the records of the Tri-Synod Archives were laid side by side, they would take up nearly three-quarters of a mile of shelf space!

Since its formation in 1993, the Archives Center has relocated three times and is now back in the Langenheim Memorial Library at Thiel College. Thiel continues to be a great supporter of the Archives Center as a sign of its partnership with the Church. The Library continues to provide telephone and data access and a small secure office space in addition to a new and much larger space for the entire collection.

In 2025 volunteers and board members stepped up to complete the shifting of materials from the former location in the basement of Passavant Center to the new area. While much work remains to be completed, the Tri-Synod Archives Board can point to a number of successes over the past year including:

- The complete digitization of the catalog of items from inception to 1988
- Acquisition of additional archival quality storage containers (MANY more are needed)
- Completion of the reshelving and reorganization of synodical and denominational materials dating from the middle-1700's up through 2015
- Division of the bound volumes collection (non-congregational books) into a new area within the Center
- Identifying a separate collection of liturgical materials
- Establishing and curating a rare books collection with books dating from the late 1700's and through

the 1800's and seeing that these books are properly stored and secured

- Consolidating and beginning to curate the collection of personal papers
- Thanks to a gift from Thiel, expanding the periodical collection. The Archives Center now holds a unique collection of newspapers and journals spanning over 175 years.
- The establishment of a new office space
- Adopting standards and practices which match those of ELCA Archives at Gettysburg and Philadelphia
- Modifying financial operating practices to be more effective in managing income and expenses.

Probably most significantly, in October 2025 the Tri-Synod Archives Board adopted the following Mission Statement:

The Mission of the Tri-Synod Archives is to serve as a repository for the retention, care, and preservation of documents and records, including books, liturgical materials, and miscellaneous periodicals, related to the ecclesiastical, legal, and historical presence of the Northwestern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Pennsylvania, and West Virginia – Western Maryland Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and their predecessor and successor bodies, including denominational and synodical bodies, congregations, related agencies and institutions, and prominent individuals; and to facilitate and assist relevant research by qualified researchers.

While much progress has been made this year, much more needs to be done. However there is renewed energy in the Board, and the leadership is stepping forward to address those needs and concerns. However, with the growth in the number of congregations being closed and their records being deposited in the Archives Center, combined with records from three Synods instead of one, the amount of material is quickly exceeding the ability of staff and volunteers to process, inventory, document, and properly store the large influx of material.

As a result, in April 2026, a 30 page report and proposal was presented to the Synod Councils laying out a plan for the future development of the Archives Center and asking for additional financial support.

The Board would like to thank former Archivist Sarah Roth for shepherding the Archives through the move from Passavant Center into the new space, the respective synodical bishops for their active support and input into the future of this constitutionally -mandated function of the synods, the volunteers who have given of their time to help complete the move, Thiel College for its continued support, and especially the staff of the Langenheim Library and Library Director Michelene Orteza, who continues to be a resource and a champion for the Archives Center and for the preservation of the history of the church in Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev Timothy A Spence
President, Tri-Synod Archives Board

Last modified: 20 April 2026

9.6. WV-WMD Women of the ELCA

WEST VIRGINIA-WESTERN MARYLAND

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Mission Statement: As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

We met September 11-13, 2025 at St. John XXIII Pastoral Center, Charleston, WV for their biennial convention. The theme was, "I am Enough". The Churchwide representative was Ginger Cutrell. Bishop Matthew Riegel brought news from the synod and presided over the communion service. All of our women pastors in our synod were invited for a time of rest and relaxation. Those who attended were Pastor Sherry Miller from St. John's, Martinsburg and Pastor Karen Erskine-Valentine from the Shepherdstown Parish.

Since we no longer have yearly conventions, we have a Spring Fling and on the off-convention year an Autumn Glory. These are held at churches with a day of Bible study, a community outreach activity, and lots of fellowship, food, and fun.

Each unit continues to work on their own outreach ministries. The Potomac Cluster is the only cluster that continues to meet once a year.

Goals for 2025-2026

1. To conduct the business of the WV-WMD Women of the ELCA with love, wisdom, and foresight.
2. To support Community Lutheran Partners, WVU Lutheran Campus Ministry, Lutheran World Relief, our sisters in Madagascar, and Lutheran Disaster Response with our prayers and offerings.
3. To encourage our sisters to embrace our God-given gifts.
4. To support the various ministries of WELCA church-wide which take action though advocacy especially for justice through our prayers and offerings.

Our women continue to keep in contact through the synodical newsletter, Lutheran Lines, which is published twice a year and is available (free) by mail or email. We encourage and support one another in ministry, share ideas for activities and resources, share happenings in our units, and share our joys and sorrows. We are Christian women working together as God's hands.

Officers		Board of Directors
President	Beverly McDonald	Linda Buckel
Vice President	Jonalee Young	Jerri Burgess

Secretary	Lynn Schillings	Barbie Chewning
Treasurer	Denise Porter	Jane Hazer
		Sara Pemberton
		Pat Schillings
		Rita Wilson
		Priscilla Horner, Advisor
		Norma Bowyer, Lutheran Lines

We will also continue to pray our prayer for all of our Christian sisters this year.

Oh, Lord, hear our prayer. Come close to us so we can feel your presence. You are a gracious and a loving God. Help us and our sisters and brothers deal with the diversity in our communities. Oh, Lord, our differences are many. Help us see you in our neighbors. And help them see you in us. Help us turn away from violence and learn to honor you together as peacemakers. May we learn to share your love with each other and truly forgive when occurrences are out of control around us. We need your comfort and peace. We need you Lord. Please help us make our communities safe. You are awesome and we praise you. You are a blessing to us. We pray this in your Son's name, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Native American Land Acclamation Acknowledgement:

We, the members of the West Virginia-Western Maryland SWO Board acknowledge and honor the Cherokee, Iroquois, Manahoac, Meherrin, Monacan, Nottaway, Occaneechi, Saponi, and Shawnee peoples, upon whose ancestral homelands we gather for worship and meetings today, as well as all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place – this land – and call it their home. ELCA.org/TruthandHealing resources

Last modified: 31 March 2026

10. Communications from Others

Last modified: 1 June 2025

10.1. Seafarers International

2025 Annual Report Highlights

Seafarers International House

***MISSION:** Seafarers International House (SIH) is the Lutheran response to the urgent needs of vulnerable seafarers and immigrants. SIH offers hospitality, social assistance, and advocacy to a multi-national and multi-faith community in the Ports of Albany, Baltimore, Duluth, Houston, New Haven, and New York & New Jersey, and in New York City.*

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: A Homecoming for Prisoners of Hope

Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. Zechariah 9:12

Dear friends of Seafarers International House (SIH):

In February 2024, a report released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that refugees and asylees have generated tens of billions of dollars more in local, state, and federal tax revenues over the last 15 years than they have cost in direct government services — ultimately representing a net fiscal gain at all levels of government.*

And yet, throughout 2025 and especially today, many refugees and asylum seekers are being threatened with deportation and imprisonment. As SIH board member Ralie Deffenbaugh reminds us, in September 2025, the Council of Churches in Namibia convened an event titled “we are prisoners of hope,” which drew parallels between Namibia’s historical struggle for liberation and the current plight of refugees and asylum seekers. The phrase is based on Zechariah 9:12 and has historically been used by leaders like Bishop Zephania Kameeta and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. What a powerful connotation.

Here at SIH, we have been charting a course toward a grand Homecoming — a return to a new home through the purchase of a property in downtown Manhattan. Just a stone’s throw from our original site in 1873, this new space will become a true home away from home for asylum seekers and seafarers, many of whom are “prisoners of hope.” Within these walls, our guests will find safety, welcome, and the assurance that they have reached a secure harbor.

During 2026, we will begin renovating this right-sized mission building, creating 16 guest rooms and community space to accommodate both small asylum-seeking families and individuals, as well as visiting seafarers. With these improvements underway, we are looking ahead to opening our doors in early 2027, ready to offer refuge and rest to all who arrive.

Parallel, we will be launching a comprehensive campaign to pay for the renovations, reduce the burden of a loan for the new building, and strengthen our services to seafarers and asylum seekers. We will keep you posted in the months to come.

In April 2025, we had a most successful Setting the Course reception thanks to the generosity of our honorees Susan Winfree, Willie Barrere, and notably Robert Sappio, – and their friends. The boost in event support enabled us to expand our services through a partnership with the Houston International Seafarers Center with our port chaplain Pastor Tammy Sharp in that busy port in the Lone Star State.

Thus, we continued a robust port mission in now six ports with nine port chaplains and ship visitors, and a fleet of six vans that we use to visit ships and to transport seafarers. In the summer and fall, volunteers from the Propeller Club, congregations, board members, and individuals helped us assemble satchels. These efforts paid off with 3,405 Christmas-at-Sea satchels delivered to seafarers connecting donors with seafaring “prisoners of hope” who experienced the joy of Christmas.

In 2025, we served 19,519 people including 19 asylum seekers we welcomed providing them with shelter, food, and social work assistance; a far cry from the 33 and 49 in 2024 and 2023 respectively because asylum seekers are fearful of coming out of the shadows. Obviously, the curtailment on asylum seekers has had its effect.

With these positive 2025 highlights in mind, perhaps we are all “prisoners of hope” in that as we are bound together in despair, we are also bound together in hope that will not leave us imprisoned.

“For I know the plans I have for you” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

Peace,
Marsh Luther Drege
Pastor and Executive Director

*From 2005 to 2019, refugees and asylees paid a total of \$123.8 billion more in taxes than they cost in government services, for a net fiscal gain of \$31.5 billion to the federal government and \$92.3 billion to state and local governments combined. Refugees and asylees paid an estimated \$363 billion to the federal government through payroll, income, and excise taxes, and \$218 billion to state and local governments through income, sales, and property taxes. Even when factoring in their spouses and children under 18, many of whom are U.S. citizens, refugees and asylees still provided a net fiscal gain, costing \$723.4 billion in government services yet paying \$739.4 billion in tax revenue, for a net gain of \$16 billion.

2025 Program Impact

19,519 immigrants and seafarers directly benefited from SIH services (up from 19,066).

2,351 lodging nights provided to 139 seafarers in Manhattan.

14,078 seafarers were visited and counseled (up from 13,556) on 1,347 ships, receiving essentials they requested.

1,878 seafarers were transported to a mall or medical facilities.

3,405 seafarers, regardless of faith, received Christmas-at-Sea satchels filled with warm clothing and holiday greetings prepared by volunteers to recognize their sacrifices. Up from 3,216 last year!
19 asylum seekers received lodging for a total of 1,328 nights. They hailed from Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Cuba (3), Haiti (5), Nigeria, Peru, Ukraine, and Venezuela (5).

2025 Financial Report

In accordance with our 2024 – 2028 strategic plan, operating gains continue to help to build reserves for a new property (\$1M) with mission-based guest rooms and offices. These gains also allow for capital repairs on the guesthouse (\$200,000), which is leased to Breaking Ground, a NYC-based non-profit which provides transitional housing to the community. Lease revenue provides only a portion of necessary means to support our mission to seafarers and immigrants. Donations remain a vital pillar of income to support our services and future expansion. Program services and reserves accounted for 85% of expenses with only 15% spent on support services and fundraising. These figures reflect unaudited revenue and expenses and are subject to change. To request the audited 2024 financial statements please send an email to henryk@sihnyc.org.

Seafarers International House

Mailing address: 120 West 14th Street, New York, NY 10011
212-677-4800

<https://SIHNYC.org/>

Last modified: 28 April 2026

11. Directory

 Section reserved in stabilized PDF version for future use.

Last modified: 27 April 2026

11.1. Synod Assembly Registrants

Registrants are listed according to the following categories:

- [Voting Members](#)
- [Advisory Members](#)
- [Visitors](#)
- [Exhibitors](#)

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.1.1. Voting Members

Voting members are listed according to the following three categories:

- [Clergy Voting Members](#)
- [Lay Voting Members — Congregational](#)
- [Lay Voting Members — Synod Council](#)

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.1.1.1. Clergy Voting Members

 Please report any discrepancies or errors to the Synod Office.

Regularly Enfranchised

Name	Standing	Call	Attending
The Rev. Devin Ames	1 – Congregational Call	06614 – First English, Wheeling, WV	
The Rev. Sally Bartling	1 – Congregational Call	06638 – Trinity, Keyser, WV	
The Rev. Wm. Curtis Black	1 – Synodical Call	Valley Hospice	

The Rev. Paul Blank	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle	1 – Congregational Call	06633 – St John, Davis, WV
The Rev. John Burk	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Jacqueline (Jacq) Campbell	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Amelia Collins	1 – Congregational Call	06026 – St Thomas, Charles Town, WV
The Rev. Tim Crummitt	1-Congregational Call	10552 – St. Mark (Elm Grove), Wheeling, WV
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Ralph Dunkin	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Dr. Doug Dyson	1 – Synodical Call	West Virginia Council of Churches
The Rev. Richard (Rick) Egtvedt	1 – Congregational Call	30659 – Shepherd of the Hills, McHenry, MD
The Rev. Andrea Ernest	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Karen Erskine Valentine	1 – Congregational Call	06038 – St Peter, Shepherdstown, WV
The Rev. Benjamin (Ben) Erzkus	1 – Synodical Call	Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU
The Rev. Courtney Erzkus	1 – Synodical Call	Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU
The Rev. Deborah (Deb) Gable	1 – Congregational Call	10551 – St James, Wheeling, WV
The Rev. Michael Heckathorn	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Carrie Hoff	1 – Congregational Call	06627 – St Mark, Oakland, MD
The Rev. Matt Holbert	1 – Congregational Call	06635 – Grace, Fairmont, WV
The Rev. Nancy Knol	1 – Congregational Call	06623 – Emmanuel, Bittinger, MD
The Rev. Doug Knupp	1 – Congregational Call	Capon-North River Parish
The Rev. Warren Lahammer	1 – Congregational Call	13210 – Christ the King (Barboursville), Huntington, WV

The Rev. Angela Lambert	1 – Congregational Call	10366 – Faith, Franklin, WV
The Rev. Kevin Mackey	1 – Congregational Call	06606 – St Paul, Huntington, WV
The Rev. Dn. Margaret Messick	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Sherry Miller	1 – Congregational Call	06035 – St John, Martinsburg, WV
The Rev. Linda Muhly	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Erik Nielsen	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Tom Omholt	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Keith Pittsnogle	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Patricia (Pat) Pittsnogle	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Ian Reid	1 – Congregational Call	06609 – First, Parkersburg, WV
The Rev. Randolph Richardson	1 – Congregational Call	06604 – Trinity, Charleston, WV
The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel	1 – Synodical Call	West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod
The Rev. James (Jim) Riley	1 – Retired	
The Rev. David Rockwood	1 – Congregational Call	06632 – St Mark, Clarksburg, WV
The Rev. Dn. Mary Sanders	1 – Synodical Call	Community Lutheran Partners
The Rev. R. Alvin Schafer	1 – Retired	
The Rev. R. Paul Schafer	1 – Congregational Call	16003 – Calvary, Brandywine, WV
The Rev. Sherri Schafer	1 – Synodical Call	West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod
The Rev. Sean Smith	1 – Congregational Call	06619 – Messiah, Moundsville, WV
The Rev. Timothy (Tim) Spence	1 – Retired	
The Rev. David Twedt	1 – Retired	
The Rev. Peter Suwak	1 – Congregational	06622 – St Paul, Accident, MD

	Call	
The Rev. John Unger	1 – Congregational Call	06030 – St John, Harpers Ferry, WV
The Rev. Patrice Weirick	1 – Congregational Call	06607 – St Paul, New Haven, WV
The Rev. James Wicker	1 – Retired	

Conditionally Enfranchised

Name	Standing	Ministry
The Rev. Darick Biondi	Extended Ecumenical Service	30546 – Cross of Grace, Hurricane, WV
The Rev. Susan Claytor	Extended Ecumenical Service	06600 – St Luke, Beckley, WV

Last modified: 30 May 2026

11.1.1.2. Lay Voting Members — Congregational

Lay Congregational Voting Members of the Synod Assembly (organized by congregational ID number) as of 26 May 2026, 4:53 p.m. Year column indicates the most recent registration update. Where no name appears, the seat is vacant. If it is known that any listed voting member is disqualified (e.g., resignation, transfer, loss of voting member status, or death), please contact the registrar (Registrar@ WV-WMD.org).

Congregation	First Name	Year
06023 – Trinity (Arden), Martinsburg, WV	Paul Wangerin	2026
06023 – Trinity (Arden), Martinsburg, WV	John Pietrowski	2023
06026 – St Thomas, Charles Town, WV	Leann Johnson	2026
06026 – St Thomas, Charles Town, WV	Michelle Erfurt	2026
06030 – St John, Harpers Ferry, WV	Tricia Crum	2022
06030 – St John, Harpers Ferry, WV	Cindy Starkey	2018
06035 – St John, Martinsburg, WV	Judy Hinnerichs	2026
06035 – St John, Martinsburg, WV	Michael Noll	2026
06037 – St James (Uvilla), Shenandoah Junction, MD	Cynthia “Cindy” Spath	2026
06037 – St James (Uvilla), Shenandoah Junction, MD	Edwin Fitzpatrick	2026

06038 – St Peter, Shepherdstown, WV	Drew Catrow	2026
06038 – St Peter, Shepherdstown, WV	Eric Valentine	2026
06104 – Ebenezer, Rio, WV	Delbert Lupton	2026
06104 – Ebenezer, Rio, WV		
06105 – Hebron, Yellow Springs, WV		
06105 – Hebron, Yellow Springs, WV		
06106 – St Peter, Wardensville, WV	Jack Beury	2013
06106 – St Peter, Wardensville, WV		
06110 – Fairview, Gore, VA	David Whitacre	2025
06110 – Fairview, Gore, VA	Ora Whitacre	2025
06600 – St Luke, Beckley, WV	James “Jim” Sheatsley	2026
06600 – St Luke, Beckley, WV	Sandra “Sandy” Sheatsley	2026
06604 – Trinity, Charleston, WV	Eileen Davall	2026
06604 – Trinity, Charleston, WV	Howard O’Cull	2026
06606 – St Paul, Huntington, WV	Edith Beals	2026
06606 – St Paul, Huntington, WV	Daniel Beals	2026
06607 – St Paul, New Haven, WV	Myra Roush	2024
06607 – St Paul, New Haven, WV	Michelle Wren	2024
06608 – Good Shepherd, New Martinsville, WV	Dorcas Friedline	2026
06608 – Good Shepherd, New Martinsville, WV	George Friedline	2026
06609 – First, Parkersburg, WV	Andrea Brock	2026
06609 – First, Parkersburg, WV	Eli Reid	2026
06610 – St Peter, Pt Pleasant, WV	Betty Knight	2017
06610 – St Peter, Pt Pleasant, WV		
06612 – Christ (Mozart), Wheeling, WV	Bradley Thomas	2025
06612 – Christ (Mozart), Wheeling, WV	Paula McDonald	2026
06614 – First English, Wheeling, WV	Gary Gwnn	2026
06614 – First English, Wheeling, WV	Cheryl Gwinn	2026
06615 – Trinity, S. Wheeling, WV	Richard “Rich” Niehaus	2026

06615 – Trinity, S. Wheeling, WV	Felicia Niehaus	2026
06618 – Christ, Vienna, WV	Jerry Steege	2026
06618 – Christ, Vienna, WV	Will Rogers	2026
06619 – Messiah, Moundsville, WV	Christopher “Chris” Durigg	2026
06619 – Messiah, Moundsville, WV	Linda Fisher	2026
06621 – St John (Cove), Accident, MD	Donna McClintock Fost	2025
06621 – St John (Cove), Accident, MD	Thomas Schwing	2021
06622 – St Paul, Accident, MD	Wendell Beitzel	2025
06622 – St Paul, Accident, MD	Fred Fox	2025
06623 – Emmanuel, Bittinger, MD	Hazel Gaumer	2026
06623 – Emmanuel, Bittinger, MD	Charles “Wayne” Gaumer	2026
06624 – Grace, Friendsville, MD	Brooke Rishel	2025
06624 – Grace, Friendsville, MD	Pauline Faucett	2025
06625 – Zion (Jennings), Grantsville, MD		
06625 – Zion (Jennings), Grantsville, MD		
06626 – St John, Red House, MD	Stephen Cosner	2026
06626 – St John, Red House, MD	Crystal Boone	2026
06627 – St Mark, Oakland, MD	Natalie “Nan” Gangler	2026
06627 – St Mark, Oakland, MD	Laura Robinson	2026
06628 – St John (Meadow Mountain), Swanton, MD	Marvin Beckman	2026
06628 – St John (Meadow Mountain), Swanton, MD		
06631 – St Paul, Aurora, WV	Cynthia “Cindy” Murphy	2026
06631 – St Paul, Aurora, WV	Annette Strawser	2026
06632 – St Mark, Clarksburg, WV	Tanya Rockwood	2026
06632 – St Mark, Clarksburg, WV	Diane Knoll	2026
06633 – St John, Davis, WV	John Cooper	2025
06633 – St John, Davis, WV	Thisbe Cooper	2025
06634 – Holy Trinity, Elkins, WV	Gregory “Greg” Schumacher	2025
06634 – Holy Trinity, Elkins, WV	Nancy Schumacher	2025

06635 – Grace, Fairmont, WV	Paul Porter	2026
06635 – Grace, Fairmont, WV	Denise Porter	2026
06637 – Church of the Covenant, Grafton, WV	Douglas “Doug” Flohr	2025
06637 – Church of the Covenant, Grafton, WV	Christina “Chris” Flohr	2025
06638 – Trinity, Keyser, WV	Dinah Courier	2026
06638 – Trinity, Keyser, WV	Justice Courier	2025
06639 – St Johannes (St Clara Community), New Milton, WV	Rebecca Stricking	2026
06639 – St Johannes (St Clara Community), New Milton, WV	Phyllis Hinterer	2026
06640 – St Paul, Morgantown, WV	Tamara Riegel	2026
06640 – St Paul, Morgantown, WV	Jerry Bouquot	2026
10366 – Faith, Franklin, WV	Jamey Wimer	2024
10367 – Faith, Franklin, WV	Dolly Nilson	2023
10419 – New Hope, Minnehaha Springs, WV	Pam Pritt	2026
10419 – New Hope, Minnehaha Springs, WV	Ken Pritt	2026
10422 – St John, Moyers, WV	Paula Mitchell	2022
10422 – St John, Moyers, WV	Tom Mitcehl	2022
10463 – Grace, Petersburg, WV	Mary Ann Groves	2024
10463 – Grace, Petersburg, WV		
10492 – Zion, Baker, WV	Michael Brill	2019
10492 – Zion, Baker, WV	Kevin Link	2025
10533 – Mount Hope, Upper Tract, WV	Jack Hedrick	2026
10533 – Mount Hope, Upper Tract, WV	Lorrinda Carr	2026
10546 – Trinity, Weirton, WV	Coleen Dailey	2025
10546 – Trinity, Weirton, WV		
10551 – St James, Wheeling, WV	Sandra Nickerson	2014
10551 – St James, Wheeling, WV	Maureen Wagner	2014
10552 – St Mark (Elm Grove), Wheeling, WV	Richard “Rick” Crummitt	2026
10552 – St Mark (Elm Grove), Wheeling, WV	Megan Crummitt	2026
13210 – Christ The King (Barboursville), Huntington, WV	Roger Hughes	2026

13210 – Christ The King (Barboursville), Huntington, WV	Danny Lauffer	2026
16003 – Calvary, Brandywine, WV	Bonnie Bland	2026
16003 – Calvary, Brandywine, WV	George Hevener	2022
30546 – Cross of Grace, Hurricane, WV	Sara Pemberton	2026
30546 – Cross of Grace, Hurricane, WV	Deborah Goff	2026
30659 – Shepherd of the Hills, McHenry, MD	Wayne Stuckey	2025
30659 – Shepherd of the Hills, McHenry, MD	Cindy Bessey	2026
31157 – Grace (Bethlehem), Wheeling, WV	Deborh “Debby” Sgroi	2026
31157 – Grace (Bethlehem), Wheeling, WV	David Scherrick	2026

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.1.1.3. Lay Voting Members — Synod Council

Seat	Name
Vice President	Nancy Weeks
Secretary	David “David” Finney
Treasurer	James “Jim” Nichols
Mon Valley-Mountain Conference	John Knoll
Ohio-Kanawha Valley Conference	Vivian “Vicky” Grate
Potomac Conference	Richard Losh
Upper Ohio Valley Conference	Marilyn Jacobs
At-Large	Bruce Dalton
At-Large	Andrew Joseph “AJ” Beckett
Young Adult	Mackenzie Rice
Youth	Gavin Bell

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.1.2. Advisory Members

Advisory members have voice but not vote.

Name	Standing	Affiliation
Nick Kiger	Churchwide Representative	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.1.3. Visitors

Visitors are, as a class, anyone with neither voice nor vote, though the the assembly may summon a visitor to address the assembly at the discretion of the assembly. There is the usual sort of visitor but also some in special classes (e.g., assembly staff, agency representatives, and seminarians). This list is accurate as of as of 26 May 2026, 4:53 p.m.

Visitors

Name	Residence
Parr Claytor	Beckley, WV
Beverly McDonald	Inwood, WV
Joseph LaRocca	Martinsburg, WV
Laurie Spence	Punxsutawney, PA

Agency Representatives

Name	Residence	Agency
Ryan Ebner	New Castle PA	ELCA Foundation
Paul Poerschke	Washington, PA	Camp Agapé

Assembly Staff

Name	Residence	Staff Position
Larisa Mount	Morgantown WV	Registrar
Tamara Riegel	Morgantown WV	Clerk of the Assembly

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.1.4. Exhibitors

Camp Agapé

The Rev. Paul Poerschke, President
724.814.7708
poerschke@verizon.net
<https://campagape.org/>

Caroline Furnace Camp and Retreat Center

Thomas "Tom" Powell, Director
2239 Camp Roosevelt Rd.
Fort Valley, VA 22652
804.874.3699
tom@carolinefurnace.org
<https://www.carolinefurnace.org/>

Community Lutheran Partners

The Rev. Dn. Mary Sanders, Executive Director
Post Office Box 5
46 German Settlement Way
Aurora, West Virginia 26705
304.851.0049
Clpwwmd@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/Community-Lutheran-Partners-Inc-156345251098178>

ELCA Foundation

Ryan Ebner, Regional Gift Planner
214 West Northview Avenue
New Castle, Pennsylvania 16105
814.823.3285
ryan.ebner@elca.org
<https://foundation.elca.org/>

Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU

The Rev. Courtney Erzkus, Chaplain
The Rev. Ben Erzkus, Chaplain
1497 University Avenue
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505
304-494-9696

chaplain@lutheranmountaineer.org
courtney@lutheranmountaineer.org
ben@lutheranmountaineer.org
<https://lutheranmountaineer.org/>

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.2. Synod

West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, ELCA

%St. Paul Lutheran Church
309 Baldwin Street
Morgantown, WV

Telephone: (304) 363-4030
eMail: Office@wv-wmd.org
Web Site: www.wv-wmd.org

Last modified: 1 June 2025

11.2.1. Officers and Staff of the Synod

Bishop

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Lynn Riegel, S.T.M.

WV-WMD Synod
%St. Paul Lutheran Church
309 Baldwin Street
Morgantown, WV
Office: 304.363.4030
Mobile: 304.680.5388
eMail: bishop@wv-wmd.org
Term: 2021.12.01-2027.08.31



Vice President

Nancy Weeks

4041 Oglebay Dr.,
Wheeling, WV 26003
Phone: 304.336.7617
Mobile: 304.639.4121
eMail: nbmweeks@yahoo.com
Term: 2023.08.01-2027.08.31

Secretary

David Finney

110 White Pine Dr.

Fairmont, WV 26554

Phone: 814.270.9107

eMail: synodsec814@gmail.com

Term: Vacancy appointment until 2026.09.01



Treasurer

James "Jim" Nichols

WV-WMD Synod

%St. Paul Lutheran Church

309 Baldwin Street

Morgantown, WV

Office: 304.363.4030

eMail: Treasurer@WV-WMD.org

Term: 2023.08.01-2027.08.31



Director of Evangelical Mission

The Rev. Sherri Schafer

WV-WMD Synod

%St. Paul Lutheran Church

309 Baldwin Street

Morgantown, WV

Office: 304.312.4222

eMail: sherri.schafer@elca.org

Bookkeeper

Angela Keres

Pro-AM Billing Solutions, LLC

%St. Paul Lutheran Church

309 Baldwin Street

Morgantown, WV

Office: 304.363.4030

eMail: bookkeeper@wv-wmd.org



Clerical Support
Larisa Mount
 %St. Paul Lutheran Church
 309 Baldwin Street
 Morgantown, WV
 Office: 304.363.4030
 eMail: larisa@wv-wmd.org

Clerical Support
Tamara Riegel
 %St. Paul Lutheran Church
 309 Baldwin Street
 Morgantown, WV
 Office: 304.363.4030
 eMail: tamara@wv-wmd.org



Bishop Emeritus
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Ralph Dunkin

Last modified: 1 May 2026

11.2.2. Synod Council

Last modified: 1 June 2025

11.2.2.1. Synod Council Officers and Members

Officers

Seat	Occupant	Term ends
Bishop	The Rt. Rev. Matthew Lynn Riegel, S.T.M. ^e	2027
Vice President	Nancy Weeks ^e	2027
Secretary	David Finney ^{e §}	2025

Treasurer	James Nichols ^{e ‡}	2027
-----------	------------------------------	------

Members

Seat	Occupant	Term ends
Clergy MVMC	The Rev. Dn. Mary Sanders	2027
Clergy OKVC	The Rev. Patrice Weirick	2028
Clergy PC	The Rev. John Unger ^e	2028
Clergy UOVC	The Rev. Devin Ames	2028
Laitry MVMC	John Knoll [†]	2028
Laitry PC	Rick Losh ^{e †}	2027
Laitry OKVC	Vivian Grate	2027
Laitry UOVC	Marilyn Jacobs	2027
Laitry At-large #1	A.J. Becket	2026
Laitry At-large #2	Bruce Dalton ^{e †}	2027
Young Adult	Mackenzie Rice	2027
Youth	Gavin Bell	2025

MVMC = Mon Valley – Mountain Conference

OKVC = Ohio – Kanawha Valley Conference

PC = Potomac Conference

UOVC = Upper Ohio Valley Conference

^e indicates Executive Committee

[†] indicates final term according to term limitations

[‡] indicates ending term ahead of schedule

[§] indicates vacancy appointment

Advisory Members

Women of the ELCA	Bevely McDonald
ELCA Church Council	The Rt. Rev. Dr. Ralph Dunkin
Director of Evangelical Mission	The Rev. Sherri Schafer

Last modified: 27 April 2026

11.2.2.2. Synod Council Committees

(Appointed)

Executive Committee	Nancy Weeks, chair ^e Bruce Dalton David Finney ^e Rick Losh Jim Nichols ^e The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel ^e The Rev. John Unger
----------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Mutual Ministry Committee	The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle, chair Paula Mitchell The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel ^e The Rev. Sean Smith Nancy Weeks ^e The Rev. Patrice Weirick
----------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Audit Committee	Bruce Dalton Janis Smith
------------------------	-----------------------------

Bylaws Committee	The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel, chair Michelle Erfurt David Finney
-------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Nominating Committee		
Conference	Clergy Member	Lay Member
MVMC	The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle, chair	Cindy Murphy
OKVC	The Rev. Patrice Weirick	James Sheatsley
PC	The Rev. Sally Bartling	Rick Losh
UOVC	The Rev. Devin Ames	Richard Niehaus

^e Denotes *ex officio*.

Last modified: 26 May 2026

11.2.3. Synod Standing Committees Elected

by Synod Assembly

Most committees within the synod are appointed by Synod Council or some other entity. Two committees, Consultation Committee and Discipline Committee, are the rare exception, these two committees being elected by the Synod Assembly.

Consultation Committee

Seat	Occupant	Term ends
Clergy #1	The Rev. Sherry Miller	2030
Clergy #2	The Rev. Timothy Crummitt	2031
Clergy #3	The Rev. Ben Erzkus	2027
Clergy #4	The Rev. Nancy Knoll	2029
Clergy #5	The Rev. Kevin Mackey	2029
Clergy #6	The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle	2028
Laity #1	Nancy Weeks	2030
Laity #2	Marvin Beckman	2027
Laity #3	Patricia Anzalone	2031
Laity #4	John Knoll	2028
Laity #5	Lois Broyles	2028
Laity #6	Eric Valentine	2029

Discipline Committee

Seat	Occupant	Term ends
Clergy #1	The Rev. R. Paul Schafer	2030
Clergy #2	The Rt. Rev. Dr. Ralph Dunkin	2031
Clergy #3	The Rev. Patrice Weirick	2027 †
Clergy #4	The Rev. Matt Holbert	2027
Clergy #5	The Rev. Ben Erzkus	2029
Clergy #6	The Rev. Randy Richardson	2029
Laity #1	Sylvia "Sue" Hoffman	2030

Laity #2	Richard Niehaus	2030
Laity #3	Nancy Weeks	2031
Laity #4	Shawn Gilmore	2027
Laity #5	Cheryl Stemple	2028
Laity #6	D. Lynn Newman	2029

† Indicates resignation from committee effective with Synod Assembly 2026.

Last modified: 27 April 2026

11.2.4. Other Synod Commissions, Committees, and Directorates

Clergy Continuing Ed	
Conference	Member
UOVC	The Rev. Devin Ames, Chair
MVMC	The Rev. Ben Erzkus
OKVC	The Rev. Patrice Weirick
PC	The Rev. Karen Erskine-Valentine

Commission for Synodical Lay Worship Leadership	Paul Wangerin The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle The Rev. Ian Reid The Rev. Matt Holber The Rev. R. Paul Schafer The Rev. John Unger
--------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Domestic Hunger	Mary Sanders
------------------------	--------------

Ecumenical Officer	The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel
---------------------------	-----------------------------

Global Missions	The Rev. Ian Reid
------------------------	-------------------

Professional Candidacy	
Clergy Member	Lay Member

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel	Jerry Bouquot
The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle	Michael Grimm
The Rev. Sean Smith	Tamara Riegel
	Julie Sandolfini

^e Denotes *ex officio*.

Last modified: 27 April 2026

11.2.5. Boards of Directors/Trustees

The listing of board directors, trustees, and members only reflects those appointed by the synod or slots reserved for a members of the synod. Many agency and institutions have other board members, especially those with multi-synod constituencies. Appointment is according to the rules of the entity. The rightmost column indicates the appointing authority. When relevant, the term is included in a middle column.

Tri-Synod Archives Board	
The Rev. Timothy Spence	Synod Council
Tamara Riegel	Synod Council

Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU		
The Rev. Jonathan Adams	2026	Synod Council
The Rev. Jason Felici	2026	Synod Council
Nancy Weeks	2026	Synod Council
Carrie Nesselrodt	2027	Synod Council
Jim Nichols	2027	Synod Council
The Rev. Patrice Weirick	2027	Synod Council
Pam Pritt	2028	Synod Council
Laurel Muhly-Alexander	2028	Synod Council
Vacant	2028	Synod Council
The Rev. Courtney Erzkus	N/A	<i>Ex Officio</i>
The Rev. Ben Erzkus	N/A	<i>Ex Officio</i>
The Rt. Rev. Matthew Lynn Riegel	N/A	<i>Ex Officio</i>

ELCA Region 8 Steering Committee

The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel	<i>Ex officio</i>
Nancy Weeks	<i>Ex officio</i>

Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp

Erik Valentine	WV-WMD Seat
The Rev. Angela Lambert	Bishop

Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.

Brian Felici	Bishop
--------------	--------

Last modified: 26 May 2026

Supply Preaching and Presiding

To assist congregations in their search for worship leadership in times of pastoral vacancy or whenever regular ordained leadership is not available, the WV-WMD Synod provides a list of authorized worship leaders. This list as well as policies and rates for supply ministry can be found on the web at <http://wv-wmd.org/vacant/supply.html>. Note well, there are two separate programs for lay worship leadership:

- Bishop's Lay Worship Leaders and
- Synodical Lay Worship Leaders.

Last modified: 27 April 2026

Bishop's Lay Worship Leaders

Bishop's Lay Worship Leaders are equipped through the synod's training program and authorized by the Bishop for service in the territory of the synod at the invitation of the congregation's pastor or congregational leader appointed for the task of coordinating supply preachers.

The WV-WMD Synod is currently revising its standards for the Bishop's Lay Worship Leaders. Until the revision is adopted, applications to enter the roll of Bishop's Lay Worship Leaders are not being accepted.

Name	Address	Telephone	E-Mail
Bannister, Melissa	1902 Market Street Parkersburg, West Virginia 26101	304.428.8865	Bannister_m@yahoo.com
Broyles, Lois	6607 Clark Drive Barboursville, West	304.962.2541	loisinwv22@gmail.com

	Virginia 25504		
Harman, Jerry (temporarily unavailable)	25 South Second Street Parkersburg, West Virginia 26101	304.481.1160	jerryharman@yahoo.com
Hodges, Henry	Post Office Box 208 Wardensville, West Virginia 26851	304.874.4491	hhodges@k.12.wv.us
Keller, Patricia	170 HC 82, Marlinton West Virginia 24954	304.788.2535	bpkeller@frontiernet.net
McKinney, George (temporarily unavailable)	14 Edgewood Drive Hurricane, West Virginia 25526	304.545.8417 (H) 304-380-8428 (cell)	roseyfutures@comcast.net
Sheatsley, James	Post Office Box 5518 807 Teel Road Beckley, West Virginia 25801-5518	(H)304.252.7363 (O)304.252.5321 (M)304.575.9827	jsheatsley@suddenlinkmail.com
Wolford, Richard (temporarily unavailable)	1557 Bridge Road Charleston, West Virginia 25314	(O)800.444.1188 (M)304.389.2938	RWolford@RWBaird.com

Last modified: 27 April 2026

Synodical Lay Worship Leaders

Name	Licensure / Exp.	Base of Operations	Telephone	Email
Bradley, Bill, OLF	Reader / 5/19/26	Fairmont, WV	304.694.6698	william.bradley101@yahoo.com
Morrison, Shelby	Reader / 5/6/26	Sugar Grove, WV	304.249.5538	slmorrison51@gmail.com
Murphy, Cindy	Reader / 10/2/24	Aurora, WV	304.677.7242	cptcjmurphy@live.com
Weeks, Nancy	Reader / 4/27/26	Wheeling, WV	304.639.4121 (cell) 304.336.7617 (H)	nbmweeks@frontier.com

Last modified: 27 April 2026

Ordained Clergy Available for Supply

Ordained Presbyter	Base of Operations	Telephone	E-Mail
Allen, The Rev Dr (TEC) (temporarily unavailable)	Fairmont WV	304.830.2183	revdrtja@comcast.net
Black, The Rev Wm. Curtis	Wheeling, WV	757.617.5230	pastorcurtisinky@gmail.com
Campbell, The Rev Jacqueline (temporarily unavailable)	Fairmont, WV	304.365.0164	prjacq@comcast.net
Dunkin, The Rt Rev Dr Ralph	Wheeling, West Virginia 26003	304.280.0710	rwd300@yahoo.com
Ernest, The Rev Andrea	Frederick, MD	301.730.5625	revandreaernest@gmail.com
Erzkus, Chap. Courtney	Morgantown, WV	717.881.4621	courtney@lutheranmountaineer.org
Erzkus, Chap. Ben	Morgantown, WV	717.881.4631	ben@lutheranmountaineer.org
Lewis, The Rev Linda	Eastern Panhandle	443.789.6811	LALewis54@gmail.com
Lowden, The Rev Bob	Stephens City, VA	717.283.3764	bob@lowden.org
Moll, The Rev Richard	New Market, VA		RAMoll@shentel.net
Omholt, The Rev Thomas	Oakland MD	202.368.0443	jetermn626@hotmail.com
Riegel, The Right Rev Matthew L	Morgantown, WV	304.680.5388	bishop@wv-wmd.org
Schafer, The Rev R Alvin (temporarily unavailable)	Wheeling, WV	304.280.0208	alvatas@gmail.com
Schafer, The Rev Sherri	Wheeling WV Franklin, WV	304.312.4222	sherri.schafer@elca.org
Sumo, The Rev Dr Alexander	Columbus, OH	614.218.6730	saq9000@yahoo.com
Sweitzer, The Rev John L. (PCUSA)	Burgettstown, PA	724.947.5749	sweitzer_john@yahoo.com

Last modified: 27 April 2026

11.3. Conferences & Deans

Conference	Dean
Mon Valley-Mountain Conference	The Rev. Ruth Bullwinkle
Ohio-Kanawha Valley Conference	The Rev. Randy Richardson

Potomac Conference	The Rev. Sally Bartling
Upper Ohio Valley Valley Conference	The Rev. Sean Smith

Last modified: 1 June 2025

11.4. Anniversaries

Last modified: 1 June 2025

11.4.1. Congregation Anniversaries

Congregational Anniversaries in 2026

25 Years (Quadrenscentennial)

Cross of Grace Lutheran Church
 PO Box 1025
 Hurricane, WV 25526
 Founded: 2001

Last modified: 31 March 2026

11.4.2. Rostered Leader Anniversaries

Presbyteral Ordination Anniversaries in 2025

Anniversary	Pastor	Date Rostered
10	Angela L. Lambert	9/17/2016
	Timothy M. Crummitt	6/17/2016
20	Randolf E. Richardson	10/14/2006
25	Sally L. Bartling	8/18/2001
40	John K. Burk	6/22/1986
	Kevin L. Mackey	10/19/1986
	Timothy A. Spence	11/30/1986
45	David. H. Rockwood	5/16/1981
50	Ralph W. Dunkin	6/13/1976


11.5. Affiliated Agencies

Last modified: 1 June 2025

11.5.1. Camps

The West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod is constituent to two Lutheran camping corporations,

- Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center and
- Camp Luther.

 The synod maintains a webpage for camping ministry (<http://wv-wmd.org/camp/>). You may visit it at any time for updates on camping ministry.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

11.5.1.1. Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center

Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center

2239 Camp Roosevelt Rd

Fort Valley, VA 22652

Tel: 540-449-0012

Fax: 540-449-0050

eMail: julie@carolinefurnace.org

<https://www.carolinefurnace.org>

Director – Tom Powell

Board of Directors	Eric Valentine, WV-WMD Seat Angela Lambert, WV-WMD Bishop’s Designee
---------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------

Last modified: 1 June 2025

11.5.1.2. Camp Luther

Camp Luther

%The Rev. Karen Erskine-Valentine

PO Box 2008

Shepherdstown, WV 25443-2008

eMail: director@camplutherwv.com

<http://www.camplutherwv.com>

Director – The Rev. Karen Erskine-Valentine

Board of Directors	
Chair	Matthew Riegel
Secretary	Phil Carl
Treasurer	Kim Propst
Members	Rick Crummitt Lauri Edwards Jason Felici Karen Erzkine-Valentine ^e

^e Denotes *ex officio*.

Last modified: 27 April 2026

11.5.2. Campus Ministries

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12. Parliamentary Aids

This section includes articles on

- parliamentary etiquette,
- parliamentary procedure — common motions,
- germane and nongermane business,
- reports, and
- a guide to assembly committees.

Use your “page turn links” at the bottom and top of this page to browse this section or your table of contents to go directly to the article that interests you.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.1. Parliamentary Etiquette

An assembly is a conversation, and, as with any conversation, there are rules, conventions, and manners. This is not an exhaustive list.

When not at the mic

Don't sidebar in such a way that those around you cannot hear debate. If your conversation is of any length, take it out of the chamber.

Feel free to step away from your seat for a breath of fresh air or to take care of personal needs, but always be ready to return to work because you never know when a vote might be called.

At the mic

Always identify yourself at the mic, stating your name and congregation (or agency or office, whichever is applicable).

Address the chair and not the assembly.

Confine your debate to the pending question — *i.e.*, the question or topic immediately before the assembly. This can get confusing when amendments are being offered. Quick example: the main motion is on buying 3 pink flamingos for the synod office lawn. An amendment is moved to make it 7. The pending question is on whether 7 is a better number than 3, not on whether blue is better than pink or whether flamingos should be purchased at all.

When voting

When a vote is expected, be at your seat in the assembly chamber (or, at least, be in front of the bar).

When voting by show of hands or rising, keep your hands up (or continue to stand if by rising) until told to put them down (or sit). Also, do not mill about.


If voting by ballot, pay close attention to the instructions.

Making motions

Main motions, amendments, and complicated motions should be presented in writing to assist the secretary and the chair. If there seems not to be time to do this, ask that the assembly stand at ease, call a recess, or serve notice and ask for postponement or laying on the table.

Previous Question (Calling the Question)

- Don't call the question if no one is in line to speak. If no one is in line to speak, debate will end automatically.
- Is it really necessary to call the question if there are only two people in line to speak?
- Call the question when you believe that the assembly does not need to hear any more debate to make up its mind about the pending question. Don't call the question to suppress debate, *i.e.*, to prevent one side or another from making its case. If the case has been made, and the same arguments are being given over and over again, calling the question is quite reasonable. The virtue in debate is not in giving everyone a chance to speak but rather in giving every reasonable and persuasive argument a chance to be heard.
- While legal, it borders on suppression of debate to move previous question and all matters before the house. It may be that someone wishes to offer an amendment to the main motion that will improve it. If, in your opinion, there is no further improvement to the main motion that can be offered, this motion (*...all matters before the house*) is reasonable. That you are simply bored with the matter before the house is not the best reason for using it. If you want to move previous question because you think there is something more important to attend to, the better and proper motion is *to lay on the table* or *to postpone debate*.
- If an attempt to call the question has failed, another attempt should only be made following significant progress in debate.

 An assembly can be confusing (and parliamentary practice even more so) for the novice attendee. Ask for help. Your chair and your parliamentarian are here to assist you participate in the work of the assembly.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.2. Parliamentary Procedure — Common Motions

During the course of an assembly, one may hear different motions and terms. Here is a list of common motions and terms with brief explanations. In no way is this list exhaustive or detailed. The motions are

divided into three categories: 1) those motions dealing with the rules, 2) those motions dealing with the flow of business, and 3) motions that deal with words.

The parliamentarian usually has a spare copy of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, which can be borrowed. The parliamentarian is willing to explain technicalities and/or research questions about the rules. If a voting member is unsure how to make a motion (or even what motion to make) in order to accomplish what the member wants to accomplish, the member may ask the parliamentarian for assistance. It is also the right of a voting member to make a formal Parliamentary Inquiry of the chair.

Dealing with the Rules

Parliamentary Inquiry

A question directed to the chair which asks for an explanation of procedure or rules related to the business at hand. A member may use this device to find out what the proper motion is to accomplish some goal.

Form: "Rev. Chair, a Parliamentary Inquiry:..."

Point of Information

Nearly identical to parliamentary inquiry, this allows the member to ask a question for the sake of clarification or more information about the business at hand (*e.g.*, the member may want to know the anticipated cost of the proposal being debated). It may be directed to the chair or, though the chair, to another, including the speaker (so long as it does not interrupt). When asked of the chair, the form is as simple as stating the question: "Rev. Chair, a point of information: What are the anticipated costs associated with this proposal?" When put to the speaker, the form is, "Rev. Chair, Form: "Rev. Chair, will the speaker yield to a question?" The speaker is under no obligation to do so.

Point of Order

Through this device, a member asks the chair to enforce the rules of the assembly. For example, it can be used to silence excessive and loud chatter between members while another is speaking. It can be used to call the chair's attention to the fact that the speaker has exhausted his/her time, has spoken more times than the rules permit, *etc.* It is one of the rare devices which is in order when another has the floor so long as the point must be dealt with immediately. Form: the member rises and says, "Point of Order!"

Suspend the Rules

Let's face it, some times parliamentary procedures do get in the way. Suspending the rules allows the assembly to take action which is not normally permitted under the rules of order. It can never be applied to provisions of the constitution or bylaws, unless a suspension is provided for in the provisions themselves or the bylaw in question is by nature itself a rule of order (very rare). Form: "Rev. Chair, I move to suspend the rules which interfere with..."

Appeal

A member, believing that the chair has ruled incorrectly on a matter of order, may ask the assembly to overturn the decision. It must be moved immediately. Form: "Rev. Chair, I appeal from the decision of the chair."

Unanimous Consent

Also known as, “general consent.” This functions as a prefix to a motion. It helps to expedite business when it is suspected that the motion being made will face no opposition. For example, unanimous consent can be used to approve the minutes. It requires no second, and the chair does not call for a vote. Instead the chair asks if there is any objection. If you do object to the motion, speak up quickly! One objection vetoes unanimous consent. The mover can then make the motion normally. Form: “Rev. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to approve the minutes.”

Dealing with the Flow

Postpone Indefinitely

The effect is to bury the main motion without it coming to a ye or nay vote. In short, it kills the main motion. Can be applied only to the main motion.

Postpone Definitely

The effect is to delay further consideration of the pending motion until a specific time or condition has been met.

Lay on the Table

This motion is used to temporarily lay aside the pending question so that more pressing business can be handled. There is no appointed time for return of the question to consideration. The assembly may, at will, return it to the floor through the motion To Take from the Table.

Refer

Sends the pending motion (and all motions to which it adheres) to a committee. The committee is specified, and instructions may be given to the committee that either constrain or empower it. If it is an *ad hoc* committee (*i.e.*, a committee specially created to consider the matter), the number, members, and/or method of appointment of the committee may be specified by the mover but need not be.

Recess

To take a break without adjourning the meeting or session. This can be used for the obvious benefits that a break offers. It can also be used, *e.g.*, to suspend business to allow for caucuses and other conversations between members to work out compromises on pending business.

Limit (or extend limits) of Debate

A truly versatile motion, this device allows the assembly to specify details from the length of speeches, the number of speeches a given member may make, to total amount of time that debate can take place, *etc.*.

Previous Question

The effect is to immediately close debate on the pending question (and other questions specified), thus bringing it to an immediate vote in most cases. Form: “Rev. Chair, I move the previous question.”

Reconsider

This motion returns to the consideration of the assembly a question that had been decided earlier in the same session. In most cases, the motion to reconsider may only be moved by a member of the prevailing side when the question was first decided.

Dealing with the Words

Amend

This motion attempts to modify the language of the pending question by striking (deleting), adding, or substituting (a combination of both) words. If an amendment to a main motion is pending, one may move to amend the amendment—this is called an amendment in the second degree. Amendments in the third degree (*i.e.*, an amendment to an amendment to an amendment) are not permitted.

Substitute

This motion is a form of amendment whereby the entire content of a pending question is replaced with new content. This motion is also employed to allow debate on the merits of two different questions at the same time.

Accept the Report / Adopt the Report

This is only used when a report proposes some action or states some opinion which requires the assembly's agreement or adoption in its entirety. Reports that merely provide information are never "accepted;" they are merely received, which requires no formal action in most cases. When a report does contain recommendations for action, it is normally best to only move adoption of those specific actions.

— Prepared for the WV-WMD Synod Assembly 2006; revised 2022

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.3. Germane and Nongermane Business

One of the most confusing aspects for novice participants in deliberative assemblies is the concept of the germane (and the nongermane). Even veteran assembly participants can struggle with distinguishing between what is germane and when it matters. The parliamentary authority (*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 12th ed.) and various rules peculiar to our synod constrain what may be introduced as business and what may be attempted in the form of amendments according to germaneness. In short,

- **Germane** — A motion is germane if it relates to the pending business (or matter) before the assembly. Motions germane to the pending business of the assembly do not require prior submission to Reference & Counsel and are not subject to any deadline. A germane motion, however, must be made within the window of germaneness, *i.e.*, before the assembly moves on to other business related to a different matter.
- **Nongermane** — A motion is nongermane if it does not relate to the pending business (or matter) before of the assembly. Most resolutions (a type of original main motion) are nongermane, as they often introduce a new matter to the assembly. Under B7.16, such resolutions must be submitted to Reference & Counsel before they come to the assembly floor, under CR7.02, such submission is to be in advance of the Synod Assembly.

Example of a germane motion

Reid: (concluding his report as chair of Global Mission) ...And, so, the drought has put 40,000 at the edge of starvation, and our companion synods are particularly hard hit. I will entertain questions.

Chair: Thank you, Pr. Reid. Are there any questions?

Felici: Mr. Chairman!

Chair: Pr. Felici is recognized.

Felici: I move that this Synod Assembly take up a special collection during the next recess for the relief of our companion synods.

Chair: It is moved that this Synod Assembly take up a special collection during the next recess for the relief of our companion synods.

Chair: Is there a second?

Erzkus: I second.

Chair: It is moved and seconded that this Synod Assembly take up a special collection during the next recess for the relief of our companion synods. The motion is before the assembly for debate. Pr. Felici, the floor is yours.

Example of a nongermane motion

Reid: (concluding his report as chair of Global Mission) ...And, so, the drought has put 40,000 at the edge of starvation, and our companion synods are particularly hard hit. I will entertain quesitons.

Chair: Thank you, Pr. Reid. Are there any questions?

Erzkus: Mr. Chairman!

Chair: Pr. Erzkus is recognized.

Erzkus: I move that this Synod Assembly take up a special collection for the Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU.

Chair: Pr. Erzkus, the motion is out of order as it is not germane to the report of the Global Mission Committee.

While germaneness is the judgment call of the chair, the chair's judgment is no absolute. Any ruling made by the chair may be appealed, the appeal going to the assembly. For a full discussion on the motion to appeal from the decision of the chair, review *RONR* (12th ed.) §24.

So You Missed the Deadline for Submission to Reference & Counsel

If the Matter Is Germane

It may be that the matter of business you would like to introduce is germane to some matter of business already coming before the assembly. If it is germane, it may be introduced when the coordinate matter is before the assembly.

Still, it is prudent to submit a resolution to Reference & Counsel well in advance of the assembly so that Reference & Counsel can review it for form, legality, and substance. Reference & Counsel's primary interest is in helping the assembly do its work and do it well. That interest includes seeing that matters coming before the assembly are in the best form that they can be in. Reference & Counsel can be a resource to those introducing matters sufficiently in advance of the assembly so as to allow Reference & Counsel to do a thorough review and engage in conversation with the sponsor(s).

If the matter is nongermane, the door is not entirely closed.

If the Matter is Nongermane

While B17.16 and CR7.02 specify that nongermane resolutions be submitted to Reference & Counsel prior to the assembly, these provisions are probably, by their nature, rules of order. Theoretically, such rules can be suspended. (*q.v.* *RONR* (12th ed.) 2:21). Whether such is the case is a matter of the chair's judgment, subject to appeal from the decision of the chair. In short, if the assembly so wills, there are mechanisms by which nongermane business may be introduced to the assembly despite the immediate rules because the parliamentary authority provides such a check and balance. If one wants to pursue this route, it would be wise to consult with the chair or the parliamentarian. Review of *RONR* (12th ed.) §25 is advised.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.4. On Reports

Reports come in many shapes and sizes, and what an assembly does with a report is a matter of the assembly's will constrained only by the nature of the report and the rules governing the work of the assembly.

How a Report Comes before the Assembly

Reports come before the assembly in two ways:

- Publication in the *Bulletin of Reports*; and
- Presentation on the floor of the assembly while in session.

Examples of the latter include the report of Elections Committee, the report of the Registration Committee, the report of the Resolutions Committee. In all these cases, the report is not seen by the assembly until it is presented on the floor.

Some reports, however, that are published in the *Bulletin of Reports* are still presented on the floor. This may involve the reading of the report, as in the case of the Nominating Committee, or it may be nothing more than the speaker referencing the report without reading it, as the bishop frequently does. In either case, the report is immediately before the assembly, and, though no motion is necessary to receive it (*q.v.*, B7.17), a motion related to its disposition or in response to it is considered germane.

Examples of the former include many reports from agencies and institutions. It is not required under our rules that every agency, institution, or affiliate report in person, taking the mic, nor is it even required that they report at all. When there is no presentation on the floor, any report published in the *Bulletin of Reports* is considered received by the assembly by virtue of publication without a vote. (B7.17) If the assembly adopts the proposed convention standing rule on germaneness with respect to published reports, a motion related to disposition of any of these reports or in response to the same will be considered germane.

Receiving vs. Accepting

There is a big difference between receiving and accepting a report.

- Receiving a report is equivalent to saying, “Yes, we’ve read/heard it.” That’s it, nothing more. “Receiving” makes no comment about the content of the report, does not take ownership of the report (in the sense that it claims the content of the report as the opinion/position of the assembly), nor does it authorize any recommendations made in the report. Most reports need only be received. Some few reports can only be received, *e.g.*, a financial report which should only ever be received and referred for audit.
- Accepting (a.k.a. “adopting,” “agreeing to”) a report is equivalent to saying, “Everything in this report, we agree to.” By accepting the report, the assembly claims everything in the report as its own opinion/position and authorizes all actionable items in the report as if each of those items had been moved and adopted by the assembly. While one of the fastest ways to do business, it is not always prudent for the assembly to agree to every jot and tittle in the report.

Implementing Resolutions

When recommendations for action are contained in a report, and that report also includes commentary or narrative reflecting the opinion of the reporter (opinions that may not be shared by the assembly), it is better to receive the report and then offer resolutions in response to it. If the reporter is kind, the reporter will include a summary of all recommended actions at the end of the report in the form of “implementing resolutions.”

Action vs. Sense

Some reports contain recommendations for action; others merely report work done or offer some other information to the assembly. If a report contains recommendations for action, those should be clearly identifiable. As previously stated, these recommendations can be adopted by the assembly through either implementing resolutions or accepting the report.

Sometimes, however, a report offers information as information without recommending any particular for action. If the assembly wants to take order some action in response to any matter included in the report, the assembly may do so through a motion offered on the floor.

Other reports contain findings or expressions of opinion. The assembly may want to take ownership of such findings or expressions of opinion, in other words, go beyond merely receiving the report. The assembly may do this by accepting the report, in which case the entire content of the report becomes the word of the assembly. In many cases, it may be better to receive the report and then offer a sense motion. A sense motion orders no action but does formally declare the findings or the opinions of the assembly.

Referring

A report might require, in the opinion of the assembly, greater scrutiny, further investigation, thoughtful

consideration, or a response that the assembly cannot frame immediately or well in light of circumstances. A report may be referred by the assembly

- back to the original reporter
- to Resolutions Committee for the purpose of drafting a response,
- to Reference & Counsel for review and recommendation,
- to an ad hoc committee,
- to a standing committee, commission, or board, or
- to Synod Council.

The report may be referred with instructions. Those instructions may include parameters for the work undertaken by the party to which the report is referred as well as the timing of the return report.

Questions

It is custom, though not rule, that assembly members be allowed to ask questions of those reporting. The chair normally allows this immediately after the report is presented.

Summons

When the report is received by publication but no presentation is planned during session, the assembly may summon the reporter to appear before the assembly. This may be done by petitioning Reference & Counsel or by bringing a motion to summon before the assembly.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.5. Guide to Assembly Committees

You will find in the next subsections descriptions of the following committees of the assembly:

- Committee on Elections
- Committee on Minutes
- Committee on Reference & Counsel
- Committee on Resolutions
- Ushers

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.5.1. Committee on Elections

Until 2019, our Committee on Elections (Elections Committee) had been what *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, refers to as the tellers. In 2019, we made a change.

The members of the Elections Committee function as overseers of the elections process and as judges of the election. As election judges, it is the Elections Committee that will take the lead in the adjudication of

questionable ballots, bringing unresolved issues to the floor of the assembly with recommendation. The Elections Committee will prepare the ballots. It will also oversee the voting process and the work of the tellers and the ushers. Per the synod's Bylaws, the Elections Committee is appointed by the bishop. Per the synod's continuing resolutions, the Elections Committee appoints, assigns, and dismisses tellers.

The tellers are those folks assigned the task of counting the ballots. They also collect the ballots during the balloting phase. This year, we are establishing a tellers pool (like a jury pool) from which the Elections Committee draws tellers for individual counts. It is hoped that most tellers will not have to count more than once.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.5.2. Committee on Minutes

Our Committee on Minutes (Minutes Committee) is a work group not a deliberative body. It is a legacy of the days when there were no recording devices other than the human being frenetically taking notes with pen on paper. While seeing to the recording of the business of the assembly is the responsibility of the secretary, it has been deemed prudent to have a team of people taking notes so as not to miss something and ensure accuracy by comparison. In 2015, we introduced videography and live streaming of the assembly. The saving of the video allowed for review of the action, increasing the accuracy of the minutes. One would think that a team of human recorders is now obsolete. In 2017, we learned not to be so complacent. Our videographer was unable to attend because of injury. Fortunately, we were able to make an audio recording. Nevertheless, over dependence on technology could put us in a precarious position. Having a team of humans seems a salutary redundancy.

Taking minutes is not as onerous as most seem to imagine. One does not take a verbatim (a word for word transcript of everything that is said) when taking minutes unless a special order is made to do so—this is very rare! When this happens—which it never has in WV-WMD—it usually entails a narrow set of statements and not the entire proceedings. It is also customary that a person, who desires his/her words be entered into the record, present a written copy of his/her speech to the secretary.

According to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, §48,

In an ordinary society, unless the minutes are to be published, they should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members. The minutes should never reflect the secretary's opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done.

The secretary will provide Minutes Committee members with detailed instructions on the recording of the action.

Minutes Committee members work in shifts. No one, except the secretary, is taking minutes the entire session. When committee members are recording, they do so alongside others. Usually 2-3 committee members are recording at one time. When action is heavier, more members are recording. This allows for breaks. There are often long spans in which no action is taking place, e.g., during a keynote address. During these times, committee members may be told by the secretary that they can relax and even leave their post for a short time. When looking at the assembly program, Minutes Committee members do not take

minutes outside of the “business meetings,” meaning committee members have no obligations at worship, workshops, etc..

Minutes Committee members should be able to use a laptop or mobile device on which they can engage in simple typing. Most committee members prefer to provide their own device because of familiarity. A few laptops are kept handy for those members who do not have their own. Basic typing skills are helpful—hunt & peck will not serve well.

It is also important that a Minutes Committee member have hearing sufficient to understand what is said by the speakers at the mics. Being able to pay attention is also important.

It is not necessary that the Minutes Committee members know everyone in the synod. Speakers and those making motions are required to announce their names whenever they come to the mic for their benefit.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.5.3. Committee on Reference & Counsel

Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, (RONR) assumes one committee handles both the review of submitted resolutions and the drafting of resolutions. Our assembly distributes those two functions to different committees. Our Committee on Reference and Council (usually referred to as, “Reference & Counsel”) performs most of the functions described under the heading, “Resolutions Committee,” in *RONR* §59. Those functions which belong to a “drafting committee” are assigned, in our Bylaws, to our “Committee on Resolutions.”

Our Reference & Counsel is charged, under our Bylaws, as follows:

B7.16. 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, which shall report thereon to the assembly with its recommendations. Other duties of the committee shall be a) to recommend special orders for the hearing or representatives, b) to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary and c) to give such assistance to the bishop as may be desired in the course of the assembly.

Review Resolutions

The primary duty is the review of all resolutions and memorials submitted to the Synod Assembly that are “of a general character which is not germane to the pending question.” What’s that mean?

Matters introduce on the floor

If a member rises immediately after a report and offers a resolution in response to the report, the resolution is germane, *i.e.*, it relates to the report. Such a resolution does not go to Reference & Counsel (unless ordered by the assembly). If member offers a resolution that has nothing to do with a report or other action taking place on the floor, the resolution is, most likely, not germane. These automatically go to Reference & Counsel.

Reference & Counsel reviews each resolution thus introduced on the floor and reports back to the assembly. In that report, Reference & Counsel may, at its discretion, recommend adoption or rejection. It may also recommend amendment. It may recommend any course of action allowable to a committee advising the assembly (*i.e.*, to set consideration as a special order, to refer, to lay on the table, to postpone, to postpone indefinitely, *etc.*). It may also report on a resolution with “no recommendation.” Unless overruled by the assembly, Reference & Counsel may determine the order in which it reports on the resolutions and is free to request consideration *en bloc*, *seriatim*, *etc.*. When reporting on resolutions, the resolution in question, as it has already been introduced on the floor is the main motion with the report of Reference & Counsel functioning either as a subsidiary motion or mere information, depending upon the content of the report.

Matters introduced in advance of the assembly or appropriately to Reference & Counsel

Most of the time, resolutions and memorials (petitions from congregations and conferences) are submitted in advance of the Synod Assembly. If a member writes a resolution while Synod Assembly is in session, and that resolution is not germane to pending business, it should be given to Reference & Counsel and not moved on the floor by the member. Even if the member does move it on the floor, if chair rules it as nongermane, it is immediately order its referral to Reference & Counsel.

Procedure is slightly different for resolutions and memorials submitted directly to Reference & Counsel. Reference & Counsel can recommend adoption, offer a substitute, recommend referral, or recommend declination of consideration.

Recommend Special Orders

Reference & Counsel may propose special orders for the hearing of representatives, members, *etc.*. This provision is a hedge against episcopal tyranny. While members have defined rights under parliamentary law, non-members do not. It is possible that a representative of a synod-affiliated agency (or some other person) requests time on the agenda and the bishop (who drafts the agenda) refuses to provide it. That agency rep may approach Reference & Counsel, petitioning for time to address the assembly. Reference & Counsel, if it so chooses, may propose special orders for the hearing of that representative, and the assembly would have the right to adopt or reject the proposal. A member too might want to address the assembly on some topic, and the member could petition Reference & Counsel for the privilege.

It should be kept in mind that the entity protected is not the representative. The entity protected is the assembly. Only members have rights in the assembly (unless certain rights are accorded through the governing docs or the will of the assembly), and a fundamental right of the assembly is to hear from those the assembly believes it would benefit from hearing. Reference & Counsel protected this prerogative on behalf of the assembly. Reference & Counsel also protects the assembly from abuse of the podium/mic by not recommending special orders when the speaker would not assist the assembly in its deliberations.

Distribute Printed Material

As the preceding section protects people from the bishop, this provision addresses tyranny by the secretary. If the secretary refuses to allow distribution of some specific printed material, the sponsor of that material may approach Reference & Counsel as something akin to a court of appeals. Reference & Counsel can order such distribution without interference by the secretary or the chair.

Assist the Bishop

Reference & Counsel may be enlisted by the bishop to assist as needed. Typically, this assistance is around matters of consequence before the assembly. Reference & Counsel, next to the parliamentarian, is the bishop's place to seek advice and counsel during the assembly.

Last modified: 13 May 2026

12.5.4. Committee on Resolutions

For the purposes of the WV-WMD Synod Assembly, a distinction is made between the Committee on Resolutions (Resolutions Committee) and the Committee on Reference and Counsel (Reference & Counsel). In addition to the rules that govern committees in general, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR)* describes the work of the Resolutions Committee, as we intend the term, in *RONR* §53. *RONR* §59 relates to the work of Reference & Counsel and is not applicable to our Resolutions Committee.

Our Resolutions Committee serves as the drafting committee of the assembly. If you remember the musical *1776*, you will remember the Continental Congress assigning to Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, *etc.* the task of drafting a resolution declaring independence for the consideration of the assembly. That is a good representation of the work of a drafting committee, the difference being that our Resolutions Committee is not *ad hoc*, *i.e.*, only assigned to one particular topic. As a standing committee of the assembly, our Resolutions Committee handles the drafting of all resolutions ordered by the assembly and not otherwise assigned to an *ad hoc* committee. Keep in mind, any member of the assembly may prepare his/her own resolution, but a resolution presented by an individual member is handed over, under our rules, to Reference & Counsel.

As a standing committee of the assembly, the assembly may refer any matter as a topic to the Resolutions Committee with instructions to draft a resolution for the consideration of the assembly. For example, should it come to pass during the course of the assembly's deliberations that a member of the assembly believes there should be a resolution before the assembly on the purchase of pink flamingo law ornaments by the synod for distribution to all congregations, that member makes a motion on the assembly floor to instruct the Resolutions Committee to draft such a resolution. The member making such a motion may include further instructions for the committee. That motion from the floor would be itself debated by the assembly and possibly amended. If it is adopted, the instructions are referred to the resolutions committee with orders to draft a resolution to that effect. The Resolutions Committee would then meet, at the call of the committee chair and set about the task of drafting such a resolution. The committee would have the freedom, within the limits of the instructions provided by the assembly, to draft the resolution as it sees fit. It also has the duty to

report that it cannot comply if it deems that such a resolution would be illegal. Once it has completed the drafting process, the Resolutions Committee reports to the assembly, presenting the resolution it has drafted, a minority report also being possible. What is described in this paragraph has rarely happened, but it can and has.

The Resolutions Committee may, at its discretion, draft any resolution which it believes would further the work of the assembly. For example, if, in the course of debate, there seems to be a mood in the assembly favoring a specific change in the logistics of Synod Assembly, the Resolutions Committee may draft a resolution (without being ordered to do so) to that effect and put it before the assembly for consideration. Such proactive work on the part of the Resolutions Committee can help the assembly (which is often short of members skilled in parliamentary deliberation) find its voice.

The other task of the resolutions committee is the review of reports submitted to the assembly and the generation of such resolutions as may seem appropriate in response. For example, the 2007 Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee drafted a resolution that admonished then Chap. Riegel for the use of too much Latin in his reports, instructing that he include translation aids in the future.

Resolutions Committee is free to draft a “closing resolution,” *i.e.*, a resolution that thanks folks or makes some final comment upon the proceedings of the assembly, but there is no requirement that it do so.

The Resolutions Committee can be one of the most important committees in an assembly. Proper composition of such a committee should include a mix of people. There should be at least one parliamentary geek. There should be at least one person with the sense of the overall working of the synod in relationship to its congregations and a larger Church. There should be at least one word smith. The rest should be people of common sense and ability to listen to what is happening on the floor, to sense the mood of the assembly, and to put it into words.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

12.5.5. Ushers & Pages

Ushers

This is not wedding ushering; an assembly usher doesn't have to escort folks to their seats while wearing a tux. Ushers do, however, provide important support to the assembly's work.

It should also be noted that the ushers form a team. It is often not necessary that all the ushers do everything together. The Ushers' Chair (The Warden) may divide the work up so that ushers are not on duty at all times.

During elections

When the Chair announces the sealing of the chamber, the ushers seal the chamber. If there are doors, the ushers close them and stand guard. If there are no doors, the ushers stand in the portals (or other obvious points of egress). The ushers may let people leave, but they do not let people enter until the Chair orders the chamber unsealed.

The ushers make sure that voting members are before the bar of the assembly and non-voting members are behind the bar. The bar is a line that separates the two. This is important because the tellers have to know who to give ballots to.

At the request of the Elections Committee Chair, the ushers assist in the distribution and collection of ballots.

Distributing printed material

When necessary, ushers distribute written material to the attendees. This can either involve walking through the chamber and leaving stuff at people's spots, giving a sufficient number to the folks at the ends of the pews, or standing at a portal and handing papers to those entering the chamber. It depends on what it is and when it is.

Herding cats

Prior to each meeting of the assembly, one or two ushers will be needed to direct voting members to sit before the bar and visitors behind the bar (unless an individual is granted a dispensation by the Chair or the Ushers' Chair).

At the beginning of each meeting or whenever the assembly is about to resume business, the ushers direct people back to the chamber. This needs to be done after meals, breaks, and recesses.

At any point the assembly is in movement, *e.g.*, breaking up for workshops, going to meals, going to worship, *etc.*, the ushers position themselves such that they can direct people.

Safety and Security

Ushers also keep an eye open for dangers, be it a chair in doorway or a fire in the lobby. If it is a simple safety fix, *e.g.*, moving that chair out of the path of egress so that no one trips over it, the usher takes care of it. Major problems should be brought to the attention of the the Ushers' Chair.

If an emergency takes place, ushers help clear the area and any egresses so that emergency personnel can gain access quickly.

Other duties as assigned

The catchall! Ushers may be called upon to assist with all manner of things.

Pages

We don't always have pages, but we sometimes get lucky. Pages are assembly staff (not voting members) who assist the officers, committee chairs, and office with communications, *i.e.*, they deliver messages and documents.

12.6. Governing Documents, Policies, and Guidelines

The governing documents of the synod

- Articles of Incorporation
- Constitution
- Bylaws
- Continuing Resolutions


are accessible from our [Synod Polity](#) webpage.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

13. Errata & Addenda


Stuff always comes in late and changes to registration take place right up the first gavel (sometimes after). Prior to employing the Manula platform, the *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* would get published, and that was that. Anything additional would have to wait until Synod Assembly for distribution as hard copies. With this new platform, we have the technical ability to post late items. Whether we have the spare human resources in the days between publication of *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* and the opening of the assembly is another matter. We'll do what we can do, but there are no guarantees. We realize, however, that some folks might want to print their *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* several days in advance of the assembly (and we encourage this). So, this is what we do:

- Up until the publication of the compiled PDF edition of the *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*, we correct errors in and add late items to the main body of *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*. We then list those changes to the main body of *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* in the [Errata](#) and [Addenda](#) subsections respectively. You can then check the [Errata](#) chart to see what corrections have been made and the [Addenda](#) chart for any additions since you may have already accessed and possibly printed any individual pages of *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*.
- After the publication of the compiled PDF edition of the *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*. Errata will still be noted in [Errata](#) subsection and corrected in the online (Manula) version but without correction correction in the PDF version of the *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*. Late items will be posted under the [Addenda](#) subsection with a listing on the [Addenda](#) subsection page. This means that you can print your *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* as a PDF download now without having the table of contents messed up if items are added. Then, when you check back in, you don't have to print the entire PDF over again. Just print the appendices and add them to your binder.

 **Download Tip:** If you download and print your *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* now and additions are added to the report afterwards and corrections made, you do not have to reprint the entire bulletin. Print only the pages you need direct from the Manula platform.

Last modified: 1 June 2025

13.1. Errata

 **Errata since initial official publication on 26 May 2026.** Errata listed after publication of the PDF edition will be published here in the online version of the *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*, but it will not be in the PDF version. [See the immediately preceding section](#) for instructions on how to navigate between the PDF version and errata after this date. For addenda to the *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*, go to the [Addenda](#).

Here follows a list of errata since initial publication of *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* on 5/26/2026. This list covers the time since official publication until the time listed in the banner above. This might be helpful to assembly attendees and others. With Manula (the on-line platform), it is possible to fix errors as

they are reported and evaluated. On-going fixes, however, create incongruity between the Manula version and any PDF versions you may have already saved and/or printed.

The matrix below will include the following:

- Date the error was addressed;
- The error, its nature, the corrective action, and any consequences of note; and
- A quick link to its page in this on-line *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*.

Those items that should probably be printed/downloaded to either replace what is in your already printed/downloaded copy are marked in bold. Of course, if you are using the on-line edition, you are good to go.

Even if you downloaded an earlier version of the PDF, you can go to the specific page in the on-line *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* and print that one page by clicking on the print icon in the upper right of the page.

Errata added after publication of PDF edition of the *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* on 6/1/26.

Date	Error/Action	Link

Errata added prior to publication of PDF edition of the *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* but after 26 May 2026.

Date	Error/Action	Link
5/27/ 26	Opening worship listed as 12:30 a.m. on program. / Corrected to indicate p.m.	Program & Agenda
5/30/ 26	Incorrect listing of status for both Linda Muhly and Erik Nielsen / Corrected to indicate that both are retired	Clergy Voting Members
6/1/ 26	Modifications to proposed agenda related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Churchwide Representative — modified • Report of the Madagascar Network — added • Report of Global Mission Committee — removed 	Program & Agenda

Last modified: 1 June 2026

13.2. Addenda

! The addenda in the first group below have been added since publication the stabilized PDF version of the *Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports*. If you are working with stabilized PDF version, simply come back here and print only those sections that have and added (and you prefer to have in printed form). Last update to this list was on 6/1/26 at 8:10 a.m.

Items added after publication of the stabilized PDF version of *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* on 6/1/26.

Date Added	Item and Link

Items added after publication on 5/26/26 but before publication of the stabilized PDF version of *The Pre-Assembly Bulletin of Reports* on 6/1/26.

Date Added	Item
5/28/26	Budget Proposal for FY2027-2028
5/28/26	Understanding the Synod Budget
5/29/26	Bishop's Report, Part II, Introduction to Workshops
5/29/26	Workshops
5/31/26	Assembly Committees & Staff

Last modified: 1 June 2026