



Minneapolis Area Synod

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

NARRATIVE SPENDING PLAN



NARRATIVE SPENDING PLAN

We are grateful for the generous Mission Support we receive from the churches in the Minneapolis Area Synod. This giving funds most of our operations budget. As in previous years, the 2026 spending plan highlights a few different sources of investments in ministry: Mission Support, the Resurrection Fund, the Victory Memorial Fund, and two Lilly Endowment Grants. The two funds and the two grants are tracked separately from the Synod's Operating Budget in the Synod's Spending Plan. The Synod is able to use funds from these sources to further our impact. In 2026, the impact from these grants and funds is expected to total about \$850,000.

Total Investments in Ministry: \$3,559,000



RESURRECTION FUND

When congregations are facing holy closure, congregations are invited to give proceeds of their building sale to the Synod Resurrection Fund - helping us embody the truth that from death can come life. The Resurrection Fund is the source for Ministry Imagination Grants, interpretation and translation services, and support for the Synod's New Ministries. (This year, the Executive Committee is proposing a 136% increase in this financial support for our newer worshipping communities.)

VICTORY MEMORIAL FUND

The Victory Memorial Fund was created from proceeds from the sale of Victory Lutheran Church in North Minneapolis. North Minneapolis congregations can apply annually for modest grants from the interest income of the fund.

LILLY ENDOWMENT GRANTS

We are also grateful to have two grant-funded projects funded by the Lilly Endowment - Family Faith and Faith & Neighboring Practices. In FY 2026, these grants help fund ministry initiatives with several of our church communities.

Family Faith: \$210,000

Family Faith is a Lilly Endowment-funded “Christian Parenting and Caretaking” initiative of the Minneapolis Area Synod that equips immigrant and non-dominant-culture families to nurture faith in everyday life. The project gathers families into supportive cohorts where they enrich their daily rhythms with faith and learn from one another through shared stories and simple, meaningful practices. Rooted in the belief that parents and caregivers are the primary faith leaders in their households, this work helps shift confidence and capacity for faith formation back to them. Grant funding supports the development of curriculum and culturally relevant resources, facilitation of cohorts, leader training, and the coordination of gatherings and ongoing support that make this approach possible.

Faith & Neighboring Practices: \$234,000

Faith & Neighboring Practices is an initiative funded in part by the Lilly Endowment’s “Thriving Congregations Initiative.” The project brings congregational teams together to experiment with small, simple practices that connect churches to God and neighbor, shifting attention from problems and scarcity, to possibilities and abundance. The grant funds an incredible Faith & Neighboring Team, and costs associated with learning retreats, cohort meetings, and administration.

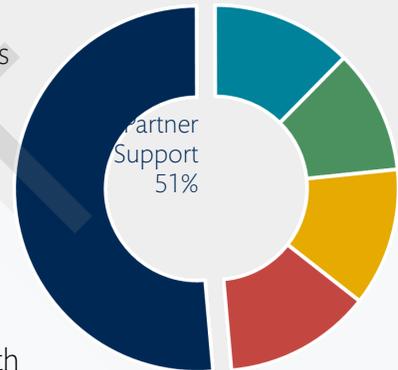


OPERATING BUDGET DETAIL

76% of the Total Investments in Ministry comes from Mission Support from Minneapolis Area Synod worshipping communities. On the next pages you will see how the Minneapolis Area Synod uses these gifts to gather, activate, nurture, and cultivate the leaders and churches in our synod. We hope that providing more information about where your gifts go in the Synod will encourage you to continue and even grow your gracious giving.

Partner Support

51% of the Mission Support we receive goes to support ministry partners locally and nationally. This partnership support includes the \$1,255,544 that we share with ELCA Churchwide. In the past we have shared 50% of the Mission Support received. (This year, the Synod Council is proposing that this percentage is decreased to 49%.) The other 2% (\$194,378) goes to local ministry partners including Lutheran Campus Ministry, Lutheran Advocacy MN, Minnesota Council of Churches, Luther Seminary, Region 3 Archives, ELCA Foundation, the Summer Youth Program, and the Synod’s eight Strategic Ministries. (Strategic Ministries are MAS ministries that receive special support from both Synod and the ELCA as investments in our shared commitment to equity and innovation. This year the Synod Council is proposing a 46% increase in funding to these ministries).



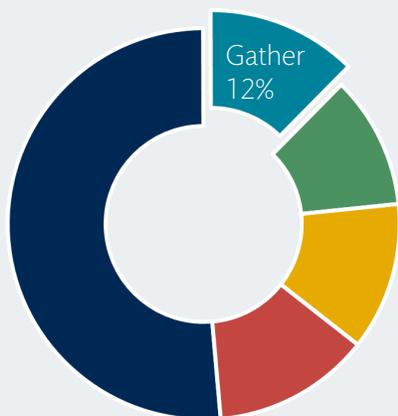
Income	
Mission Support	\$2,562,335
Miscellaneous Income	\$126,672
Total Revenues	\$2,698,507
Expenses	
ELCA Mission Support	\$1,255,544
Partner Ministries	\$194,378
Program Support	\$52,208
Compensation & Benefits	\$944,896
General Operating Expenses	\$261,642
Total Expenses	\$2,708,669

The Synod is also proud to be the fiscal agent for the Synod Senior Band, the Synod Youth Choir, Pray Without Ceasing, and the Welcome Fund. These are all pass-through accounts that are shown in the budget, but don't bring in income.

GATHER

"Thank you SO much for caring for your leaders and finding a wide variety of ways to show it."

- MAS Rostered Minister



13%
\$337,747

As the Minneapolis Area Synod, we live out the meaning of the word synod — a way together — by gathering people to worship, learn, pray, and support one another. At Synod Assembly, lay leaders, pastors, and deacons from our 137 worshipping communities come together to meet each other, share meals, worship, do a service project, and engage in the shared work of the church. Throughout the year, we also host a Bishop's Theological Conference and two Ministerium gatherings for our pastors and deacons. These are intentional times for learning, worship, and strengthening relationships. In addition, our Peer Groups initiative provides space for leaders to walk together in life and ministry. Across our large and diverse synod, these Spirit-filled connections make ministry possible and sustainable.



ACTIVATE



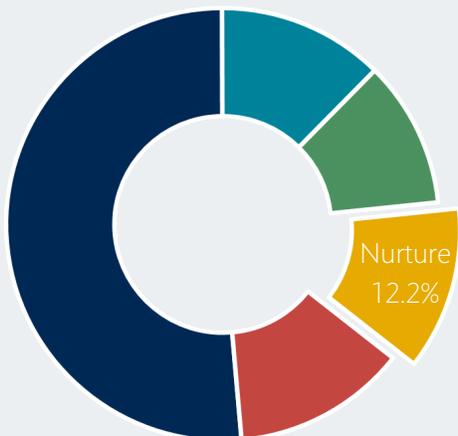
The Synod's commitment to provide learning opportunities about how to better engage our surrounding community has enabled our congregation to more fully know, support, and love our neighbors!"
- Member from Calvary Lutheran, Minneapolis

11%
\$303,712

Grounded in God's grace and committed to Christ's command to love our neighbors, we activate Synod leaders to trust God's future and to live out that trust through concrete action. This work happens in practical ways—training, resource-sharing, financial prioritizing, and the courage to stand up faithfully together. These are challenging times and the witness of the church is vital. As the Synod, we respond to the call of Scripture and the invitations of our siblings to pray and work together for peace and liberation, to dig deep and disrupt the old systems and status quo that keeps us isolated along lines of race, economics, and gender. We partner with faith-based community organizing efforts and focus on areas like immigration and creation-care ministries. We also coordinate direct support through programs like the Hunger Fund so leaders can strengthen ministries, address immediate needs, and plan for long-term vitality. The Holy Spirit leads us to follow Jesus closely—acting with compassion and speaking truth to power, and empowering Synod leaders to do the same.



NURTURE



"The Minneapolis Area Synod Staff provided steady guidance and thoughtful support during a season of staff transitions, ensuring the process was handled with care and professionalism. Their calm presence brought clarity and reassurance which was greatly appreciated."

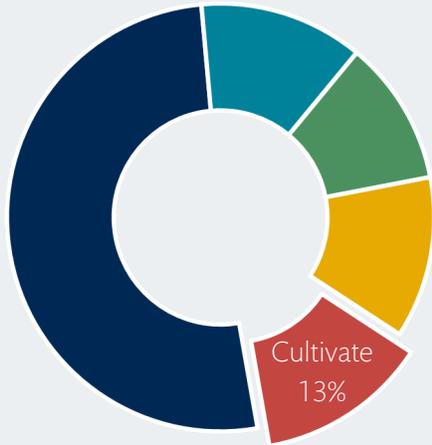
- Faith Lutheran, Coon Rapids

12%
\$331,936

The Minneapolis Area Synod provides trustworthy and thoughtful supports that empower congregational leaders to remain grounded, courageous, and vital in all circumstances. Rooted in our shared Lutheran identity, faith practices, and governing documents, the Synod sets expectations and guides communities toward healthy boundaries and accountability. We support congregational councils in their vital work and uplift faithful collaboration and solidarity between churches throughout the Synod. We walk alongside churches during times of celebration and conflict, offering guidance, care, and resources to strengthen their ministries. We provide clear and practical support on church constitutions and healthy governance ensuring each community has the "tools and rules" to live out its mission faithfully and effectively.



CULTIVATE



"The Communicators Gatherings have been incredibly valuable to me. I've built connections that help me do my work better, learned from the wisdom and experiences of others, and received thoughtful feedback on my communications."
- MAS Church Communicator

13%
\$353,651

We journey alongside congregations and their leaders as they discern and live out God's call to ministry. Practical resources, training, and education support churches as they seek faithful ways to follow Jesus today. Each year, our "Tool Kit" workshops equip leaders—cultivating more-proficient treasurers, wiser pastors, more-strategic council presidents, and more-effective communicators.

We also accompany individuals discerning a call to become Deacons or Pastors, walking with them through candidacy, seminary, internship, ordination, their first call, and beyond. Similarly, we support congregations during pastoral transitions by fostering healthy closure, providing experienced interim pastors, guiding call committees, and helping connect them with potential new leaders. The Synod's role in all these moments helps cultivate strong leaders and healthy congregations grounded in God's mission.

