

WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER



STORYTELLING ENGAGEMENT

AUGUST 2025 Mission Support Memo

What Mission Support Looks Like

A story about our 2025 Churchwide Assembly

As you read this story, what inspires you?

How can you learn more about this year's assembly?



Almost a thousand ELCA Lutherans made their way to toasty Phoenix, Ariz., to gather for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly from July 28 to Aug. 2. It was a joyous, thoughtful and busy week. Alongside the normal business of the assembly — considering resolutions, memorials and social statements — voting members were tasked with electing a new presiding bishop and secretary to lead our church for the next six years.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry, who currently serves as the bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod, was elected to serve as our new presiding bishop. Presiding Bishop-elect Curry has a fascinating vocational story. He started his ministry as a lay mission developer at Shekinah Chapel in Riverdale, Ill., while participating in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program in pursuit of ordination. Following his election, he told the assembly, “Perhaps I’m out there in one of you. I never saw myself as good enough. And so, for two years, I said no, and finally said yes to becoming a mission developer. When I said yes, your support, this church’s support, of that ministry meant everything. So if you want to know what your benevolence dollars [including Mission Support] look like, it looks like me. And I want to say thank you. Thank you for your investment.”

The assembly also elected the Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills to be our next secretary. Secretary-elect Mills currently serves as assistant to the bishop and interim director for evangelical mission in the ELCA North Carolina Synod. Following her election, she remarked, “I have to echo our newly elected presiding bishop and say, I am the product of you. I am also a TEEM candidate.” Mills celebrated “a new season for our church. I do believe that the reason why I, an African American woman, [can stand] before you, with no degrees in a church that loves to have people who are educated, is because you saw the gifts in me and the possibility and potential in me. ... I celebrate with you that we listen to God’s call and that we will become God’s beloved community.”





Both Presiding Bishop-elect Curry and Secretary-elect Mills celebrated and gave thanks for the support of the whole church, including the impact that the sharing of Mission Support had on both of their ministries. Through Mission Support, synods and the churchwide organization provide vital funding for mission developers, new and emerging ministries, and candidates in the TEEM program, which prepares individuals for ordained ministry in the ELCA, with a focus on emerging ministry contexts such as ethnic-specific, multicultural, rural and inner-city settings.

Our next presiding bishop and secretary were both able to answer their new calls in part because of our Mission Support dollars and the investment made in them by the whole church. We all say, Amen.

ENGAGE WITH US

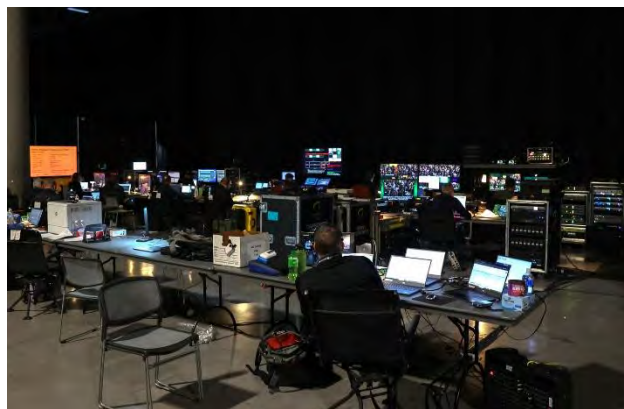
[ELCA MISSION SUPPORT VIDEO](#)

AVAILABLE FOR ALL TO SHARE

Do you need a way to explain Mission Support to others? This [Mission Support video](#) details how your congregational offering supports ministries around the world through our synods and churchwide organization. Of the \$1.6 billion given to ELCA congregations and worshipping communities as regular offerings, most stays with the congregation to fund its vital ministry. A portion — about 5% on average — becomes Mission Support, given by congregations to our synods. Mission Support ensures that synods can find and equip leaders of all ages and deploy an array of ministries, including those of synod companions and those for youth and young adults. Our synods, in turn, give a portion of that Mission Support to our churchwide organization to fund our shared work across the country and around the world. Mission Support is possible only because of your congregational offering. Read more stories about Mission Support at livinglutheran.org/SOFIA.

GRATEFUL

We are extremely grateful to all the people who helped make our 2025 Churchwide Assembly a success: the voting members who attended and made thoughtful decisions for the future of our church; the synod staff who educated and helped arrange travel for all attending; our churchwide organization staff and committees, who handled registration, hotel arrangements and event planning for this massive group; and so many other folks who worked behind the scenes before, during and after the assembly. We are grateful for and inspired by their work.



In gratitude,

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