

Annual Report 2024

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Amounts reflect audited financial information as of June 30, 2024.

SEVEN MISSION PRIORITIES

1

PLANT,
sustain, and revitalize
Lutheran churches



2

SUPPORT
and expand
theological education



3

PERFORM
human care in close
proximity to Word and
Sacrament ministries



4

COLLABORATE
with the Synod's members
and partners to enhance
mission effectiveness



5

PROMOTE
and nurture the spiritual,
emotional, and physical
well-being of pastors and
professional church workers



6

ENHANCE
early childhood, elementary
and secondary education,
and youth ministry



7

STRENGTHEN
and support the Lutheran
family in living out
God's design



OUR MISSION

In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities and the world (adopted by the Synod in convention, 1995), making disciples — for life!

Guided by the mission statement of the LCMS, the people serving at the LCMS International Center labor to synchronize the strategic internal ministry capabilities and coordinate with the districts, agencies, auxiliaries, educational institutions, Recognized Service Organizations and formal international church partners of the Synod to enhance efforts and activities that make known the love of Christ throughout the world, as together our Synod makes disciples — for life.

**Making
Disciples
for Life** 



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD

Making Disciples for Life is the current triennial mission emphasis of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, adopted at the 2019 convention and reaffirmed at the 2023 convention.

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THE LCMS PRESIDENT

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

Grace and peace to you in Jesus.

Quo vadis? Which way, Rome? As I was writing this, the conclave of cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church was meeting in Rome to elect a new pope. Rome's effect upon worldwide Christianity is enormously significant. Today, the trend toward tradition and liturgical worship (authenticity) is drawing thousands back to Rome. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has also seen an uptick, as young people — particularly young men and young families — join our churches.

Quo vadis? Which way, Missouri? For 15 years, I've sought one thing: that the LCMS would be who we say we are, that we would hold unequivocally to the inerrant Scriptures, which give us everything we need to know and believe in the blessed Gospel of free forgiveness in Jesus' cross and resurrection. I think daily about our history as a Synod, about President Behnken (who served 1935–1962), and how the St. Louis seminary drifted decade after decade into theological liberalism and a rejection of the absolute authority of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. By God's grace and faithfulness, our seminaries are strong in their theology today! Our Concordia universities are strong and getting stronger in the faith.

Trends and fashions come and go. A few congregations in our Synod will always grab onto the newest thing; others are offended by rather small changes. But the LCMS stands strong in our confession that sinners are justified by God's grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Every day I get up with one goal: Do the right thing today. Stand by the clear teaching of the Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions. No more, no less. The second thing I strive for is excellence in all we do, aimed at outreach and church planting, and serving our beloved districts and congregations. Our challenges are daunting, but so much is happening. I also think daily of Luther's warning that the Gospel passes away like a summer rain for thanklessness. Let us "rejoice always" (1 THESS. 5:16). "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!" (PSALM 118:1).

I thank God for all of you. I probably have met as many LCMS pastors, teachers and laypeople as anyone else in the church. I've been to some 120 district conventions. I've probably done 100 district visitations. Here's what I have consistently found: pastors and people laboring joyfully to share Jesus and care for His people, and doing it with vigor and joy, no matter the headwinds. I'm tremendously encouraged by you. I'm thankful for the work of our Synod. The bulk of the work is done in and by our congregations, no matter how large or small. If I thought there was something amiss in the work of the LCMS — a tiny snapshot of which is reported here to you — I would not be able to stand in front of you with a good conscience.

Thank you for your fidelity. Thank you for your support and generosity. Thank you for the work you do for the sake of the Gospel at home and throughout the Synod. It is the highest privilege of my life to serve Christ in and through you, and to be served in love by you.

Quo vadis? Which way to go? To Christ, "who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (ROM. 4:25). To the neighbor with the message of forgiveness and love. And this no matter what may come.

I pray for you and covet your prayers.

In Christ,

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison

THE LCMS CHIEF MISSION OFFICER

Rev. Kevin D. Robson

The LCMS chief mission officer (CMO), working within the Office of the President, is responsible to the Synod president for the supervision, cross-coordination and resourcing of the Synod's five principal mission and ministry units: the Office of International Mission (OIM), the Office of National Mission (ONM), the Office of Pastoral Education (PED), Mission Advancement (MADV) and Communications (COMMS). All of these units work under the president's leadership, fulfilling specific directives provided by every Synod national convention and — with respect to the OIM and ONM — under policies established by the Synod-elected Boards for International Mission and National Mission. All told, the five principal mission and ministry units, the mission boards and the CMO's office continue in their recent pattern of constituting over three-fourths of the Synod's total annual operating expense budget, while working vigorously in pursuit of the Synod's established and reaffirmed mission and ministry emphasis, *Making Disciples for Life* (2023 Resolution 4-02), and the seven mission priorities (2023 Resolution 4-03):

- › Plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches;
- › Support and expand theological education;
- › Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries;
- › Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness;
- › Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers;
- › Enhance early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry; and
- › Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design.

The dedicated LCMS employees in the above-mentioned units — those working here in the U.S. (most in the LCMS International Center in St. Louis) and our international missionaries and support staff deployed in overseas settings — are honored to have been called and appointed to serve the Synod's congregations, congregants and church workers in a diverse array of mission and ministry initiatives at home and abroad. We do so with a sense of sacred purpose, gratitude and awe in our rich blessings, as we listen carefully to the expressed needs of LCMS constituents, advance faithful best practices, and steward responsibly the abundant resources that God has made available through countless fellow saints.

Considering both the joy and seriousness of the work behind and before us, a prayer based on the encouraging words of St. Paul is fitting:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend

with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (EPH. 3:14–4:6)

How does that play out today in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as the kingdom of God grows at His will and pleasure? By these (with innumerable specific examples):

- › In the preaching and teaching of Christ crucified for our sins and raised for our justification (ROM. 4:25);
- › In the planting and sustaining of churches new and old, assemblies of the worshiping faithful through whom God distributes the treasures of His grace in the ministry of Word and Sacrament;
- › In the extension of Christ's mercy to our neighbors with spiritual, emotional and physical needs — not the least of which is the defense of that neighbor's life; and
- › In love and the self-sacrificial witness of word and deed from one individual Christian to a family member, an acquaintance or a neighbor.

Space limitations hardly allow a full recounting of the work of the OIM, ONM, PED, MADV and COMMS units over the past year. Reports and stories of the outcomes are made continually available through the Synod's regular publications: *Reporter*, *The Lutheran Witness* and *Lutherans Engage the Word*, as well as on the web, in videos, via social media and through the release of a host of resources for direct application in the church's ongoing work at the local, district and national levels. To sustain and increase the speed and transparency of Synodwide communications, we anticipate the rollout of further enhancements — a completely new digital platform and website — and the pending release of thoroughgoing reports as assigned to the 2026 LCMS convention, various deadlines for which are beginning to draw near even now.

Let's connect Jesus and His limitless grace to more people, even as we continue to be who we say we are: boldly confessing Lutherans walking the same road together. Stay tuned for a rising tide of good news, and to God alone be the glory!

To God alone be glory!

THE LCMS OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL MISSION

Rev. Dr. Cory J. Rajek

Executive Director

Spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches and show mercy are the three pillars that define the work of the Office of International Mission (OIM) worldwide. However, if the goal is to support a community of Lutherans faithful to Christ for generations, the second emphasis of planting Lutheran churches must form the centerpiece of the OIM's work. A strategy of church planting that focuses on a community of faith gathered around our Lord's promises given through Word and Sacrament ministry not only supports generational believers (God works through means), but it also promotes a faithful community dedicated to Lutheran identity. Educating and rallying our missionaries and staff around this goal has been the primary focus of the OIM over the past year.

The significance of passing the faith from one generation to the next is highlighted in Scripture. For example, Psalm 78:4 declares, "We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and His might, and the wonders that He has done." This verse underscores the responsibility of every Christian community to equip "the coming generation" with the knowledge of God's Word and the hope found in Christ.

The OIM's approach to mission aligns with this biblical model by emphasizing catechesis, theological education, Word and Sacrament ministry, and works of mercy leading to a Lutheran congregation. These practices ensure that indigenous people learn and grow in the sound doctrine and practice clearly distinguished in our Lutheran tradition. This foundational faith becomes the anchor amid shifting cultural and religious landscapes.

The goal of the OIM's work is, and always has been, to make generational Lutherans through spreading the Gospel, planting Lutheran churches and showing mercy worldwide. By strengthening the family unit as defined in Scripture, the OIM seeks to strengthen the building blocks of society and the church the world over. Through planting Lutheran churches, the OIM equips parents to lead their children in prayer, Scripture reading and catechism study in their homes and through a community of believers.

For the last 20 years, the OIM's Latin America and Caribbean region has partnered with LCMS members, districts and other entities in supporting and helping form generational Lutherans through church-planting efforts. This partnership called a FORO (a Spanish word meaning "forum") has been a blessing to our partner churches, the LCMS and the Lord's mission in general. In 2023, the LCMS in convention (Res. 2-07A) directed the OIM to adopt the FORO model in all four regions, thereby providing a pathway for interested LCMS parties to participate in international mission. In response to this directive, the OIM is currently laying the foundation for the implementation of FOROs worldwide. We anticipate that the OIM will more than double its current number of FOROs in the next couple of years.

The OIM's church-planting efforts are a vital strategy for ensuring faithful generations for years to come. By prioritizing catechesis, theological education, Lutheran identity and a strong family unit, church planters lay the groundwork for healthy congregations. And with the addition of the FORO model in its four regions, the OIM is inviting all interested LCMS members and entities to join us in this worldwide mission.

THE LCMS OFFICE OF NATIONAL MISSION

Rev. Daniel M. Galchutt

Executive Director

The mission field is right before you. This is true wherever you are, because the mission field is wherever God's people are. Jesus makes this clear in John 4 with the account of the Samaritan woman. Jesus' disciples had gotten Jesus some food and were urging Him to eat, but Jesus was considering something else. He was looking at the people who were ripe to hear His Word. To help His disciples see this, Jesus said, "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest" (John 4:35). Jesus teaches His disciples, He teaches us, that God's mission is right before us.

That's why the Office of National Mission (ONM) exists, because the mission field is here: where our congregations and schools are and where God's people are. Our purpose in the ONM is to support congregations, schools, church workers and all God's people as they serve and work in "God's Mission Here."

What follows are some of the ways that we supported the mission work of God in North America this past year. There's a lot more that we can't put in this report, so please connect with us to learn more.

The ONM works across several ministry departments like LCMS Church Planting, which partners with districts to support local efforts to plant new LCMS congregations. At the time of this writing, there are 62 sites that have been identified and are working through the various stages of the church-planting process. We're working to provide tools, best practices and partnership grants to support these efforts.

A number of these church-planting efforts are among people of various ethnicities. LCMS All Nations Ministry partners with Church Planting for these efforts and more. The first All Nations Council meeting took place in 2024 to foster collaboration for ministries that are working with different people groups. An online directory of more than 500 congregations and ministries has been created to help them connect and share resources.

The ONM also helps to connect ministries through our Recognized Service Organization (RSO) ministry. There are nearly 200 recognized ministries in the LCMS that serve in "God's Mission Here" and provide people of the LCMS with opportunities to volunteer and support efforts beyond the local congregation.

Still, the local congregation, the gathering of God's people around Word and Sacrament, is the heart of the mission. LCMS Worship supports congregations with regular resources like prayers, calendars and other tools to benefit pastors and those who plan worship services. A number of these resources were shared at the 2024 Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music, which had 540 attendees. In the years to come, Worship will embark on a five-year program to encourage child faith formation in worship thanks to significant funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

Speaking of children, LCMS School Ministry serves 1,776 Lutheran schools across North America with over 170,000 students and more than 21,000 educators. The School Ministry job board continues to help address the challenge of finding educators and administrators for our Lutheran schools. New protocols for National Lutheran School Accreditation have been developed and implemented to benefit our schools, our children and our families.

LCMS Family Ministry provides resources to encourage family discipleship, equipping families in passing the faith onto the next generation. New resources include family devotional content, catechism memory cards and mealtime conversation cards.

LCMS Youth Ministry continues to provide resources for young people, especially around the “7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry.” The sharing of these resources will be enhanced using funding from another grant by Lilly Endowment Inc. During 2024, Youth Ministry continued to equip called and lay youth workers through the 2024 National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference, and preparations are well underway for the 2025 Gathering. LCMS Campus Ministry also hosted a staff gathering in 2024 for practitioners. Participants were encouraged in their work and learned from each other in the process.

In response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton, an initial \$1.4 million in grants has been allocated to support recovery efforts by LCMS Disaster Response. Eight disaster response centers were established across three states, and there will be volunteer opportunities available in North Carolina through 2025. In 2024, Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT) deployed 53 times to serve after natural disasters across the United States, saving impacted homeowners approximately \$3 million in cleanup costs.

LCMS Life Ministry has worked to support the growing involvement in life marches. In 2024, there were 23 national, state and local marches. An estimated 2,000 Lutherans participated, more than doubling the previous year’s total. Million Dollar Life Match grants continue with 20 awards in 2024. Life Ministry also published new adoption and foster care resources, worship planning resources for Life Sunday, and suicide prevention resources.

LCMS Specialized Spiritual Care Ministry continues to pioneer advancements in training with its Lutheran Visitation Education program. Recognized by the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) as a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) equivalent course, Lutheran Visitation Education is meeting a need by providing practical spiritual care training and education to LCMS rostered church workers.

LCMS Health Ministry placed a special emphasis on mental health by creating a video-based curriculum for LCMS teachers and youth workers and publishing a spiritual care companion called *Restoring Hope: Care for Mental Health*.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry continues to offer workshops and training for pastors and lay leaders to help them tackle the challenges of funding congregational ministry by putting the Word of God first. Several districts are working with Stewardship Ministry to get Bring Giving Home workshops into every circuit. Online workshops and resources also continue to be produced.

With the Word of God at the center of all we do as God’s people, LCMS Worker Wellness has focused on the encouragement and appreciation of rostered church workers. We’re sharing the programs and practices of healthy church workers and supportive congregations.

We thank God for church workers and for all of you as we remember your work and partnership together in “God’s Mission Here.”

PASTORAL EDUCATION

Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck

Executive Director

Pastoral Education is responsible for:

Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS)

Since 1998, Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support (PALS) has worked in collaboration with LCMS districts and congregations to support and encourage pastors, their wives and families in their transition from seminary to parish throughout the first three years of the pastor's first call. Each PALS group is facilitated by a seasoned pastor and his wife, who have been selected by their district president. The groups meet six days each year for time in the Word, study of ministry topics, personal and ministry reflection, and fellowship. PALS activities include ongoing district gatherings, an annual facilitators conference in St. Louis, and an annual PALS presentation at each seminary for concluding students and their wives. Currently 32 of the 35 LCMS districts participate in PALS.

One new pastor said of PALS: "The PALS program provides opportunities to be encouraged and learn from brother pastors and our facilitators. I am thankful that this program includes my wife and children. What a blessing! I don't know how anyone could go through their first three years of ministry without PALS."

In 2024–25, PALS is also developing a PALS program for deaconesses (Post-Certification Applied Learning and Support). Currently, there are three online cohorts, with meetings facilitated by an experienced deaconess.

Learn more about PALS at lcms.org/pals.

Set Apart to Serve (SAS)

Since the founding of the LCMS in 1847, nearly every Synod president and convention made a plea for more pastors and Lutheran school teachers. When the additional commissioned church work offices were established, this plea included directors of Christian education, deaconesses, directors of Christian outreach, directors of parish music, directors of family life ministries and directors of church ministries.

SAS was launched at the 2019 Synod convention by Resolution 6-01 and reaffirmed at the 2023 Synod convention. SAS is working to build a culture of forming and recruiting church workers in every LCMS congregation, family, school, district and entity. This culture is supported most by those who are influential in forming and recruiting our youth and adults to consider and pursue a full-time church work vocation: pastors, parents, Lutheran school teachers, DCEs, all other LCMS commissioned church workers, and laity.

Forming and recruiting more pastors and church workers is a Synodwide effort. Prior to SAS, many throughout the Synod — seminaries, universities, districts, pastors, teachers and others — were striving to heed the Lord's call to "pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (MATT. 9:38) alone. Now, SAS has brought every LCMS player to the table under one vision and message: Forming and recruiting church workers must continue until our Savior returns so that the saving faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is passed on from one generation to the next.

SAS has also developed robust resources to help influential adults form and recruit church workers, as well as a church work curriculum (crafted in partnership with Concordia Publishing House) for use in Sunday school and Lutheran day schools.

SAS is accountable to the Synod to provide positive markers for which the time and resources are being expended in this collaborative, Synodwide effort.

- › In 2021, 54% of LCMS pastors reported knowing about and using SAS strategies and resources to encourage youth to consider church work. In 2024, that number increased to 88%.
- › In 2021, 39% of LCMS commissioned workers reported knowing about and using SAS strategies and resources to encourage youth to consider church work. In 2024, that number increased to 88%.
- › In 2021, 26% of LCMS laity reported knowing about and using SAS strategies and resources to encourage youth to consider church work. In 2024, that number increased to 58%.
- › SAS asked polled pastors, commissioned workers, and parents if they had a conversation with at least one youth to consider full-time church work. In 2022, 71% of these adults had at least one conversation; in 2023, that number increased to 84%. **In 2024, 92% of these adults had a conversation with at least one youth about church work.**

While the seminaries and Concordia universities are all doing a phenomenal job recruiting church workers, they depend on the formation and recruitment of church workers that must first take place in the congregation, school and home.

The Concordia universities report the following for the 2024–25 academic year:

- › Concordia University, St. Paul, St. Paul, Minn., reports having the highest number of church work students since 2012, with over 100 students.
- › Concordia University, Nebraska, Seward, Neb., reports a 23% increase in church work students over the previous year.
- › Concordia University Irvine, Irvine, Calif., reports a 43% increase in church work students over the previous year.

For more statistics, see the [2024 SAS Annual Report](#), especially pp. 18–23.

Preach the Word

Preach the Word (PTW) is a resource that helps pastors work together to improve their preaching through video modules with accompanying resources and by interacting with seminary professors and fellow preachers. There are currently 10 modules available at resources.lcms.org/preach-the-word. The PTW committee is working on developing additional modules and new resources to support pastors in continuing to develop their preaching skills.

LCMS Pastoral Education also oversees:

- › The Global Seminary Initiative • lcms.org/makeagift/gsi
- › The Joint Seminary Fund • lcms.org/makeagift/joint-seminary-fund
- › The Life Together as Synod video series • resources.lcms.org/life-together-as-synod-video-series
- › Coordination of ongoing collaborative efforts between corporate Synod; Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne; and the Concordia University institutions, with respect to pre-seminary and seminary programs of pastoral formation; and
- › Administrative coordination for the LCMS Pastoral Formation Committee

FY24 YEAR IN REVIEW

THE LCMS CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND TREASURER

Nathan M. Haak

Fiscal Year 24 by the Numbers

- › **\$104.5 million** — Support, revenue and other sources of funds
 - **\$12.9 million** from the congregations of the Synod via district support
 - **\$41.9 million** of gifts and grants directly to Synod from living individuals and other entities
 - **\$21.0 million** of “final gifts” via bequests
 - **\$17.7 million** from investments
 - **\$11.0 million** from all others
- › **\$71.9 million** of expenditures
 - **\$57.1 million** (79.4%) on programs
 - **\$14.8 million** (20.6%) on advancement, management and general
- › **\$32.6 million** — Increase in net assets during the year
- › **\$199.3 million** — Year-end net assets, a record level

Fiscal Year 2024 did not go “to plan.” We did not *plan* for such strong investment performance, increasing revenues from investments by \$7.5 million vs. the prior year. We did not *plan* for the significant generosity of individuals leaving bequest gifts to the Synod, increasing revenue from this source by \$13.5 million. We did not *plan* to underspend the budget by almost \$10 million, as we worked to utilize the gifts so generously shared with us during the year.

But these things *did* happen, and the Synod is in a position of financial strength like never before.

We are using this position to *invest* — not only to build further financial resources, but in the ministry of sharing the Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ. These are investments in: sharing the Good News around the world through the Office of International Mission; supporting “God’s Mission Here” through the Office of National Mission; assisting our current and future pastors through the work of the Office of Pastoral Education; and modernizing the tools we use to support and share this work through a new website, back-office tools and technologies, and more.

I anticipate expenditures in FY25 will exceed those of FY24, and FY26 will exceed FY25. We strive to do the work the Synod has charged us to do with the resources made available to us. In all things, we trust that our God will preserve and expand His church as He sees fit.

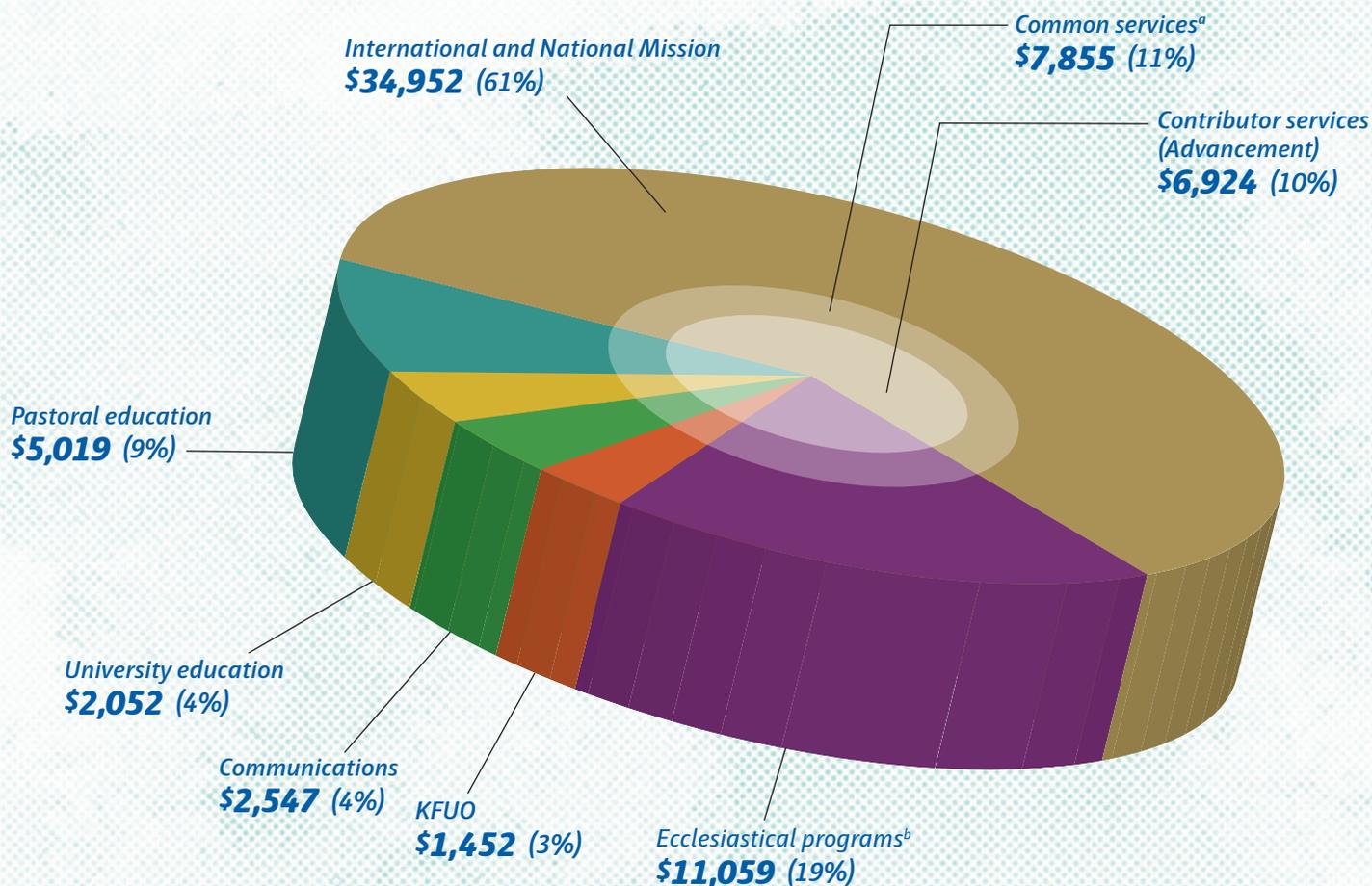
These investments are balanced by a desire to work toward lasting and sustainable endeavors. While most of the “unplanned” items in FY24 were financially beneficial, this is not always the case. Just two years ago, investments dropped in value by more than \$20 million. The generosity of individuals through bequests is amazing, yet each one represents a last and final gift, diminishing future giving to the Synod. Inflation continues to erode purchasing power. While we have no desire to return to the negative balances of just a few years ago, we also have no intention of sitting on an ever-expanding financial reserve.

In all my work as the chief financial officer and treasurer of the Synod, there is nothing more humbling than the constant reminders of the generosity of God’s people. Being entrusted with the allocation and stewardship of those resources is a constant tension between financial prudence and seizing the opportunity. It is my fervent and constant prayer that the Lord takes our imperfect decisions and uses them to His glory and for the strengthening of His church here on earth.



SPENDING: HOW DOLLARS WERE PUT TO WORK

Total \$71,860
(\$s in thousands)



PROGRAM AREA	DIRECT SERVICES	INDIRECT SERVICES ^c		COMBINED PROGRAM COSTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPENSES
		Contributor services (Advancement)	Common services ^a		
Int'l. and Nat'l. Mission	\$34,952	\$4,240	\$4,810	\$44,002	61%
Pastoral education	\$5,019	\$609	\$691	\$6,319	9%
University education	\$2,052	\$249	\$282	\$2,583	4%
Communications	\$2,547	\$309	\$350	\$3,206	4%
KFUO	\$1,452	\$176	\$200	\$1,828	3%
Ecclesiastical programs (incl. convention)	\$11,059	\$1,341	\$1,522	\$13,922	19%
Sub-totals <i>(Percentages of total in italics)</i>	\$57,081 (79%)	\$6,924 (10%)	\$7,855 (11%)		
Total Expenditures		\$14,779 (21%)		\$71,860	100%

a. Board of Directors, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Risk Management, Audit, Accounting, Information Technology, Human Resources, Operational Services.

b. Ecclesiastical programs encompass the Constitution- and Bylaws-mandated elected or appointed officers, mission boards, commissions and functions focused on strengthening our life together and our confession as Christians in the LCMS and its global partner churches. Because they are mandated in the Constitution and Bylaws, the Better Business Bureau classifies them as an expected program of the LCMS, not an indirect services aspect.

c. The Better Business Bureau, Candid (previously known as Guidestar) and Charity Navigator endorse a standard that indirect services costs should not exceed 33–35% of a nonprofit's total expenditures, with program expenditures being at least 65–67% of the total.

BUDGET & SPHERES OF MISSION

FISCAL YEAR 2024 (July 2023 – June 2024)

Funding Sources for Expenditures

Chief Mission Officer	Planned Expenditures (Budget)	Actual Expenditures	Use of Donor-Restricted Net Assets	Revenue Earned from Services	Other Unrestricted Support
International Mission, incl. Projects and Ministry to the Armed Forces	20,327,957	15,720,314	15,711,939	8,375	–
International Missionaries & Workers	12,577,466	12,382,563	12,382,563	–	–
National Mission, Programs and Projects	10,256,979	5,176,470	4,560,766	615,704	–
National Youth Gathering	–	–	–	–	–
Disaster Response; Disaster Relief	2,319,617	1,672,781	1,657,577	15,204	–
Pastoral Education	1,439,676	1,880,580	1,225,626	50,750	604,204
Seminary Subsidies & Joint Sem. Funds	2,064,727	2,606,469	2,005,242	–	601,227
Global Seminary Initiative	203,333	531,857	531,857	–	–
Communications	2,571,911	2,547,296	181,852	440,571	1,924,873
Mission Advancement	7,709,705	6,923,850	5,037,372	–	1,886,478
Office of the President, BOD, COP, Secretary, CTCR					
KFUO	1,791,766	1,451,624	1,263,022	142,314	46,288
University Education	1,282,000	2,051,798	–	–	2,051,798
Ecclesiastical Services (incl. Convention) ^a	11,103,977	11,059,125	684,434	2,904,045	7,470,646
Chief Financial Officer, Chief Adm. Officer					
Common Services ^b	8,019,367	7,855,249	647,779	395,448	6,812,022
TOTALS	<u>Plan (Budget)</u> 81,668,481	<u>Expenditures</u> 71,859,976	45,890,029	4,572,411	21,397,536
			<u>FUNDING USED FOR EXPENDITURES</u> 71,859,976		

a. From Board of Directors Policy Manual:

5.2.6.3 The following functions or activities established by the Synod national convention will be fully funded through the Synod budget process using unrestricted income or assessments. These activities will not have the need to raise funds or accept restricted funds except as approved by the Board of Directors or by the action of the Synod national convention: Commission on Constitutional Matters; Commission on Theology and Church Relations; ecclesiastical supervision activities; doctrinal review; meetings and events of the Synod Praesidium, Council of Presidents or Board of Directors; conflict resolution activities; Synod national convention; employment costs (salary/benefits/etc.) of elected officers and support staff.

b. Board of Directors, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Risk Management, Audit, Accounting, Information Technology, Human Resources, Operational Services.

ASSETS AND ACTIVITIES



Our Synod at a Glance

EMPLOYEES

Corporate Synod	208*
LCMS Foundation	65
Concordia Plans	165
Lutheran Church Extension Fund	161

MISSION EXTENDERS

LCMS Districts	35
International Partner Churches	
<i>Sister Churches in Altar and Pulpit Fellowship</i>	43
<i>Associate Churches Working toward Altar and Pulpit Fellowship, Cooperating in Theological Dialogue, Education, and/or Mercy Work</i>	37
<i>Other Churches Working toward Faithful Ecumenism & Joint Statements</i>	23
Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs)	203
Auxiliaries	2

* Excludes international missionaries

ALL FINANCIAL REPORTING PROVIDED BY

Nathan Haak,
LCMS Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

Statement of Financial Position (Condensed) — Audited

(\$ in thousands)

As of June 30	2024	2023
Assets		
Cash & Receivables	44,490	39,051
Property, Investments, Other	<u>154,831</u>	<u>137,381</u>
Total Assets	199,321	176,432
Liabilities		
Payable (Due) to Others	8,190	8,383
Deferred Revenue	38	2,397
Other	<u>1,241</u>	<u>781</u>
Total Liabilities	9,469	11,561
Net Assets (Assets Minus Liabilities)		
Without Restrictions on Use	63,668	41,818
Carrying Restrictions on Use	<u>126,184</u>	<u>123,053</u>
Total Net Assets — End of Fiscal Year	189,852	164,871

Statement of Activities (Condensed) — Audited

(\$ in thousands)

Revenue and Net Asset Releases	2024	2023
District Pledges (Worship Offerings) Received*	12,905	13,558
Charitable Contributions Released*	63,181	50,388
Investment Income/Sale of Fixed Assets	17,670	10,272
Sales & Services, incl. Nat'l Youth Gathering & Convention	5,701	13,014
Other	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Total Income and Net Assets Released	104,457	92,232

Expenditures (Expenses)	2024	2023
Direct Services (Program)		
Mission — ONM & OIM, incl. Youth Gathering	34,952	43,203
Pastoral Ed/Seminaries; Universities	7,071	6,665
Communications; KFUO	3,999	4,031
Ecclesiastical Programs, incl. Synod Convention	<u>11,059</u>	<u>7,451</u>
Total Direct Services (Program)	57,081	61,350
Indirect Services (Program Support)		
Management & General Services	7,855	7,129
Contributor Services & Fundraising	<u>6,924</u>	<u>6,104</u>
Total Indirect Services (Program Support)	14,779	13,233
Total Expenditures (Spending)	71,860	74,583

Change in Net Assets (Bottom Line)	2024	2023
Net Assets — Beginning of Year	164,871	147,222
Net Assets — End of Year (June 30)	189,852	164,871
Change — Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	24,981	17,649

* Revenue recognized on Statement of Activities differs slightly from charitable contributions recorded and reported by LCMS Mission Advancement to present the Financial Statements accurately in accordance with US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP).

Important notes: Management and General Services include the Board of Directors, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Risk Management, Human Resources, Internal Audit, Accounting, Information Technology, Building Services & Maintenance, and Travel & Meetings. Under the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws, Mission Advancement (contributor services & fundraising) is considered an LCMS program unit under the supervision of the Chief Mission Officer. However, by accounting regulations Mission Advancement is classified as indirect services. Elected and appointed officers, boards and commissions, and rosters (grouped as ecclesiastical services) are considered by the Better Business Bureau and accounting principles to be constitution-mandated direct program services, not management/general (overhead).

LCMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS & EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The composition of the Board of Directors is defined in Synod Bylaw 3.3.4.1.

Mr. Christian Preus
Board Chairman
Executive Committee
Grand Marais, Minn.

Mr. Andrew Grams
Vice-Chairman
Executive Committee
Governance Committee
Franklin, Tenn.

Mr. Leo Mackay Jr.
Executive Committee
Finance and Audit Committee Chair
Alexandria, Va.

Mr. Jan Lohmeyer
Personnel Committee Chair
Waveland, Miss.

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
Executive Committee
St. Louis, Mo.

The Rev. Roger Gallup
Personnel Committee
River Grove, Ill.

Mr. Larry Harrington
Finance and Audit Committee
Casper, Wyo.

The Rev. Josemon Hoem
Personnel Committee
Fort Wayne, Ind.

The Rev. Peter K. Lange (Non-voting)
St. Louis, Mo.

Dr. Jesse Yow
Governance Committee Chair
Livermore, Calif.

The Rev. Dr. John W. Sias
Executive Committee
Secretary of the Board
St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Rick Stathakis
Finance and Audit Committee
Shelby Township, Mich.

Mr. Allan Voss
Governance Committee
Sheboygan, Wis.

OFFICERS (ELECTED AND RANKED IN CONVENTION)

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
LCMS President

The Rev. Peter K. Lange
LCMS First Vice-President

The Rev. Benjamin T. Ball
LCMS Second Vice-President
Central Region

The Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray
LCMS Third Vice-President
West-Southwest Region

The Rev. Nabil S. Nour
LCMS Fourth Vice-President
Great Plains Region

The Rev. Christopher Esget
LCMS Fifth Vice-President
East-Southeast Region

The Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe Jr.
LCMS Sixth Vice-President
Great Lakes Region

The Rev. Dr. John W. Sias
Synod Secretary

OFFICERS (APPOINTED)

The Rev. Kevin D. Robson
Chief Mission Officer
Appointed by LCMS President

Mr. Felix L. Loc
LCMS Chief Administrative Officer
Appointed by the LCMS Board of Directors

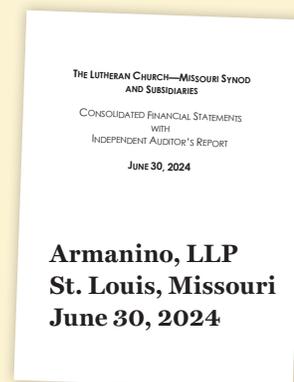
Mr. Nathan M. Haak
LCMS Chief Financial Officer
(Treasurer)
Appointed by the LCMS Board of Directors

FROM THE 2024 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT

OPINION

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Subsidiaries as of June 30, 2024 and 2023, and the changes in their net assets and their cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

(Financial information and audit reports are publicly accessible at lcms.org/bod.)



LCMS MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Mark D. Hofman

Executive Director

“But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” (Psalm 86:15)

Reflecting on the 2024 fiscal year (see the donation comparison table), we can see God’s goodness and mercy despite the challenges present in a world affected by sin. Historically, the crucial unrestricted support from the LCMS, derived from regular worship offerings by congregations, has experienced a long-term decline. Congregations affiliated with the LCMS faced significant financial stress due to high inflation and global turmoil. As the cost of goods and services rose, households and businesses felt the pressure, which ultimately impacted congregations and districts. A good number needed to reduce the level of budgeted support for the work Synod’s congregations expect of the LCMS national office in St. Louis. Nevertheless, most individuals continued to support their local congregations as best they could, and for that faithfulness we can all rejoice!

God is truly good and merciful. Many individuals, when confronted by economic pressures, struggled to balance their donations to the church’s mission with their essential expenses. Families found it necessary to prioritize food, medical bills and other necessary expenses over their desire to supply charitable contributions to the LCMS. While most chose to continue giving, they often had to reduce their donation amounts. The LCMS understands this situation because many people kindly shared their hardships through phone calls, emails, handwritten notes and in-person visits. Thus, declines in the number of individuals, couples, families, groups and congregations contributing directly to the LCMS and other charities can largely be attributed to financial pressures beyond corporate Synod’s control.

Due to space limitations in this report, the year-over-year comparison table does not distinguish between living donors and those who passed away yet still remembered their Synod’s mission through estate planning. Readers may notice declines in both the number of donors and the number of gifts in certain categories, such as Global Mission, LCMS Disaster Response and KFUEO Radio, compared to Fiscal Year 2023. However, despite the decrease in donor counts and gift numbers, the total financial support increased. This contrast in data requires clarification. God placed some households and organizations in a position to contribute larger, one-time gifts. Additionally, in Fiscal Year 2024, the LCMS received substantial support from the estates of individuals who had planned to leave a bequest — a final offering to the Lord — through their Christian wills, trusts or other estate instruments. These planned estate gifts accounted for much of the overall increase seen in the table.

Nonprofits both within and outside the church continue to witness the passing of individuals from the Greatest Generation, baby boomers (including “Generation Jones”) and even millennials. God understands the anxiety that can arise from a decline in the number of donors within organizations like the LCMS as long-term financial partners pass away, yet He remains consistently merciful. In FY2024, God made sure the work done in His name could continue for another year, primarily supported by estate gifts and a smaller number of living donors who, despite economic challenges, were able and willing to give in larger amounts.

Perhaps you, dear reader, have already made plans to set aside a portion of the material blessings God has entrusted to you, intending it as a final offering for His purposes after He calls you into eternal life. You may wonder whether your planned end-of-life gift to your congregation, favorite Lutheran charity or the

LCMS will have a meaningful impact. You may also be among those who, despite facing inflation, personal or family pressures, and political upheaval, have bravely decided to give sacrificially, trusting that God will meet your every need.

Rest assured, you make an enormous difference in sharing and spreading the Gospel. God understands with perfect clarity what His mission will require in terms of financial support and knows precisely when each voluntary gift will have the greatest impact. He knows exactly what He wants a contributor to give in terms of the amount, and He even gives them those resources to give back for His mission. He knows the plans He has for you (**JER. 29:11**) and the perfect timing for fulfilling His mission to reach people with the Gospel. Every person God led to donate in 2023 and 2024 contributed meaningfully, whether through immediate gifts or planned estate contributions. God's perfect will and Word are always sufficient to overcome the anxieties brought on by inflation, political unrest and human uncertainty.

We always, in all circumstances, give thanks to God! He is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” Every year, those who contribute — living or now sainted — reflect His steadfast love to others. Every year, every person who gives matters and makes a difference in our shared, vigorous effort to make known the love of Jesus in word and deed here at home and around the world.

The LCMS Mission Advancement team thanks all who, in a courageous act of faith, contributed to the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during FY2024. As a team, we are committed to assisting and supporting anyone who wishes to share Jesus Christ with the world through their voluntary philanthropy. Please let us know how we can best serve and support you.



OUR GIVING YEAR TO YEAR

Voluntary Contributions to Support Gospel Proclamation and Convention — Mandated Work (Unaudited**)

Fiscal Year 2024				Fiscal Year 2023		
DONORS*	GIFTS	AMOUNT (\$)	DESIGNATION (CONTRIBUTOR INTENT)	DONORS	GIFTS	AMOUNT (\$)
SYNOD SUPPORT						
<i>Where the mission opportunity or financial pressure is greatest</i>						
35	402	12,905,431	Unrestricted (congregation worship offerings via districts) ^a	35	423	13,108,614
5,826	8,939	11,899,647	Unrestricted (contributions and bequests sent direct to the Synod)	4,344	6,261	4,079,548
<i>Restricted by contributors for specific purposes</i>						
Shared funds — International and National Use						
3,400	6,860	5,174,618	Global Mission — (Witness and Mercy)	4,292	8,653	3,150,386
5,973	9,656	4,873,101	LCMS World Relief and Human Care (Mercy)	6,284	10,157	4,070,025
823	1,650	1,522,807	Disaster Response work	983	1,831	1,318,966
254	464	195,597	Christ's Care for Persecuted/Displaced (Ukraine)	1,503	1,868	977,862
12,526	46,331	25,340,319	International Mission only (work/missionaries, MAF, incl. disasters)	12,570	47,608	22,212,097
1,259	2,613	2,177,774	National Mission only (work, incl. disasters, Soldiers of the Cross)	6,938	9,184	3,861,482
3,475	5,278	3,736,687	Pastoral Ed, (Joint Sem Fund, GSI, <i>Set Apart to Serve</i> , PALS, etc.)	3,954	5,975	3,773,939
1,113	2,530	1,542,833	Worldwide KFUEO	1,268	2,671	936,684
1,498	4,522	1,443,654	Synod — Other restricted uses, incl. National Offering	1,524	4,602	2,085,232
1	4	4,028,162	Donor-imposed time restriction (<FY2025, FY2024>) on use	Amount credited to correct designation		
3	7	358,032	Endowment (permanently restricted by donor instructions)	2	42	3,698,215
89,256	75,198,662			99,275	63,273,049	
FOR OTHER ENTITIES via SYNOD^f						
86	163	345,913	Concordia University System (CUS)	64	141	72,277
2,762	4,998	862,548	Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL)	2,993	4,936	739,424
11	18	\$964,751	Other LCMS-related Entities and Agencies (pass through)	68	99	984,385
5,179	\$2,173,212		• TOTAL - OTHER ENTITIES •	5,176	1,796,087	

*The sum of these donor numbers is greater than the number of actual donors, since a single contributor can give to more than one designation. The total number of donors in FY2023 was 29,274; the total number of donors in FY2024 was 25,609. These numbers included donors who passed away and remember the LCMS or a related entity in their estate plan (bequests).

** Dollar amounts reported on this table are the IRS-deductible value of voluntary charitable gifts, recorded on the date the donor released control of the asset. These figures are not GAAP compliant because they are recorded to satisfy contributor reporting to the IRS, rather than under FASB accounting principles. Dollar amounts are the gross total of the donated assets, not the net amount available for expenditure.

^f LCMS Mission Advancement and/or Synod Accounting play a role in recording, receiving, receipting and/or administering these contributions.

LCMS COMMUNICATIONS

Michael J. Behr

Executive Director

LCMS Communications shares the message of Christ crucified by telling the stories and presenting the teachings of the church across an array of print and digital media. We support the Office of the President, the Office of National Mission, the Office of International Mission, the Office of Pastoral Education and Mission Advancement with their strategic and tactical communications needs as we produce several magazines, a newspaper, videos, marketing materials, presentations, training modules, resources and web content.

The most visible work of Communications is our four publications: *The Lutheran Witness* (theological education for laity), *Reporter* (news of the Synod), *Lutherans Engage the World* (our mission work at home and around the globe) and, returning after an eight-year hiatus, the *Journal of Lutheran Mission* (a peer-reviewed academic journal on Lutheran missiology). The total print subscriptions between all these publications are approximately 160,000, with another 20,000 e-subscriptions. We also have several e-newsletters, including the *Life Together Digest*, monthly worship resources, *God's Mission Here*, *Set Apart to Serve* and Operation Barnabas' *Warning Order*. In total, these e-newsletters have 23,000 subscribers.

The Communications team manages the main LCMS social media pages, which include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. We have over 220,000 followers to our various social media pages.

The biggest project that the Communications unit has taken on in recent years is the complete overhaul of all our digital assets onto one comprehensive website at *lcms.org*. The new website effort kicked off in January 2024 and is expected to launch in the summer of 2025. This will be the first of several phases, and once completed, we will have consolidated 14 various websites into one fully mobile-enabled website with drastically improved navigation and functionality. This will be a dramatic improvement from the websites we've had for well over a decade and will be an invaluable resource for our church workers, congregations, schools and our members in general. Currently, our various websites are visited by over 140,000 users per month. We expect web traffic to increase significantly over time with the modern web platform.

So, whether you are reading one of the official LCMS publications in print or online, attending a conference or convention, watching a worship video on Facebook, or viewing photography online from a mission story in Africa, the Communications team helped make that possible.

THE LCMS CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Felix L. Loc

The chief administrative officer (CAO) assists the LCMS Board of Directors (BOD) in carrying out the responsibilities given to it by the Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions of the Synod. The Board of Directors has delegated to the CAO responsibility for maintaining contact with the Synod's general counsel and for making certain legal decisions. The CAO is also responsible for the general management and supervision of the business and legal affairs of the Synod as directed by the Board of Directors. In addition, the CAO serves as the Synod's convention manager.

The BOD has taken the proactive approach of its oversight responsibilities during this triennium and has been adopting resolutions to work with the agencies of the Synod to address a variety of corporate structures to serve the needs of the members of the Synod. Each of the entities is presented with its unique set of challenges and opportunities and will be offering collaborative input in this endeavor. The BOD also met in 2024 to conduct its strategic planning session to discuss the needs of the Synod and identify key areas of opportunities and threats. The board has taken the Hoshin Kanri approach to addressing those areas.

UB Greensfelder officially engaged its general legal counsel services to the LCMS at the start of FY25 and has been actively engaged in all legal matters of the LCMS, including litigation, employment, contracts and various other items requiring legal attention. The firm has stepped in and supported the needs of the Synod with exemplary legal expertise and experience. We are incredibly blessed to have a team of attorneys who are committed to protecting the legal rights of the organization and the church body.

Corporate Synod is looking to streamline the administrative contractual work outsourced by the LCMS and to utilize software that provides contract builder capabilities for streamlined contract automation. The software would provide file storage, signing ability, editing permission and visibility to track progress. The different departments will be coming together to identify their specific contractual needs and provide input in the contracts process.

At the end of 2024, the Human Resources Department conducted its second annual engagement survey for corporate Synod employees working at the International Center and in the mission field. A lot of work and effort has been put into identifying employee needs to support their service in the mission and ministry of the LCMS. One of the major changes identified in the previous year's survey led to the permanent adoption of a flex work policy approved by the Operations Team beginning Jan. 1, 2025. HR is committed to creating a positive working environment for those in service to the church as employees of the LCMS.

As we continue walking together, we are incredibly blessed to have a church body committed to its confession and the work of the Holy Spirit through the members of the Synod. The generous support we receive has positioned us to look forward toward advancing God's kingdom in this temporal world for the eternal benefit of His redeemed people. I am continually thankful for the many Lutherans who have come before me and for having a church body that delivers the faithful preaching of the Word and the right administration of the Sacraments. We are truly blessed.

SYNOD SECRETARY

Rev. Dr. John W. Sias

The Office of the Secretary, with its integrated department of Rosters, Statistics and Research Services, as required by the LCMS Constitution and Bylaws, supports good order in the Synod; administers official processes and lists; and provides expert, in-house research capacity to all the Synod's activities. The office, which now consists of the elected secretary, an assistant and an office administrator, provides service to the Synod's officers, agencies, boards, commissions, ordained and commissioned ministers, congregations, schools, and related entities. Through the secretary's service on the LCMS Board of Directors, the Commissions on Constitutional Matters and Handbook, and the Board of Governors of Concordia Historical Institute (the Synod's department of archives and history), and as staff to the Council of Presidents, the office offers close support to the necessary administration of the Synod's life together.

The deep work to prepare to support the congregations' governance of their Synod in its 2026 convention is already underway. The office has developed a new online form system that will — for officer, board and commission nominations; convention registration; overture submission; and a variety of other important purposes — replace the familiar but inefficient fillable PDF forms and bevy of emails with which we have made do these past several conventions. This generalizable system is aimed to make participation easier while increasing responsiveness and efficiency.

The office is presently also supporting:

- › A massive study of the circuits of the Synod to enable a task force formed by the previous convention (2023 Res. 9-06A) to recommend potential changes to convention representation after 59 years (in 2026) of applying the same formula.
- › Review, by the Commission on Constitutional Matters, of higher education governing documents in the Synod (Res. 7-04B [C]) and of congregation constitution guidelines, last significantly revised in 2012.
- › Efforts to guide the Pastoral Formation Committee, seminaries, universities and Council of Presidents in assessing pastor preparation and availability in future years.
- › Intensive work by the Board of Directors and Commissions on Constitutional Matters and Handbook to address aspects of governance of corporate Synod and its various agencies.

These immediate projects join many regular items, which are worked at steadily but are never finished.

Rosters and Statistics

The Rosters and Statistics activity continues to lead to the implementation of more efficient ways of collecting and disseminating information critical to all the ministries and agencies of the Synod. In the fall of 2024, it activated, on behalf of the Council of Presidents, a significant new online framework for the collection and maintenance of biographical and vocational information on the Synod's ordained ministers and the Synod's congregations, schools and other calling entities in their call processes for ordained ministers. This is one more phase of bringing into one coherent platform the various processes necessary to maintain the

roster of the Synod and to make well-selected call lists available in a timely fashion to her member congregations. Work is underway to bring commissioned ministers into the same framework.

Efforts continue, in collaboration with the districts, to encourage and facilitate closer to unanimous congregational reporting of statistics and lay leaders (currently about 75% submit each year); to strengthen reporting for schools; to evaluate the potential for revitalization of the Synod's youth list (used by our colleges, universities and seminaries to reach out to potential students); and to strengthen, accelerate and reduce the overhead of the processes the congregations use to govern their Synod and contribute to wise planning of future ministry together. As part of this work, the unit continues to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on worship attendance and congregational membership; while there has been a rebound in most places, and growth in some, the aggregate continues below historical norms. To care for one another effectively, we need to understand how we are doing in every place and to strengthen the governance mechanisms that guide the Synod forward in faithfulness and in addressing real needs in a timely way.

Research Services

The Research Services unit, consisting principally of a religious sociologist and a data scientist, aims to support the activities of the national Synod and of her districts with timely and insightful research service, ranging from survey and focus group administration and analysis to statistical and demographic research. In-house but self-contained, the unit can approach these problems with immediate insight but also necessary objectivity. In 2024, the unit contributed significant studies in support of work by ministry and support units and the Council of Presidents on worker wellness, church worker recruitment, the Synod's print and digital media offerings, the Synod's convention, circuit function and realignment, and many other topics. A recent survey of pastors on the visitation and electoral functions of their circuits — the first in present memory — garnered nearly 3,000 responses and a wealth of data that will inform future discussion and work on this important aspect of our life together as Synod.

Conclusion

At the Synod's founding in 1847, it had a constitutional secretary charged with maintaining the roster, statistics and archives. Now, 178 years later, the Office of the Secretary and its integrated department continue to keep all in the Synod mindful of our common commitments, as expressed in the Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions, and to provide the congregations of the Synod with the information they need to guide their future development, combining stability and order with efficiency and responsiveness. This work is made possible by undesignated gifts from the congregations of the Synod (at writing, approximately \$319 per year per parish). We are profoundly grateful and hope to offer value, steadily supporting in various important ways the maturation of our Synod, by God's grace and His working on us through the Word, in every way into Him who is the Head, "into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (EPH. 4:15-16).

ROSTERS AND STATISTICS



Our Synod at a Glance

CONGREGATIONS

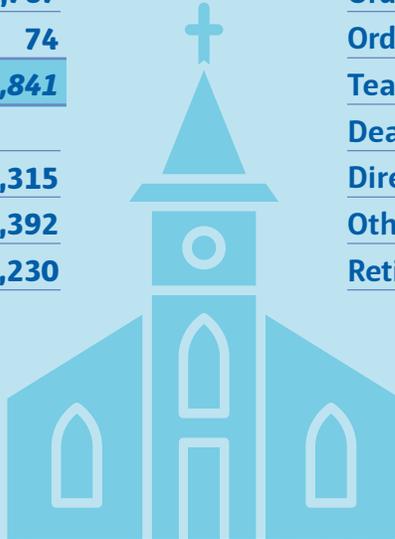
Member Congregations	5,767
New Church Starts*	74
Total	5,841

Baptized members	1,674,315
Confirmed members	1,328,392
Average weekly attendance	547,230

* A New Church Start is a congregation that meets regularly for worship and/or Bible study and intends to become a member congregation.

CHURCH WORKERS

Ordained Ministers (Active assignment)	5,548
Ordained Ministers (Candidates for calls)	326
Teachers	4,872
Deaconesses	184
Directors of Christian Education	533
Other rostered workers	221
Retired workers, including pastors	7,618





LCMS Missionaries and Military Chaplains at a Glance

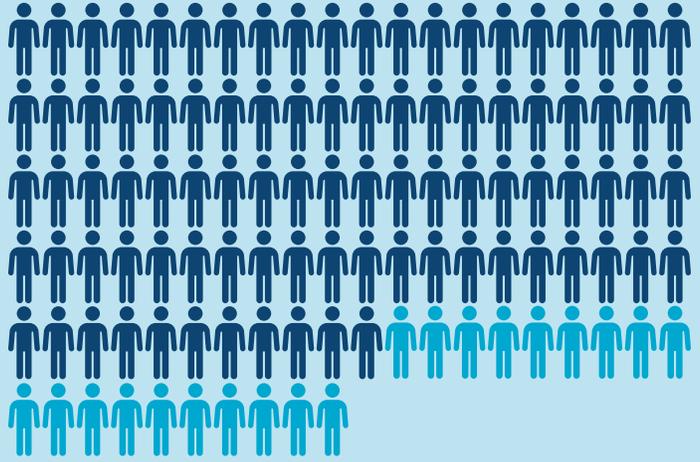
LCMS MISSIONARY TEAM

International regions	4
Missionaries (headcount)	91
Alliance missionaries	19

MINISTRY TO THE ARMED FORCES

LCMS Military Service Branch Chaplains	125
Ministry Staff	3

As of December 2024, the current force of 91 LCMS missionaries and 19 alliance missionaries serving internationally:



International Mission -
International Center staff with missionary support or oversight roles.



EDUCATION

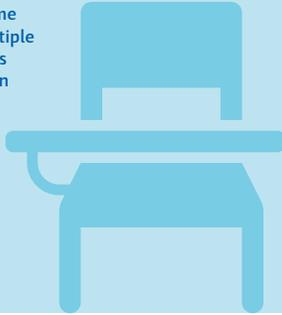


Our Synod at a Glance

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

Preschools	1,707*
Elementary Schools (K-8)	732*
High Schools	109*
International Schools	3
Colleges/Universities	6
Seminaries	2

*The total number of Schools is 1,737. Some schools operate multiple grade levels and thus have been counted in multiple sections.



LUTHERAN SCHOOLS — ENROLLMENT

	Headcount
PRESCHOOL & CHILD CARE CENTERS	77,508*
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	76,181*
HIGH SCHOOLS	18,877*

* These enrollment numbers do not include students enrolled in the Synod's international schools.

	Headcount	Full-time Equiv.	Church Work
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES*	31,902	19,873	910
By school:			
Concordia, Ann Arbor (CUW)	1,638	1,287	51
Concordia, Chicago	6,786	3,603	96
Concordia, Irvine	4,913	3,363	123
Concordia, Nebraska	3,966	1,974	313
Concordia, St. Paul	7,743	5,179	82
Concordia, Wisconsin	6,856	4,467	245

* 2023–2024 academic year enrollment.

	Headcount	Full-time Equiv.
SEMINARIES — Total enrollment – Fall 2023	919	566
Concordia Theo. Seminary, Fort Wayne	279	227
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis	640	339

	Headcount	Full-time Equiv.
SEMINARIES — Ordination-track only – Fall 2023	566	408
Concordia Theo. Seminary, Fort Wayne	191	158
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis	375	250



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