



FUNDING OUR MISSION

2024



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





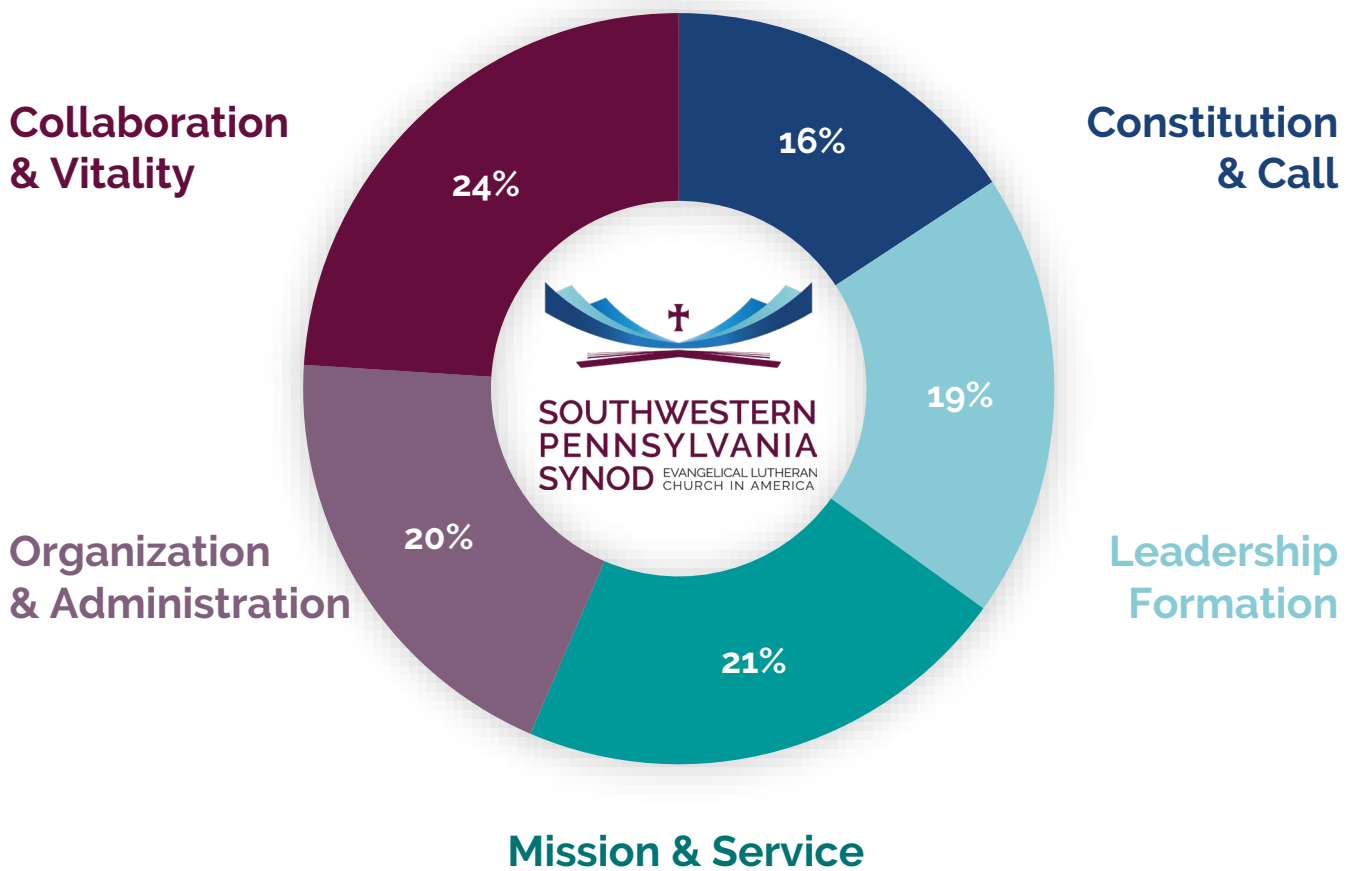
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A budget is more than just a balanced checkbook; it's a statement of values.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod strives to allocate its fiscal & human resources in ways that serve our mission prioritizing faith, discipleship & centering in Christ.

The Synod's \$1,544,972 annual budget begins with sharing a percentage of Mission Support received with our Churchwide expression. The remainder serves leaders & congregations in Southwestern Pennsylvania.



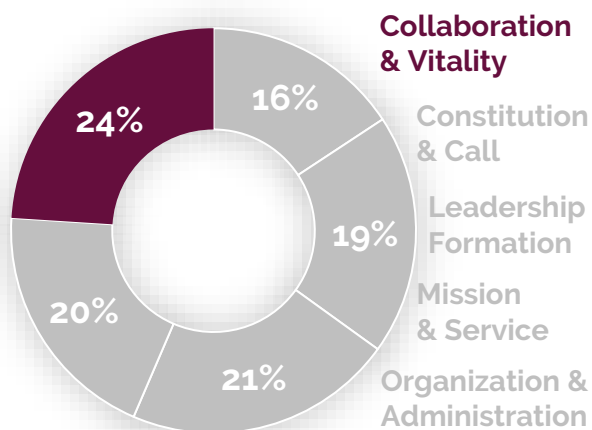
MISSION: To serve, connect, and equip ELCA congregations in southwestern Pennsylvania to tell the story of Jesus.

\$370,650.00

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: Joint-parish revitalization results from ELCA training.

"Several members of my congregations had the opportunity to participate in the Congregational Vitality training offered by the ELCA and were inspired to create a Vital Congregations Taskforce. The taskforce has created a joint-parish mission statement, added signage, updated pew cards, and created a QR code for members to invite others. We also visited with Beaver County commissioners and the executive director of the Beaver Women's Center to deepen relationships and learn more about needs in the community. We are excited to participate in the ribbon cutting and opening of a new men's shelter for Beaver County and will serve monthly meals.

The Congregational Vitality training has invited us to listen and reflect, ask questions and think creatively about how to be more present in the community."

— *Pastor Margarethe Galbraith-Cordes*
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Beaver and
Hope Lutheran Church in Brighton Township

Vital congregations 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. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and its staff are equipped to engage congregational leaders with powerful resources to address real-world ministry challenges.



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

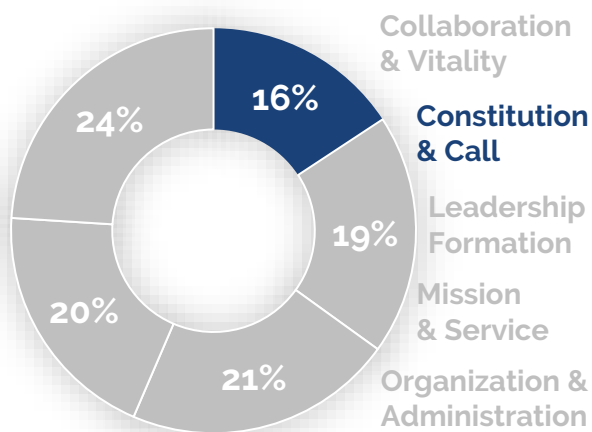
- Congregational ministry support for stewardship, evangelism, missional leadership, discipleship, & faith formation
- Guidance for new parish & collaborative models
- Support for new & renewing ministries
- Ecumenical Affairs Committee & ecumenical/interfaith partnerships
- Care & Leadership of Congregations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

\$243,030.00

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.

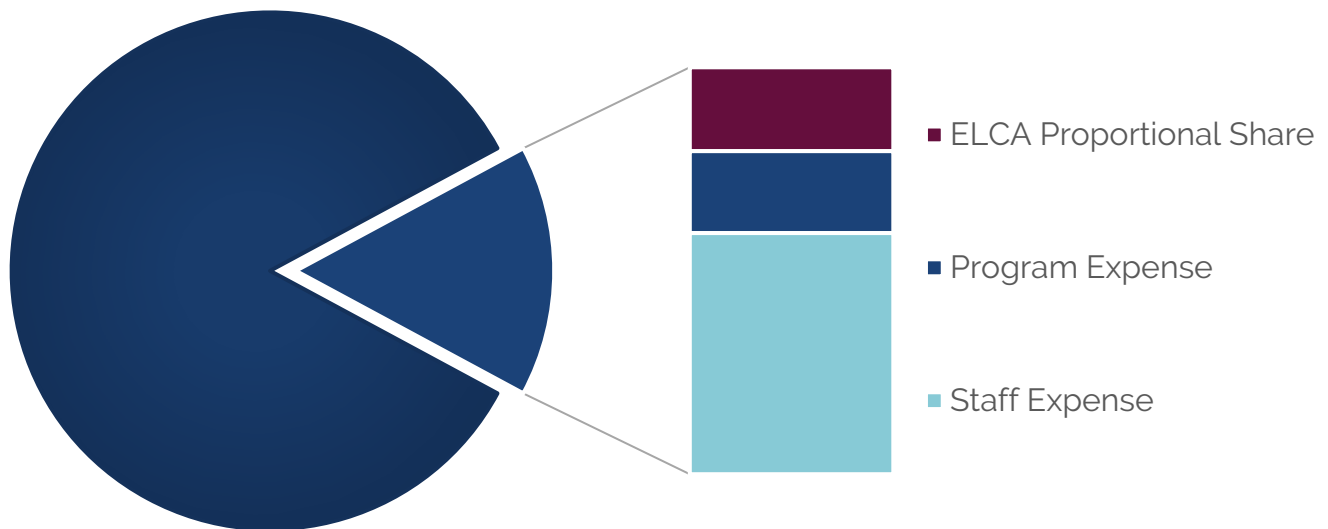


Case Study: Perry Highway Lutheran Church's path to communal healing after trauma.

"Perry Highway Lutheran Church has had its share of ups and downs. With the departure of our pastor of over 25 years and COVID hitting us two months later, our congregation was losing parishioners rapidly. With the help of our synod, we obtained a wonderful intentional interim pastor who was with us for two years. She helped guide us along through our trauma; and with care and the determination of our members and our synod, our interim pastor and an assistant to the bishop were able to bring us out of our sad times into looking to call a new pastor. After a short period of five months, we called a new warm and vibrant pastor. Our congregation is now growing with our new exciting pastor and a message of inclusion and growth.

— Judy Weber
Perry Highway Lutheran Church

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. Our main expense in this category is the staff time it takes to have the hard conversations and abounding joy that make a 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 innovative strategies to improve mission and ministry in the 21st century

Synod

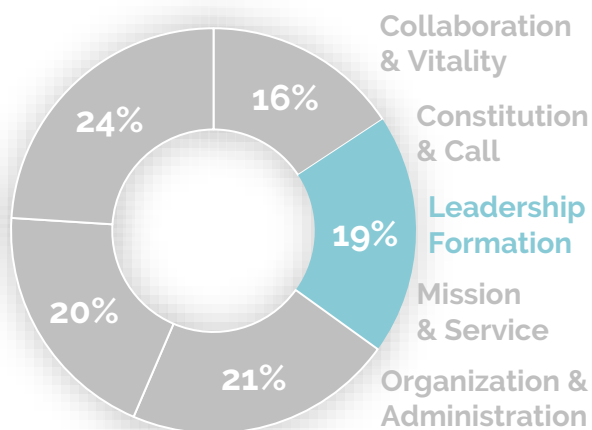
- Prepare & approve candidates for ministry
- Support ministers & congregations throughout the call process
- Train & place interim calls
- Provide pulpit supply to congregations
- Synod council & conferences expenses
- Support/counseling fund
- Guide congregations during conflict & uncertainty
- Adjudicate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

\$296,851.25

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.



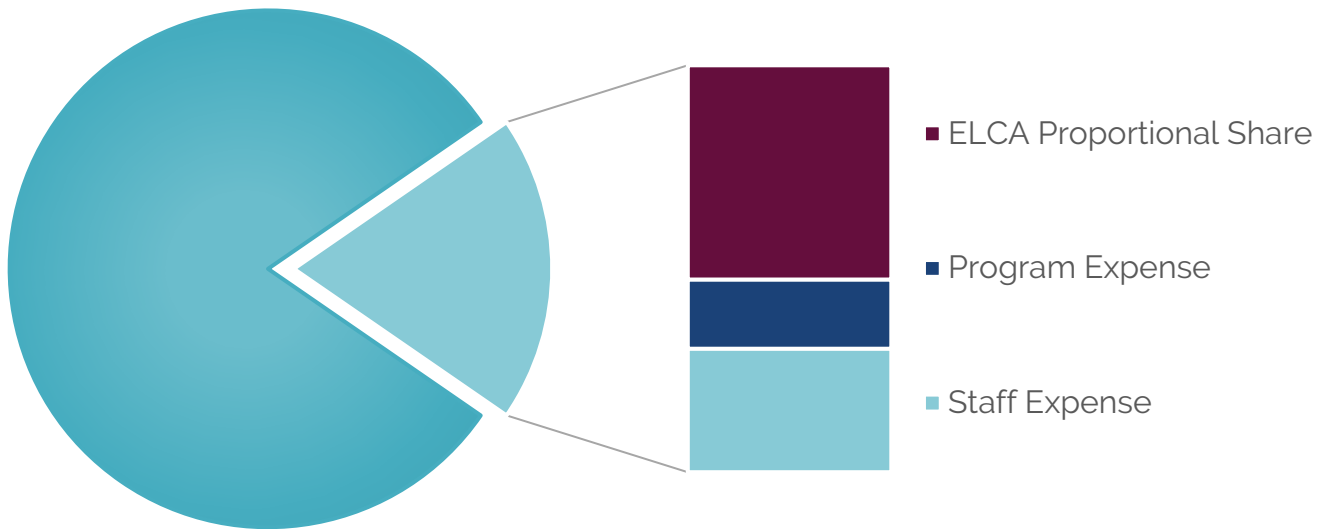
Case Study: "Care With the Word" educational event

"As a lay worship Leader and life-long learner, I am continually looking for educational opportunities to expand the knowledge I gained during my year-long lay ministry training at Luther Seminary. While our synod has a rich history of continuing education for ordained pastors, Bishop Kusserow recently invited lay worship leaders to take part in a two-part class, alongside the clergy of our synod, in which we studied *Preaching and Teaching "With Love and Respect for the Jewish People."*

I gained valuable insight and practical ideas for preaching and teaching the two congregations I currently serve. As anti-Semitism continues to be on the rise, we talked about the importance of the words, images, and messages we deliver in our sermons and in our teachings. In turn, the members of our congregations will experience God's love and mercy as we share how the Holy Scriptures are filled with grace for all."

— P. J. Carte, Lay Worship Leader
St John Lutheran Church, Connellsville

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 who 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.



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

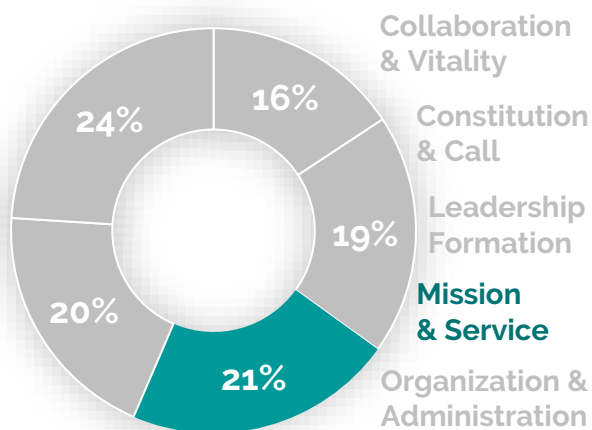
- The Resource Ministry
- First-call theological education
- Care & Leadership of All Generations Committee
- Care & Leadership of Rostered Ministers Committee, & continuing education
- Mentorship during times of discernment
- Training, education & support for lay leaders
- Thiel College & United Lutheran Seminary
- Student grants

\$332,405.25

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: The synod's second annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration event

"The Authentic Diversity and Justice team is a synod working group focused on building 'authentic' inclusion and diversity in our congregations and fighting all forms of oppression in our organization and in our region. The Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration is organized annually as a means of creating greater opportunities for individual and congregational engagement in this ongoing work.

In 2023, the engagement centered on addressing housing needs that are integral to Dr. King's vision of a beloved community and collaborating with ecumenical, interfaith and community partners to achieve measurable progress. We identified the many housing ministries currently organized or supported by our congregations and encouraged their support.

— Rev. Dr. Martin Rafanan
Authentic Diversity & Justice Working Group

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. The work done via these channels also creates a way for individual Lutherans, congregations, and communities throughout southwestern Pennsylvania to work 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 150-member churches and the ELCA's 120 companion synod relationships
- 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

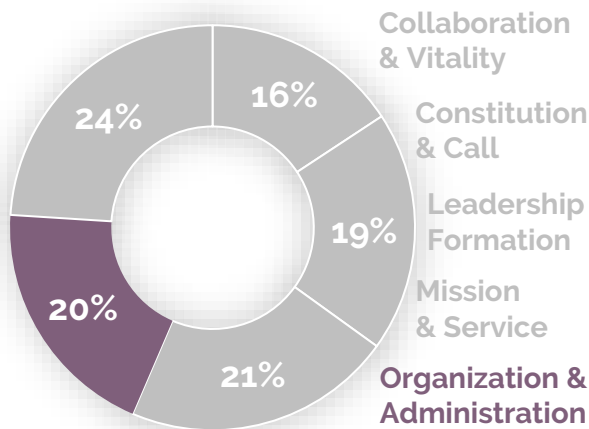
- Camping ministry at Lutherlyn & Camp Agape
- Campus ministry & youth ministry
- Social ministry partners: Lutheran SeniorLife, Glade Run, Bethesda Lutheran Services, Lutheran Service Society
- Advocacy through LAMPa
- Outreach, Stewardship, Church in Society, & Church Throughout the World Committees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

\$302.035.50

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: Michelle Snyder was a guest speaker at a Monthly Ministerium online gathering to discuss how we can live and thrive within seasons of bracing for change.

"It's not uncommon, when asked to do a Zoom meeting with a group of pastors, for the request to come with a pre-meeting.... A 'get-our-ducks-in-a-row' conversation. It's usually about start times, who's in charge of breakout rooms, and hoped for outcomes. But when I got on the call with the staff of this synod, it was a very different kind of meeting.

This group of thoughtful folks spent an hour reflecting deeply with me. They very caringly laid out what they thought would be useful and why, in their deliberations, they thought I would be the person to lead it. The meeting was not perfunctory; it was mindful and intentional. And it made my experience of working with the ministerium all the more robust as a result."

— Michelle Snyder
Center for Healthy Churches

The gears continually turning behind the scenes are also a form of ministry. The Synod's staff not only keeps our operations running, but supports the operations of congregations as well, allowing them to fulfill their calling with fewer headaches. Additional shared functions that would be beyond the capacity of any one congregation are also managed by Synod office staff.



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

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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