

I am the vine,
you are the branches

John 15:5

Mission Stories of the Northern Great Lakes Synod



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



“Synod” means “Walking Together”.

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

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

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

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

“We have a great and faithful God. We have been entrusted with a ministry of hope and reconciliation. God is at work in our ELCA and in the 80 congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. We have a story to tell. We have good news to share!”

“We are blessed to hear each other’s stories of faith, and we are more effective in our ministry efforts when we are all moving in the same direction.”

(Bishop Katherine Finegan)

“Shipwrecked” on the Stonington Peninsula

“If ever the church is to flourish again, one must begin by instructing the young!”

Martin Luther

Our little white church in the wildwoods just finished hosting Vacation Bible School. As we review the week that brought six area churches together on our beautiful Stonington Peninsula, we give thanks to God for the opportunity to share the good news with over 62 exuberant young people!

We were “Shipwrecked” on a desert island for the week. A large bus picked up kids and helpers from Christ the King Lutheran and Bethany Lutheran in Escanaba, Bethany Lutheran in Perkins, First Lutheran in Gladstone, and Calvary Lutheran in Rapid River, and transported them down County Road 513 to Trinity Lutheran Church in Stonington.

There was an amazing group of volunteers from each church who made this dream a reality. Trinity itself doesn't have many young people on its rolls, but we do possess a core group of members who believe that the future of our church lies with the young. This multi-congregational endeavor attempts to engage and encourage the young people in our churches to get excited about attending worship, and also seeks to reach those in our communities who are unchurched. As one of our youngest participants was overheard saying “I'm gonna have to tell my mom that we gotta go to church from now on, this is FUN!”

**Susan Sundstrom-Young
Trinity Lutheran, Stonington, MI**



“Walking Together”

It was a Wednesday afternoon when my cell phone rang. It was Pastor Andrea Fluegel at Prince of Peace Lutheran church in Eagle River.

“They announced at the school this morning that a senior student was killed last night in a car accident. I’ve been at the school all day with the kids. We’re having a candlelight vigil tonight. Can you help?”



And so on that night, I gathered up a few boxes of candles and drove up to Eagle River. We didn’t know if we’d have 5 or 100 kids coming, but Pastor Andrea had done a wonderful job preparing for the night. There were candles upon candles for people to light. There were cards they could write prayers on. There were pieces of dissolvable paper and a bowl of water for people to write down the things they never got to say to Michael.

Pastor Andrea, Father Patrick from St. Peter Roman Catholic Church, and I read scripture and prayed with the over 150 people who came that night to grieve Michael’s loss and to find some measure of hope and peace with each other. By the time the night was over, all of us were exhausted. We’d been crying, we’d been praying, we’d been hugging. And the grieving had only just begun. Still, I think we succeeded in providing a space, no matter how short, for people to openly wrestle with their emotions and just grieve.



It’s on those nights that I’m glad we are synod – that we, congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have each other to rely on. I’m glad that neither Pastor Andrea nor I had to do the work of helping 150 high school students grieve the loss of their classmate alone.

Being the church isn’t always easy, especially when we live in times of grief and mourning. Thanks be to God that our congregations have each other to get through the difficult times, to laugh during the happy times, and to do more together than any of us could do on our own!

**Pastor Ken Ranos
Faith Lutheran Church, Three Lakes**

“Bike Ride for World Hunger”

Fourteen bicyclists hit the road pedaling on Sunday afternoon, July 8th, as Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church’s annual Bike Ride for World Hunger began.

- The youth, ranging from 11 years old to 17, put 250 miles on their tires this year and stuck to the northwoods. This year’s trek took them from Rhinelander to Sayner for a few nights and then to Conover for two nights and concluded in Three Lakes on Friday afternoon, July 13th.

On Sunday, the group rode the initial 27.5 miles and on Monday put another 60 miles on.

“It’s a long trip, but it’s a fun one,” said Jeremiah Bellow, one of the many youth on the ride this year. This year marks his third year on the bike ride. “I’m hoping for a dryer year this year after last year.”

While the group mainly stuck to bike trails this year, there were times when they traveled on county roads and highways on the way to their destinations. First time riders this year include Johanna Dellenbach from Rhinelander and Katherine Zimmerman from Boyd, Wisconsin.

The youth continued to raise money while on the bike ride. All of the money raised was donated to the ELCA World Hunger program and the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry. Last year about \$5,000 was raised. This year, close to \$3,000 was raised.



“The kids look forward to this ride every year,” said Pastor Tammy Barthels, who is the pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church and served as a support driver this year. “They have a lot of fun on it and they grow closer together by the end of it.”

The riders finished each day with games, a meal and devotions.

Pastor Tammy Barthels
Immanuel Lutheran, Rhinelander, WI

For more information on the group’s ride, go to www.immanuelrhinelander.org/bikeride.

“Retired Men’s Group”

When he retired in 1999, NGLS Bishop Emeritus Dale Skogman asked a couple of other retired men at First Lutheran Church in Gladstone if they thought there would be interest in forming a “Retired Men’s Group”. The result has been most gratifying. Since forming, the group has had fifty-one participants, with thirty-three active members at the present time, and an average monthly attendance of twenty-one. Given the age of the group, seventeen former participants have died, but they are quickly replaced as new participants are warmly welcomed to join the group.



Bishop Skogman leads the group which meets on the second Thursday of each month from 9-10:30 a.m. The format is simple: Thirty minutes for fellowship with friendly conversation, time devoted to sharing issues and concerns (Given the age of the group health issues are a major topic!) and a Biblically based discussion led by Bishop Skogman. The “Master Builder’s Bible for Men” has served as a study resource with application of biblical texts made to current issues of concern personally and within church and society. The conversation never lags as there’s spirited discussion interspersed with a great deal of humor.



Participants are invited to provide simple treats which are washed down with ample cups of coffee! Most often, the men hand the bishop \$20.00 and he, with the help of his wife Jo, oversee the refreshment time. Enthusiastic about the group, some of the men begin arriving a half hour before the appointed meeting time to join in the fellowship. Imagine twenty-one hearing impaired men gathered in a classroom and the saying is true “You can hardly hear yourself think!”

The group has proved to be a marvelous vehicle for providing support, comradery, fellowship and the sharing of concerns and insights among Christian men rooted in the Holy Scriptures. Truly a discipleship of believers rooted in Christian values and convictions.

Bishop Emeritus Dale Skogman

**YOUR CONGREGATION'S MISSION SUPPORT DOLLARS
(\$795,000 GIVEN IN 2018)**

ALLOWS THE NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD TO

Offer Programs throughout the synod (U.P. and Northern Wisconsin)

- **Campus Ministry**
- **Synod Administrative Staff Support**
- **Support for ELCA ministries (48% passed on to ELCA – see next back page)**

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Individual and Congregational "Restricted" Gifts support (\$250,000+ in 2018)

- **Candidacy – the raising up and support of new rostered leaders**
- **Congregational Vitality Retreats**
- **Professional Leaders' Enrichment**
- **"Walking Together" Conference Events**
- **Youth Programming**
- **Domestic and World Hunger Needs**
- **Seminarian Scholarships**
- **Stewardship Efforts**
- **Campus Ministry**
- **Lay Schools**
- **Lutheran Social Services**
- **Tanzanian Companion Synod Relationships and Ministries**
- **Various "Restricted" Endowment Funds such as:
NGLS Fund for Leaders, Skrenes Fund for Ministry, Rural Ministry,
Skogman Scholarship Fund, Holli Scholarship Fund, and others**
- **General Endowment Fund for a variety of undesignated ministries such as:
Lay School, Congregational Renewal Projects, Pastor's Debt Retirement**



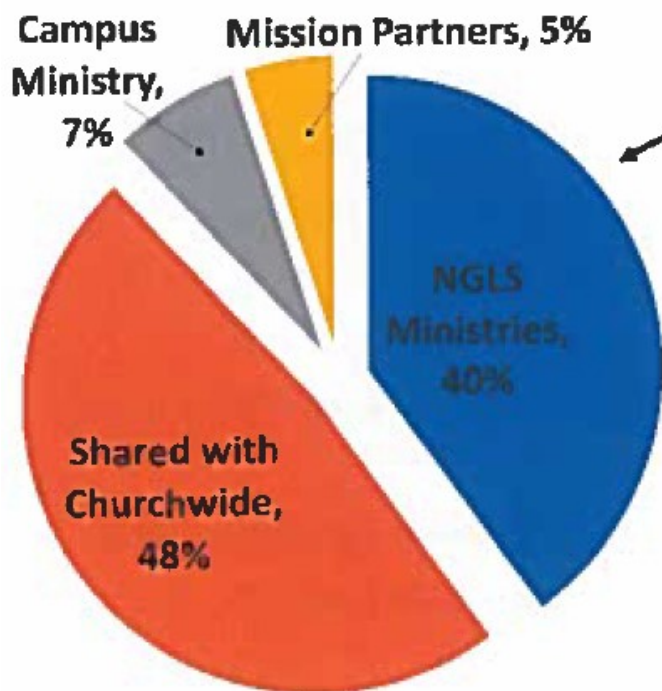
Where your treasure is . . .



there your heart shall be also.

Luke 12:34

Because your money has the ability to take your heart along with it.



Pie Chart Distribution of Mission Support Dollars to the Northern Great Lakes Synod

Northern Great Lakes Synod:

80 Congregations
24,661 Baptized Members
\$11.6 Million in Disbursements by Congregations for their Ministries

ELCA:

9,163 Congregations
3,458,839 Baptized Members
\$2.4 Billion in Disbursements for Churchwide Ministries

**Where your treasure is . . .
 there your heart shall be also.**



Luke 12:34

Because your money has the ability to take your heart along with it.

Your Congregation's Unrestricted Mission Support Dollars

48% in 2018 sent by Northern Great Lakes Synod to the ELCA churchwide to:

- Grow and support congregations throughout the United States – 357 new plants last year
- Grow the Lutheran church around the world – 230 missionaries sent out
- Support and develop current leaders and future leaders – 9900 rostered leaders
- Provide governance and leadership through the 65 synods and oversight for ELCA ministries
- Investment in technology and communication for the whole church
- Provide research and strategic planning resources
- Resources to address social issues and advocate for justice
- Sustain ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and relationships