

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Minneapolis Area Synod
of the ELCA

On the evening of Jesus' resurrection, as two of his followers were walking along the road that leads from the city of Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus "talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them." - Luke 24

Grace and peace to you, beloved of Christ Jesus.

This resurrection story is a favorite. We walk together as church, and Jesus draws near and walks with us. The labors of the day, the content of our discussions, the swirl of society and politics, the hopes and fears, these things shift, and yet, Jesus walks with us and is known once again as we gather together around the table.

What a year this has been. This report to the worshipping communities of the Minneapolis Area Synod is an opportunity to look back on 2024, and to look ahead at the year to come. Most of all, it is an opportunity to name and celebrate some of the ways the Holy Spirit continues to enliven God's church. We give thanks to you and your congregation for your partnership in this ministry we share.

On May 4, 2024, you elected me to serve as your Bishop. On August 1, 2024, I took office, and on September 21, 2024, I was installed during a festive and moving worship service at Central Lutheran Church. This election represents a significant threshold in our synod's life as we continue by the Spirit's leading along paths yet unknown. Thank you for your trust and your continued prayers. We are particularly grateful for the intentional work of the Bishop's Election Committee. My deep thanks to Bishop Ann Svennungsen for her 12 years of faithful leadership, and for her generosity of wisdom and spirit as I learn the ropes. As I have restructured parts of our synod's ministry team, we have had several staff transitions. Some have completed their service, over the summer and fall we welcomed a few new staff, and in 2025 we will welcome more. Thank you to our staff for their patience, perseverance, faithful ministry, and good courage during a long transition.

Stepping into this role, I am more mindful than ever that we are **Church Together: Learning Together, Listening Together, Serving Together, Worshipping Together.**



A few highlights from 2024



- 137** worshipping communities, including
 - 3** new starts
 - 8** congregational strategic ministries
- 3** congregations marked Holy Closures this year, honoring their years and ministry, and in closing, stewarded their assets by contributing to the Resurrection Fund.
- 11** languages spoken in worship



- 62** call processes in **55** congregations
- 8** ordinations of new pastors and deacons and **24** rostered ministers installed into new positions
- 34** people discerning a call to ministry and active in our candidacy process
- 305** pastors and deacons currently serving in our synod, and around **370** retired ministers
- 52** pastors and deacons serving in specialized ministries, including chaplains, educators, social ministry leaders, and missionaries



- 5** years of Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices cohorts supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations Initiative, with plans to apply for a scaling grant in 2025
- 17** congregations in the current cohort of Faith Practices and Neighboring Practices, and **13** in the first cohort (that's nearly 1/4 of our synod's congregations!)
- \$1.25 million** grant received from the Lilly Endowment for Family Faith – a project accompanying parents and caretakers from the Synod's new and strategic ministries. Watch for more details coming soon!



- 800** people attended the Bishop Installation in person, including **220** clergy
- \$2,681,409** pledged in Mission Support, with **50%** supporting MAS ministry and **50%** for ELCA ministry
- 2** companion synod partnerships: Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) and the Leipzig District-Evangelical Lutheran Church in Saxony, Germany, including visits from Archbishop Musa Filibus (LCCN), Superintendent Sebastian Feydt and Pastor Cristoph Reichl (Leipzig)



Synod staff supported leaders and congregations, convening, communicating, collaborating, and navigating conflicts

Hosted many special events such as an Eco Faith Summit, Boundaries Workshop, Bishop's Theological Conference, Ministeriums, and Communicators Gatherings



What a gift to reflect on the amazing ways we were Church Together in 2024! We look forward to 2025 with the Conference Assemblies in February, Synod Assembly (May 2 - 3), and the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (July 28 - August 2). We walk together as church, trusting that Jesus continues to come near and walk with us. We are Church Together. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Bishop Jen Nagel