

PART III: Synod Ministry Partners

Northern Great Lakes Synod

Synodical Women’s Organization 103
U.P. Wild Church..... 105

Campus Ministry

Lutheran Campus Ministry – Michigan Technical University 106
Lutheran Campus Ministry – Northern Michigan University..... 107

Colleges & Seminaries

Augustana College..... 108
Luther College 109
Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago..... 110
Wartburg Theological Seminary..... 112
Wartburg College..... 113

Region 5

Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin..... 115
Region 5 117

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Presiding Bishop’s Letter for 2024 Synod Assembly 118
ELCA Federal Credit Union 119
ELCA Foundation/Lutheran Planned Giving 120
ELCA Mission Investment Fund 121
Portico Benefits Services 122

Report of The Synodical Women’s Organization Northern Great Lakes Synod (NGLSWO)

Greetings from the Synod’s Women of the ELCA.

Our organization continues to assess the needs and preferences of our area women, and to seek ways to engage them in our women’s ministries. The board had a very busy year, planning for the annual convention and retreat, and participating in the Triennial Convention and Gathering in Phoenix, Arizona.

Three of our board members converged on Phoenix with over 800 women for the Triennium. The theme was “Just Love” and we attended workshops on how we can share God’s love as we deal with issues of immigration, human trafficking, climate change, the Truth and Healing Movement and allyship, and how our contributions can support WELCA’s Katie’s Fund \$1 million Campaign.

In October we held our synod’s women’s convention and retreat. The theme was “Our Walk with God” and we explored ways to enhance that walk with journaling, Bible studies, prayer beads, fellowship and worship. At the convention we re-elected the prior year’s board and added two new members. Our current Board, which meets bimonthly primarily via Zoom calls, includes the following people:

OFFICERS

Mary Ellen Perkins, President (2023-2024)
P O Box 57
Mass City, MI 49948

Sarah Sleeter, Vice President (2023-2025)
622 Sixth Street
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

Carol Ontto, Secretary (2023-2024)
201 Cherry Creek Road, #104
Marquette, MI 49855

Barb Marden, Treasurer (2.1.2024-1.31.2026)
4515 Lake Anna Road
Florence, WI 54121

BOARD MEMBERS

JoAnn Nurmi, Cluster 1 Board Member (2022-2023)
316 Chicago Mine Road
Wakefield, MI 49968

**Cluster 3 Board Member (2022-2024)
VACANT**

**Cluster 4 Board Member (2022-2023)
VACANT**

Julie Beck, Cluster 2 Board Member (2023-2024)
44924 Paradise Road
Chassell, MI 49916

**Cluster 5 Board Member (2022-2024)
VACANT**

**Cluster 7 Board Member (2022-2024)
VACANT**

Connie Schmidt, Cluster 6 Board Member (2023-2025)
209 S 12th Street
Escanaba, MI 49829

Michelle Johnson, Cluster 8 Board Member
(2023-2025)
960 Highland Drive
Marquette, MI 49855

Diane Gendron Board Member At Large (2023-2025)
1956 Ledge Street
Niagara, WI 54151

Last year the board was awarded a \$1,000 grant from WELCA's Katie's Fund, and we used the money to assist victims of human trafficking, and to fund scholarships to our retreat. We will continue to offer scholarships to women so they can participate in our convention and retreat this September.

At the convention, the attendees discussed how we can increase participation at our convention by women all over our synod. We formed a task force to review options including the notion of separating convention from the assembly weekend, so we could hold the convention on a Saturday, and in different locations all over the Upper Peninsula, hosted by local churches. This would reduce costs and facilitate participation by women in different locations. This year's convention and retreat will still be combined but watch for announcements of new developments for 2025!

The theme for this September's Convention and Retreat will be "Woven Together." We will gather at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp on the weekend of September 20-22 where we will again enjoy times of fellowship, worship, workshops and contemplation.

We want all women in our ELCA congregations to recognize that they are automatically members of the Women of the ELCA, and are invited to fully participate in all our SWO gatherings, conventions and retreats even if they are not members of a local women's group. We especially encourage first-time attendees to apply for scholarships.

We also want to remind all of our congregations and their women that only their financial support enables our Synodical Women's Organization and churchwide WELCA to carry out its ministries. We get no other funding from our synods. We rely on your generosity.

Mary Ellen Perkins

President of the Northern Great Lakes Synodical Women's Organization

Report of U.P. Wild Church

We have had a very exciting year!

We offer gatherings monthly in the Marquette area with our Nature Prayer Service and Wilderness Walks. Yet, we do much more with our core groups like foraging, service projects, home outreach, and to Room at the Inn. One group that seems particularly affected in a positive way are the 30 to 50 age range. Children are particularly welcome and the Wild Church outdoor format is perfect for including and involving families.

We added more ways to donate via the website beyond just Paypal. We now have the options for monthly and recurring donations via credit card through the website and we also have a "text to give" option. We are able to ask for donations at each offering and pass out the text to give cards during the services. We have quarterly meetings with the wisdom counsel (made up of ELCA, Episcopal reps). UP Wild Church has broad, strong support from within the greater Diocesan structure, Church wide in the ELCA, the Great Lakes Synod, Messiah Lutheran, and the Episcopal Church through grants and are looking into community grants.

The main theme of the past year has been nurturing expansion of UP Wild into other areas of the UP. We have actively meeting groups in Delta County, Keweenaw, St. Ignace, Northern Wisconsin, and Marquette with interest in Paradise and Ironwood. I've been working with these branches throughout the formation process and will continue to offer resources, guidance, and in person visitations.

Thank you for all your continued prayers and support!

Lanni Lantto

Mission Developer UP Wild



Dear partners in Christ of the NGLS,

What a year it has been at Lutheran Campus Ministry at Michigan Technological University! Beginning a new call to Good Shepherd/LCM just weeks shy of first semester, it feels like the year has been tumbling steady forward and now there remain just weeks left of the academic year. At LCM Michigan Tech together we worship, adventure, serve & support one another.

What has the Spirit been up to, and where can you partner with us in this vital and growing campus ministry?

- + Regular student engagement in worship, averaging 6 -12 students (25 at Easter!), in attendance or worship leadership.
- + A new Student Community Meal, cooked *by* students, *for* students with an average of 30 meals served each week, having had 24 different student volunteer cooks serving over 100 different peers this academic year. *Feed my sheep* Jesus said, and so we have been!
- + Adventures to waterfalls and hiking up mountains, baking Christmas cookies, and attending Fortune Lake's young adult winter wellness retreat.



I've learned this year that Lutheran Campus ministry is a uniquely collaborative ministry: it belongs not just to a campus pastor, to Good Shepherd, or to the students. It belongs to *all* of us, which includes anyone who would take the time to read this report, and has a heart for sharing the love of Christ to the next generation.

If you would like to join us in ministering to young adults and students and make an impact today, consider this your invitation! I would look forward to connecting with you, and sharing more about what God is up to through Lutheran Campus Ministry at Michigan Tech.

In gratitude for your partnership,

Rev. Sarah Semmler Smith
pastor@goodshepherd906.org
www.goodshepherd906.org



Greetings in Christ,

This was the first semester for me in a campus ministry role at Northern Michigan University. Working with other denominations including Methodist and Episcopal, we created a name to help center our students in the work we are doing: Sacred Space. Sacred Space recognizes the ecumenism in what we are doing here at NMU. Students can be Lutheran, but also, we have had the opportunity to meet students from differing backgrounds, and diverse experiences of Christianity, some good and others painful. We meet at Common Grounds, our student led coffee house and base for most Sacred Space activities. This is my new location since the sale of the LCM house. Coming on board in August, I dove right in with our Fall Fest at the beginning of the semester, where we reached out and invited students to our opening nights and semester programming. Programming this year consisted of Sunday Night Dinner and Devos (Devotions), Time with Bob (Students would read a chapter of a Bob Goff book to one another), Theology on Tap (Meeting at different venues to discuss topics such as heaven, hell, mission trips, etc.), and Thursday Night Word and Worship (Usually a social snack time followed by a short worship). I wrapped the year with a finals breakfast to say goodbye to outgoing student teachers and give the students a little brain food.

As we look backwards to move forwards, we want to continue the above programming and add our mission trip to Sanibel Florida in March to participate in hurricane recovery and relief. We are also making space for some other social one-off events such as game nights and movie nights. We continue to discuss how to add regular service opportunities to what we do at Sacred Space Campus Ministry and look for opportunities to connect with on campus services such as Ripple Effect an on-campus food pantry and team which tries to assist students who might need basic needs met (clothing, school supplies, bedding). I am blessed to work with amazing colleagues Erica Thomas (Wesley Campus Ministry) and Marna Franson (Episcopal Campus Ministry) as well as my colleague to the north, Sarah Semmler-Smith (Michigan Tech Campus Ministry).

As we look to 24-25, I am very aware of the continued need for on campus presence. I am hoping this summer to make sure and process where we might make ourselves more available for students. Hoping to continue all the programs we have created; I am always looking to listen to students who can speak to their needs and what might make their experience better at Sacred Space.

From Pastor Alex LaChapelle

Office of the President

Augustana College annual report

Dear Friends:

In its mission statement, Augustana College declares itself to be “deeply rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and an inclusive expression of Lutheran higher education.” The college’s new strategic plan, *Augustana Bold & Boundless*, reaffirms this rootedness. Approved in January by its board of trustees, which includes Bishop Stacie Fidler, the plan has three core goals:

1. Engaged and holistic learning
2. Student success in life and career
3. Serving our neighbors through engagement with our community, region and world

Strategic plans are all well and good, but if I may borrow from Luther’s Small Catechism, *What does this mean for us?*

It means that the purpose of Augustana College is to afford an opportunity for a liberal arts education that speaks to all dimensions of human existence, in a manner consistent with the higher education values of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

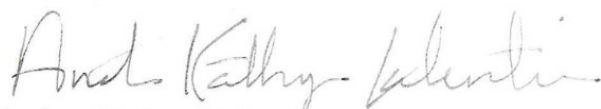
It means that as a community dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion, Augustana prizes interfaith engagement, commitment to justice, spiritual exploration, reasoned examination, vocational discernment, and freedom of academic inquiry and expression

Since its founding, Augustana College has educated and graduated people of purpose, with deep passions, the skills to accomplish ambitious goals, and extraordinary gifts for leadership. Our graduates possess a way of thinking about, and looking at, the world that equips them with a panoramic view of their community and the world that motivates them to have impact wherever they are. This is what Augustana has done since 1860 and we aspire to continue to shape graduates who make their communities better because of their experience with us.

At a time when many private liberal arts colleges in the Midwest are facing declining enrollments, we are grateful that the steadfast support of alumni and friends of the college has allowed us to keep an Augustana education in reach of families. The Murry Gerber Challenge is a \$40 million match that doubles the impact of any gift to endowed financial aid resources. It’s the fuel behind *Augustana Possible*, the single largest financial aid initiative in the institution’s history.

Augustana College stakes its future on the need of society for people whose education is framed by purpose. People who are not daunted by hard decisions because they have a set of values, derived in the context of community, to help them navigate the unforeseen. This future is unreachable without effective partnerships like that with the Northern Illinois Synod and the ELCA, for which my colleagues and I are deeply grateful.

Sincerely,



Andrea Kathryn Talentino
President

LUTHER COLLEGE

Greetings from Luther College and from our home in Decorah, Iowa – where river, woodland, and prairie meet upon lands that have been home to the Ioway, Sac, Fox, and Dakota people and their ancestors. We are proud to share with you highlights from this past academic year that reflect our mission to educate minds and develop whole persons equipped to understand and confront a changing society.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, we honored milestones in the college's history, including the 40th anniversary of our Asian Students Association and Allies and the 50th anniversary of our partnership with the TRIO Achievement Program, which provides first-generation and income-eligible students with financial assistance and a strong on-campus support system as they navigate their college careers.

We celebrated our living relationship with our Nordic heritage, including hosting a visit from Anniken Huitfeldt, Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs in September. Similarly, we took the opportunity to reflect upon our continued identity as a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, welcoming to campus the Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, executive director of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities, to give our Black History Month keynote address and to meet cohorts of students, faculty, staff, regents, and community leaders.

The academic year has also been uniquely focused on future-facing initiatives as we live into our grounded and global campus vision. We have launched a new Strategic Framework, a new core curriculum, a new engineering science major, and a new partnership with the University of Iowa College of Public Health to create a 4+1 bachelor's to master's degree.

We have expanded our Luther College Impact Award, which offers four years of free tuition for qualified students, to include not only students residing in Iowa, but also students residing in Minnesota. We have increased the amount of our academic merit scholarships, added First Generation and Campus Visit Awards, and continue to offer a wide range of merit and need-based financial aid, including the EPIC (Education Partners in Covenant) grant, which matches up to \$1,000 per year in support of students from participating congregations. Annually, Luther students are gifted nearly \$50 million from more than 850 different funds, reflecting our ongoing commitment ensuring that a Luther education is affordable and accessible to students and families.

We celebrate two historic gifts toward the expansion and renovation of our Regents Center, home to Norse athletics and the campus center for sports and recreation: an unprecedented \$10 million gift from Michael and Nicole Gerdin and the Gerdin Charitable Foundation—the largest individual gift in the college's history—and a \$2 million gift from Dennis and Suzanne Birkestrand to support gymnasium renovations. These renovations are part of our Campus Master Plan, which envisions other capital projects, as well.

Other highlights from this year include music ensemble tours across the Midwest, Great Plains, and Southern United States, as well as summer tours to Norway and Brazil. We welcomed more than 600 high school and middle school students for last summer's Dorian music camps, 150 alumni and friends for our adult Dorian band retreat, and more than 1,500 high school students for our annual winter Dorian music festivals - choir, orchestra, band, and keyboard. A number of our Luther sports teams recently claimed American Rivers Conference titles, including men's and women's tennis, men's golf, and men's and women's swimming and diving.

It is with a spirit of gratitude, curiosity, and excitement that we continue to devote ourselves—students, staff, and faculty alike—to the pursuits of learning in community, discerning our callings, and serving with distinction for the common good. We do so ever-mindful of the challenges that face our institutions and our society, and with a deep sense of humility as we work to create a community of faith and learning for all. We are profoundly grateful for you, our partner congregations, and your ongoing support and prayers.

Soli Deo Gloria!

President Jenifer K. Ward



Dear ministry partners in the Northern Great Lakes Synod:

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) is grateful to share highlights from our seminary in this 2024 report to supporting synods. Thank you for your continued support of our innovative and thriving seminary.

Highlights from this year include:

- In May 2023, LSTC relocated to its new home on the fourth floor of the Rev. Donald P. Senior Academic Center building at 5416 South Cornell Street in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. Designed as an agile 21st-century seminary offering in person and omnichannel learning opportunities, this strategic move has positioned LSTC to invest in key areas while opening the door for innovation and growth. Leasing space in a building shared with the Catholic Theological Union and McCormick Theological Seminary deepens our commitment to ecumenical collaboration.
- The LSTC Board of Directors appointed a task force to examine and propose a reparations plan for the seminary tied to the sale of our former building at 1100 E. 55th Street. As part of the ongoing communication about this vital initiative, the Reparations Task Force launched a website (lstc.edu/reparations) to keep the community abreast of developments and milestones achieved by the Reparations Task Force. This platform is a comprehensive resource, providing updates and insights gained through research and discussions.
- A new investment area for LSTC is its expansion into asynchronous forms of online learning. This new platform will allow learners to access and complete lectures and readings within their own timeframe utilizing on-demand content such as podcasts and video lectures. In the first phase of this project, the seminary will focus on creating Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) and Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM) certificates. In its second phase, the seminary will introduce First Call Theological Education (FCTE) courses, professional development courses for rostered leaders, and continuing education courses for those who want to grow in their faith. As we expand, the seminary will continue to offer its existing degree and certificate-based residential and distance learning tracks.
- This spring, we are undergoing our regular cycle of periodic comprehensive reviews by our accreditors, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), our specialty accreditor, and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), our regional accreditor. These involve the opportunity to research and write a valuable self-study report that summarizes our school's performance and improvements across the whole span of our operations. The reviews culminate in each case with an on-campus visit by accreditation teams, who will later gather their findings into reports shared with us this summer.
- Honoring the 50th anniversary of Christ Seminary - Seminex, LSTC is hosting a conference April 16-18 online and at its new facility in Hyde Park. This event-packed experience combines LSTC's annual Homecoming celebration and features engaging sessions, insightful discussions, and once-in-a-lifetime reunions. A digital version of the conference will be available after the event. Visit LSTC.edu/Seminex for information about the conference, Homecoming, and other Seminex-related celebrations.

- [Dr. Linda E. Thomas](#), Professor of Theology and Anthropology and Director of the Albert “Pete” Pero, Jr. and Cheryl Stewart Pero Center for Intersectionality Studies, was recently appointed Interim Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs for LSTC. In the fall of 2023, [Dr. Karri Alldredge](#) joined LSTC as an Assistant Professor of New Testament. [Rafael Malpica Padilla](#) was appointed as the inaugural DAMM Chair in Leadership and as the Director of Latin Ministry and Theology. A faculty search for the Braatz Chair in worship is currently underway.
- We look ahead to our 164th commencement at a new location: St. Paul and the Redeemer Episcopal Church, at 4945 South Dorchester in Hyde Park. This spacious, flexible, and fully-equipped facility is well-suited to house our commencement exercises in grand style, with plenty of room for a reception and socializing afterward. This year’s commencement speaker will be our own Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing, Professor of New Testament and longtime faculty member, who will be retiring at the end of this academic year.

To learn more about LSTC and the historic changes happening now, please visit www.lstc.edu.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. James Nieman, president
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



Dear Partners in the Northern Great Lakes Synod,

Greetings from your siblings in Christ at Wartburg Theological Seminary, in Dubuque, Iowa. I am pleased to have the opportunity to share with you some of the ways the Holy Spirit is at work in and through your seminary.

First, we are delighted to announce the successful completion of Lead Boldly!, our comprehensive capital campaign. We exceeded our goal of \$28 million, which included enthusiastic support for student scholarships, one of our highest priorities. As a part of this ambitious campaign, we also are very pleased to announce the completion of an extensive remodel of our primary educational and office building, Fritschel Hall. This project came in under budget and on time, thanks to the excellent work of our staff and our local construction partners. We would love to show you the renovated educational space; please know that you are invited to visit anytime!

Second, I want to share with you a new emphasis that Wartburg is placing on TEEM and Certificate Programs, exemplified by the new director of these programs, Pastor Carrie Greenquist-Petersen. I invited Pastor Carrie to share some thoughts with you about this program:

Over the past nine months it has been my privilege and pleasure to help Wartburg welcome and serve TEEM candidates for rostered ministry, lay leaders, synods and partners. I have gotten to know the students through admissions, candidacy processes, contextual education, classes/modules and endeavored to nurture an identity of quality and worth in Wartburg's TEEM and Certificate students. Clear and timely communication can make the difference between feeling forgotten and feeling immensely valued. This is why being available to all partners to hear and address any question or concern is my top priority. It is a true joy to accompany each student along their path of discernment for leadership in Christ's church.

Third, Wartburg Seminary is announcing the launch of a Congregational Accompaniment Project to equip congregations for intercultural competence and to open doors to new mission opportunities with Latine people. This project aims to foster deeper understanding of diversity and to cultivate the development of meaningful relationships that reflect the love of Christ. Upon application, Wartburg staff from the Centro Teológico Luterano Multicultural and the Journey Together program will accompany congregations and their leaders in this process.

Finally, we have a new tagline at Wartburg, which speaks directly to our sense of mission in the current moment in the life of the church: **Listen. Wonder. Lead.** "At Wartburg Theological Seminary the voices of God and our neighbors call us to **listen** deeply. In these limestone halls and your local communities, Jesus' love invites us to **wonder** that transformative power of the Holy Spirit, who inspires our life together. Our graduates **lead** a changing church with holy curiosity, creativity and joy. In hope, we proclaim God's grace that carries us through death to resurrection life. **Listen, wonder, and lead at Wartburg.**"

We know the church needs leaders, and we are working with you to form them. Please continue to pray for, identify and raise up candidates for public ministry. At Wartburg, they will be equipped to share the good news of Jesus Christ in a world in need of healing and hope.

We give thanks to God for you and for our partnership, through which we participate in God's mission in the world. To learn more about Wartburg Seminary and our strategic, innovative programs, please visit www.wartburgseminary.edu.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Kristin Johnston Largen, Ph.D.
President



2023 Annual Report to the Synods

Wartburg College is dedicated to challenging and nurturing students for lives of leadership and service as a spirited expression of their faith and learning.

Guided by our vision, we are answering the call to prepare resilient leaders of positive change for service in a complex world. This will be realized by building on our distinctives and embracing new opportunities to be the leading institution in educating the whole person.

Enrollment

- Fall 2023 enrollment was 1,472 students from 41 U.S. states and 44 countries, which includes 196 U.S. students of color and 92 international students. More than 20 Christian denominations and several world religions are represented. Our enrollment saw its largest year-to-year percentage increase since 2016.
- The five majors with the highest enrollment are business administration, biology, exercise science, elementary education, and psychology.
- The online Master of Arts in Leadership program enrolled a new cohort of eight students as well as one pursuing the Graduate Leadership Certificate.

Strategic Positioning

- After almost two years of research and planning, the college announced the Wartburg Commitment, a new pricing model and value proposition designed to help students consider, afford, and experience Wartburg College. Starting in Fall 2024, the comprehensive program includes a new competitive price, reduced financial barriers for lower- and middle-income families, and funding to increase access to immersive experiences.
- A new Wartburg brand, Experience More, was launched in conjunction with the Wartburg Commitment. Extensive research found the distinctive experiences students have at Wartburg involve a nurturing community, connection, and engagement. These common threads of the Wartburg experience resonate with students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

- The first 15 students to earn a master's degree from Wartburg College graduated in May with a Master of Arts in Leadership. The students came from as far away as Ohio and California and represented an array of work sectors, including business, K-12 and higher education, public administration, the military, and faith communities.
- In January 2023, Wartburg faculty approved a new THRIVE General Education curriculum to be implemented in the 2024-25 academic year. THRIVE stands for Thinking Critically, Human Culture, Reasoning, Information Fluency, Vocation, and Effective Communication.
- Dr. Ethan Blass was inducted into the newly established Herbert and Mildred Kleinfeld Professorship in German Language and Culture. The professorship, provided through the generosity of Gerald Kleinfeld in honor of his parents, will support teaching and learning in the German Department.
- As a member of the Iowa Private Transfer Collaborative, Wartburg received a three-year grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and Teagle Foundation to make the experience of transferring from an Iowa community college more transparent.
- The college launched Knights to Know, an educational web series that introduces influential alumni to the greater Wartburg community. The first year's theme is Women of Wartburg and has featured women in STEM and leaders in service.
- In 2023, the Wartburg esports team began competing in a new state-of-the-art arena that was created through the renovation of a computer lab and classroom.
Women's wrestling opened its inaugural season in Fall 2023, bringing the total number of intercollegiate athletics teams to 25.

Spiritual Life and Campus Ministry

- The Rev. Maggie Falenschek was named the dean of spiritual life and the Herbert and Cora Moehlmann

Chaplaincy Chair effective Aug. 7, 2023. She is a graduate of Concordia College and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary with a demonstrated passion for Lutheran higher education and a desire to interpret Wartburg's Lutheran values for an increasingly diverse campus community.

- Spiritual Life equips all students to live into a spirited expression of their faith. As our campus becomes increasingly religiously diverse, we seek innovative ways to holistically support our students as well as build bridges across difference. This work includes partnering across campus with Student Life, Academic Affairs, and Dining Services.
- SLCM has welcomed Kristin Teig Torres in a reimagined position as Director of Student Leadership, Service, and Engagement. Kristin's presence in and in collaboration with SLCM intends to amplify the connection between spirituality and service on our campus.
- Within their roles as Moehlmann Chaplaincy Chair and McCoy Family Distinguished Chair in Lutheran Heritage and Mission, Maggie Falenschek and Caryn Riswold are working to develop a common language set focused on what it means to be a Lutheran college to assist with interviewing and onboarding of new employees and as foundational understanding for our campus community.
- Craig Hella Johnson, a critically acclaimed composer, arranger, educator, and conductor, received the 2023 Graven Award in its 34th year. The annual award for Christian vocation highlights the powerful and positive effect of a strong sense of Christian vocation as it interfaces with service to the community, the church, and the world.

Recognition

- President Rebecca Ehretsman was the recipient of the 2023 American Association for Hand Surgery Humanitarian Award, which honors special contributions or personal sacrifices for the betterment of humanitarian efforts. Ehretsman has contributed to global medical outreach around the world, including 19 visits to Guatemala and treatment for hundreds of children with congenital limb differences and traumatic injuries.
- Michael McCoy, chair of the Wartburg Board of Regents, received the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Volunteer of the Year Award for his work with the college, which has spanned three decades and includes more than \$7 million in gifts for capital projects, an endowed chair, and numerous other enhancements.
- The Wartburg Medal was presented to Bill Hamm '66, former interim president of the college and Lutheran higher education leader; the Rev. Durwood "Bud" Buchheim '53, a longtime Lutheran pastor; Hans-Peter Brodhun and the late Günter Schuchardt, retired members of the Board of Regents from Eisenach, Germany; and Tom '68 and Marnie '69 Hubbard, former Wartburg employees. The Wartburg Medal recognizes individuals who have provided significant service to the college over a sustained period and who have a personal commitment to the college's mission, quality, and character.
- Jen Christy Bye '95, a strategic portfolio and program manager for Principal Financial Group, was elected to the Board of Regents.
- Paul Zelle '24 received the Rossing Scholarship in Physics from the ELCA for the second time. Zelle is pursuing a degree in computer science and physics.
- Rabeca Ndhlovu '24, a Davis United World Scholar from Zambia, received a \$10,000 Projects for Peace grant to carry out a summer humanitarian effort teaching young girls in Lusaka, Zambia, how to make and sanitize reusable menstrual pads.
- Maeve Dunne '23 was selected by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board for a Fulbright award to Taiwan through the program's English Teaching Assistant Program.
- Andrew Buchheim '23 received the prestigious R.J. McElroy Graduate Fellowship, designed to encourage persons of accomplishment, intelligence, integrity, and leadership ability to pursue challenging academic careers.
- Dr. Duane Koenig '53 received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at May Commencement for his distinguished career in family medicine and general surgery and medical mission work in Tanzania.

Wartburg continues to deliver on a vibrant mission that transforms the entire college community as together we learn, serve, and demonstrate care for each other. Thank you for your prayerful support of our efforts to strengthen Lutheran higher education and our community of learning.

Dr. Rebecca Ehretsman, President

Report of Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin



(LOPPW)

www.lopep.org (Search LOPPW on Facebook)

Submitted by Rev. Cindy Crane, Director cynthia.crane@elca.org

Thank you for supporting ELCA's advocacy ministry in Wisconsin with support to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan! We especially express gratitude for Bishop Katherine Finegan, the Northern Great Lakes Wisconsin synod staff, and Mr. William Mattson, your faithful policy council member assigned by NGLS. In addition, we are grateful for Stefanie Ehle's steady leadership on our WI/UP youth planning team.

Youth and Young Adults

New in 2023 and to be continued: LOPPW continues working with a team from around Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to plan ways to engage youth.



Stefanie Ehle, NGLS Youth Ministries Coordinator, helped to plan and lead at our 2023 youth advocacy retreat. We are thankful for her continued leadership to help plan our 2024 retreat. At our 2023 event, we were also blessed to benefit from the leadership of Rev. Alex LaChapelle, Prince of Peace in Marquette, and Charlette Strom of Fortune Lake Bible Camp. Our next youth advocacy retreat will be open to high school youth and young adults and will be held at Pine Lake Bible Camp in Clintonville from **October 4 - October 6, 2024**.

During the last year, in response to God's grace and our life in holy community, we engaged our members and worked with legislators on the following priorities:

Calling for an End to Hunger: We are an active part of the Healthy School Meals for All Coalition. We also



are advocating on the Farm Bill and Child Tax Credit, which are federal bills relevant to Wisconsin and the UP.

To the left is our 2023/24 Hunger Advocacy Fellow, Frances Dobbs, at a press conference supporting Healthy School Meals for All legislation. Frances is with us full-time for one year thanks to a grant from ELCA World Hunger.

New Presentation! Frances has developed a new presentation on hunger in Wisconsin and the Healthy School Meals for All proposed legislation.

Addressing the Crisis of Human Trafficking: LOPPW builds awareness on human trafficking. Because of our steady advocacy, the Governor's office invited LOPPW staff to be present at the signing of three new bills we supported (photo on the right).



Caring for God's Creation: LOPPW held its second biennial State Budget advocacy day on climate and water in March 2023. We worked in partnership with Faith in Place. Some of the participants from the SCSW on the left at the Capitol.

Immigration: In February 2024, we organized an advocacy day to address four bills that would impact DACA recipients living in Wisconsin. One of the DACA bills came close to passing. We are hopeful that the bills will be able to gain more ground in the future and that our voices will continue to make a difference. We also continued to support driver's licenses for people who do not qualify for a license only because they are ineligible for a Real ID. We advocated for this to help our immigrant neighbors, support farmers and others who employ immigrant workers, and to make our roads safer.

Supporting Juvenile Justice Reform: We continue to advocate for returning youth 17 years old to the youth justice system via education and advocacy and are active leaders in the Raise the Age Coalition. Wisconsin is one of three states that automatically sends 17-year-old youth through the adult court

New Resource and Presentation (on our website under Resources, Reflections & Tools)

Our hunger advocacy fellow, Frances Dobbs has created a PDF resource on the background of immigration in Wisconsin and bills related to driver's licenses and DACA recipients that LOPPW continues to work on, and a presentation based on the resource.

Outreach: We involve our members via online action alerts, resources, weekly reflections, monthly updates with special interviews, and online and in-person trainings.

Partners

LOPPW's director is on the steering team of the Wisconsin Climate Table and Raise the Age Coalition. LOPPW is also involved with coalitions related to hunger, anti-sex trafficking and immigration.

Join the Advocacy Network



Please consider going to loppw.org and click on to *Join the Advocacy Network* at the bottom right of our Home page. We'd love to share our Monday reflections, monthly updates, and action alerts with you. Also follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Thank you again for your support as we continue working on our five priorities, broadening our outreach to adults, and creating more opportunities for youth. God's blessings!



Thank you for taking the time to learn about the ministry of Region 5 as you prepare for and engage in the business of your synod assembly. This synod joins with eleven other synods in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois to form Region 5: one of the 9 regions across the ELCA. The ministry of region 5 is roughly divided into 3 categories: convening synod ministry leaders; accompaniment of those preparing to become pastors and deacons; and tending to archival records.

As a region, your synod bishop, staff, and other leaders gather with their colleagues throughout the year. These gatherings are a way for them to support and pray with one another; and to share their ideas, experience and expertise with one another to faithfully minister in your synod. The twelve bishops, along with the regional candidacy manager, make up a regional steering committee. Their collegiality is important in establishing great working partnerships for years to come.

The Region 5 steering committee affirmed in 2023 to work together to provide a 3 year cycle of professional ethics education-aka Boundaries Education. This 3 year cycle will begin in 2024 with a basic professional boundaries education event for rostered ministers and synod authorized lay leaders. Subsequent years in the 3 year cycle will focus on racial justice and gender justice. Region 5 continues to gather bishops and staff in the region on an annual basis for shared support, learning, worship and fellowship. In 2023, we gathered at the ELCA churchwide offices and met with the ELCA Future Directions vision team as well as other ELCA leaders.

As candidacy and leadership manager for region 5, most of my time is spent working alongside synod candidacy committees. “Candidacy” is the term used to describe our process of forming and preparing people to serve as a pastor or deacon in the ELCA. Ministry also includes training for new candidacy staff and volunteer committee members in your synod. ELCA candidacy itself is in a period of review and renewal, to align our process with what the church needs of ministry leaders today. You can find out more information at www.elca.org/formation. As members of the ELCA we believe that discernment about vocation is holy work for all people. God calls all of us to live out our vocation in community, in service to God and in love toward the neighbor. An online tool, www.journi.faith is for all who are interested in exploring how their gifts for ministry can be put into service throughout the ecology of the ELCA and beyond. I also welcome and encourage your prayers and invitation to those you know who have gifts for rostered ministry. You can learn more about this at www.elca.org/Our-Work/Leadership.

As a region, we also share in the care of archival records. Region 5 archives are housed at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Our archivist, Sue Dodd, collects records of and responds to inquiries concerning synods, deceased rostered personnel, and dissolved congregations within region 5. This work both preserves institutional records and documents the historical record of the institution within the context of the larger world. As congregations in the region make decisions to close, Sue is a resource to you in determining what records to save and how to transfer them to the archives.

Thank you for your synod’s participation in this shared ministry and for the privilege to serve among you.

Rev. Ramie L. Bakken, Candidacy and Leadership Manager ramie.bakken@elca.org
Sue Dodd, Region 5 Archivist sdodd@wartburgseminary.edu

In partnership with the Synods of

Metropolitan Chicago ~ Northern Illinois ~ Central/Southern Illinois ~ Southeastern Iowa ~ Western Iowa ~ Northeastern Iowa
Northern Great Lakes ~ Northwest Wisconsin ~ East-Central Wisconsin ~ Greater Milwaukee ~ South-Central Wisconsin ~ La Crosse Area



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

April 8, 2024

“We have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them” (1 John 4:16).

Dear friends in Christ,

Thank you for your faithful and continuing partnership as we work together to help people discover the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Because God’s grace and love have made a difference in our daily lives, we want others to experience that same love and acceptance. There are many in our communities who feel alone and are searching for love and connection. Sometimes we feel at a loss to know how to make a difference — what do we say, what can we do, how do we share God’s love?

You share this love every day. When you invite others to join in your faith community, to worship, to participate in service activities, to pray together, to share their story — these are all ways our neighbors experience the love of God in community.

There are examples of God’s love throughout our church as we work for healing, peace and justice to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

The Spirit is calling us to move together as one church to share the grace and love we experience every day. May God bless your time together.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton Presiding Bishop Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

***Providing a full complement of financial services
to ELCA members, congregations and ministries***



The ELCA Federal Credit Union, chartered in 2015, provides a full suite of financial products and services to members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA. We are the first of the ELCA's financial ministries to offer loans to individuals. The Credit Union offers a rich variety of products—from savings and checking accounts and CDs ... to loans, lines of credit and credit cards. And now, we provide home mortgage loans for new homes or remodeling, along with home equity lines of credit.

We serve ministries with federally insured deposit accounts, a flexible credit card program, auto loans and unsecured ministry loans up to \$100,000 for small projects such as building repair and purchases. Our new CU@Work program presents the opportunity for ministry organizations to offer our Credit Union products and services along with other exclusive perks to their employees.

In 2023, we ushered in the fifth cohort of participants in the ELCA's Resourceful Servants program, designed to improve financial wellness and assist rostered leaders in building emergency savings funds. In this matching program, ELCA rostered leaders make ongoing deposits to their Credit Union emergency savings accounts, and our partner MIF matches those deposits up to an established amount. Together, we have served 722 rostered ministers who, collectively, have made emergency savings deposits of more than \$1 million.

Our strong online presence allows members to access their funds anytime, anywhere—as consumers expect.

Why choose the ELCA Federal Credit Union?

- The ELCA Federal Credit Union supports the ELCA's mission of good stewardship. We provide full services to all ELCA members, congregations and related ministries.
- Our mission is to offer competitively priced products and services. As a not-for-profit financial cooperative, we can often offer better rates and lower fees than traditional banks. We have demonstrated success in providing savings to our members.
- With the church as our sponsor, we operate in ways that are consistent with the church's values.

Membership is open to every ELCA member, synod, congregation and ministry—and their employees.

For more information about the products and services of the ELCA Federal Credit Union, please visit our website, elcafcu.org or call us toll free at 877-715-1111.



ELCA Foundation

Updates from the ELCA Foundation | Synod Assemblies 2024

The ELCA Foundation doesn't just envision a future; it's building one where intentional generosity and stewardship have allowed the mission and ministry of the ELCA to grow beyond our expectations. Our goal is to create a vibrant culture where intentional giving fuels the expansion of the ELCA's work in the US and around the world.

We're on a mission to grow ELCA ministries by empowering individuals, congregations, synods, and other entities with the tools they need to maximize their financial potential.

But what does that mean for you?

Imagine having a trusted partner who not only helps you navigate the complexities of gift planning and administration but also provides expert guidance on how to invest in the future of your ministry. That's where the ELCA Foundation steps in.

Whether you're considering leaving a legacy through an endowment, navigating estate planning, or exploring creative ways to support your congregation, we're here to make the process seamless and straightforward. Best of all, our gift planning services are completely free for you and your ministry.

Ready to take the next step in growing your congregation's culture of giving? Connect with your local ELCA Foundation representative today and discover how together we can make a lasting impact. Visit Foundation.ELCA.org to get started.

2023 AT A GLANCE

Our gift planning network walked alongside **203 donors/families** in developing their gift plans, which resulted in **\$62.5 million** in future planned-gift commitments. **More than \$17 million** of this will go to provide direct support to individual ELCA congregations.

The network generated **\$116.3 million** in total gifts and investment assets. This includes new planned-gift commitments, **\$8.8 million in current gifts**, including funded trusts, gift annuities and individual endowments, and **\$45 million in new assets** invested in the Ministry Growth Fund.

CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL GIFT PLANNER:

Cynthia Halverson
cynthia.halverson@elca.org
773-380-2572

8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631 • 800-638-3522 • Foundation.ELCA.org



The Mission Investment Fund: Your financial partner

The Mission Investment Fund, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals. MIF offers a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and partner ministries, including outdoor camps, senior housing and social service agencies.



The result? **Impact investments**, with a transformative impact on our communities: Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.

Why is MIF the right choice?

- **MIF has demonstrated expertise** in church and ministry financing. With longstanding experience in congregation and ministry building projects, we're unique among lending institutions.
- **We consistently offer competitive rates and terms.**
- **We offer a full suite of financial services.** MIF offers congregations, ministries and individuals a host of investment options. We work in deep partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union to offer a wide range of financial products and services.
- **The faithful stewardship of Lutheran congregations and their members funds our loans.** The money invested in MIF finances hundreds of capital projects across the church.

MIF has a longstanding tradition of strength and stability. At year-end 2023, MIF had 811 loans outstanding, totaling \$578.3 million. Investment obligations totaled \$547.7 million. With total assets of \$774.4 million and net assets of \$208.2 million at year-end 2023, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 26.88 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you minister to a world in need. We are honored to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

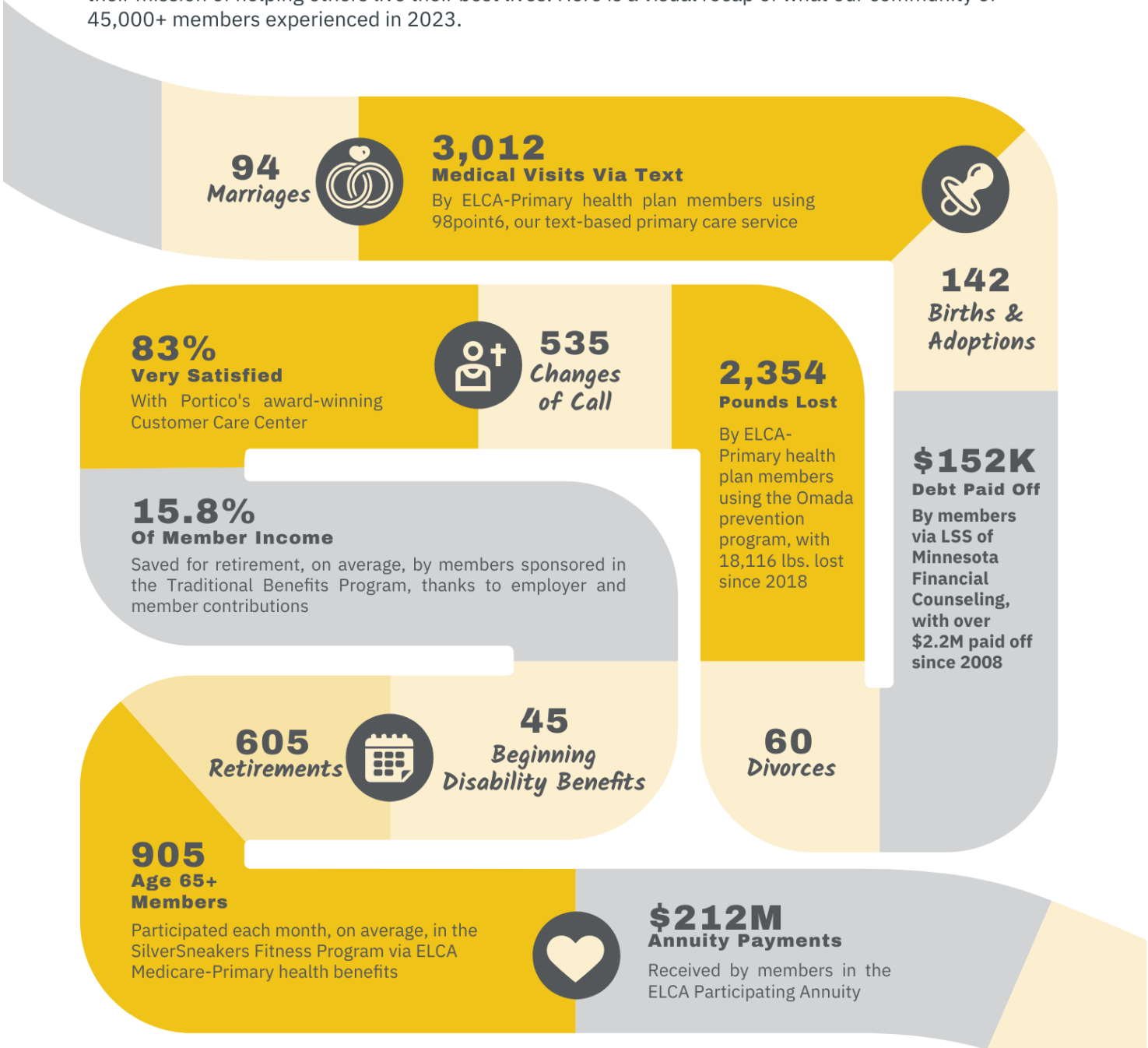
MIF at work in the Northern Great Lakes Synod (as of December 31, 2023):

- 3 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$280,849
- \$2,969,048 in Mission Investment Fund investment obligations

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, mif.elca.org or contact your Regional Manager LuAnn Ferguson: 651-900-3575 luann.ferguson@elca.org

Benefits Making a Difference

At Portico we strive to offer benefits that make our plan members' lives better, so that they can fulfill their mission of helping others live their best lives. Here is a visual recap of what our community of 45,000+ members experienced in 2023.



Our mission is to serve those who serve – financially, emotionally, and physically. We do this by securing quality, cost-effective, and useful benefits that make a difference for our members and sponsoring organizations. With each new year we continue to grow our pool and affirm the value and importance of church together.

Note: Unless a specific benefit program is mentioned, these numbers and percentages were drawn from across Portico's benefit programs.