



**Mission Stories of the
Northern Great Lakes Synod
&
Ministry Financial Review and Plan**



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



“Synod” means “Walking Together”

All the congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod are intertwined in this mission work of Christ. We are grateful for the financial and people resources offered up for the sake of Christ’s mission. We are truly in this work together.



The Church is the people of God created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this Church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include:

- ◆ Facilitating the call process
- ◆ Developing new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries
- ◆ Leading and encouraging congregations in evangelism efforts
- ◆ Assisting congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world
- ◆ Encouraging congregations to respond to human need
- ◆ Encouraging financial support for the work of the local and global church by individuals and congregations
- ◆ Providing resources and trainings for congregational life



The ELCA’s 65 synods vary greatly in size, geography, membership, staffing and program. Our smallest synod has 30 congregations – the largest nearly 300. The synods are grouped into nine regions, which are points of connection for them and the churchwide organization. Synods unite the work of congregations within their areas, serve as regional support, and guide pastoral and other staff candidates. In order to strengthen the relationship between synod leaders and the churchwide office, many churchwide teams relate to and support the work of the synods. We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world – together.

“We have a great and faithful God. We have been entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation and hope. God is at work in our ELCA and in the 79 congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. We have a story to tell. We have good news to share! We are blessed to hear each other’s stories of faith, and we are more effective in our ministry efforts when we are all moving in the same direction.”
(Bishop Katherine Finegan)

Faithful Innovations—Holy Experiments

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

(Mt. 18:20 NKJV)

The Faithful Innovations training provided by our NGL Synod, gave our core group, our “Guiding Team”, an opportunity to strengthen our faith together. We gained courage to share our faith more openly with our fellow congregational members and with our community both in action and in words. Through Dwelling in the Word, we focused on what God might be up to in the Keweenaw. The FI training brought us to a place where we could take our own next steps following “God at Work” planning. We went out into the surrounding towns, bringing new life to our Sunday School, sharing meals, bringing a Christ based activity to a local Christmas celebration (right along with Santa). Our own active Church membership is small, but the world around us is a big place where God still has work to do.



Faithful Innovations Training at Fortune Lake

Toni L. Waara, Bethany Lutheran Church of Keweenaw



A Fun Filled Faith Formation for Kids Ages Kindergarten to 6th Grade

All Denominations Welcome

Opportunities for Adults Too!



Beginning Sunday, September 22, 2019 From 10:00 am - 10:45 am

Bethany Lutheran Church of the Keweenaw
Mohawk, Michigan

Questions Call 337-2662

Poster Printing Courtesy of Thousand Action Team Project

A “Let's Eat Italian Community Dinner” served about 100 people! Everyone seemed to enjoy the food and visiting with friends and neighbors.

God bless these folks. This idea came out of the Faithful Innovations Retreat that **First Lutheran, Ewen and Trinity Lutheran, Trout Creek** participated in. God is at work inspiring people!

The local Methodist and Roman Catholic churches are now inspired to host similar community meals in their churches too!



Mission of Hope in Delta County, Michigan

On Saturday August 24, 2019 twenty churches, several businesses, and community agencies came together at the UP State Fairgrounds, Ruth Butler Building, Escanaba to provide every man, woman, and child in need with an expression of hope. Over a year ago a handful of pastors in Escanaba got together to talk about how they could help bring hope to their community. How we might be able to all come together to be one church to serve our community? With a poverty rate over 30% in Delta County, these pastors dreamed a vision to help bring hope and the Mission of Hope One Church Event was born.



The vision was to bring hope to people by providing a one stop experience where people could connect with Social Services, Job Fair opportunities with local businesses, have a hearty lunch meal, Kids Zone, children fitted with new shoes, get a hair cut, have a professional portrait taken, get a backpack full of school supplies, hygiene kits, diapers, and a box of groceries.



On August 24, 1753 people were served, 950 pairs of kid's shoes, over 250 haircuts, 300 photo portraits, 850 packages of diapers, 1200 hygiene kits for 500 people, 1000 boxes of groceries, 500 Back Packs, and 250 first-aid kits were given away. The day closed with the full production concert of the Christian Contemporary Band, "NewsBoys" that played to over 3,000 people.

It was an overwhelming experience of meeting our community needs. We had planned for 600-800 people to attend and we served over 1,700 which totally blew us away and exceeded our wildest dreams. To think that twenty churches of all stripes could come together to help those in need throughout our community was a possibility that could have been unthinkable. But it happened...we came together as One Church to demonstrate the love of God to all. God showed up and it all became God's Work our Hands in Delta County.



ELCA Churches participating: **Immanuel Lutheran, Escanaba; Bethany Lutheran, Escanaba; Christ the King Lutheran, Escanaba; First Lutheran, Gladstone; Calvary Lutheran, Rapid River.**

Pr. Dennis Meye
Transition Pastor
Immanuel Lutheran, Escanaba

“Pandemic times—The church has left the building”

“Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands.” Acts 7:48



Winter Parking Lot Worship at Bethany Lutheran, Perkins, MI

“We are YOOPER strong. I am the snow woman pastor blessed to serve these people of God. I am grateful.”

Pastor Diane Srutowski



Easter Service on the shores of Lake Superior with Messiah Lutheran of Marquette



Good Shepherd, Peshtigo, WI helping with free food during pandemic



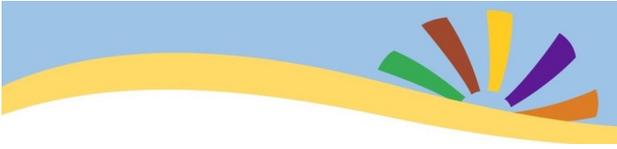
Easter Sunday Parking Lot Worship at Ascension Lutheran, Minocqua, WI



Worship around the fire at Porterfield Lutheran, Porterfield, WI



Learning Together



Lent 2021 featured an invitation for the whole synod to take part in a **Racial Equity Challenge** modeled after what **Pastor Andrew Plocher and Pastor Molly Eversoll had offered at Messiah Lutheran, Marquette.**

It was an opportunity to grow, stretch, and reflect with our siblings in Christ from around the synod. Pastors throughout the synod led Zoom discussion sessions in a safe and nonjudgmental learning space. Resources at www.nglsynod.org under Programs and Racial Equity Challenge.

Year of Discovery around the Doctrine of Discovery

The Northern Great Lakes Synod Council declared May 2020 to May 2021 as a “Year of Discovery.” There remains a call for our synod members to better understand and appreciate the history, heritage and culture of Native American peoples, to reflect on the historical content of the Doctrine of Discovery, and to engage in dialogue with Native American siblings. During Zoom meetings as part of the Fall “Walking Together” events, people in our synod were introduced to the Doctrine of Discovery and asked to consider our relationships with the tribal communities within our territory. **Pastor Bucky Beach, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Houghton,** offered an online class. A Year of Discovery Task Force met to offer many resources for our synod. These resources are archived on our synod website, www.nglsynod.org



Pastor Julie Belew, Holy Cross Lutheran, Baraga, comments:

“It is my hope that this Year of Discovery also takes you to a sacred place a place of discovering a valuable culture worth learning from, a spirituality filled with grace and gratitude and an awareness that we are all related.”



The 2021 Synod Assembly features multiple **online workshops** on a variety of topics. Most of these workshops will be archived at www.nglsynod.org or on our synod’s YouTube channel. One workshop highlight is the: “A Conversation with our Anishinaabe Neighbors”.

“**Lifelong Faith Formation**” classes are designed for curious adults who want to become better equipped to serve the work of Christ in their congregations.

Deacon Lori Ward coordinates these efforts. These online classes were launched in 2020 during the pandemic. Zoom technology allowed teachers to connect with people throughout the synod at no cost to the participants. Classes offered included: Bias in Rural America, Gospel of John, Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, Galatians, Ecclesiastes, Intro to Biblical Greek and Bonhoeffer.



With the help of a **\$22,700 ELCA Synod Vitality Grant**, we will offer training modules/seminars for congregational presidents and lay leaders. We will continue to host “Faithful Innovations” cohort trainings. This grant money allows us to feature various stewardship training events such as the one we had with Grace Pomroy of Luther Seminary. This stewardship training is archived on our synod website: www.nglsynod.org/stewardship

COVID Grants Help

With help from the ELCA, our Northern Great Lakes Synod was able to distribute a total of \$17,500 of emergency grants in increments of \$500 to many of our congregations. This grant was to be used to fund adaptive ministries during these pandemic days. **Ken Raisanen of St. Paul's, Mass City, Michigan** reflects below on how their congregation stepped up to offer a children's ministry even during the pandemic.



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Eight years ago, my wife Christine answered the call. The Sunday School program at St. Paul's had ceased to exist for a variety of reasons. The congregation was trending in a negative direction as the local economy struggled. As with many aging congregations, we were not seeing a lot of youngsters on Sundays, yet when we revived our Vacation Bible School Program fifteen years ago, we were drawing in an average of thirty kids per summer session. Only about one third of the Vacation Bible School participants had a family connection to St. Paul's, but we were happy to provide an opportunity for kids in the local communities.

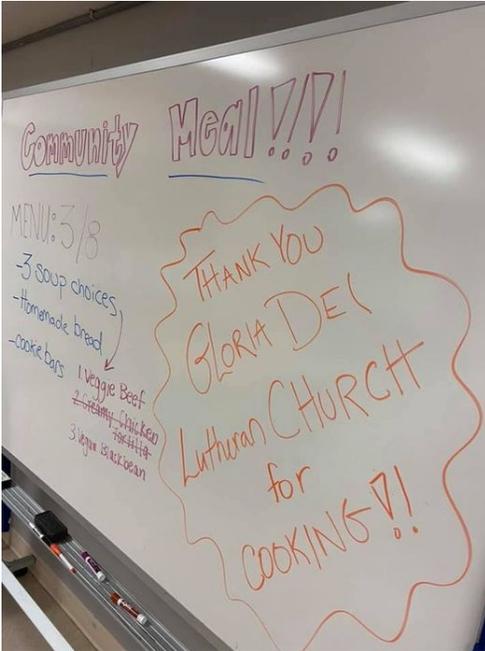
My wife decided that the same sort of effort was needed, and the first year she began Wednesday Bible Adventures with a multi-age group of kids ranging from preschool (age 3) to middle elementary. There had only been one student pre-registered the first year, but the group has now grown to close to thirty. Some of the older WBA students have now graduated into Pastor Jay's Faith Formation classes. When in-person activities were suspended in March of 2020, my wife began to research how to do the program in the fall. Even if schools returned to in-person sessions, the multi-age WBA program was going to be all but impossible to run as it had in the previous seven years. Using a hybrid of packets mailed home (with a lesson outline, crafts, and instructions), Christine began recording the lessons to post on our parish website. The program began using Pastor Jay's overworked laptop and when the synod sent out information about assistance grants, my wife applied for one. By the second recording session, we had converted the old Sunday School office into a small studio replete with a green screen background, laptop, microphone, camera, and lights.

Yes, COVID could have ended the WBA program but in this case, it has actually spurred an increase in numbers. Another Ontonagon church asked if they could get a copy of the mailed materials to duplicate so they could have their own Wednesday School students tune in. Word of mouth and helpful grandparents has added other kids from Ontonagon to Marquette to Nebraska to the mailing list. It is a lot of work and both my wife and Pastor Jay are looking forward to the day when in person sessions return. We have faith that the Lord will give us strength to carry on until then. In the meantime, I will leave you with the prayer song they use to start every session.

Let us pray: Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place.

Note: These 'hybrid' children's lessons can be viewed on the website of the **Northern Lights Parish** www.northernlights-up.org under "Youth Education"

Serving Beyond our Church Walls



Gloria Dei Lutheran, Hancock, MI provided a soup supper to go for Finlandia's campus ministry. Below is a portion of the thank you to the congregation from **Pastor Sarah Semmler Smith, Campus Pastor at Finlandia**:

"I came to the Chapel this morning with gratitude on my mind. Last night we fed over 30 students, who were thrilled to be served what they called "church-lady soup" (though I don't know if any of the men in your households actually cooked.)



One of them said as she came through, 'You know we really appreciate these meals. Because food is like, expensive... and if you ever need help cooking let me know.'

They see the servant hearts of those who serve them, they are filled with gratitude that comes through the love language of broken bread, and they're inspired to do the same. You helped do that. Thank you for showing your care to our students."

Even in the midst of challenge, we can still share Christ's love with others. And it spreads. Keep encouraging others and being Christ's hands and feet in this world.

Bethany Lutheran, Escanaba, MI offers a similar outreach of food to students at **Bay College**.



Quilters in our synod have long been creating wonderful and useful quilts that are shared in their own communities as well as around the world through Lutheran World Relief.

We see here a quilter from **Calvary Lutheran, Rapid River, MI**

**YOUR CONGREGATION'S MISSION SUPPORT DOLLARS
(\$791,892 GIVEN IN 2020)**

ALLOWS THE NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD TO

Offer Ministries locally, domestically, and all over the world.

- Campus Ministry
- Synod Administrative Staff Support
- Support for ELCA domestic & global ministries (*49.6% passed on to ELCA)

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Individual and Congregational "Restricted" Gifts support (\$278,232 IN 2020)

- Candidacy – the raising up and support of new rostered leaders
- Faithful Innovations Training
- Professional Leaders' Enrichment
- "Walking Together" Conference Events
- Youth Programming
- UP Wild Mission Development
- Domestic and World Hunger Needs
- Seminarian Scholarships
- Congregational COVID Grants
- Stewardship Efforts
- Tanzanian Companion Synod Relationships and Ministries
- Campus Ministry
- Lifelong Faith Formation Classes
- Lutheran Social Services
- Various Restricted Endowment Funds



Endowment Funds —“Equipping the Saints Fund”

With a Current Balance of some \$430,000,

Our Undesignated “Equipping the Saints Endowment Fund” allows for yearly distributions for ministries that are not necessarily part of our synod budget. These funding distributions are crucial as the regular budget of the synod has been reduced in past years. We thank God for those who had the wisdom to create this synod endowment fund. And, we welcome gifts of all kinds— direct monetary gifts or deferred legacy gifts in the form of trusts, property, insurance, etc. These distributions allow creative and ongoing ministries to happen!



Proposed 2021 distributions totaling \$21,000 are:

Pastor’s Debt Retirement— It is the rare pastor that graduates from seminary with minimal education debt. In an effort to lighten the load, increase the pastor’s financial acumen, and free the pastor to serve well, we offer an annual grant and financial counseling resources.

Bay College Campus Ministry in Escanaba— A part-time campus pastor serves at Bay and this modest funding helps make a Christian presence on campus possible.

Walking Together Conference Events— In the Fall of 2021, the Synod staff hopes to travel to many of the conferences for conversation, education, leadership training, and idea sharing.

Lifelong Faith Formation Classes— The old Lay School model has shifted to online offerings utilizing online technology allowing more people to participate. Funds support teachers and help provide curriculum.

Pastor’s Retreat— Plans are for an August, 2021 retreat and renewal experience at Fortune Lake for pastors and their families.

Bishop’s Continuing Education— Bishop Finegan will attend a leadership training event.

Congregational Vitality— Supports the vision of the Synod Vitality Project to enhance the vitality of our congregations through leadership development.

U.P. Wild— Our collaborative and innovative ministry focusing on outdoor worship.

Assistant to Bishop Tanzania Trip— Pastor Jim hopes to represent our synod in a visit to our companion synod friends in the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of Tanzania in 2022.

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An additional \$72,264 was distributed out of designated restricted endowment funds for:

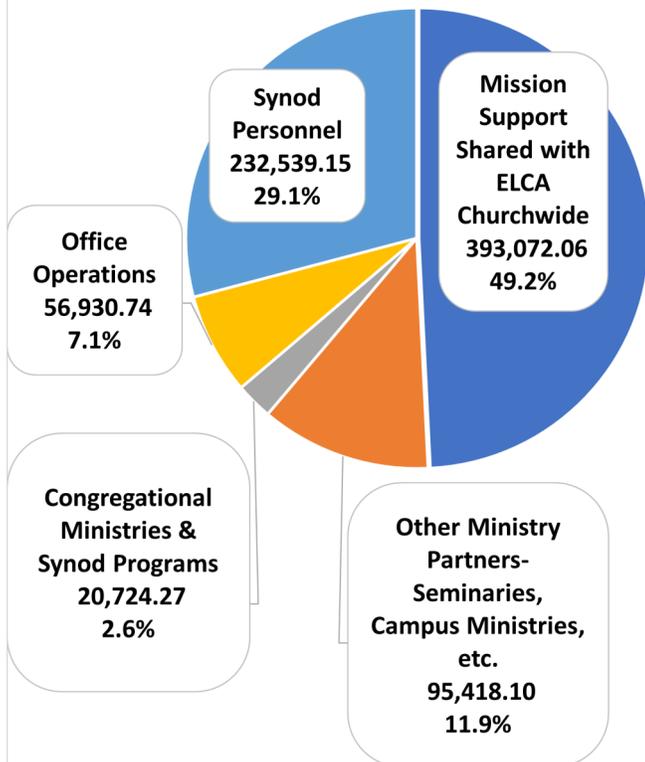
- Seminarian Scholarships
- Tanzanian Scholarships and Companion Relationship
 - Rural Ministry
 - Pastor’s Debt Relief

These are areas that people have a passion about in their designation of these funds.

Note: These distributions are not part of our regular synod budget.

Any individual or congregation who wants information about legacy giving or endowment funds is encouraged to contact our ELCA Regional Gift Planner, Cynthia Halverson, at (773) 380-2572

FY 2020 Expenses-Actual Unrestricted



Northern Great Lakes Synod:

79 Congregations
 1 SAWC (Mission Development)
 58 Pastors under Call
 1 Deacon under Call
 9 Licensed Lay Ministers
 21,074 Baptized Members
 \$11.6 Million in Regular Offerings
 by Congregations

ELCA:

8,900 Congregations
 3,458,839 Baptized Members
 \$1.7 Billion in Regular Offerings to
 support local and global ministries

Your Congregation's Unrestricted Mission Support Dollars

*47% in 2020 sent by Northern Great Lakes Synod to the ELCA churchwide to:

- Grow and support hundreds of new congregations throughout the U.S.
- Enable congregations to renew their local ministries
- Develop and share resources for faith, discipleship, prayer, stewardship and worship
- Grow the Lutheran church around the world through accompaniment
- Support and develop current leaders and future leaders
- Provide governance, oversight, and leadership through the 65 synods and ELCA ministries
- Invest in technology and communication for the whole church
- Provide research and strategic planning resources

41% of ELCA Mission Support funds ELCA Ministries in the U.S.

22% of ELCA Mission Support funds Global Ministries

37% of ELCA Mission Support helps develop current and future leaders

The ELCA received \$41 million in Mission Support in 2020

In FY2020 the ELCA received \$393,072 in Mission Support from our synod
 (*47% + \$20,882.20 extra = net 49.6% of Congregational Mission Support)

Where did the Synod spend the monies we received?

The approximate numbers below represent distributions from both unrestricted income (money the synod has some discretion of where to spend it) and restricted income (money the synod received with a specific designation)

\$484,000 of Congregational Mission Support sent to the Northern Great Lakes Synod and designated gifts was passed on to the ELCA Churchwide organization.

The ELCA uses that money to provide domestic and global ministries in Christ's name. Some of that money



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

is funneled back to our synod through grants for synod personnel and campus ministry.

The ELCA proclaims Christ through hunger relief, missionary efforts, disaster relief, training leaders, providing educational resources, and advocacy just to name some of the ELCA's many impacts. Having a national church pool its efforts makes our witness stronger than any single congregation or synod.



\$256,000 was shared with partners in ministry such as seminaries, ELCA church related colleges, campus ministries, Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp, and the Wisconsin Council of Churches. Seminaries train leaders for the church. Campus Ministries in our own synod are active at Michigan Tech in Houghton, Bay College in Escanaba, and Northern Michigan in Marquette.



Colleges are often critical times for people of all ages to grow in their faith in Christ and create a community that shares the love of Jesus with others. The Wisconsin Council of Churches was most helpful in providing great resources to pastors and congregations during the pandemic.

\$99,000 was used within our synod for specific congregational ministries, outreach and hunger ministries. Congregational programming was supported, people heard the Good News of Jesus and people were fed.



\$357,000 was used for Office Operations, Personnel and Administration.

The synod office has 4 full-time staff:

Bishop Katherine Finegan; Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission Jim Duehring; Office Administrator Heather Oysti; and Bookkeeper/Secretary Betsy Koski. We assist congregations and leaders in their ministries both



administratively and pastorally. We are just a phone call or email away. We are here to serve you and serve the Lord's work in this synod and beyond.

UP Wild: A Collaborative Ministry of

the Northern Great Lakes Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan

Wild Church is a means of encountering the actively Living God, based on shared values of faith, connection, and nature. Deep within the Christian tradition there hides a wealth of wisdom on how to cultivate a culture of compassion through the way of love. It is time to bring this authenticity forward especially in the wild setting of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.



Lanni Lantto is the Mission Developer for UP Wild. She describes this ministry, "We are a community who openly prays for the healing of the land and our hearts, allowing for open conversation on our culture of consumption, embracing holy wisdom, and celebrating our varied personal experiences. Using expansive language, our intention is to provide space in which each person experiences God's love and is able to apply these teachings into their every day life. We walk Jesus' way of love, justice and transformation and especially strive to listen and respond to the spiritual needs of those outside of traditional church contexts."

What people are saying about UP Wild:

- "Thank you for guiding us into the real world today- we needed it."
- "Wow, bravo to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Northern Great Lakes Synod, and Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan for sponsoring UPwildchurch. Nature hikes and contemplative prayer in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This is a brilliant idea!"
- "I have realized over the course of the last couple years, that I had forgotten who Jesus was. That is a SAD place to be. The damage and abuse that I suffered at our old church, really messed me up."
- "I have been reasonably close to some church my whole life. I have never felt excited about church. Usually I viewed church as a comforting place to visit when I felt the need. This is different. Wild Church is the right fit for my spiritual needs!"



To learn more go to: www.upwild.org

Northern Great Lakes Synod FY2020 Financial Review & FY2021 Proposed Plan

	<u>FY 2020 Income- Actual</u>	<u>FY 2020 Percent per Category</u>	<u>FY 2021 Income- Proposed</u>	<u>FY 2021 Percent per Category</u>
Unrestricted Income				
Congregational Mission(Benevolence) Support	791,892.07	92.93%	774,999.00	99.76%
Payroll Protection Program	58,200.00	6.83%	-	0.00%
Interest Earned	2,072.28	0.24%	1,900.00	0.24%
Total Unrestricted Income	852,164.35	100.00%	776,899.00	100.00%

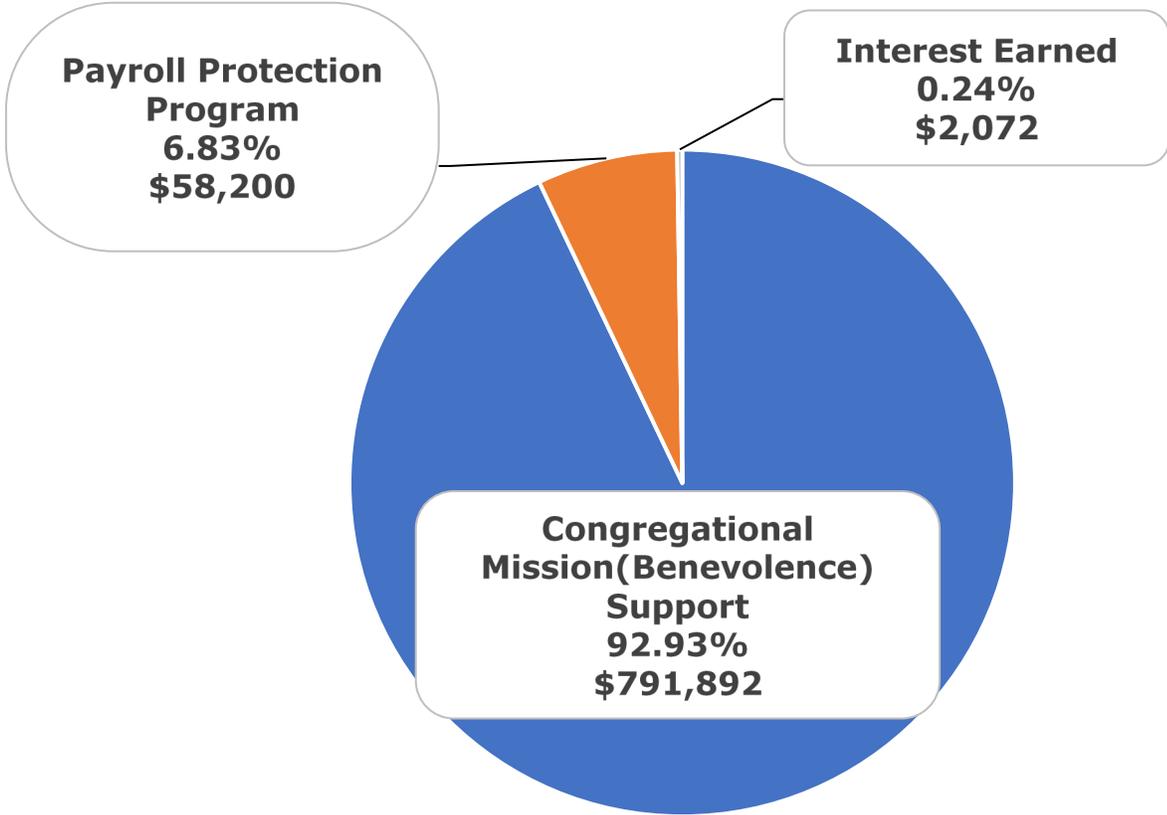
	<u>FY 2020 Expenses -Actual</u>	<u>FY 2020 Percent per Category</u>	<u>FY 2021 Expenses- Proposed</u>	<u>FY 2021 Percent per Category</u>
Unrestricted Expenses				
Mission Support Shared with ELCA Churchwide	393,072.06	49.21%	356,500.00	45.78%
Other Ministry Partners-Seminaries, Campus Ministries, etc.	95,418.10	11.95%	98,405.00	12.64%
Congregational Ministries, Communications, Meetings	20,724.27	2.59%	3,000.00	0.39%
Office Operations	56,930.74	7.13%	61,082.00	7.84%
Synod Personnel	232,539.15	29.12%	259,663.00	33.35%
Total Expenses Unrestricted	798,684.32	100.00%	778,650.00	100.00%

	<u>FY 2020 Income- Actual</u>	<u>FY 2020 Percent per Category</u>	<u>FY 2021 Income- Proposed</u>	<u>FY 2021 Percent per Category</u>
Restricted Income				
Designated congregational gifts to synod, ELCA, Fortune Lake	278,232.22	67.83%	300,000.00	57.30%
Grants to synod, grants to campus ministry, synod-sponsored pastor	131,930.59	32.17%	223,588.00	42.70%
Total Restricted Income	410,162.81	100.00%	523,588.00	100.00%

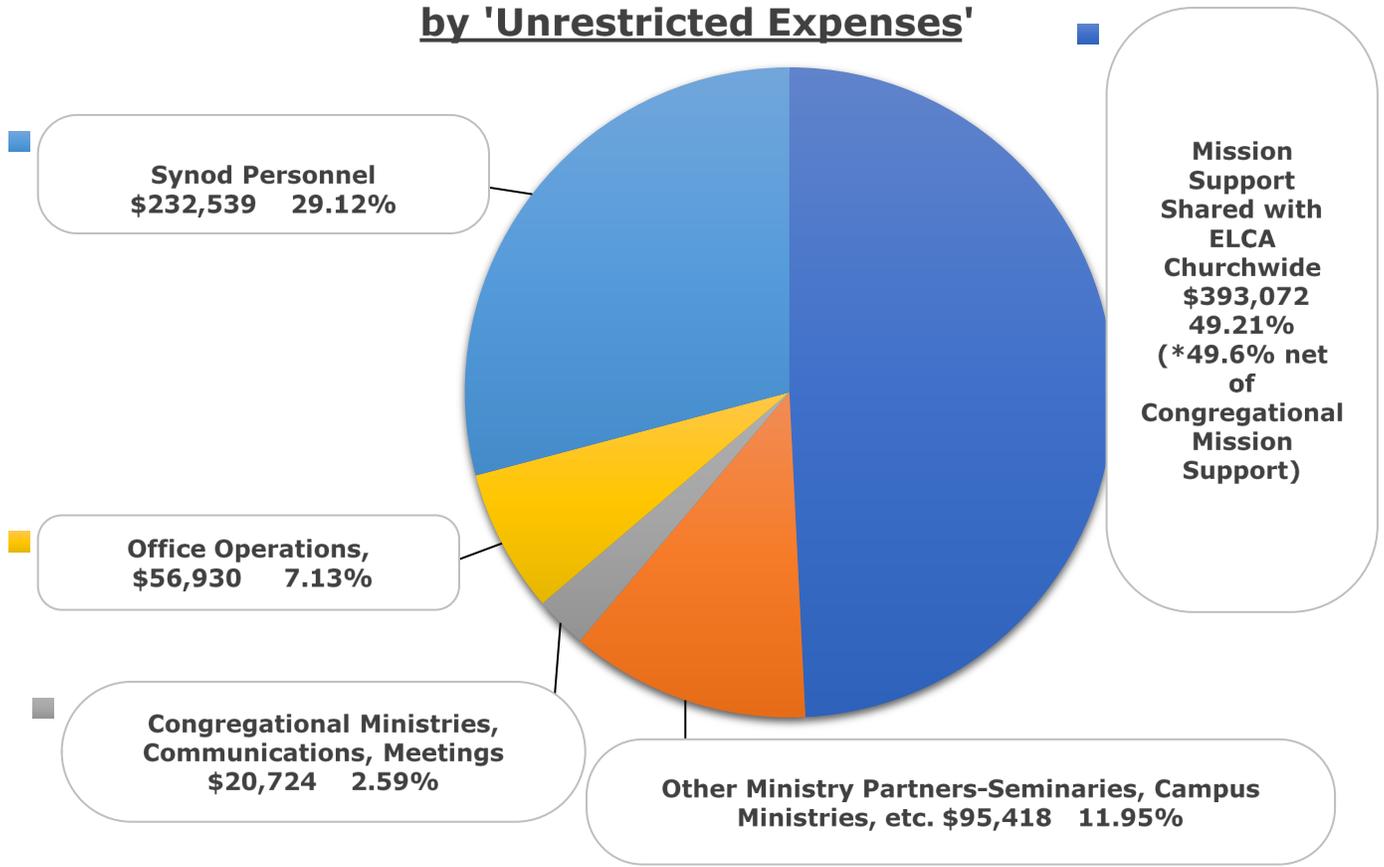
	<u>FY 2020 Expenses -Actual</u>	<u>FY 2020 Percent per Category</u>	<u>FY 2021 Expenses- Proposed</u>	<u>FY 2021 Percent per Category</u>
Restricted Expenses				
Designated to ELCA, Synod Partners, Fortune Lake	150,786.33	43.67%	200,000.00	36.80%
Designated to Campus ministries, seminaries	9,785.25	2.83%	8,500.00	1.56%
Congregational ministries, ministry by synod, mission outreach, hunger	78,148.18	22.63%	161,347.00	29.69%
COVID Grants, Endowment Developer, Assembly, Communications	31,820.44	9.22%	43,300.00	7.97%
Office Operations	3,059.51	0.89%	320.00	0.06%
Synod Personnel-DEM grant, synod-sponsored pastor	71,669.68	20.76%	130,021.00	23.92%
Total Restricted Expenses	345,269.39	100.00%	543,488.00	100.00%

47% + \$20,882.80 Misson Support was sent to ELCA = \$393,072.06 a net of 49.6% of Congregational Mission Support

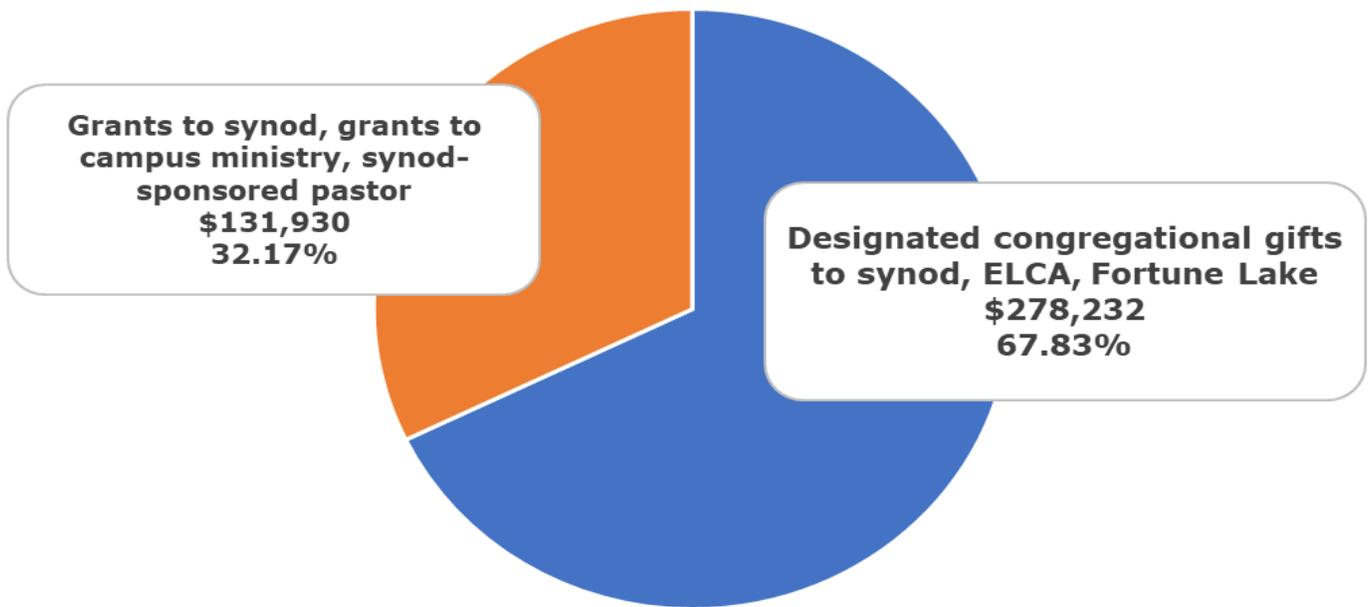
FY 2020 Unrestricted Income-Actual



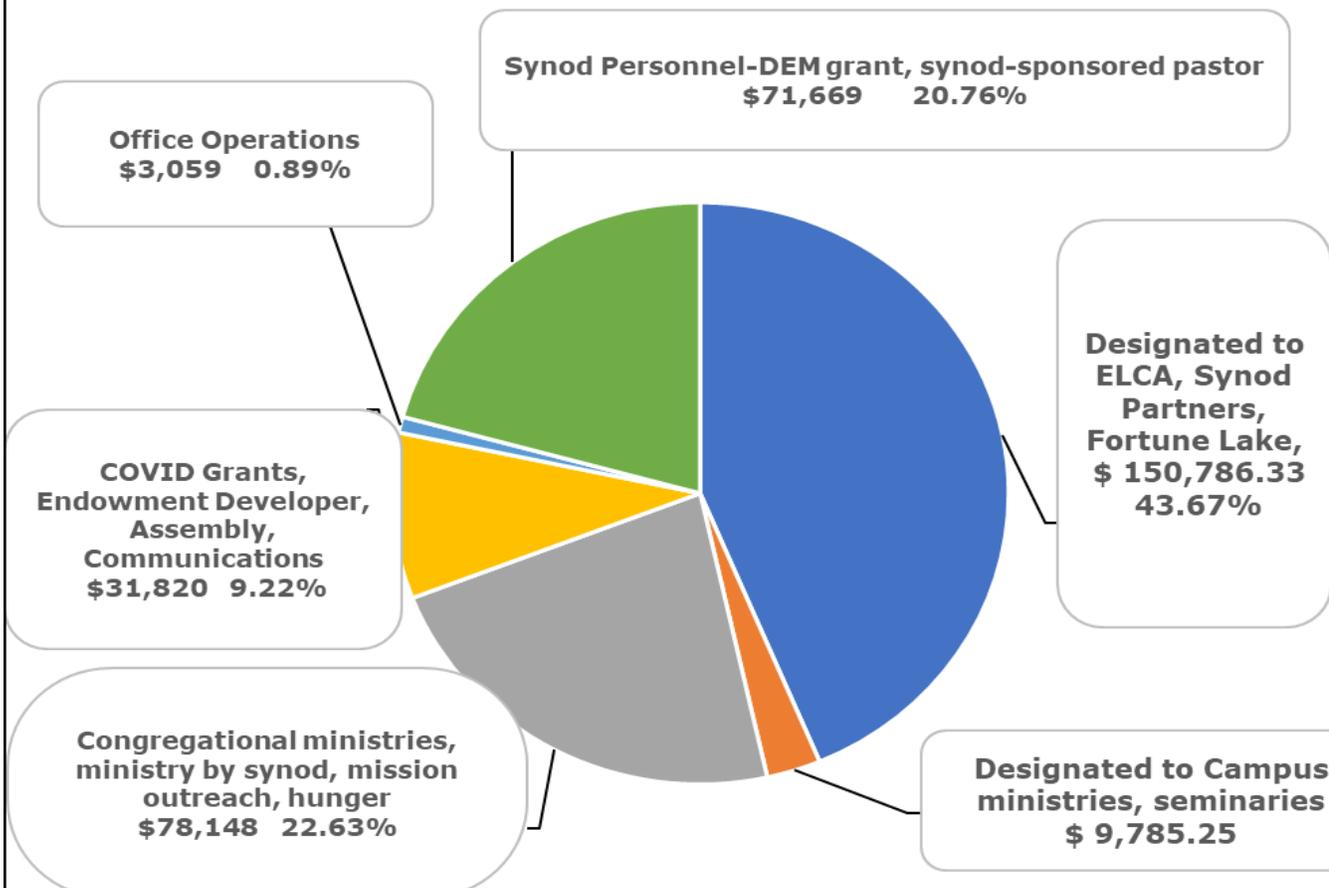
'FY 2020 Expenses-Actual' by 'Unrestricted Expenses'



FY 2020 Restricted Income-Actual



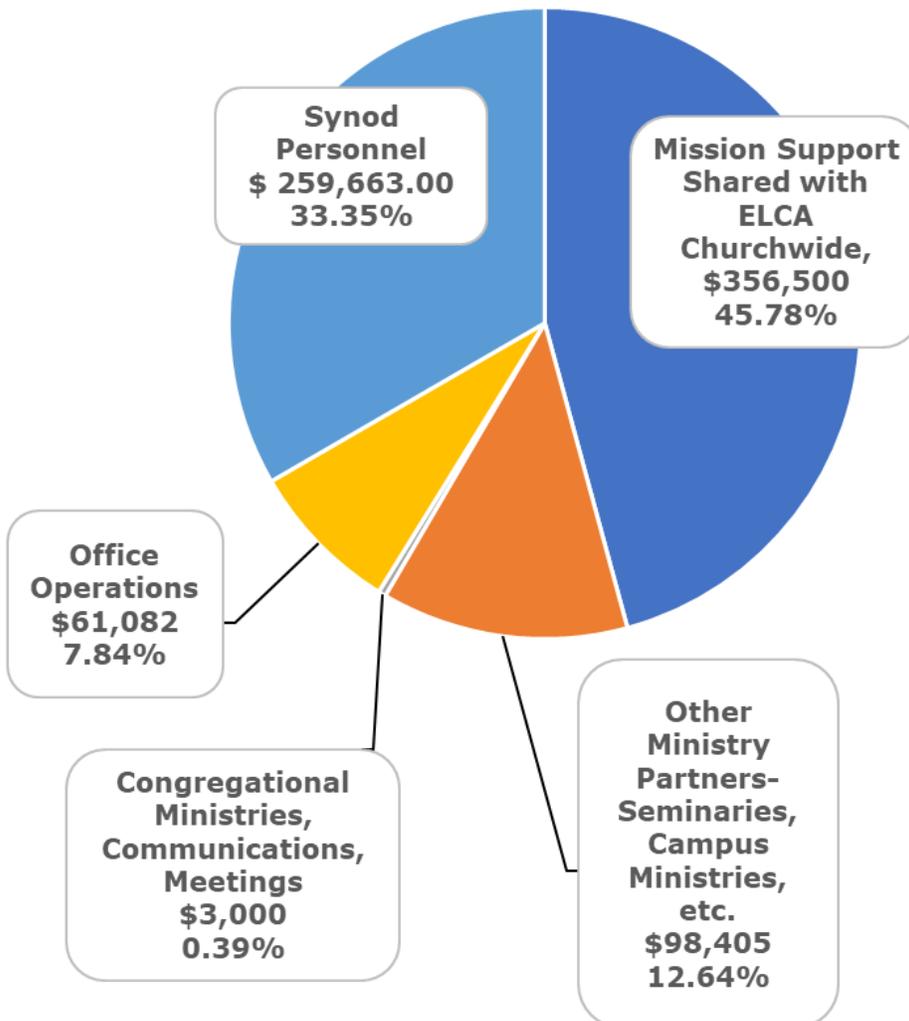
FY 2020 Restricted Expenses-Actual



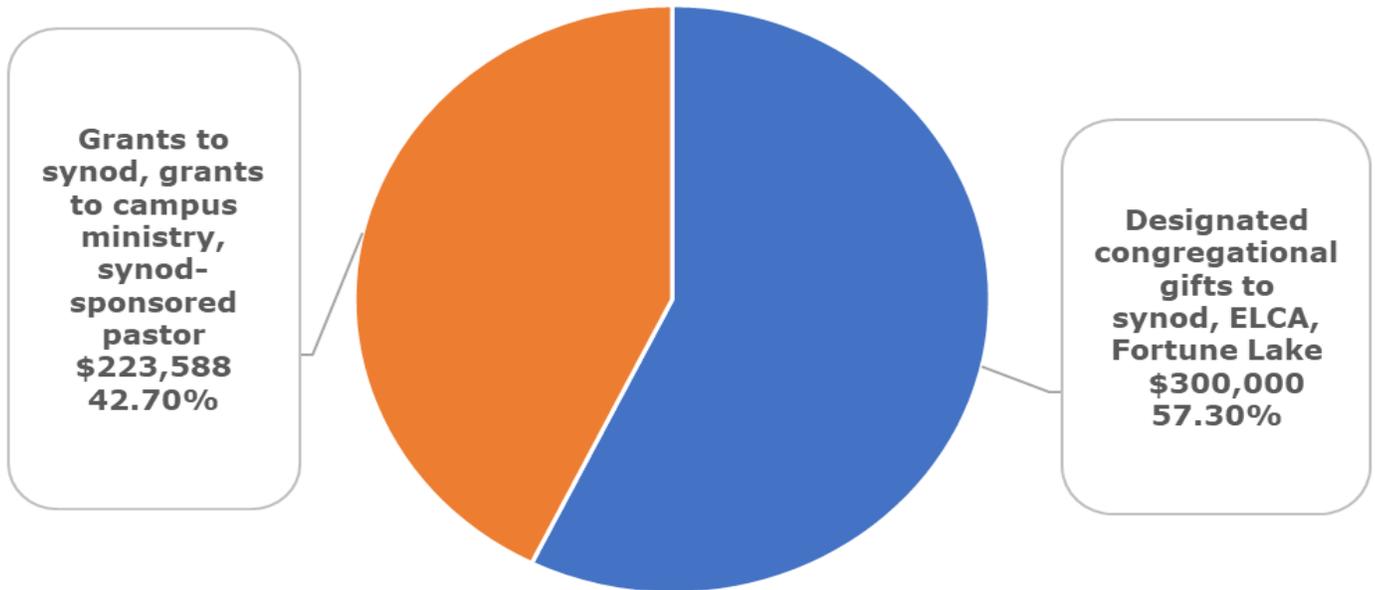
FY 2021 Unrestricted Income--Proposed



FY 2021 Unrestricted Expenses- Proposed



FY 2021 Restricted Income-Proposed



FY 2021 Restricted Expenses-Proposed

