

Bulletin of Reports
for the
Thirty-eighth Assembly
of the
NEW JERSEY SYNOD, ELCA

May 30, 2026



Water marks us. Witness moves us.



New Jersey Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Thirty-eighth New Jersey Synod Assembly. Please read this Bulletin of Reports so you may be an informed Voting Member.

Assembly Vocabulary No Accident

It is important to note and remember that no delegates will be present for the assembly. “Voting members” are not delegates!

- The terminology related to the legislative process of this church is no accident.
- The words “Synod Assembly,” rather than convention, and “Voting Members,” rather than delegates, were deliberately chosen for our governing documents.

These words not only fulfill certain legal requirements, but also reflect that the ecclesial understanding of the three primary expressions of this church—congregations, synod, and church-wide organization—exist and serve within this *one church*.

The people of this synod are not sent as delegates; they are *not* gathered to act as some politicized delegates to a regional party convention. Rather, they *assemble* as duly selected members of this church with *voting* responsibilities for governance and elections on behalf of the synod. The Synod Assembly is just that, an assembly of the people of this church, some of whom have been granted the responsibility of being *Voting Members* of the *Synod Assembly*.

The people of this church, when gathered as *Voting Members* of the Synod Assembly, have the responsibility of electing the voting members of the *Church-wide Assembly*. Persons so chosen are given the responsibility of doing the work of the Church-wide Assembly on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

They are *not* sent to participate as politicized delegates from some regional or agenda-specific caucus at some national party convention.

The vocabulary that we use both shapes and reflects our understanding of this church.

We need to (a) understand more clearly, and (b) embrace more completely the conviction that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America “shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the church-wide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and, therefore, lives in a partnership relationship with the others.” (ELCA Church-wide Constitutional Provision 8.11.)

Indeed, we together affirm and declare the primary principle of organization of our church, namely: “The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church.” (ELCA Church-wide Constitutional Provision 5.01)

Within this one church, we, as voting members, advisory members, non-voting members, visitors, and staff will gather to carry out the work of this Synod Assembly.

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"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

March 23, 2026

Dear siblings in Christ,

As you gather for your synod assembly, I want to express my gratitude for what you are doing — and have been doing — for this church, *our* church.

In the months since I was installed as presiding bishop, I have been focused on connection. Some of you have heard me talk about what it means to be a connected church. This vision of connectedness grows directly out of one of the three priorities we, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have named for this season of our life together.

When we lifted up these priorities, we committed ourselves to them not as abstract ideas but as guiding commitments for how we live and serve as church. As I reflected on them, the third priority stood out with particular clarity: to be a connected, sustainable church, raising the bar together.

That priority has been shaping my thinking and my leadership. It asks not just what we do but how we do it — together, across congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. Connectedness is not a program or a slogan; it is a way of being church that recognizes our shared calling and our shared responsibility. This is not my church. It is yours. It is ours, together. The ministries you carry out in your congregations and synods are not just yours — they are ours together.

Over the next several years, you will hear this priority expressed with greater focus and clarity. In 2026, our emphasis is on connection — strengthening relationships, listening deeply and recognizing how much we depend on one another.

In 2027, you will begin to hear me speak more intentionally about sustainability — how we steward our people, our resources and our structures so that our witness remains strong for generations to come. By 2028, connection and sustainability will come together in a shared language of togetherness, as we more fully live into who God is calling us to be as church.

So, when you hear language about being together, it is about living out the ELCA's vision of a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. It matters deeply to me that we know who we are, moving forward as one body, trusting God and one another.

I believe this is how connection is built — not by standing alone but by being church together.

With gratitude and hope,



The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Yo soy la vid y ustedes las ramas. El que permanece en mí, como yo en él, dará mucho fruto; separados de mí no pueden ustedes hacer nada” (Juan 15:5). 850am-1005

23 de marzo de 2026

Estimados hermanos en Cristo:

Ahora que van a reunirse en su asamblea sinodal, quiero expresar mi gratitud por lo que están y han estado haciendo por esta iglesia, *nuestra* iglesia.

En los meses desde que fui instalado como obispo presidente, me he concentrado en la conexión. Algunos de ustedes me han oído hablar sobre lo que significa ser una iglesia conectada. Esta visión de conexión surge directamente de una de las tres prioridades que nosotros, como la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América, hemos nombrado para este período de nuestra vida juntos.

Cuando destacamos estas prioridades, nos comprometimos con ellas, no como ideas abstractas, sino como compromisos que nos guían en cómo vivir y servir como iglesia. Al reflexionar sobre aquellas, la tercera prioridad sobresalió con una claridad particular: ser una iglesia conectada y sostenible, elevando el estándar todos juntos.

Esa prioridad ha estado moldeando mi pensamiento y mi liderazgo. No solo pregunta qué hacemos, sino cómo lo hacemos — juntos, en todas las congregaciones, los sínodos y la organización nacional. La conexión no es un programa ni un eslogan; es una forma de ser iglesia que reconoce nuestro llamado y responsabilidad compartidos. Esta no es mi iglesia. Es de ustedes. Es nuestra, juntos. Los ministerios que llevan a cabo en sus congregaciones y sínodos no son solo suyos —son nuestros juntos.

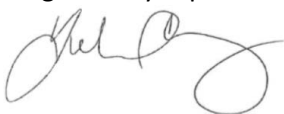
Durante los próximos años van a escuchar esta prioridad expresada con mayor enfoque y claridad. En 2026, nuestro énfasis está en la conexión: fortalecer las relaciones, escuchar profundamente y reconocer cuánto dependemos unos de otros.

En 2027 comenzarán a oírme hablar con más intención sobre la sostenibilidad: cómo cuidamos a nuestra gente, nuestros recursos y nuestras estructuras para que nuestro testimonio siga siendo fuerte para las generaciones venideras. Para 2028, la conexión y la sostenibilidad se unirán en un lenguaje compartido de unidad, mientras vivimos más plenamente lo que Dios nos está llamando a ser como iglesia.

Entonces, cuando escuchen lenguaje sobre estar juntos, este tiene que ver con vivir la visión de la ELCA de un mundo que experimenta la diferencia que la gracia y el amor de Dios en Cristo marcan en todas las personas y la creación. Es sumamente importante para mí que sepamos quiénes somos, avanzando como un solo cuerpo, confiando en Dios y en los demás.

Creo que así es como se forja la conexión: no estando solos, sino siendo iglesia juntos.

Con gratitud y esperanza,



El Rvdo. Yehiel Curry
Obispo Presidente
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América



**Meet
Our
ELCA
Churchwide
Representative

Christine Mangale**

Christine Mangale is Director of the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC) and Main Representative of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to the United Nations in New York. She leads the church's justice advocacy engagements with the United Nations; it's agencies and member states. Ms. Mangale is a global expert on multilateralism, providing leadership on human rights, peace, sustainable development, migration and gender justice.

With over 20 years of experience, Christine has held roles with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran World Federation, and the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church, where she started her service with the church as a youth leader and the Youth Secretary for the Lutheran Communion in Eastern and Central Africa. Ms. Mangale is a founding member of the executive board of the non-profit, Mpanzi- a 501(c)3 supporting education, peace, and development in rural African communities.

Christine has co-edited multiple editions of the *Ecumenical Women at the UN Guide to Advocacy handbook* and contributed to *Affirming Women's Human Rights a publication of the Lutheran World Federation*. She holds a degree in Political Science from the City University of New York–Lehman College and a Master of Science in International Affairs from The New School.



**NEW JERSEY SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
THIRTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY
May 30, 2026
DoubleTree Hotel – Somerset NJ**

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **ON-SITE CHECK-IN:** Begins at 8:45am. **PROMPT** registration check in is requested as a quorum is needed to open the Assembly.

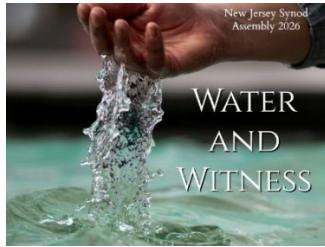
2. **WORSHIP:** Worship will begin at 9:30 AM. All are welcome!

3. **NAME TAGS:** At check-in Voting Members and Visitors will receive a name tag and lanyard. *PLEASE RETURN THESE AT THE END OF ASSEMBLY. Synod Council members will be identified with red ribbons / synod staff with purple ribbons.*

4. **VOTING:** Voting will be done through VPOLL, an online voting system. You will need a smartphone, tablet or laptop with an internet connection (or data plan) in order to cast your vote. Voting prompts will appear on your screen at the appropriate times. VPOLL practice will take place at the start of assembly. Our Assembly Tech Team will be available to assist with any issues.

***PLEASE NOTE:** Voting Members will receive their login information at check-in. These credentials are unique to each voting member. Whatever device you first login from is the device you must use to vote with throughout the assembly.*

5. **GERMANE MOTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:** When a Voting Member makes a motion from the floor, the Voting Member must present the motion on the proper form to the Secretary. This form is available from the Secretary at any time during the Assembly.



Thirty-eighth New Jersey Synod Assembly
Trigésima Octava Asamblea del Sínodo de Nueva Jersey
Doubletree by Hilton, Somerset, New Jersey
May/Mayo 30, 2026

WiFi: NJSYNOD Password: SA2026NJ

8:45 AM Registration Opens/ Se abren las inscripciones

9:30 AM Holy Communion with Affirmation of Baptism
 Santa Comunción con Afirmación del Bautismo

Plenary Session 1/ Sesión Plenaria Uno

Opening of the Assembly/ Apertura de la Asamblea
 Welcome and Introductions/ Bienvenida y Presentaciones
 Introduction to Assembly (including Vpoll practice)
 Introducción a la Asamblea (incluyendo práctica con Vpoll)
 Consent Agenda/Agenda de Consentimiento
 Assembly Agenda/Agenda de la Asamblea
 Rules of Procedure/Reglas de Procedimiento
 Appointment of Assembly Committees/
 Nombramiento de las Comisiones de la Asamblea
 Adoption of 2025 Minutes/Aprobación del Acta 2025
 2027 Spending Plan Presentation/Presentación al Plan de Gastos 2027
 Report of Nominating Committee/Informe del Comité de Nominaciones
 Witness Moment/Momento de Testimonio
 Report of Reference and Counsel/Informe del Comité de Referencia y Consejo

Break/Receso

Report of the Treasurer/Informe del Tesorero
 Report of the Secretary/Informe del Secretario
 Report of United Lutheran Seminary/Informe de United Lutheran Seminary
 Song/Canción

12:15 PM Lunch/Almuerzo

1:15 PM Plenary Session 2/ Sesión Plenaria Dos

Gathering Song/Canto de entrada
 Report of Registration/Informe de Registro
 Witness Moment/Momento de Testimonio
 Mission Advocacy Table/Mesa de Incidencia de la Misión
 Report of the Bishop/Informe de la Obispa
 Announcements

Break/Receso

Report of ELCA Churchwide Rep/ Informe de la Represente de la ELCA
 Witness Moment/Momento de Testimonio
 Spending Plan Adoption/Adopción del Plan de Gastos
 Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center Report/Informe de Cross Roads
 Witness Moment/Momento de Testimonio
 Report of Reference and Counsel/Informe de Referencia y Consejo
 Thanksgiving/Installation/Closing liturgy
 Liturgia de Acción de Gracias, Instalación y Clausura

3:00 PM Assembly Adjourned/Se levanta la Assamblea

PRE-ASSEMBLY WORKSHOPS: TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026

6:30 PM Gathering and Devotions

6:45 PM to 7:45 PM and 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM



WORKSHOP ZOOM LINK (Click [here](#).)

Each workshop, unless otherwise noted, will be offered twice so that you can attend two workshops. Once signed on, you can stay on the whole time even through the 15-minute break. Each one-hour time block will begin with a brief welcome and introduction to everyone before breaking out into our specific groups.

2027 Spending Plan Workshop (Offered in Session 2 only)

Learn about the Synod Council's proposed 2027 spending plan to support our synod ministries, from ministries within New Jersey to worldwide missions. *Leader: Synod Treasurer Jim Harris*

Dreaming a Theme: The Synod Youth Retreat – (Offered in Session 1 only) Help us discern a theme for our annual November retreat for youth in grades 6 - 12. What messages do our young people need to hear about their faith? How can we carry our theme throughout the retreat? Anyone with a love for youth and young people and a creative side is welcome! *Leaders: Youth Ministry Mission Team*

2027 Youth Activities from NJ to MN! (Offered in Session 2 only) The Youth Ministry Mission Team has been building a calendar of events from now through summer of 2027: a Somerset Patriots game, a kayaking adventure, and favorite return events like the retreat and the Farminary. We'll discuss the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis and opportunities for small groups to experience the Gathering with youth from all over the ELCA. You will leave with concrete dates and ideas for ways to involve your youth! *Leaders: Youth Ministry Mission Team*

Basics of a Simple Capital Campaign

Imagine what your congregation can do when the debt is paid! The Congregational Debt Reduction Grant encourages congregations to start a capital campaign to reduce or eliminate their monthly debt payment. The grant will provide funds that match the amount the congregation raises. We will walk through the basics of planning, starting, and sustaining a capital campaign in a small membership congregation. We will talk about a congregation's vision, mission, and what it might expect to raise over a three-year campaign, and we will offer ways to cultivate generosity as congregations consider what new possibilities the Holy Spirit might be guiding them to once the debt has been paid. *Leaders: Pastor Dean Brown and Pastor Jim Kromholz*

Advocacy in New Jersey

Join us for a conversation about how we can love and advocate with those who are experiencing food insecurity in our state. We will also discuss challenges facing our state as a result of federal funding cuts. Learn how you can help! *Leader: Pastor Sara Lilja, Executive Director, Coalition of Religious Leaders*

Imagining What's Possible: Latine and Bilingual Worship Practices

If you are wondering how to reach out and begin a Spanish or bilingual worship experience, this workshop invites you into conversation with practitioners who are actively doing this work. Together we will explore ministry models, practices, partnerships, and learnings rooted in Latiné communities, with space for questions, shared wisdom, and practical next steps. *Leaders: Pastor Maristela Freiberg and Practicioners*

2026 Synod Assembly Resolution and Memorial

This workshop is an opportunity for discussion of the 2026 Assembly Resolution and Memorial that will be voted on at the assembly. *Leaders: The Committee of Reference and Counsel*

A Look at Food Waste

Participants will view a video and engage in a discussion. Learn impacts of food waste through a spiritual, ethical, theological, and ecological lens. *Leader: Deb MacBride, Care for Creation Team*

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER MOTIONS CHART

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (1990 Edition)

The motions below are listed in order of precedence.

A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take break	I move to recess for...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that (or "to)...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Motions that bring a question again before the assembly - no order of precedence.
Introduce only when nothing else is pending.

YOU WANT:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Take matter from table	I move to take from the table...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Cancel previous action	I move to rescind...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or Majority with notice
Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

Incidental Motions - no order of precedence.
Arises incidentally and are decided immediately.

YOU WANT:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Enforce rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Demand a rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None
Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

NEW JERSEY SYNOD, ELCA
RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE 38th SYNOD ASSEMBLY

1. One third of the voting members of the synod assembly shall constitute a quorum. (S7.14)
2. Two (2) lay representatives of Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities and Synod Approved Outreach Mission of the New Jersey Synod shall be given voice and vote during the Assembly.
3. Persons who are on the roster of the New Jersey Synod, ELCA, On Leave or Retired, Living Out-of-State, but who are serving New Jersey Synod congregations/worshiping communities by special appointment, and those Retired Pastors Living Out-of-State who are actively engaged in the life and ministry of the New Jersey Synod shall be given voice and vote during the Assembly.
4. Persons on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in a Synod other than the New Jersey Synod, but who are serving New Jersey Synod congregations by special appointment, shall be given voice and vote, during the Assembly.
5. Persons who are not on the roster of the ELCA, but who are serving New Jersey Synod congregations/worshiping communities by special appointment of the Bishop of the NJ Synod shall be given voice and vote, during the Assembly.
6. Chairs of Mission Teams and Committees listed by the Synod Council shall be given voice, not vote, on matters pertaining to their work during the Assembly.
7. Voting will take place in a variety of ways throughout the assembly. These may include electronic voting using Vpoll, voice votes, and voting cards. To have an abstention recorded, notify the secretary. Abstentions do not count in the vote totals.
8. Voting members need a smartphone or tablet in order to use Vpoll for voting. Unique login credentials will be provided upon registration. There is no provision for proxy voting.
9. When an item of business is opened by the chair for discussion, those voting members wishing to speak must move to a floor microphone. Before speaking, each person will indicate their name, congregation name and location. Members must specify if they are speaking for or against the item under consideration.
10. Debate shall be limited to two minutes per person per issue. Time will be kept by the Secretary. Debate will terminate when three speakers have been heard on each side, unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting.
11. Late Resolutions received after the March 31 deadline will be referred to the NJ Synod Council.
12. Resolutions received on time shall be reviewed by the Committee of Reference and Counsel, which, when reporting to the Assembly, may:
 1. recommend approval;
 2. recommend disapproval;
 3. recommend referral to the Synod Council; or
 4. recommend a substitute motion to the Assembly

13. Floor nominations for at-large positions may be made at the time of the Nominating Committee report and require completion of the [electronic nomination form](#).
14. All reports published in the Bulletin of Reports shall be received by the Assembly by virtue of that fact without vote.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION OF THE 2027 SPENDING PLAN

1. At the time of the introduction of the Spending Plan, discussion shall be limited to questions for clarification and information and the serving of notices of intent to move an amendment to the Spending Plan.
2. Voting Members desiring to present motions germane to the Spending Plan shall be given until **12:00 noon on Saturday, May 30** to submit written notice of such intent to the Treasurer, James Harris.
3. Members of the Fiscal Management, Administration, and Property Committee shall meet with voting members proposing an amendment.
4. At the time appointed for the adoption of the Spending Plan, the Fiscal Management, Administration, and Property Committee shall report to the Assembly all proposed amendments, with the Committee's recommendations.
5. When motions germane to the Spending Plan are presented on the floor of the Assembly, the Fiscal Management, Administration, and Property Committee shall have an opportunity to respond to the recommendations. Any Voting Member wishing to increase a line item in any area of the Spending Plan shall propose a source of funding.

RESOLUTION I
NEW JERSEY SYNOD, ELCA

A RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE CONGREGATIONAL EDUCATION AND ACTION TO OPPOSE THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM IN FAITH AND POLITICS.

WHEREAS the political ideology of Christian Nationalism idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life, appropriating sacred symbols, interpretation of history, values, and policies, insisting that they have always and must continue to reflect a narrow interpretation of Christian teachings,¹ and

WHEREAS Christian Nationalism seeks to place political power only in the hands of Christian Nationalists, at the expense of foreigners, immigrants, and even native-born Americans who are not believed to belong on racial and religious grounds,² and

WHEREAS approximately three in ten Americans are sympathetic to the worldview and agenda of Christian Nationalism,³ and

WHEREAS although many expressions of Christian Nationalism are not overtly violent, Christian Nationalism in its most extreme form is closely associated with violent hate groups,⁴ and

WHEREAS the Constitution of the United States is not a religious charter, but rather establishes a secular system that favors no group among religions,⁵ and

WHEREAS the gospel of Jesus Christ does not call for the massing of governmental power in His name, but rather calls those who faithfully follow Christ to love neighbors, welcome foreigners and strangers among us, care for the needy and powerless, free those oppressed by systems of inequity, and treat all with justice and mercy,⁶ and

WHEREAS the association of this nationalist ideology with the language and symbols of Christianity places the responsibility firmly on Christ's church to publicly reject this ideology as heresy and to work to oppose its influence in both the church and the public square.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all congregations of the New Jersey Synod are encouraged to provide educational opportunities exploring the theological errors and the political dangers contained within the Christian Nationalism movement.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all congregations of the New Jersey Synod are encouraged to seek to advocate at the local level (school boards and town council deliberations) to protect the witness of the gospel by maintaining separation of church and state in local policies and by opposing implementation of Christian Nationalist policy goals.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Team of the New Jersey Synod shall provide educational resources and be available to assist congregations in their educational and advocacy efforts.

Submitted by: Rev. Serena Rice, NJ Synod Anti-Racism Team

Date: March 17, 2026

Source notes:

¹ Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry, *Taking America Back for God*.

² Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry, *Taking America Back for God*.

³ Public Religion Research Institute. <https://prri.org/research/mapping-christian-nationalism-across-the-50-states-insights-from-prri-2025-american-values-atlas/>

⁴ Margo Kitts, *Proud Boys, Nationalism, and Religion*, accessed through academic publishing.org.

⁵ ELCA Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life.

⁶ John 6:15; Matthew 22:38; Leviticus 19:34; Matthew 19:21; Isaiah 58:6; Micah 6:8.

RESOLUCIÓN I
SÍNODO DE NUEVA JERSEY, ELCA

UNA RESOLUCIÓN PARA FOMENTAR LA EDUCACIÓN DE LAS CONGREGACIONES Y LA ACCIÓN PARA Oponerse A LA INFLUENCIA DEL NACIONALISMO CRISTIANO EN LA FE Y LA POLÍTICA.

CONSIDERANDO que la ideología política del Nacionalismo Cristiano idealiza y aboga por una fusión del cristianismo con la vida cívica estadounidense, apropiándose de símbolos sagrados, interpretación de la historia, valores y políticas, insistiendo en que siempre han reflejado y deben seguir reflejando una interpretación estrecha de las enseñanzas cristianas; y

CONSIDERANDO que el Nacionalismo Cristiano busca colocar el poder político solo en manos de los nacionalistas cristianos, a expensas de extranjeros, inmigrantes e incluso estadounidenses nacidos en el país que no se consideran pertenecientes por razones raciales y religiosas; y

CONSIDERANDO que aproximadamente tres de cada diez estadounidenses son simpatizantes de la cosmovisión y la agenda del Nacionalismo Cristiano; y

CONSIDERANDO que, aunque muchas expresiones del Nacionalismo Cristiano no son abiertamente violentas, en su forma más extrema está estrechamente asociado con grupos de odio violentos; y

CONSIDERANDO que la Constitución de los Estados Unidos no es una carta religiosa, sino que establece un sistema secular que no favorece a ningún grupo entre las religiones; y

CONSIDERANDO que el evangelio de Jesucristo no llama a la acumulación de poder gubernamental en Su nombre, sino que llama a aquellos que fielmente siguen a Cristo a amar al prójimo, dar la bienvenida a los extranjeros entre nosotros, cuidar a los necesitados y desamparados, liberar a los oprimidos por sistemas de inequidad, y tratar a todos con justicia y misericordia; y

CONSIDERANDO que la asociación de esta ideología nacionalista con el lenguaje y los símbolos del cristianismo coloca la responsabilidad firmemente en la iglesia de Cristo para rechazar públicamente esta ideología como herejía y trabajar para oponerse a su influencia tanto en la iglesia como en la esfera pública.

AHORA, POR LO TANTO, SE RESUELVE que se aliente a todas las congregaciones del Sínodo de Nueva Jersey a ofrecer oportunidades educativas que exploren los errores teológicos y los peligros políticos contenidos dentro del movimiento del Nacionalismo Cristiano.

Y SE RESUELVE ADEMÁS que se aliente a todas las congregaciones del Sínodo de Nueva

Jersey a buscar abogar a nivel local (juntas escolares y deliberaciones de consejos municipales) para proteger el testimonio del evangelio mediante el mantenimiento de la separación de la iglesia y el estado en las políticas locales y al oponerse a la implementación de los objetivos de políticas del Nacionalismo Cristiano.

Y SE RESUELVE ADEMÁS que el Equipo Antirracismo del Sínodo de Nueva Jersey proporcione recursos educativos y esté disponible para asistir a las congregaciones en sus esfuerzos educativos y de defensa.

Presentado por el Rev. Serena Rice, del Sínodo Equipo Antirracismo NJ

Fecha: 17 de marzo de 2026

Notas de la fuente:

1. Andrew Whitehead y Samuel Perry, *Taking America Back for God*.
2. Andrew Whitehead y Samuel Perry, *Taking America Back for God*.
3. Instituto de Investigación de Religión Pública.
<https://prri.org/research/mapping-christian-nationalism-across-the-50-states-insights-from-prris-2025-american-values-atlas/>
4. Margo Kitts, *Proud Boys, Nationalism, and Religion*, accesado a través de academic publishing.org.
5. Declaración social de la ELCA sobre Fe y Vida Cívica.
6. Juan 6:15; Mateo 22:38; Levítico 19:34; Mateo 19:21; Isaías 58:6; Miqueas 6:8.

A Memorial Requesting a Social Message on Artificial Intelligence (AI)¹

WHEREAS the rapid adoption of Artificial Intelligence brings up perplexing questions within congregations, seminaries, and the pulpit, and

WHEREAS AI is often described as set to have the same level of impact on the world as the Industrial Revolution, the invention of the internet or the printing press, or even the discovery of fire, and

WHEREAS AI promoters promise that it will be a tool that sorts through the near infinite amount of information produced in our world, creates more efficient offices and electrical grids, and widens access to healthcare and education, and

WHEREAS AI skeptics warn that it will leave large percentages of young people unemployed, cause irreparably damage to the environment, create unintended cultural chaos, give cover for illegal activities, and make decisions without responsibility and have authority without accountability, and

WHEREAS this Church has wise things to say about truth, vocation, personhood, and idolatry, be it

RESOLVED that the New Jersey Synod memorializes the 2028 Churchwide Assembly to authorize the creation of a Social Message on AI to be produced at or before the Churchwide Assembly in 2031.

Submitted by Pastor Chris Halverson, Spruce Run Lutheran Church, Glen Gardner, NJ

¹ Here are two definitions of AI from the ELCA's Corporate Social Responsibility Issue Paper on AI: "AI is generally considered to be a discipline of computer science that is aimed at developing machines and systems that can carry out tasks considered to require human intelligence."

"AI refers to the theory and development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as speech recognition, decision-making, and pattern identification. AI encompasses a broad spectrum of capabilities, from mimicking human actions and thought processes to acting and thinking rationally."

MEMORIAL I

Un Memorial que Solicita un Mensaje Social sobre la Inteligencia Artificial (IA)

CONSIDERANDO que la rápida adopción de la Inteligencia Artificial plantea preguntas desconcertantes dentro de las congregaciones, seminarios y el púlpito, y

CONSIDERANDO que a menudo se describe que la IA tendrá el mismo nivel de impacto en el mundo que la Revolución Industrial, la invención de internet o la imprenta, o incluso el descubrimiento del fuego, y

CONSIDERANDO que los promotores de la IA prometen que será una herramienta que clasificará la casi infinita cantidad de información producida en nuestro mundo, creará oficinas y redes eléctricas más eficientes, y ampliará el acceso a la atención médica y la educación, y

CONSIDERANDO que los escépticos de la IA advierten que dejará a grandes porcentajes de jóvenes desempleados, causará daños irreparables al medio ambiente, creará caos cultural no intencionado, encubrirá actividades ilegales y tomará decisiones sin responsabilidad y tendrá autoridad sin rendición de cuentas, y

CONSIDERANDO que esta Iglesia tiene asuntos sabios que decir sobre la verdad, la vocación, la personalidad y la idolatría, sea

RESUELTO que el Sínodo de Nueva Jersey solicite a la Asamblea de toda la Iglesia de 2028 que autorice la creación de un Mensaje Social sobre la IA que se produzca en o antes de la Asamblea de toda la Iglesia en 2031.

Presentado por el Pastor Chris Halverson, Iglesia Luterana Spruce Run, Glen Gardner, NJ

Aquí hay dos definiciones de IA del Documento sobre Responsabilidad Social Corporativa de la ELCA sobre la IA:

"La IA se considera generalmente como una disciplina de la informática que tiene como objetivo desarrollar máquinas y sistemas que puedan realizar tareas consideradas como requerir inteligencia humana."

"La IA se refiere a la teoría y el desarrollo de sistemas informáticos que pueden realizar tareas que típicamente requieren inteligencia humana, como el reconocimiento del habla, la toma de decisiones y la identificación de patrones. La IA abarca un amplio espectro de capacidades, desde imitar acciones y procesos de pensamiento humano hasta actuar y pensar de manera racional."

Proposed 2027 Spending Plan for the New Jersey Synod Assembly

February 1, 2027 through January 31, 2028

This proposed plan provides financial support for carrying out the synod's missions and objectives. This plan was developed in collaboration with the Fiscal Management, Administration and Property Committee. The Synod Council recommends approval of this plan by the Synod Assembly.

Income Supporting the Spending Plan is primarily Mission Support gifts from congregations. Distributions from restricted funds, interest income and other gifts supply the remainder.

	2025 Actual		2026 Approved Spending Plan		2027 Proposed Spending Plan	
Mission Support	1,723,597	85%	1,600,000	70%	1,700,000	68%
Restricted Fund draws		10%		26%		27%
Restricted support for Mission Development	113,083		172,167		257,000	
OSEF support for Bishop's Office	-		180,000		200,000	
Health Benefit Assistance	-		10,000		-	
United Seminary Endowment support	10,000		40,000		40,000	
Advocacy Ministry Support	-		35,000		35,000	
Endowment support for Candidacy	28,795		45,000		43,390	
Summer Programs Support	-		20,000		20,000	
Stewardship support	-		1,000		1,000	
Endowment for Staff Housing Support	-		6,000		6,000	
Endowment to Support Cross Roads	26,000		38,500		38,500	
Wurffel Administrative Support	-		8,000		-	
Mission Development - Property Manager	32,069		25,900		32,900	
ELCA support to the NJ Synod		< 1%		< 1%		< 1%
ELCA support for Mission Director	10,000		10,000		9,500	
Other income		4%		4%		4%
Individual Contribution Support	1,908		-		-	
Special Giving Operations Support	1,200		-		-	
Thrivent Choice	891		1,200		1,200	
Interest Income - All Banks	84,367		80,000		100,000	
Total Income	2,031,910		2,272,767		2,484,490	

Mission Support is the congregational gifts to support the work of our synod. Mission Support provided 85% of the spending plan income in 2025 and is forecast to provide 68% of income in 2027.

Restricted Fund draws are the money released from restricted funds to support synod programs. This money supports congregations and missions within New Jersey, the United Lutheran seminary, pastoral candidates, Cross Roads Camp, programs supporting church pastors, stewardship programming, the Bishop's Office, and management of the synod properties. The approval of this spending plan explicitly approves spending this money from these restricted funds.

Other Income includes personal gifts to the synod, Thrivent Choice dollars and interest income.

Ministries and Expenditures

Section 1: ELCA Churchwide and Ministry Partners supports partners in ministry within New Jersey, within our ELCA region, and across the churchwide organization. Half of Mission Support gifts received by the synod are given to ELCA churchwide.

	2025 Actual	2026 Approved Spending Plan	2027 Proposed Spending Plan
ELCA Share of Mission Support	861,798	800,000	850,000
United Lutheran Seminary	100,000	130,000	130,000
Cross Roads Outdoor Ministries	37,500	50,000	50,000
Lutheran Archives Center	2,500	5,000	5,000
New Jersey Coalition of Religious Leaders	1,000	35,000	35,000
Seafarers and International House	2,000	5,000	5,000
	1,004,798	1,025,000	1,075,000
Percentage of spending plan	49%	45%	43%

The increase in support for mission partners in 2027 is the 50% of Mission Support shared with the ELCA. \$100,000 increased Mission Support on the first page means \$50,000 more in ELCA support here.

43% of the proposed spending plan supports ELCA Churchwide and our Ministry Partners.

Section 2. Strengthening Congregations focuses on the processes and programs that strengthen congregational capabilities and facilitate collaborative ministries across our synod.

	2025 Actual	2026 Approved Spending Plan	2027 Proposed Spending Plan
Strengthening			
Assistants to the Bishop and staff support	258,706.51	333,083	342,410
Youth Ministry programs	36,599.37	56,500	56,500
Synod Continuing Education	-	2,000	2,000
Discipling and Witness Team	-	1,000	1,000
Justice and Peace Mission Teams	526.04	1,000	1,000
Synod Communications	6,504.92	9,000	9,000
Stewardship Resource Development	1,000.00	1,000	1,000
	303,337	403,583	412,910
Percentage of spending plan	15%	18%	17%

Strengthening Congregations within the New Jersey Synod includes:

- Ministering to congregations and pastors in need
- Assistants to the bishop and staff personnel supporting congregations
- Youth Ministry leadership, programs and grants
- Discipleship and Witness Mission Team
- Justice and Peace Mission Team
- Synod-wide communications
- Development and production of congregational Stewardship resources

Section 3: Outreach Supporting Congregations

	2025 Actual	2026 Approved Spending Plan	2027 Proposed Spending Plan
Congregational Vitality	115,071	172,167	257,000
Percentage of spending plan	6%	8%	10%

Outreach Supporting Congregations enables new expressions of ministry in our Synod, assists the start-up of new missions and revitalizes existing congregations. During 2025, the synod financially supported

- Bridge of Peace Community Church in Camden
- Christus Lutheran Church in Camden
- Santa Isabel Lutheran Church in Elizabeth
- Trinity Lutheran Church in Jersey City
- Emanuel Lutheran Church in New Brunswick
- Casa Unida Luterana in Pennsauken
- St. John Lutheran Church in Passaic
- St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Secaucus
- Camino de Vida in Summit
- St Bartholomew Lutheran Church in Trenton
- Santa Isabel Ministry to Immigrants in Detention
- Tapestry Collective in Montclair

In 2027 we plan to increase support for strategic Lutheran ministries in New Jersey and to fund a new Mobile Latine Ministry.

Section 4: Office of the Bishop guides and supports congregations and clergy, funds synodical and legal processes, and nurtures church leadership.

	2025 Actual	2026 Approved Spending Plan	2027 Proposed Spending Plan
The Bishop and staff support	256,732	293,436	327,323
Candidacy and seminarians	28,795	45,000	43,390
Pastoral supply coordination	4,091	4,213	4,435
First Call Pastoral support	10,965	7,725	12,000
Ecumenical and interfaith programs	-	1,300	1,300
Synod ordinations and special events	2,413	3,000	3,000
Synod Assembly and Assembly reserve	12,500	12,500	12,500
	315,495	367,175	403,949
Percentage of spending plan	16%	16%	16%

The Office of the Bishop leads and administers:

- Congregational vacancy and call processes
- Seminarian formation and identifying clergy candidates
- Guidance, training and help for all first-call pastors
- Interaction and dialogue with other religious and ministry partner organizations
- Synod gatherings such as the Synod Assembly and Ministerium Day
- Pastoral supply for congregations

16% of the proposed synod spending plan supports the Office of the Bishop.

Section 5: Oversight and Planning for the Sake of the Mission provides the administrative resources to run the synod organization including travel for staff and volunteers, maintaining the synod properties, managing finances, and satisfying legal and regulatory obligations.

	2025 Actual	2026 Approved Spending Plan	2027 Proposed Spending Plan
Staff support	117,694	119,684	141,470
Staff Travel Expenses	19,132	18,300	20,300
Volunteers Meeting & Travel	2,482	6,000	5,000
Audit, Legal and Insurance	31,975	40,000	38,000
Property management	80,883	76,230	84,546
Supplies and services	41,043	43,800	43,500
	293,209	304,013	332,816
Percentage of spending plan	14%	13%	13%

Summary

The proposed Spending Plan supports the New Jersey Synod missions and programs, balancing expenses with expected revenues.

	2025 Actual	2026 Approved Spending Plan	2027 Proposed Spending Plan
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,031,910	2,271,938	2,481,674
TOTAL INCOME	2,031,910	2,272,767	2,484,490
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	- < 2%	829 < 1%	2,816 < 1%

The Synod Council recommends **THAT the Synod Assembly approve the proposed 2027 Spending Plan.**

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

2026 MISSION DISTRICT ELECTIONS

SYNOD COUNCIL - (To be ratified by the Synod Assembly):

Mission District Elections

Delaware - No Election

Gateway - **Lay Female or Gender Non-binary:**

Patty Espejo, Grace, Bayonne, Second Term ending 2029

Clergy

Rev. Margarette Oiji, First and Tapestry Collective, Montclair – Term Ending 2027

Middle - **Lay Female or Gender Non-binary**

Gail Cruz, Grace, Perth Amboy

Northern - **Clergy**

Rev. Lisa Holliday, Trinity, Bogota, Second Term ending 2029

Shore - **Clergy**

Rev. Pamela Werner, St. James, Folsom, term ending 2029

Western No Election

2026 MISSION DISTRICT ELECTION

- ✓ *Congregation has completed the ELCA Parochial Report Part A*
- * *Congregation contributes Mission Support sharing*
- ~ *Rostered Leader submitted Annual Report to Bishop Bartholomew*

**SYNOD COUNCIL – Terms Ending 2029
Elections Complete (To be ratified by Synod Assembly)**



GAIL A. CRUZ
*Grace, Perth Amboy ✓ **
Raritan Cluster, Middle District



PATRICIA A. ESPEJO
*Grace, Bayonne ✓ **
Hudson Cluster, Gateway District



~ **THE REV. LISA S. HOLLIDAY**
*Pastor, Trinity, Bogota ✓ **
Meadowlands Cluster, Northern District



~ **THE REV. MARGARETTE OUJI**
*Pastor, First and Tapestry Collective, Montclair ✓ **
Union-Essex Cluster, Gateway District



~ **THE REV. PAMELA J. WERNER**
*Pastor, St. James, Folsom ✓ **
South Shore Cluster, Shore District