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Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Celebrating Anniversaries of Ordination in 2023

The Reverend Chrys Hendrick —25 Years

The Reverend Chrys Hendrick (Chrysande Levesque Hendrick) was ordained on Transfiguration Sunday, February 14, 1999 at her home congregation, Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, San Antonio, TX. Present were her childhood pastor, the Rev. Burton Schroeder and his wife Lois, who traveled from Washington State for the occasion. Pastor Schroeder had confirmed her at Nativity Lutheran Church, Wonder Lake, Illinois in June, 1960. Also present were five “snow bird” members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Harvey, MI, to which she had been called and then served until her retirement on April 30, 2006.

Pastor Chrys married Lawrence A. (“Bud”) Hendrick on March 8, 2009, with her sister, Dee Levesque Trotter (d. June 20, 2009) as matron of honor, in the Bronson Hospital chapel, Kalamazoo, MI, where Dee was an ICU patient.

Since her retirement, Pastor Chrys has served as “an itinerant preacher,” supplying often at many congregations in the wider Marquette and surrounding area. As an artist, she also designed and constructed numerous large-scale banners for Messiah Lutheran Church, for several Northern Great Lakes Synod assemblies, and for both Bethany (Ishpeming) and Grace (Gwinn) Lutheran Churches. She also served as schedule coordinator for the pastors weekly text study from 2005 until (and through) its Covid pandemic dissolution late in 2023.

Following a career of twenty-five years in the US Air Force as an intelligence officer, she entered the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest (LSPS) in Austin, TX, in 1994, served her internship at Fairbanks Lutheran Church in Alaska, and graduated from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA, with the class of 1999. Her seminary studies were extended a semester due to the deaths of her parents, Eve and Jake Levesque, in November and December 1997.

Pastor Chrys lives with her husband and precious canine, 14-year-old “Abby,” in Harvey, MI. Chrys and Bud were longtime members at Messiah and now members at Grace, Gwinn.

The Reverend Paul J. Raappana—55 years

Paul J. Raappana was born at home in Baltic, Michigan to Clara (Kinnunen) and Einar Raappana. Baptism followed at what is now Grace Lutheran Church in South Range. His father died a year later in the TB epidemic. He was raised by his mom and step-dad, Leo Okkonen.

He was confirmed at Siloa Lutheran Church in Ontonagon. He attended Suomi College, Northern Michigan University prior to entering Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Maywood campus, finishing senior year at the new Hyde Park campus. He was called to serve the following congregations: three-point parish of Concordia/Palmer, Our Savior's/Suomi Location; Faith/National Mine; Faith in Sault Ste Marie,

Salem in Shell Lake, Wisconsin and St. James in Rudyard. He is currently active with the Finnish Ministry of Zion Lutheran Church in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, Canada.

When he was in his first parish he met and married Sandee (Koski) Raappana and they had a daughter Saara who passed to life eternal in March 2024.

The Reverend Rell D. Spickerman—60 years

Pastor Rell Spickerman was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Fred and Violet Spickerman. He was baptized and confirmed at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI. Pastor Spickerman graduated from Capital University, Columbus, Ohio with a B.A.; graduated from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN with an M.Div.; then graduated from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, MSW. He did his post-graduate work at the Westchester Institute of Counseling and Psychotherapy.

Pastor Rell is married to Louise Marie Spickerman and they have four children: Soren, Jennifer, Dietrich, and Siri; and 6 grandchildren: Ben, Lars, Arnold, Drake, Aubrey, and Bryan.

Pastor Rell was one of the first pastors in former American Lutheran Church to develop a “tent-making” ministry by serving Trinity Lutheran Church and working full time in the department of clinical psychology at Suffolk Psychiatric Center, Central Islip, New York where he was designed head of the department of psychology.

When he was the Area Director of Lutheran Social Services of Upper Michigan for 17 years he was instrumental in establishing 3 housing and Urban Development Living Facilities: two for low income elderly and one for low income developmentally disabled; saw that the Upper Michigan office became licensed to do Foster Care, Open Adoptions and International Adoptions; started Voices for Youth, a crisis intervention program for Homeless Youth Via a grant from the Kellogg Foundation; was co-creator of the Options (Career Development) Program; and established four counseling sites throughout Upper Michigan. While employed full time at LSS Rell also served as pulpit supply minister for 17 years at the Community Presbyterian Church in Big Bay, Michigan.

Rell has served on the Synod Consultation/Discipline Committee, The Homosexuality Task Force, and Leadership Support Committee. He has certificates in the following programs: Midwest Management Development Program, Mental Illness and chemical Dependency, Family Systems, Genograms, the Milton Erickson Institute in Clinical Hypnosis, Healing the Wounded Children Within, Metaphors to Heal By, Addiction Intervention Ministry, the Dispute Management Training Institute, The American Arbitration Association, State of Michigan Association of Court Mediators, and Hospice Care and Ministry.

Prior to retirement., he was a volunteer chaplain member on the Superior Home Nursing and Hospice team. He has been called upon by the Catholic Social Services to assist with some counseling casework and to co-lead

an anger management group; and by the Ironwood Crisis Intervention Team to assist families who are having a catastrophic reaction the sudden death of a family member. He has also taught the course in Pastoral Care at several Northern Great Lakes Synod Lay Institute locations. He was a Board member of “Honoring Health Care choices.”

Minister of Word and Sacrament Retiring Since Last Synod Assembly

The Reverend Stephen Gauger—Retired

Steven Gauger was born and raised on the north side of Milwaukee, where he was baptized and confirmed at Salem Lutheran Church. He attended Lutheran schools in Milwaukee through grade 12, and received his college degree in 1975 from Shimer College, Chicago, Illinois, with majors in German and Philosophy.

While working in Racine, Wisconsin, he met his future wife Peggy, and they were married at Holy Community Lutheran Church on September 18, 1982. In 1985, they moved to the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, and he was ordained on June 25, 1989. He has served from 1989-1994 at First Lutheran, Plymouth Ohio, and since 1994 at Calvary Lutheran, Rapid River Michigan.

Peggy and Pastor Steve have two adult sons, Matthew and Christopher, in Madison, Wisconsin.

The Reverend Lon Hider—Retired

Lon Hider was born October 27th, 1960 in Manistique, Michigan and was baptized at The Barn in Allendale, Michigan. In 1984, he received his bachelor's degree of theology from the Grand Rapids Baptist College. Post-college, Pastor Lon served the poor by creating economic opportunities through the non-profit organization Break Through Urban Ministries. Lon went on to pursue a Master of Divinity degree at North Park University in Chicago, IL.

Reverend Lon Hider was ordained in and called to the East Delta Parish Congregational Churches in 2006. Amongst many of his pastoral duties, Pastor Lon enjoyed most preaching, teaching, serving, helping, leading and making disciples. Throughout his career, Pastor Lon's involvement in ministry occupied many fronts. He worked to mend social bridges and increase the Churches' outreach. After 12 years of ministry with the East Delta Parish Congregational Churches, Pastor Lon went on to earn his Doctor of Ministry from George Fox University in 2019. That same year Pastor Lon would be called to Lakeside Christian Church in Escanaba, Michigan. In February 2022, Reverend Lon Hider began his journey of transferring to the ECLA Roster and would be ordained the following January as a Minister of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA church. It was at the time Pastor Lon was called to serve Christ the King Lutheran Church in Escanaba, Michigan and Faith Lutheran Church in Rock, Michigan. He has since retired from these calls as of February 2024.

The Reverend Matthew Lamb—Retired

On August 23, 1957, Matt was born to Harlan and Ruth Lamb in St. Ignace, Michigan. He graduated from Pickford High School in Pickford, Michigan in 1975; earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mining Engineering from Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan in 1979; worked as an engineer and manager for 10 years before enrolling in the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (now united

Lutheran Seminary) from which he earned an MDiv. Degree in 1993.

His first call was in 1993 to Trinity Lutheran Church in Ishpeming, Michigan. Then he served Trinity Lutheran Church in New Holland, Pennsylvania; and St. James Lutheran Church in Rudyard, Michigan. In 2012, he was called by the Northern Great Lakes Synod to serve as Synod Missioner in the Three Lakes Conference (Eastern Upper Peninsula). He has retired as of March 2024.

Matt married Alison in the summer of 1977 and he enjoys being father to three children and grandfather to several grandchildren. In addition to serving the Church in his roles as pastor and missioner, he feels blessed to enjoy spending time with his family, milling lumber, and tending to their goats and chickens

Deceased Ministers of Word and Sacrament Since Last Synod Assembly

The Reverend Ingmar L. Levin

The Rev. Ingmar Lorits Levin, 97, of Manistique died peacefully on Saturday, August 19.

He was born July 10, 1926, in Stockholm, Sweden to Hulda (Andersson) Levin and Lorits L. Levin. He emigrated to the United States in November 1926, settling in Worcester, MA.

Pastor graduated from North High School in 1944. Ingmar was drafted into military service on November 29, 1944. Levin served in a replacement company with the 102nd Infantry, 1st division. His unit was responsible for security at the Nuremberg war crimes trial and he was able to witness the historic proceedings. He was discharged from the army on August 20, 1946 and returned to the family bakery in Worcester.

Pastor was a 1950 graduate of Upsala College in East Orange, NJ and Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, IL, graduating with a Master of Divinity Degree in 1954. He was ordained in the Augustana Synod in Los Angeles, CA.

On August 27, 1955, Pastor married Betty Nelson of Ingalls, MI. They were married until her death in 2003.

Pastor Levin served at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ansonia, CT, Bethany Lutheran Church in Isabella, MI and Zion Lutheran Church in Manistique. He retired in 1991 but continued to serve as an interim pastor and supply pastor throughout the Upper Peninsula for the next 25 years.

In seminary, a professor told his students in serving your church, you must also serve your community. He took that to heart. Levin was active with Boy Scout Troop 402, Cub Scout Pack 402 and Scout Troop 400 for 60 years. He earned the Wood Badge in 1978. He served as founding chair of the Schoolcraft County Mental Health Clinic and served on that board for 11 years. He was chair and vice-chair of the Menominee Delta Schoolcraft Community Action Agency and the Foster Grandparent Program for 22 years. He served on the Manistique Area Schools Board of Education for 12 years, serving as president for 9 years. He was named Man of the Year by the Lions Club in 1964, Man of the Year by the Elks Club in 1977-78 and Folk Fest Hero in 2004. He was a member of the Manistique Area Schools VIPS program and volunteered as a weekly reader in the library at Fairview Elementary and Emerald Elementary for 25 years. He served as co-chair of the Manistique Charter Commission. He was a member of the Community Concert Committee and an active member of the of the Manistique Ministerial Association.

Pastor Ingmar is survived by his daughter Linda (Kay MacGregor) of Manistique and son Karl (Angela) of Frankfort, IL; two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife Betty.

The Reverend Robert V. Langseth

Born during a blizzard to Hans and Martha Langseth, Robert V. Langseth arrived on February 3, 1933, at Glyndon, Minnesota. He was baptized at Herby Lutheran Church in Argusville, North Dakota on March 5, 1933, and in 1946, he was confirmed in the same congregation. He graduated from a one room grade school (1946); from Oak Grove Lutheran High School, Fargo, North Dakota (1950); Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota with a Bachelor of Arts degree (1954); and from Augustana Campus, Lutheran School of Theology in 1958 with a Bachelor of Divinity degree.

Pastor Bob served at Trinity Lutheran Church in Unity, Wisconsin (1958-65); Faith Lutheran Church in Calumet, Michigan (1965-88); as well as Protestant chaplain of the USAF, serving the 665th Squadron at Calumet's radar station (1971-88). Both he and his wife Deloris were active members of the Companion Synod Committee. They made 11 trips to Tanzania and were instrumental in the construction of facilities at the Kisarawe Lutheran Junior Seminary. Over the years, he served on several committees of the Northern Great Lakes Synod and was very active in his service to the Keweenaw Community. In 2007, Pastor Bob was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Interior to serve as a chairperson on the Advisory Commission of the Keweenaw National Historical Park headquartered in Calumet. He also had articles published and written about his ministry.

Because Pastor Bob was so active on so many levels in his life, it must be said that he also received many awards. "Living Our Missions to Love, Share and Serve" Award from Oak Grove Lutheran High School in 2017; "President's Award for Distinguished Citizenship"; "Outstanding Alumni, Distinguished Service to Church and Community" Award from Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago; and "Development of the Best Lay Ministry Program in USAF Chapels" Award from the United States Air Force were just a few of his prestigious awards.

The Reverend Jennifer Johnson Wrege

Rev. Jennifer Johnson Wrege, age 70, of Woodville, Wisconsin, passed away on November 1, 2023 at Park View Home in Woodville, Wisconsin. Rev. Johnson Wrege was born in Bellville, IL, on July 7, 1953, firstborn of Don and Pat Johnson. Her earliest years were spent near Scott Air Force Base while Don finished his time in the Air Force Band as a French horn player. Soon the family settled in Rockford, IL and during the next seven years three brothers were added to the family.

Confirmed in May of 1967 at Zion Lutheran Church in Rockford, Rev. Johnson Wrege was active in the congregations as a VBS and Sunday School helper for pre-school classes. In the summer of 1967, the family moved to Amery, WI, here she attended high school - graduating in 1971. She attended the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and worked as a social worker for 8 years where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in social work in 1976.

Rev. Johnson Wrege took a year off from college to volunteer in the LCA's Associate in Deaconess Service program. She was assigned to a Lutheran institution – the Wartburg Orphan Farm School of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Pelham, NY just outside the Bronx.

Upon graduation from UW River Falls, Rev. Johnson Wrege accepted a position as Social Worker at Queen Anne Nursing Home in Hingham, MA where she was employed until entering Luther-Northwestern Seminary in 1981. Master of Divinity in hand by June of 1985 and ordained in November of 1985, her first call was to a two-point parish in the Upper Peninsula – Siloa, Ontonagon and Faith, White Pine (1985-1993) During her time there she adopted Shaun and Josh. She served at Bethany, Norway from 1993-2000 and as Assistant to the Bishop from 2000 to 2011.

Rev. Johnson Wrege married Marvin Wrege on January 1, 2001 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Appleton, Wisconsin. Together they enjoyed camping, walks, bike riding, and canoeing with friends on the St. Croix River. She was an avid quilter, loved to travel and enjoyed garden therapy. Marv preceded her in death in 2021.

Rev. Johnson Wrege's life was blessed by an abundance of family and friends who gave her much love and joy. She was very thankful for their presence in her life.

The Reverend Leslie E. Niemi

Leslie Edward Niemi was born in Munising, Michigan to Edward and Pearl Niemi on February 25, 1931. He died on January 22, 2024 in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

Les always felt fortunate to have grown up in the Chatham-Eben area. He thought it was a most wonderful place to live. He graduated from Eben High School in 1949, where he had played basketball and ran high hurdles in track.

In September of 1949, he enrolled in Suomi College (more recently known as Finlandia University) and continued his education at the Suomi Seminary. He also studied at Northern Michigan University and at Northwestern in Evanston, Illinois.

Les took the oath of ordination into the Holy Ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church in Waukegan, Illinois on June 20, 1954.

Following ordination, Les accepted a call to become pastor of the rural Trout Creek (Michigan) parish. Here he had the task of turning a basically Finnish-speaking church into a modern, English program. He found the ministry to be both challenging and exciting. This parish encompassed not only Trout Creek, but Ewen, Paynesville, and North Bruce as well.

In November of 1960 Les received a call to Bethany Lutheran in Republic, Michigan, one of the charter churches of Suomi synod. He served ther from 1961-1965.

In 1965, he was called to become the pastor of Eden Lutheran Church in Munising. He would be there for 18 exciting years, which included the building of the beautiful Eden-on-the-Bay Lutheran Church. (This church also installed the only church sauna in the nation). During this ministry, he was asked to conduct services at the neighboring Presbyterian church. While at Eden, the adoption of the former Suomi synod congregation of 25 members who had been served from Marquette took place. He continued a Finnish language service under the Suomi Seura and also preached in Finnish in Newberry, Michigan four times a year for 18 years and often at Bethel Lutheran Church at Ishpeming. He also served on the Alger-Marquette Community Action Board (AMCAB), Action Housing Board, Alger-Marquette Community Mental Health Board, Michigan Clergy Council for Problem Pregnancies, Selective Service Board, Alger County Alcoholism Council, Alger County Historical Society and Rotary Club.

After retiring from the ministry, Les served as Director of Special and Planned Giving for Finalndia University from 1983-1994 and later volunteered his gifts as a member of Mount Olive Lutheran Planned Giving and Endowment Board.

In 1999 Les and Marcia purchased a home in Lake Havasu city, Arizona and enjoyed 25 wonderful winter years there. They were members of Mount Olive Lutheran Church.

Les was preceded in death by his first wife, Betty Sjostrand and his son, Michael. He is survived by his wife Marcia, his sons Daniel (Tanya) and Nathan (Laurel), half-brother Edward, step-daughters, Kristin Madigan and Gretchen Marks, granddaughters Amanda and Kristen, grandsons Jaden, Jason, Nathan, and Brandon, and several great grandchildren.

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Curt PoulosMember, Synod Council
Rev. Diane SrutowskiMember, Synod Council

The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:

(S10.03.)

- Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of the Synod.
- Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.
- Provide for an annual review of the roster of ordained ministers and the roster of associates in ministry and make appropriate recommendations to the Synod regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.
- Issue letters of call to ordained ministers and letters of appointment to associates in ministry, consecrated deacons and deaconesses, commissioned teachers, and certified or commissioned lay professionals as authorized by Chapter 10 of the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.
- Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of the Synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of the Synod.
- Reports its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of the Synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

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Year = Year Term Ends (3 year terms)

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Northern Great Lakes Synod

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Year = Year Term Ends (1 year terms)

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Year = Year Term Ends (1 year terms)

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Report of the Candidacy Committee

What a year this has been! We have experienced a multitude of emotions as our committee has accompanied seminarians through traditional and untraditional pathways toward serving God in ministries of Word and Sacrament (Pastoral) as well as those in Word and Service (Diaconal and Chaplaincy).

Current members of the Northern Great Lakes Synod Candidacy Committee include Marcie Kaven (Chair), Andy Hill (Recording Secretary), Linda Levine, Roland Jacobson, Pastor David Murphy, Pastor Grant Van Lishout, and Bishop Katherine Finegan. Our Region 5 Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Reverend Ramie Bakkan, also offers us in-person and remote partnership and guidance. We are a small, but mighty team all connected in a common desire to compassionately partner with a variety of persons discerning a call to ministry in the ELCA.

Our Bi-Synodical partnership with the East Central Synod of Wisconsin maintained throughout the year and we held three shared meetings on March 17th via Zoom, on June 28th at St. Andrew Church in Wausau, WI, and on December 1st-2nd at St. John Lutheran Church in Green Bay, WI. Collectively, at these three meetings our unified efforts “Entered” four candidates into the process and “Approved” six candidates as a culmination of their academic and practice preparations into ministry.

The NGLS Candidacy Committee also met on August 31st at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Marinette, WI and “Entered” two more candidates into the ministry of Word and Sacrament. It was at this meeting that Marcie Kaven was elected as the new NGLS Candidacy Chairperson. Additionally, many of our NGLS Candidacy Committee members participated in a remote training Summit in September, reviewing the ever-changing Candidacy process as well as special training on meaningful and sensitive accompaniment of candidates.

In mid-October our NGLS Candidacy Committee learned of the ECSW Synod Council’s vote to dissolve the Bi-Synodical relationship. This was presented as a reflection of the ECSW desires to expand their candidacy process to include Synod Authorized Ministers. Since unifying in 2009, the two Synods have worked together and learned from each other, to meet the candidacy needs of our region. Unfortunately, the ECSW determined that it was no longer willing to learn and grow together. This was a difficult season for our NGLS Candidacy Committee, as we felt our collective voice was not invited to that specific point of discernment. Our final meeting held together was in early December. We worked together amicably and honored the process, while respectfully withholding votes in the ECSW “Entrance” of a new SAM. We have and will continue to accept the new design of separation and look forward to more localized Candidacy efforts for our NGLS Candidacy Committee.

Our current ministry roster of candidates includes the following...

Robert Lake, of Faith Lutheran in Ishpeming, MI.

Word and Sacrament Candidate, Wartburg
Entered in August 2023 as a Distance Learner
Estimated Approval in 2027

Daniel Moschea, of Porterfield Lutheran in Porterfield, WI

Word and Sacrament Candidate, Wartburg
Entered in August 2023 as a Distance Learner
Estimated Approval in 2027

Wade Crevier, of Good Shepherd in Peshtigo, WI

Word and Sacrament Candidate, Wartburg
Entered in April 2021 as MDiv Distance Learner
Endorsed in Fall 2022
Estimated Approval in 2025

Lance Crevier, of Good Shepherd in Peshtigo, WI

Word and Sacrament Candidate, Wartburg
Entered in April 2021 as MDiv Collaborative Learner
Endorsed in Summer 2023
Estimated Approval in 2025

Our NGLS Candidacy Committee celebrates the ministerial paths of these four candidates. We also recognize that each candidate is unique, and we are committed to doing our best to meet each one where they are, in the hopes of benefiting the kingdom in mutual ministry.

Our NGLS Candidacy Committee also requests the Northern Great Lakes Synod to partner with us in two ways:

Join our efforts to promote a mindfulness of recognizing ministry potential in our congregations. Candidacy Committees accompany candidates through a process, but the mystery of faith seems most present at the point of recognizing spiritual gifts in one another. Please pray for all people feeling called toward rostered ministry within the ELCA, that they may be encouraged and offered guidance in their important seasons of discernment.

Pray for the wellness of the NGLS Candidacy Committee. Our year ended with a bit of confusion and pain.

We are committed to our work and to staying focused on our tasks at hand, but appreciate being lifted in prayer as the broken, healing, people of Christ we all are.

Thank you for your continued call toward this important work of Candidacy and for your prayerful consideration as we move forward into new spaces for healing and grace.

Blessings in Candidacy,

Marcie Kaven, NGLS Candidacy Committee Chair

Northern Great Lakes Synod Fund for Leaders (5G) 2024 Annual Report

Thank you to the people of the Northern Great Lakes Synod for making an investment in the future of the church through the ELCA Fund for Leaders. We are grateful for your partnership!

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the ELCA Fund for Leaders provided scholarship assistance of more than \$3 million in support of nearly 350 future pastors and deacons. Thank you for your role in ensuring that these future leaders will be freed from the burden of student debt so that they can go and serve as the church needs and the Holy Spirit leads.

Students supported in 2023-2024: Total \$6,000

- Lance Crevier \$6,000 Wartburg Theological Seminary

Additional Information about your funds

Total awarded since inception: **\$391,515.02**

Northern Great Lakes Synod -First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Iron Mountain- FFL, E270902

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$32,368.51**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$0.00**

Northern Great Lakes Synod Skogman Family - Fund for Leaders, E270903

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$200,281.14**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$2,921.20**

Northern Great Lakes Synod Kemppainen Family- Fund for Leaders, E270904

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$85,030.44**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$0.00**

Northern Great Lakes Synod Fund for Leaders, E271344

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$404,273.32**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$9,604.77**

Northern Great Lakes Synod-United Lutheran Church of Crystal Falls, E271444

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$6,466.45**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$0.00**

Northern Great Lakes Synod -Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Menominee, MI – FFL, E271473

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$64,645.22**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$0.00**

Continued on next page ->

Northern Great Lakes Synod-Bethel Lutheran Church- Fund for Leaders, E271528

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$89,257.28**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$0.00**

David V and Patricia A Hollis Fund for Leaders, E271758

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$96,651.67**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$0.00**

The Klasner Family Seminary Scholarship Fund, E273313

Market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$16,850.26**

New gifts given to your fund in 2023: **\$0.00**

Combined market value as of 12/31/2023: **\$995,824.29**

Total amount available for you to award for 2024-2025: \$82,300*

*This number is calculated with a 10% holdback to ensure that all promised scholarships can be paid during both semesters, even if the market fluctuates. Please issue awards in whole dollars.

Documents

Process and Timeline

2024 Guidelines for Synods

This document contains eligibility criteria and notes on the selection process and timeline.

2024 FFL Synod nominations

Synods submit nominee information to FFL by May 1, 2024 using this Excel template.

2024 Instructions for Synod or Congregation nominees

Synods send to each nominee by May 15. This document assists students registering/applying in ELCA GrantMaker.

Students register and apply: May 15 - June 5, 2024.

Students accept the grant agreement online in July 2024.

For more information, please visit [ELCA.org/fundforleaders](https://www.elca.org/fundforleaders) or call 800-638-3522, ext. 2936

Report of the Endowment Fund Committee



A good friend of mine once said, “never deprive someone of the opportunity to give”. Indeed, giving is a real gift. We thank you for your faithful stewardship of sharing some of your treasure to do God’s work through the funds of our Endowment Ministry.



This report highlights some of the work of the synod Endowment Ministry, through its various funds, made possible by our generous givers and where those financial resources were allocated.



As always, space is limited so two(2) new initiatives deserve special attention. The Synod Ministry Fund and the Seed Sowers vision over the next three years.

The Synod Ministry Fund is a new fund created to provide financial support for congregational and synod ministries. The first fund drive was conducted in 2023 and the hope would be to have a drive every year to replenish monies spent for various projects. This is an unrestricted fund that is visioned to be an agile support source of monies gathered in one year and spent the next.

At the synod assembly last year, the inaugural Seed Sowers luncheon was held to thank people who had made a planned gift (remembered the NGLSynod/ELCA in their will) or were considering doing so. We have been blessed, abundantly, by the seeds sown through our endowment ministries this past year.

The financial resources at the end of the fiscal year totaled \$2,570,600 compared to the 2022 year end total of \$2,355,376.

A total of \$25,500 was distributed to ten(10) different projects from the unrestricted Equipping the Saints Endowment Fund. A total of \$90,982 was distributed to six(6) different ministries from the restricted Endowment Fund. The details of these distributions can be found by referring to appendices A and B attached to this report.

Thank you for sharing some of your treasure and the love it represents and thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted and In Christ,

Dirk Manson, Chair



Northern Great Lakes Synod Equipping the Saints Endowment Fund Distribution (Unrestricted) - 2023

Unrestricted Assets to determine distribution:
Average Market Value 2019-2023 is \$407,543.70

\$1,000 Website Development and Maintenance

Having switched to a different website company in order to keep pace with the demands placed on that media platform, our website is vastly improved but also more expensive. This distribution will help support the additional financial burden on Mission Support dollars.

\$4,000 Synod Youth Events

The Youth Committee, along with our new Synod Youth Coordinator, plans for Conference based youth events throughout the year. These funds will provide grants up to \$500 for collaboration within each conference for youth events.

\$2,000 Lifelong Faith Formation

Since its inception in 2019, over 500 people have participated, via Zoom, in one or more classes. We look forward to another year of engagement unhampered by geography or weather. Funds will support teachers, the administrator, and help to provide any needed curriculum.

\$3,000 Bay College Campus Ministry

All of our Tri-County Conference congregations support this ecumenical ministry. A part-time campus pastor serves and receives very modest funding. This disbursement helps make a Christian presence on campus possible.

\$2,500 Synod Council Retreat

The Church is changing and being transformed/reformed. The challenges, opportunities, and possibilities are different than they were even four years ago even as our mission remains the same. As the Synod Council seeks to lead our Synod into the future, a time of reflection, discernment, visioning, and prayer is appropriate. This disbursement makes this important work possible.

\$6,000 Leadership Support

Plans are in the works for a Fall Theological Conference, a Clergy Women's Retreat, events around healthy boundaries in congregations, and an event for our Licensed Lay Ministers and Supervisors.

\$2,000 U.P. Wild Church – Mission Development

Begun in 2018, this ministry effort is in collaboration with the Episcopal Diocese and supported in part by a grant from the ELCA. Begun as a holy experiment in the Marquette County area, additional ministries now include the Keweenaw and Delta County Communities.

\$2,000 WLUC TV 6 Christmas Worship Service

The pandemic created both the need and the opportunity for a broadcasted Christmas worship service that people could participate in from home. In partnership with WLUC TV6, we anticipate this effort will continue. This disbursement will provide a portion of the needed financial support.

\$1,000 Justice Advocacy

Several groups have emerged and coalesced around Racial Equity, Cultural Competency, Welcome and Inclusion, and building relationships with our Tribal neighbors. This disbursement will provide financial support as each effort builds momentum in our Synod.

\$2,000 Endowment Ministry Project Expenses

This year will see our First Inaugural Luncheon of the Seed Sowers, i.e., people who have or who are interested in including an ELCA ministry in their estate plan or will. This disbursement will provide financial support for that luncheon and follow-up communications and promotions for Endowment ministry in our Synod.

Total 2023 Distribution: \$25,500

(6.25% distribution of assets)

Northern Great Lakes Synod

Endowment Fund Distribution - Restricted

2023

Restricted Assets: \$2,064,028.33 (January 31, 2023 balance)
ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust & Thrivent Financial

\$18,000 Seminarian Scholarships

Preparing the next generation of pastoral leaders is an important part of the Synod's work. Students from synod congregations benefit from our various endowments. For the 2023-2024 academic year, full-time student will receive \$12,000, with part-time students receiving \$6,000. Our synod stands as the most generous synod in the ELCA in the support of seminarians.

\$7,311 Tanzania Scholarships

Restricted giving by donors has made it possible to support members of the Church in Tanzania pursue their learning at the Kisarawe Lutheran Junior Seminary and higher education at Tumaini University in Tanzania.

\$11,634 Rural Ministry

Restricted giving by donors makes it possible to support our synod work. Programs throughout our synod benefit from this gift including seminary candidacy, outreach and leadership support.

\$10,934 St. Mark's, Marquette Legacy Endowment Fund

Distributions from this fund, which was created following the closure of the congregation, supports the ministries of Fortune Lake Camp, Finlandia University, ELCA Seminaries/Seminarians, Synod Mission Support, and Room at the Inn/Warming Center.

\$12,600 Clergy Debt Relief Fund

This newest Endowment Fund was begun through the generous bequest of Norman Lamberg. Annual grants are made to rostered persons who have incurred debt while in seminary seeking their first theological degree. Seven pastors received grants in 2023.

\$5,003 Bishop Thomas and Luanne Skrenes Fund for Ministry

Annual distributions from this Endowment Fund support the clergy of our synod through debt retirement, as well as ministries with our Companion Synod, the Eastern & Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

2023 Total Distribution from Restricted Funds - \$65,482

2023 Total Distribution: \$90,982



2023 Report of the Synod Ministry Fund



The work of the Northern Great Lakes Synod is accomplished through the generous giving of our 78 congregations. We generally refer to the funds provided as “Benevolence” or “Mission Support.” These funds are used to cover basic costs such as staff salaries, benefits, utilities, and so on. The Synod is intentional about being good stewards of the resources entrusted to them, and the Synod Council, each year, works to propose the balanced budget that is necessary in order to be fiscally responsible. Understandably, but regrettably, this type of budgeting leaves very little in the coffers for additional ministry endeavors.

In early 2023, Bishop Katherine Finegan began sharing her vision of a new fund that would provide financial support for the innovative and imaginative ministry efforts waiting to be undertaken “if only” the money was there. The Bishop referred to it as the Synod Ministry Fund, a fund that would assist the Northern Great Lakes Synod in living out Christ’s Great Commission in new and creative ways.

By October, a Synod Ministry Fund Policy was in place with the NGLS Finance Committee assisting in early efforts to oversee requests for donations as well as the distribution of funds collected. On November 28th, the traditional day of the year designated as “Giving Tuesday”, the Synod was able to formally begin raising funds – thanks, in part, to matching funds of \$2000.00. By year end, the Synod Ministry Fund had reached \$6,928.00!

The goal of the Synod Ministry Fund is to subsidize projects using quickly accessible monies – gathered in one year and sent out the next. According to our new policy, approximately 90% of the available dollars, or \$6235.00 in funds, have been set aside for 2024 projects. In early 2024, a grant application was in process, inviting individuals and congregations to submit their ideas for projects that are innovative, collaborative, and evangelism focused.

As of April 1, 2024, three applications have been received and approved:

Community Good Friday Cantata: A choral observance of Good Friday comprised of singers from the community and the four Ishpeming churches (Bethel, Faith, Trinity, Bethany). The grant supported a small orchestra, music, advertising, and honoraria for musicians and directors. \$850

Kitchen upgrades for Lutheran Campus Ministry at Michigan Tech in and through Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Houghton: A thriving weekly community meal with students requires a kitchen that passes muster with the health department. In concert with an additional grant from the National LCM body, support from partner congregations, and congregational support, the SMF grant offers the support of the NGLS for this worthy effort. \$1000

U.P. Wild Church Convocation: Our U.P. Wild outdoor church initiative has grown to six different locations: Marquette, the Keweenaw, Northern Wisconsin, Rapid River, the Soo, and the Iron Mountain area. Our Mission Developer, Lanni Lanto, wishes to gather all interested and participating leaders for conversation, discernment, and planning as to the next steps of this creative and out-of-the-building ministry. \$1000

Donations may be received at any time, but plan on an “ask” once again in the Fall for the 2025 disbursements. There is no deadline for applications. Funds will be disbursed as long as funds are available.

We want to thank everyone involved in getting this new and exciting effort to support ministry up and running, and we look forward to seeing and hearing more about the fruits of this endeavor in the months ahead.

In Christ, Pr. Terry Frankenstein, Synod Treasurer

Report of Lifelong Faith Formation



Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.
Psalm 25: 4-5, New Revised Standard Version

Lifelong Faith Formation offers opportunities for learning, fellowship, and spiritual growth through Bible studies, book discussions, and lively interaction on church history, Lutheran theology, and contemporary issues that are relevant to Christian life. Evolving every year since it was launched in 2020, the program offers online classes in the winter and fall, with occasional in-person sessions.

In 2023, these 13 classes engaged 178 people:

- **Beyond Policy: Empowering the Faith Community to Recognize and Respond to Child Abuse and Sexual Assault**, with Pastor Kari Vadis of Trinity, Rhinelander;
- **Christ's Kaleidoscope**, a focus on resources that educate and deepen cultural competency regarding racial equity, our indigenous neighbors, and the LGBTQIA+ community, with Samuel Brink, Fortune Lake Lutheran Bible Camp, and Pastor Bruce J. Thorsen, Faith, Okemos, Michigan;
- **Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past: A Conversation about Loss, Grief, and Nostalgia in Congregational Life** by Michael Girlinghouse, a book study with Bishop Katherine Finegan;
- **Introduction to Biblical Hebrew**, with Pastor Nicole Hanson Lynn of Salem and Zion, Ironwood;
- **Introduction to Family Systems Thinking & Book Study of Friedman's Fables**, with Rev. Jim Duehring, Assistant to the Bishop;
- **The Gospel of Mark: It's Story and Meaning**, with Pastor Phil Johnson, Ascension, Minocqua;
- **Meeting Christ in Prayer** with Pastor Terry Frankenstein
- **Stewards of Children**: The movement to make your faith community a safe space, with Pastor Kari Vadis, Trinity, Rhinelander;
- **Rediscovering God and Changing the World: A Book Study of the Life of Martin Luther by Eric Metaxas**, with Bishop Emeritus Tom Skrenes;
- **A Spirituality of Death and Dying**, with Pastor Elisabeth Daniels of First, Gladstone;
- **That's Not in MY Bible: a survey of the Apocrypha** with Pastor Tommy Richter, Zion, Manistique;
- **"Who are the Evangelicals?"** with Dr. Lon Hider, Christ the King, Escanaba; and
- **Year-Round Stewardship on a Congregational Level**, with Karen Sylvester of Zion, Marinette.

Our primary goal for 2024 is to offer a diverse schedule of winter and fall classes to include Bible study, church history, spiritual growth, social justice concerns, and Lutheran theology among other topics of interest to the people of our synod.

Special thanks to Bishop Katherine Finegan and synod staff—Rev. James Duehring, Betsy Koski, Heather Oysti, and Courtney Wehmeier—for their many contributions to the program; to all of the teachers; and to these committee members for their commitment and counsel through 2023:

- Matthew Johnson (Chairperson and Secretary), Immanuel, Rhineland;
- Chaplain Karen Anne Hanson, Northland Retirement Community, Marinette;
- Rev. Lon Hider, Eden, Munising;
- Rev. Stephen Gauger, Calvary, Rapid River;
- Pauline Kiltinen, Messiah, Marquette;
- Judith Quirk, Messiah, Marquette;
- Rev. Soren Schmidt; Holy Trinity, Chassell;
- Cindy Sjoquist, First, Gladstone;
- Rev. Diane Srutowski, Retired;
- Rev. David Tielbar, Zion, St. Ignace and Trinity, Brevort;

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Johnson
Chairperson
Lifelong Faith Formation Committee

Deacon Lori Ward
Synod Missioner
Lifelong Faith Formation Administrator

Report of the Leadership Support Committee

The Synod Leadership Support Committee is responsible for supporting Rostered Leaders, Licensed Lay Ministers, and their families as they engage in their specific ministries. We plan and provide opportunities and resources for wholeness of life and continuing education. We hope to encourage and enhance spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health among our Synod's ministry leaders and their families.

The massive shift from the last winter season to this winter season seems in sync with other shifts we have seen our ministry within and through the Leadership Support Committee. Both congregations and their leaders have been moving in a variety of directions. We continue to be deeply grateful for Intentional Interim Pastors, Administrative Interim Pastors, and Licensed Lay Ministers as they are serving congregations throughout our Synod. We also continue to be blessed with the ministry of Collaborative Seminary Students – students who are training for ministry and serving in congregations as they continue their studies – as well as ordained leaders from our Full Communion Partner denominations. All our rostered leaders have been creative, persistent, and devoted to their ministries – continuing to adapt as circumstances change with new technology options and on-going health concerns.

Our Committee said good-bye to Pastor Jay Welshonse, as he moved into a call in a different synod. We welcomed Pastor Jack Busche to our team. We are developing new ways building of mentoring relationships among our rostered leaders, especially for those in the first three years of rostered ministry. We are investigating a new format for Boundaries Training and exploring the means for all Pulpit Supply leaders to participate in this training. Pastor Catie Ford serves as our liaison to the First Call Theological Education (FCTE) planning team who work with rostered leaders in our Synod and the six synods that cover the remainder of Wisconsin. This ministry is also in transition as the retreat center where First Call gatherings have been held enacted new policies and may not work for our needs in the future. We support Bishop Katherine Finegan as she works with mobility and matching ministry leaders with congregations in need, as well as supporting the efforts to aid in debt relief for Rostered Leaders within our Synod. Pastor Ford worked with a subcommittee to prepare a draft of the 2025 Compensation Guidelines, which our committee reviewed before passing it along to our Synod Council. We are very grateful to Betsy Koski and Courtney Wehmeier who assist us with administrative details and number crunching. Deacon Lori Ward guides Licensed Lay Ministers and their supervisors, coordinates the Lifelong Faith Formation classes, and supports our Synod Staff in a variety of other activities.

Events for continuing education and spiritual growth have been a mix of online and in-person gatherings. The events of the past year included:

- Regular ZOOM Check-in gatherings with Bishop Finegan and rostered leaders

- Lifelong Faith Formation opportunities

- Online Gathering for Retired Rostered Leaders

Online and In-person Boundaries Trainings focused on creating safe places for children

Faithful Innovations Trainings led by DEM Pastor Jim Duehring

Bishop's Convocation at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp in September 2023

Hybrid online/in-person First Call Theological Education Event in November 2023

As we look ahead to the next year, our Synod Staff members continue to work with congregations for renewal and spiritual growth. We are evaluating the options for Theological Conferences for rostered leaders – as venues become more expensive, as rostered leaders are dealing with family situations (such as schools that “go remote” with very little notice) and with bi-vocational ministry situations, and as educational time and expense become more of a concern for our leaders. At this time, our planned events for the next year include: Life-Long Faith Formation opportunities, Faithful Innovations trainings for laity and rostered leaders, a return to Mackinac Island for a Theological Conference in September 2024, a First Call Theological Education Event or Events in November 2024, a Gathering for Retired Rostered Leaders, the annual Clergy Spouses' Retreat, and continuing online Recharge Discussions.

Many thanks to current committee members for their work: Bishop Katherine Finegan, Pastor Catie Ford (liaison to FCTE & Compensation Subcommittee Chair), Pastor Jack Busche, Pastor Kay Richter (Chair), and Deacon Lori Ward (Synod Missioner & Secretary).

Respectfully Submitted by

Pastor Kay Richter, chair

Report of Prayfaithfully

www.prayfaithfully.org or www.nglsynod.org/prayfaithfully

www.nglsynod.org/prayfaithfully

“To PRAY is to laugh, whistle, dance on happy feet, sing, shout, and jump! higher than ever before. But it is also to whisper, wonder, stumble in dark places, cry, scream, or just hold a tired head in tired hands and wait...Prayer is our tired reaching out to the one who holds us closer and loves us more than we would dare imagine.” - Greta Schrumm

Prayer is so very many things...all resting in the loving hands of God. Thank you to the many lay people and pastors in our Synod who have shared their faith in the devotions written for our Prayfaithfully website. Still the most accessed page on the website, these devotions are a staple for daily use by many.

In 2023, 42 individuals along with one Bible study group and Fortune Lake summer camp staff shared their faith by writing Prayfaithfully devotions. Thank you for your dedication and willingness to be a part of this Synod ministry! **You are a blessing!**

New writers are most welcome!! Because I don't know everyone in our Synod to be able to ask you personally, contacting me to volunteer to write is most appreciated! Individuals, couples, Bible study groups, confirmation classes, women's and men's groups are all welcome to write a week's worth of devotions based on a Scripture passage(s) or topic of your choice, followed by a short devotion and closing prayer. Detailed guidelines for the devotions can be found on the Synod website. Simply contact me at the Synod office by phone or email and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Christine Harkness does a fantastic job writing the Prayfaithfully calendars that accompany the Northern Light newsletter. She lifts up a wide range of people, occupations, current events, and relevant issues, expanding our awareness and encouraging us to remember the importance of keeping these things in our prayers. Thank you, Chris, for your exceptional work!

Once again, thank you to all who wrote – and read – Prayfaithfully devotions. Your words are an inspiration, a comfort, a challenge, and a blessing to all!

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Koski

bakoski@nglsynod.org



Report of the Walking with Our Indigenous Neighbors Task Force

Boozhoo! Akina Indinawemaaganag! Greetings all relatives!

It is said, “There will come a time when the Light-skinned Race will be given a choice between two roads.” The road to technology and the road to spiritualism. “If they choose the right road, then the Seventh Fire will light the Eighth and Final Fire – an eternal Fire of peace, love, brotherhood and sisterhood (The Mishomis Book: The voice of the Ojibway, Edward Benton-Banai, p. 93).” According to the Ojibwe prophecy, the road to spirituality represents the slower path that traditional Native people have traveled and are now seeking again. We are asked to walk alongside them for the common purpose of healing a damaged and seared earth. We do this by learning from them and practicing the ways that preserved this land long before white Europeans arrived.

We, the NGLS WWOIN Task Force, are committed to two main goals: 1) providing awareness and education to the people of our synod about the Indigenous people who live beside us. 2) providing hands-on volunteer services to tribal communities. Thus, the task force restructured to form two groups according to these purposes. One group focuses on synod-wide education and information. The other group focuses on local initiatives. Currently, there exists a local group on the reservation of Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) in Baraga, MI to fulfill the second goal. It is our hope that where other tribal communities thrive, synod folks and local churches will also walk alongside their Indigenous neighbors.

The year of 2023 unfolded with many efforts in continuing to build tribal relationships. Members of the WWOIN task force and others (anyone from our synod congregations is invited!) joyfully participated in the following events at KBIC:

Every spring semester at Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, a task force member is a guest speaker in the Anishinaabe Values and Philosophy Class. The topic in 2023 was paralleling the Judeo-Christian Creation & Flood Story with the Anishinaabe Creation & Flood Story.

The month of February brings the outdoor winter fun game of the Snow Snake. Local task force and community members join with KBIC in making snow snakes (4-5 feet long decorative sticks) that are slid down a trail of snow for competition. February – April also brings our participation in the preparation and harvesting of maple sap at Dynamite Hill Farms, the home of Jerry Jondreau and Katy Bresette, Ojibwe traditional food growers.

In April – Members of the WWOIN Task Force worked with Bishop Finegan to write a letter in support of S.195 and H.R. 650 Bill- The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Land Claim Settlement Act of 2023 to Representative Jack Bergman, Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, and Governor Gretchen Whitmer. This letter was presented to KBIC Tribal Council and approved with appreciation. The bill has passed the Senate, but remains in the House of Representatives.

May – The 2nd Annual Children’s Water Walk was well attended with many children learning how to carry on the tradition of caring and praying for the water. Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Baraga, MI hosted campus ministry students from the University of Maryland for a four day Ojibwe cultural immersion experience. Members of the local task force guided the group with the following activities: Tour and teachings at KBOCC, Pinery Indian Cemetery, Assinins (location of Catholic Indian Orphanage), PowWow grounds and trails, Dynamite Hill Farms, and KBIC Debweyendan Indigenous Garden. The students expressed that they had an overwhelmingly eye-opening experience!

The summer months included participating in Children’s Remembrance Walk, KBIC PowWow, and 17 mile water walk from Pequaming to Baraga. The Baraga Task Force kept the Veterans fed during the three day PowWow and also assisted in making sandwiches and providing transportation for the water walk.

It was also around this time members of the task force met with KBIC Tribal Council member, Rodney Loonsfoot to speak at the Marquette Area Public Schools Board of Education meeting to encourage removing the Redmen and Redette nicknames. Numerous members of the task force, along with Bishop Finegan, spoke at the forum. The board has since voted 4-3 to abolish the Marquette High School Redmen/Redettes nickname and began the process of rebranding as the Marquette Sentinels.

The year came to a close with the U.P. Wild Church Wilderness Walk on the KBIC reservation. The walk focused on how the Anishinaabeg see the world. Pray Faithfully Devotions on the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers were posted in October. The 5th Annual People of the Heart Water Walk completed their annual 90 mile walk from Baraga to Copper Harbor. The Lutheran Churches of Bethany, Mohawk; Holy Cross, Baraga; and Good Shepherd, Houghton hosted meals in collaboration with the MTU “food chiefs” who fed and nourished the water walkers on their 3 day journey. October through December entailed much work with the Baraga local task force under the guidance and direction of Coordinator Rodney Loonsfoot, of the Marine Corp Toys for Tots Campaign. Two and half months of collaboration included distributing donation boxes to local businesses, picking up and distributing toys. The Kick-off event to start the Campaign was hosted by Holy Cross, Lutheran Church, Baraga.

The goal of a second task force, this one synod-wide, is to provide awareness and education to the people of our synod about the Indigenous people who live beside us. This WWOIN task force engaged in the following:

We met several times throughout the year to support one another, learn about events taking place in native communities across the synod, and discuss ways to expand the circle of learning and advocacy.

We provided two weeks of material for learning and discussion for the 2023 Lenten Kaleidoscope challenge.

We created and staffed a display at the 2023 in person NGLS assembly in Marquette.

We attempted to inform individuals and congregations throughout the synod of developments and opportunities for learning and advocacy through the NGLS Northern Light and E-Notes.

We developed a service to use for worship on a Native American Sunday in congregations across our synod.

Four members of our task force serve on the ELCA Churchwide's Truth Seeking and Truth Telling task force dedicated to researching Lutheran and Christian involvement in the Indian Boarding School era. The goal of this task force is to become transparent about our past involvement and the harm it caused, as well as to work toward new relationships with our indigenous neighbors. Other members of the ELCA are invited to serve—let us know if you would like to do so!

We developed a four session study for the NGLS Lifelong Learning Faith Formation series beginning in January, 2024 entitled Native America and the Stewardship of the Land: Land Acknowledgments and Beyond.

We continue to call attention to the ELCA's Truth and Healing Movement. Please see www.elca.org/indigenous for more information!

It is said, "There will come a time when the Light-skinned Race will be given a choice between two roads." The road to technology and the road to spiritualism. (The Mishomis Book) The Northern Great Lakes Synod is blessed to share a home and land with many Indigenous People that are, among others, Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi. May it be our blessing and goal to walk our paths together toward healing relationships and healing Mother Earth. Our roads are merging, thanks be to God!

---Submitted by Pr Julie Belew, Pr Dave Van Kley and Pr Bucky Beach

Report of Conference 1—Iron-Gogebic-Ontonagon

Report from Conference President, Pastor Doug Norquist

Conference 1 is named “IGO Conference” for the three counties (Iron County, WI; Gogebic County, MI; and Ontonagon County, MI) in which most of our members live. **Our 2023 gathering took place on October 15, 2023 at Zion Lutheran Church, Ironwood.** Members were present from several of our congregations. Some highlights follow.

As Pastor of the host congregation, Pastor Nicole Hanson-Lynn led us in **worship**, utilizing Taizé songs (“Veni Sancte Spiritus”, “Come and Fill Our Hearts”) and the first verse of “Restore in Us, O God” (Daw/Hopson) used in a similar way. There were questions for reflection, regarding our faith and the IGO Conference. We had also been encouraged to ask someone, from a congregation other than our own, about how we might pray for them. These requests helped to inform our prayers.

In his capacity as Conference president, Pastor Doug Norquist chaired the meeting.

Treasurer Kristine Carlson reported on the demise of her office: That is to say, at its 2022 gathering, the Conference had voted to zero out the checkbook, close the account, and discontinue the office of Conference treasurer. Accordingly, the remaining funds (about \$525) were disbursed to Fortune Lake Camp, the file handed over to Pastor Kay Richter, who had agreed to ask the synod office what to do with it, and Kris was out of a job (freeing her for another one – see below).

Newly elected by unanimous ballot: Pastor Doug Norquist as President; Chris Wirtanen (filling out a term for Ralph Wirtanen, deceased) as Vice President; Kristine Carlson as secretary; Pastor Nicole Hanson-Lynn, David Kauppi, and Sue Hill (pending acceptance) as nominating committee.

Synod Council Representative **Gabriel Lannet** brought a **report on behalf of the Northern Great Lakes Synod.**

The next IGO Conference gathering is scheduled for September 29, 2024, 4pm ET/3pm CT, at First, Ewen.

The gathering **enjoyed food and hospitality** from **members of Zion Lutheran Church.**

Report of Conference 2—Copper Country

Copper Country Conference President’s Report (Conference 2) for 2024 Synod Assembly of the Northern Great Lakes Synod

Grace and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Much of this report echoes, borrows (and adds to) from our previous report as collaborations, events, activities, and efforts continue.

Our current conference officers and elected positions are:

Rev. Kelly Ylitalo, Mission United Lutheran Church, Pelkie, Conference President
Beth Parzych, Mission United Lutheran Church, Pelkie, Vice President
Lisa Beck, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Hancock, Secretary
Gale Eiola, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Baraga, Treasurer
Bill Binroth, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chassell, Synod Council Representative
Rev. Soren Schmidt, Holy Trintiy Lutheran Church, Chassell, Conference Nominating Committee
Rev. Jared Howard, Faith Lutheran Church, Calumet, Conference Nominating Committee
Liz Hakola, Mission United Lutheran Church, Conference Nominating Committee

The Copper Country Conference would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the gifts of our retired clergy who continue to support, uplift, encourage and preach the Gospel: Rev. Peter Vorhes, Rev. Bucky Beach, Rev. Micheal Laakko, and Rev. Bill Jacobson. In similar fashion, we also give thanks for the life and ministry of Rev. Robert “Bob” Langseth. While we grieve at the loss of our colleague, we rejoice that his faithful energy and work in the Spirit touched so many. We are certain the Spirit continued to be shared and carried Bob forward into the welcoming promise of eternal life in Christ.

We want, with God’s grace, to additionally acknowledge and give welcome and blessings to those who are familiar to us and who have had special installations and ordinations and/or appointments within the past year and in our Conference area:

Rev. Bucky Beach is interim pastor at Grace, South Range.
Rev. Julie Belew is pastor at Holy Cross, Baraga, also Interim Pastor in L’Anse, MI.
Rev. Micah Cavaleri is pulpit supply pastor for Conference 2.
Rev. Bill Jacobson is interim pastor at Northern Lights Lutheran Parish in Ontonagon County.
Rev. Micheal Laakko completed interim pastor call at Northern Lights Lutheran Parish in Ontonagon County.
Rev. Soren Schmidt is pastor at Holy Trinity, Chassell, completed Interim Pastor call at Good Shepherd, Houghton, MI.
Rev. Sarah Semmler-Smith was installed at Good Shepherd, Houghton, former pastor at Finlandia University, also was Interim Pastor at Grace, South Range, MI.
Rev. Kelly Ylitalo is pastor at Mission United, Pelkie, who was recently voted in as Conference 2 President.

Each of these clergy has been integral in the continued ministry leadership in and around our conference. Our text studies have been enriched with ecumenical conversations, conference-wide collaborative work, and a wide array of community outreach efforts. We thank God for the amazing clergy and leaders in our conference who so tirelessly work to uplift and encourage this beautiful conference community and steward the creation that encompasses us.

Our conference leaders continue to share thoughts and ideas about collaborations, various events, and activities for all ages through the conference. We continually seek the input, time, and talent from others to assist in

developing even stronger bonds through relationships and events. In 2023, people of various ages from across the conference participated in:

highway clean-up	blood drives
curling	Soup's On meal service
multiple VBS programs	Let's Eat meal service
youth retreat at Finlandia	Let's Rebuild community efforts
Faith-In-Action events	Feeding America partnerships
confirmation and acolyte events	pool parties
social outings	various service projects

We are additionally thankful for our ecumenical and inter-religious partnerships and for special events such as service of commendation for Finlandia University and the two conference meetings held in 2023.

We are looking forward to another active, productive, and servant-leadership year together in community – in God's family. We are excited to welcome U.P. Wild-Keweenaw to our conference and can hardly wait for further, amazing outdoor worships and experiences together.

Thank you for sharing. Thank you for continuing to worship, to welcome and witness in the faith, hope, and love of Jesus Christ! We see you. We see Christ in you. We see the Holy Spirit active in you and the community and spaces we in which we gather. We pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to be ever present and vigilant in you and for our great community. Amen.

Blessings,
Rev. Soren S. Schmidt, Conference 2 exiting President
Rev. Kelly J. Ylitalo, newly-elected Conference 2 President

Report of Conference 3—Headwaters

The Headwaters is the only Conference that consists only of Wisconsin congregations, so we hold the western-most locations. Like so many in our synod, our communities tend to be smaller, more rural, and spread out from one another. They focus on the many part-time and tourist residents, also many of our more permanent residents are snow birds. This gives us a fluid and ever-changing congregational mix and fewer people who have a year-round connection and participation.

We began the year with eight congregations and of those, two are being served by long time pastorates – Trinity in Rhinelander and Calvary, Minocqua. Faith in Three Lakes has a fairly new Pastor in Catie Ford. The others are also experiencing transitions of leadership and direction. Prince of Peace in Eagle River called a Pastor this year and are now finding good leadership in Grant VanLishout. We have four semi-retired Pastors serving interims: Immanuel, Rhinelander with John Kuziej, Ascension in Minocqua with Philip Johnson, Pioneer Lake in Conover with Peggy Rose and Paul Heykes worked with Prince of Peace until their placed their latest call. We are very grateful for the energy and leadership and continuity that our interims provide. Shepherd of the Lakes has been served by a Licensed Lay Minister, Bill Wendorf. However in September they voted to disassociate from the ELCA, which was finalized in December. So our conference has been actively dealing with leadership changes and the difficult challenges of finding new Shepherds to come to the Northwoods to serve the people here.

As conference pastors we have had good gatherings focusing on building each other up with worship and sharing what is happening in each of our parishes. We found the Chrism Mass to be a beneficial and uplifting event with our Bishop and we always enjoy being treated to lunch. We will be meeting again for this with Conferences 4 and 5. The newest endeavor for our area is the establishment of a program for reaching out to our local neighbors and members who want a different worship experience. Taking up the U.P. Wild model for spiritual nourishment we have begun “Worship in the Wild.” We have sponsored two hikes with time for devotion and prayer. This ministry will be connected with the U.P. efforts utilizing their resources and experience through Lanni Lantto, our Mission Developer. Rev. Catie Ford is spear-heading this outreach, along with Matthew Johnson and Rev. Grant VanLishout.

At our annual meeting, Rev. Kari Vadis shared information about the training opportunities through Darkness to Light and our need for being on the forefront in providing protection for our children. It is necessary, even within churches, to be proactive in our role as caregivers and teachers of youth, so the message of love is properly received. We reviewed our joint endeavor with five of our pastors providing Midweek Lenten messages that were recorded and shared with congregations. The leader at each congregation presided at their own service but the message was on the video. Then weather was not an issue for traveling from site to site still a variety of voices were heard sharing the message focusing on the Tree of Life.

The October meeting was held at Ascension with other joint concerns being shared. We heard input about ‘Walking with Indigenous Neighbors’ being part of the Lifelong Faith Formation classes. Also information was shared about the National Youth Gathering. Elections were held with Rev. Max Gray as President, Rev. Catie Ford as VP, Nancy Heykes as Secretary, Randi Danner completing a term as Synod Council representative, and the Nomination Committee is Jane Lipp, Rev Grant VanLishout, and Jack Palmer. Our next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2024 at Immanuel in Rhinelander.

Submitted by Max Gray, Headwaters Conference President

Report of Conference 4—Four Rivers

Greetings dear friends of the Northern Great Lakes Synod!

The Holy Spirit continues to be active among the churches and people of the Four Rivers conference. This past year the conference met via ZOOM on November 4, 2023 for our annual meeting, where those involved discussed our conference activities, preparations for this Synod assembly and our aspirations for our future together as conference churches. It was noted that in the past year our conference churches continued to engage one another in our Synod's ministries and question one another regarding where we feel our shared ministry together is headed. Some of the ministries we enjoyed together this past year included but were not limited to supporting and participating in events at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp near Crystal Falls, MI; promoting and taking part in our Synod's Lifelong Faith Formation classes, participating in Lutheran World Relief quilting groups and other projects, meeting regularly at the Florence Parish First Presbyterian church for text studies and collegial support and sharing the occasional special event or worship opportunity as we were able. An example of this was the Florence Parishes Suicide Awareness healing service and Grief Share group which was supported by other churches in our conference.

Over the course of the next year, we are going to try to increase our communications with one another as congregations with the hope that this may lead to more creative and meaningful ways of doing ministry together. In the short term this may look like sharing newsletters with one another or promoting our programs and events better throughout our communities, and in the longer-term increasing participation in activities together and working to support one another with our resources. At the same time there are concerns being discussed and considered for further discussion on the necessity of having conference meetings or events in the ways we have become accustomed to, or in embracing a better model for conference ministry that should be pursued. We continue to give thanks to God for the opportunity to walk alongside each other these days and we hold all of the churches of the Northern Great Lakes Synod in our prayers.

On behalf of the Four Rivers conference congregations,
grace and peace be with you all,
Rev. Lloyd Leo Luedeman

Report of Conference 5—Menominee Valley

The Menominee Valley Conference, consisting of congregations in both Michigan and Wisconsin, strives daily to serve God and our varied communities. Our rostered leaders serve in parish ministry and well as chaplain ministry in care facilities.

2023 was an active year for our conference which included a few significant changes. We said goodbye to Vicar Katy Tomlanovich at Our Savior's, Marinette as she completed seminary and began her first-call in the East Central Wisconsin Synod. We also welcomed Pastor Christine Olson who began serving an intentional-interim at Emmanuel, Menominee. The final significant change came with the congregations of Good Shepherd, Peshtigo and Our Savior's, Marinette forming a parish partnership and calling Pastor David Murphy as their shared pastor. Many MVC hunger ministries continued with their local food pantry and other food drives. Good Shepherd, Peshtigo expanded a hygiene items ministry to be a community support program, meeting additional needs including supporting families experiencing medical hardships. Our Savior's, Marinette again hosted a drive-thru Thanksgiving Dinner and Good Shepherd, Peshtigo continued their Chicken Booyah Community Meal. The MVC continued the strong tradition of collecting for LWR Quilt, Health, and School Kit ministries in October and 'Loading the Boxcar'. In addition, Our Savior's, Marinette donated dozens of quilts to Sleep in Heavenly Peace, an organization that helps provide beds to children who do not have one at home. Again, this past year a number of congregations participated in "God's work. Our hands." projects throughout our communities. New in 2023 was a first time of trying a UP Wild event in Menominee and continuing monthly youth events. More events are planned for 2024.

In 2024, the MVC looks to continue and strengthen the ministries already present in the conference and look for innovative new ways to proclaim the gospel through word and deed.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor David Murphy,
Conference President

Report of Conference 6—Tri-County

Conference 6 continues to work collaboratively to serve people in Delta, Schoolcraft, and Alger Counties. Over the past year we have continued to engage in ministry partnerships to meet the needs of our congregations, members, and pastors.

Since last synod assembly we have seen a few changes in the pastoral leadership of the congregations. Pastor Terry Frankenstein began serving Cavalry Rapid River as Administrative Interim following Pastor Steve Gauger's retirement. Pastor Melissa Salminen was installed and is serving Trinity Stonington and Bethany Perkins. Pastor Lon Hider retired from Christ the King, Escanaba and Faith, Rock. Pastor Jack Busche is serving as administrative interim at Faith, Rock. Pastor Dave Johnson and Sarah Sleeter are serving as administrative interims at Christ the King.

Our congregations have continued to partner together in the following ways. The clergy continue to meet weekly via zoom for text study to discuss the lectionary texts. Once a month the clergy gather for lunch. In December the clergy gathered for a Christmas party. In February Bethany Lutheran hosted a Chrism Mass which was led by Pastor Jim Duehring. In addition to conference 6 clergy the Marquette area clergy were invited to join us. We look forward to upcoming opportunities for continued collaboration including the Conference gathering at Immanuel for a hybrid synod assembly May 18. As part of the week leading into synod assembly the conference will host a synod wide hike that is being planned in each of the eight conferences. Three VBS programs will be held throughout the summer in the conference at Stonington, Gladstone, and Escanaba. We look forward to our annual water tent at the UP State Fair.

Congregations and pastors of the conference:

Bethany, Escanaba is served by Pastor Lily Brondyke

Immanuel, Escanaba is served by Pastor Mike Markwell

Christ the King, Escanaba is served by administrative interims Pastor Dave Johnson and Sarah Sleeter

First, Gladstone is served by Pastor Elisabeth Daniels

Cavalry, Rapid River is served by administrative interim Pastor Terry Frankenstein

First, Trenary is served by administrative interim Pastor Terry Frankenstein

Zion, Manistique is served by Pastor Tommy Richter

Bethany Lutheran Church, Perkins is served by Pastor Melissa Salminen

Trinity Stonington, is served by Pastor Melissa Salminen

Faith, Rock is served by administrative interim Pastor Jack Busche

Conference 6 Officers:

President: Pastor Mike Markwell

Vice President: Pastor Tommy Richter

Treasurer: Chuck Thomas

Secretary: Vacant

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Mike Markwell, Conference President

Report of Conference 8—Superior Central

The last year continued many transitions in the lives of our pastors and churches. As a conference, Superior Central continues to pray for the many congregations that are seeing changes in their leadership. We also continue to pray for the Synod which continues to see God driving us in a new way of being and doing church in our communities and across the synod.

As a conference, we have continued to build and grow our cooperation and collaboration. Nearly all the congregations in the conference are now working together for our confirmation program (meeting once a month at different congregations) and it has generated energy and joy (with 35+ youth participating). Groups of our conference clergy continue to meet regularly, plan continuing education together, and enjoy fellowship together. As a conference we look forward to continued collaboration and to deepening the relationships between our communities and our synod.

We continue to pray for partners in ministry and our conferences, our Synod, and our ELCA churchwide.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pr. Andrew Plocher

Conference 8 President.