



FUNDING OUR MISSION
2021



**SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA
SYNOD** EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA





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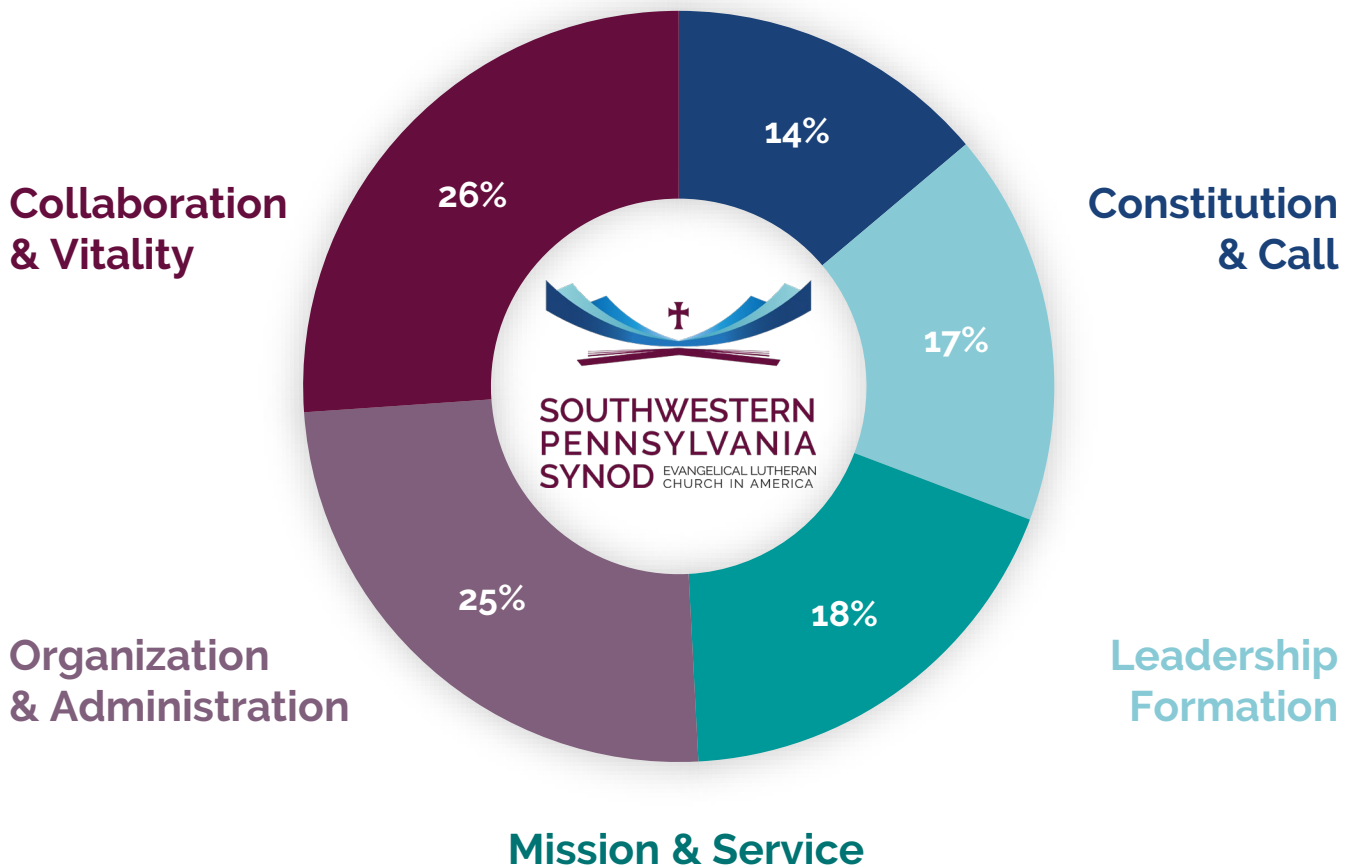
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Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

Bishop Kusserow recently offered a similar counsel: **“Let’s not let the familiar become an obstacle for the possible.”** It was said as the synod staff assessed new office spaces.

Over the past year, learning to diverge from the familiar and discerning God’s will has been the constant work of all within our synod: from congregation leaders reinventing Church in the time of pandemic, the synod staff embracing new ways of working, to the budget committee reshaping how we fund our mission.

Through the work of the budget committee and synod council, as well as the deliberation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, this budget looks much different than in years past. In some cases, it was necessary to let go of the familiar, but the result serves all within our synod and is a faithful expression of our synod’s mission.



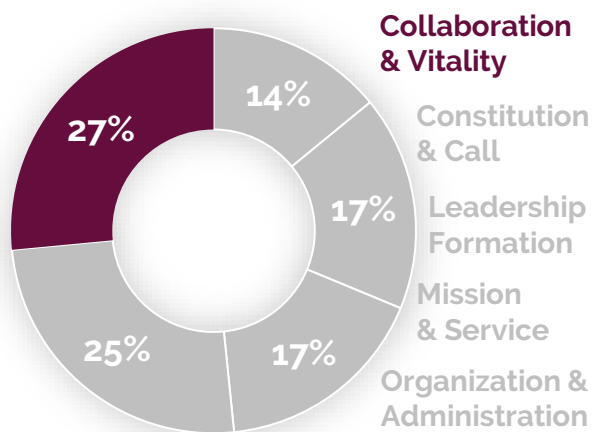
MISSION: To serve, connect, and equip ELCA congregations in southwestern Pennsylvania to tell the story of Jesus.

\$428,559.12

COLLABORATION & VITALITY



We're better together; it's the very definition of "synod": on the journey together. When creative energy & collaboration meet ministry, the results are vibrant Christian communities.

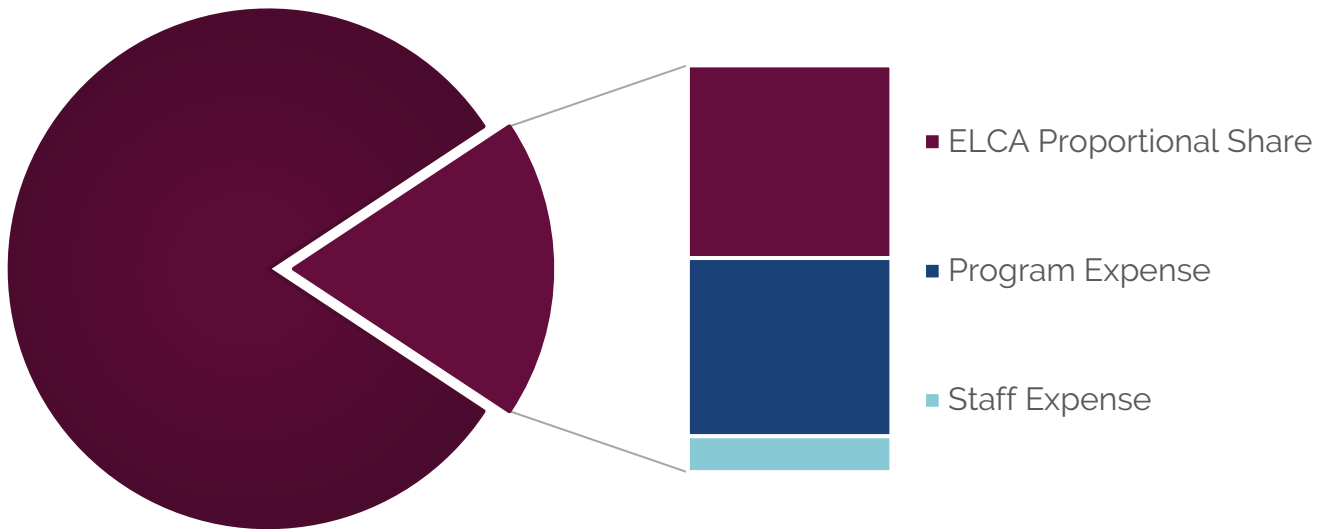


Case Study: Synod-wide stewardship study led by the Stewardship & Financial Support Committee

In early summer, the Stewardship & Financial Support Committee hosted a Zoom book study on the book "Grateful" by Diana Butler Bass. Since we weren't able to host a live Stewardship event this year, the book study sounded like a wonderful alternative. Thanks to our Zoom account we not only had people participating from congregations across our synod but also from other synods. We began each study with general conversation around that week's chapter, then we broke into small groups for deeper discussion. This time took us into deep conversation about the need as human beings to grow the feeling of being grateful. It was wonderful to share ideas and creativity around giving thanks. We ended each study back together for reflections, sharing and prayer. We were excited at the great response and received wonderful feedback. You can look for us to offer this again in the future. "

— Barbara Nugent
Synod VP & Stewardship Committee Chair

Vital congregations are communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world. Our investment into the Churchwide expression of the ELCA returns to us with added value as we work collaboratively to find creative and innovative avenues for congregational health. **Now more than ever, while we cannot physically gather, digital tools for collaboration are vital to bind congregations and leaders to one another in connection, growth, and encouragement.**



ELCA

- Plant and support 357 new ELCA congregations in the United States
- Work together with our ethnic specific and multicultural ministries to develop networks and resources for congregational vibrancy
- Design and maintain communications tools to strengthen our Lutheran identity and connect members with one another through new technology and systems
- Develop and promote efforts related to stewardship education, financial literacy, mission interpretation and growth in giving to all church ministries

Synod

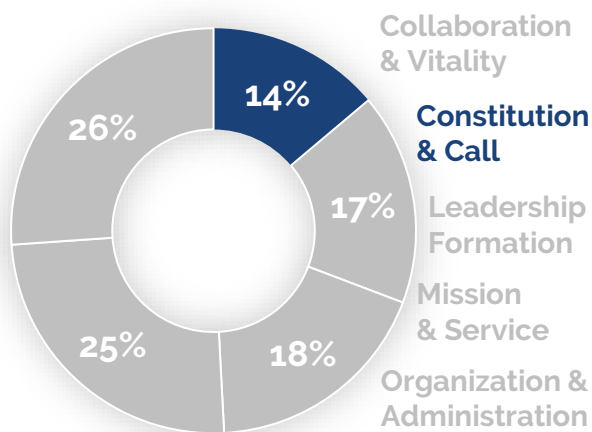
- Congregational ministry support for stewardship, evangelism, missional leadership, discipleship, & faith formation
- Guidance for new parish & collaborative models
- Support for new & renewing ministries
- Ecumenical Affairs Committee & ecumenical/interfaith partnerships
- Congregational Life Committee & Communications Services Committee

\$227,481.10

CONSTITUTION & CALL



Whether in the joy of welcoming a new candidate to the ministry, uncertainty of pastoral transitions, or trauma of congregational crises, the synod supports members during the biggest changes & needs.



Case Study: Renewed ministry of Pastor David Hanssen

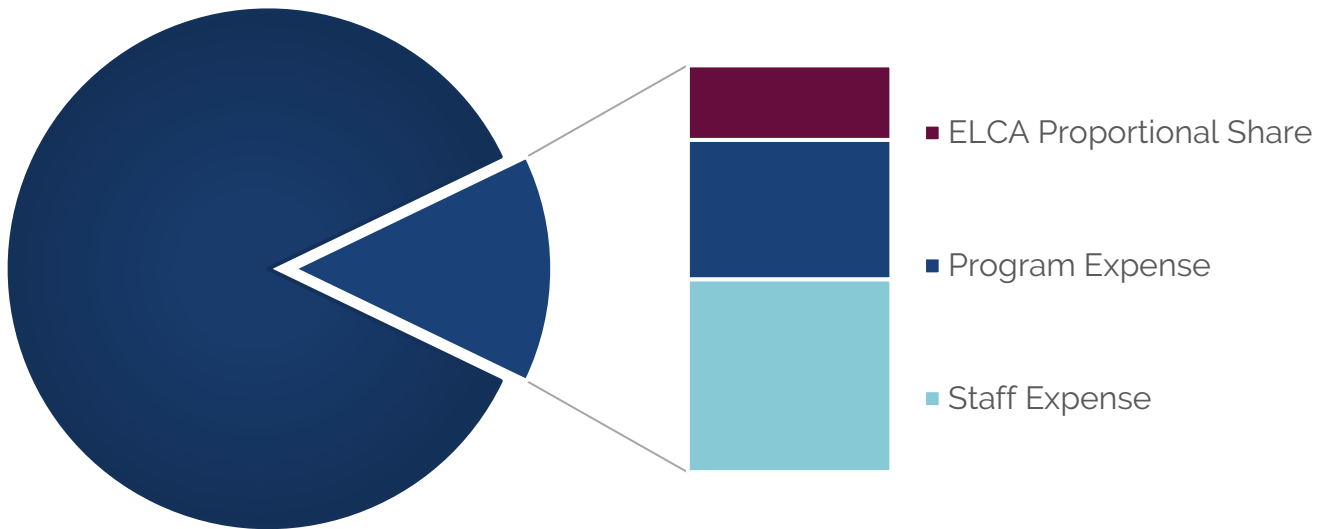
"When I arrived here at Bethel, I wasn't sure I wanted to be a pastor anymore. I had lost the sense of call that was once so strong in my life.

In the past year, as both the transitional interim and now as the called pastor of Bethel, that sense of call has returned. I know God has called me to be a pastor in His Church and to be the pastor to His people here at Bethel.

God has given me a great gift being called here and to have the privilege of preaching the Word and administering the holy sacraments to the saints here on the Chestnut Ridge.."

— Pastor David Hanssen
Bethel, Stahlstown

While technology can optimize many tasks, there is no way to mechanize wisdom, guidance, mentorship, and sound judgement. Ministry is a field that requires person-to-person relationships, especially in matters of discernment and vocation. **Since the 2020 budget, staff roles have shifted and expenses decreased. Yet in this category, staff remain the cornerstone of keeping our ministerium safe, prepared, & healthy.**



ELCA

- Recruit, prepare and implement a system for the deployment of 17,500 rostered ministers
- Coordinate meetings and support for 65 synodical bishops
- Organize lay and clergy leaders from across the church to serve on the governance boards and committees that provide guidance and oversight for ELCA ministries
- Research and analyze trends that impact the ELCA and develop innovated strategies to improve mission and ministry in the 21st century

Synod

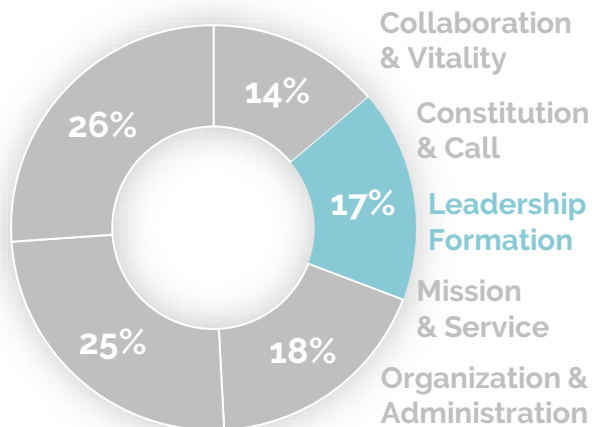
- Prepare & approve candidates for ministry
- Support ministers & congregations throughout the call process
- Train & place interim calls
- Provide pulpit supply to congregations
- Synod council & conferences expenses
- Support/counseling fund
- Guide congregations during conflict & uncertainty
- Adjudicate ethical & constitutional offenses

\$277,780.34

LEADERSHIP FORMATION



Healthy & growing leaders are needed for healthy & growing congregations, which is why the synod is constantly offering training & formative experiences for rostered and lay leaders.



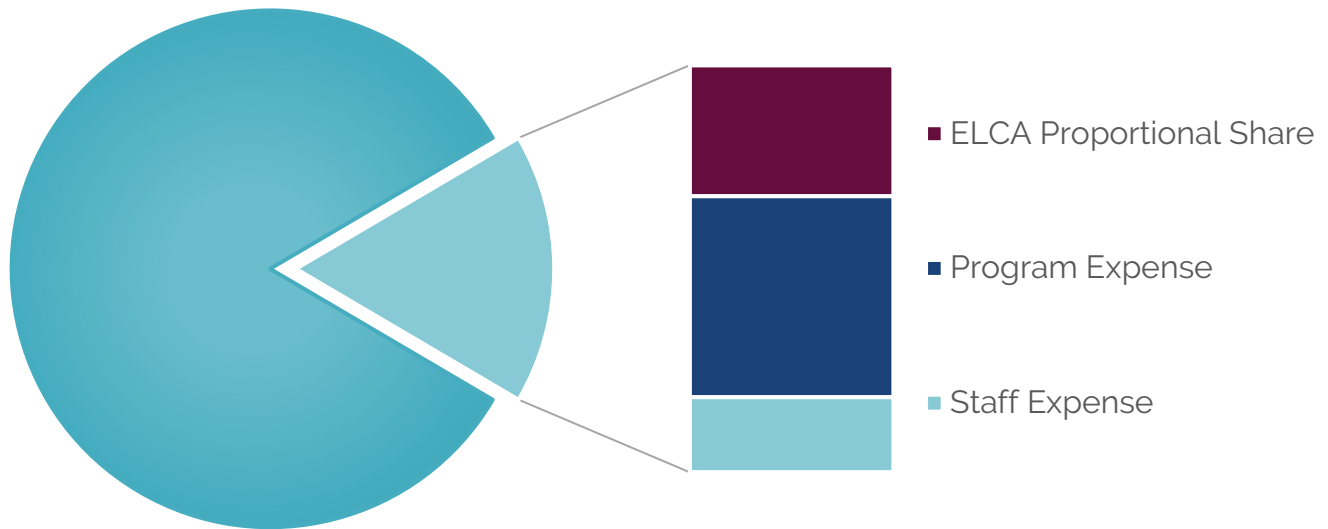
Case Study: Collaborative lay worship leader training with the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

"The Love+Teach+Heal Leadership Academy has given me a better understanding of what it means to be a congregational leader. The knowledge acquired in the class gives a sound understanding of the Episcopal and Lutheran beliefs and practices. I have enjoyed the class and continue to learn so much each time that I am currently taking it for the third time. Pastor Natalie Hall leads us through topics and guides the class through common sense theology. Another enjoyable aspect is the diversity of the class members. Not everyone comes from an Episcopal or a Lutheran community, making our discussions interesting because we get to hear perspectives of what Church means to people from different backgrounds.

The knowledge acquired from attending these classes has given me the confidence to be able to lead a worship service and know that it is for the glory of God that we gather."

— Ray Dittenhafer
Holy Trinity, Irwin

A diverse portfolio of tools helps us reach the needs of a diverse pool of leaders. Sometimes the personal guidance of staff is needed, other times it's a renowned public speaker that inspires, or a curriculum developed at the Churchwide or Synodical level. This distribution of personal, local, and national resources keeps us equipped to offer paths to growth and renewed energy for all kinds of leaders. **Now we are rising to the challenge of supporting leaders online, yet as closely as ever before.**



ELCA

- Support and develop current and future leaders in the ELCA
 - Seven ELCA seminaries
 - 26 ELCA colleges and universities
- Develop and share resources for faith, discipleship, prayer and worship
- Offer events and leadership opportunities for youth and young adults – Including the ELCA National Youth Gathering
- Sustain ecumenical and interfaith relationships

Synod

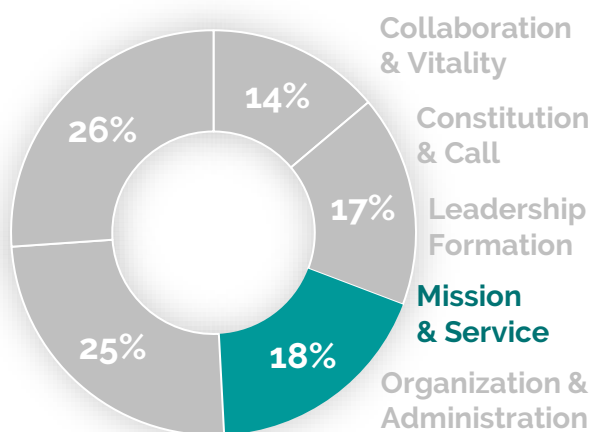
- The Resource Center
- Continuing education for ministers
- First-call theological education
- Ministry Committee & Youth Ministry Committee
- Mentorship during times of discernment
- Training for lay worship leaders
- Leadership support, lay education
- Thiel College & United Lutheran Seminary
- Student grants, career development services

\$302,051.66

MISSION & SERVICE



Because Christ dwells in us, we are sent into the world to be his hands & feet. The synod commissions & supports ministries in our local congregations & throughout the world.



Case Study: Congregation trainings by Glade Run Lutheran Services

"Glade Run, as a sanctuary-certified agency, is guided by the understanding that many of the challenging behaviors displayed by individuals we encounter are directly related to adverse experiences. Trauma informed care training has helped individuals and congregations understand the impact of such experiences and how they shape the present and future. These trainings in turn help congregations to navigate change by learning from the past in order to focus on the hope of the future. Congregations learn how to create safe communities. Our training helps make these traumatic experiences less intimidating because trauma informed communities are places to heal from those experiences.

We have brought trauma informed training to congregations in our synod and we can help you create a safe space, sanctuary space, too."

— *Pastor Christina Hough*
Director of Spiritual Care, Glade Run

Overhead expenses are lowest in this category. Both locally and nationally, lives are changed through financial contributions and the hands-on care of ministry teams and social ministry organizations. **We have adapted new models of support for our ministry partners in 2021 that are mutually beneficial and facilitate individual Lutherans, congregations, and communities throughout southwestern Pennsylvania in working together towards common goals.**



ELCA

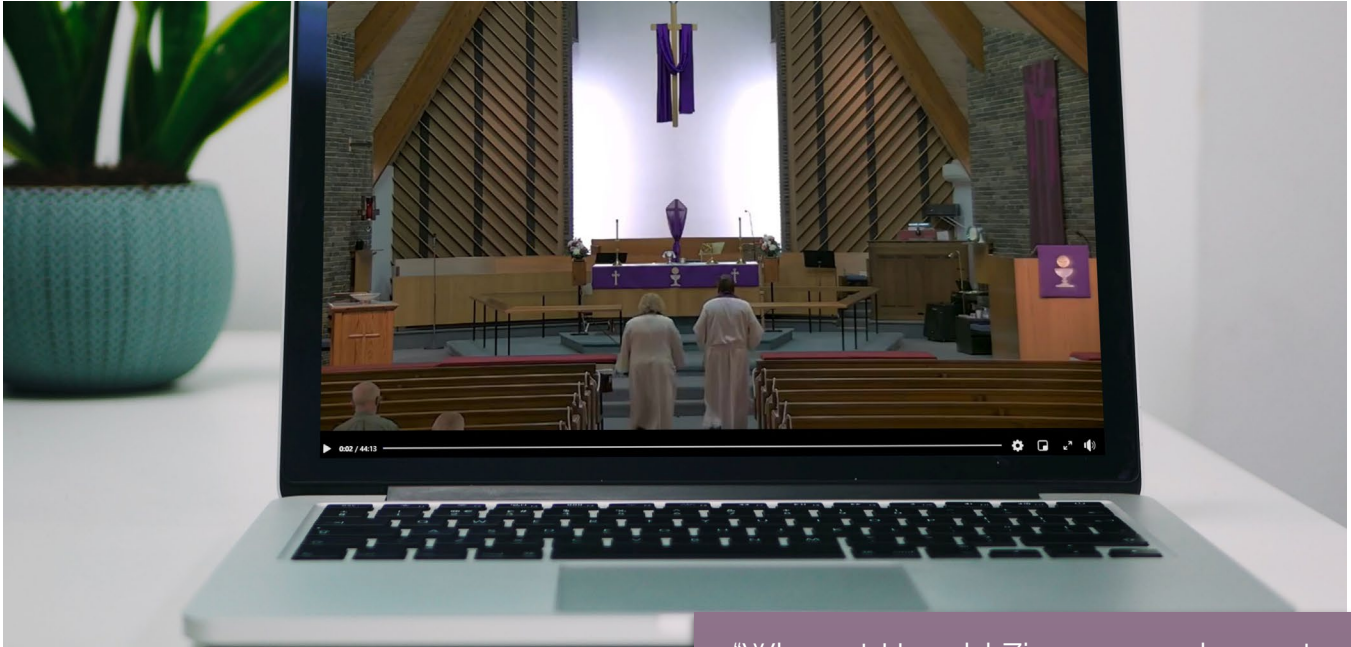
- 230 missionaries in more than 48 countries
- 84 young adults in global mission (YAGMs) in 11 country programs
- Lutheran World Federation's 145-member churches and the ELCA's 85 companion synods
- Support social ministry organizations, such as Lutheran Services in America, to impact the lives of 1 in 50 Americans
- Create social statements and equip members and leaders to advocate with lawmakers in order to support policies that promote justice and peace

Synod

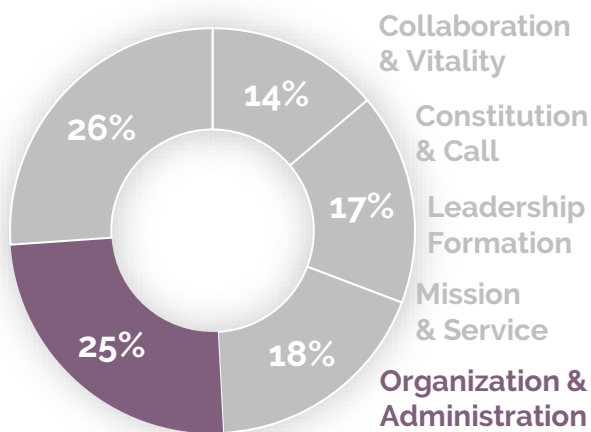
- Camping ministry at Lutherlyn & Camp Agape
- Campus ministry & youth ministry
- Social ministry partners: Lutheran SeniorLife, Glade Run, Bethesda Lutheran Services, Lutheran Service Society
- Advocacy through LAMPa
- Outreach, Stewardship, & Church in Society Committees
- Support missionaries & companion synod
- Provide relief with disaster response

\$406,167.71

ORGANIZATION & ADMINISTRATION



The Synod provides additional infrastructure, resources, & coordination for Lutherans throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. More ministry & service is possible because of our shared work.



Case Study: The Resource Center, directed by Deacon Beth Caywood, assists congregations in finding the support they need.

“When at Harrold Zion, we made great use of the synod’s Resource Center. The Assistant Pastor would search for ideas for Adult Ministry. The Director of Family Ministries would search for ideas relating to her area of service. I would search for ideas for Confirmation and Senior High Sunday School classes. The time Beth would spend with us was invaluable.

During Covid, Beth has been wonderful, keeping us apprised of webinars relating to worship and learning ideas during these difficult days. As a result of Beth’s knowledge and directions, I have made use of many of the webinars that she has brought to our attention.”

— Pastor John Smaligo
Harrold Zion, Greensburg

The gears continually turning behind the scenes are also a form of ministry. Shared functions that would be beyond the capacity of any one congregation are often managed by synod staff for the benefit of all. **The relocation of the synod office and sale of our prior building was a big step toward responsible stewardship of assets which greatly decreased the overhead portion of this category.**



ELCA

- Maintain a constituent data base of over 1.1 million records of rostered and lay leaders, members, donors and congregations
- Equip congregations and synods with resources to assist in risk management and legal matters
- Preserve archives and historic records of the ELCA and its predecessor bodies
- Provide coordination and support for churchwide ministries
- Process 150,000 gifts to ELCA ministries

Synod

- Congregational support for:
 - Reporting
 - Governance
 - Administrative best practices
- Administrative support:
 - Financial management
 - Data/history keeping
 - Legal support
- Synod-wide communications
- Coordination of Synod Assembly
- Mission Endowment Fund oversight



SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD

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Cover photo courtesy of Harrold Zion Lutheran Church, Greensburg

