



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

About

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region.

We are church

We are what God has made us – people whom God has created by grace to live in union with Jesus Christ and has prepared to live faithful, fruitful lives by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:8-10). In Jesus Christ, God has reconciled us to God and to each other. As we gather around word and sacraments, this life in Christ is what defines, shapes and guides us as a community of faith, the church.

By God's grace we can and do live confidently and generously in this community of faith and in service of others, amid the mysteries and paradoxes of this life in Christ – including our human limitations and failings, and the ambiguities, uncertainties and suffering that we experience.

We are Lutheran

We are a church that walks by faith, trusting God's promise in the gospel and knowing that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. We proclaim Jesus Christ crucified and raised from the dead for the life of the world. As the apostle Paul wrote (Romans 1:16-17), and we echo in our Constitution (2.02), we are not ashamed of this gospel ministry because it is God's power for saving all people who trust the God who makes these promises. "We are to fear and love God, so, that we do not despise preaching or God's word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear it and learn it" (Small Catechism). God's word, specifically God's promise in Jesus Christ, creates this liberated, confident and generous faith. God gives the Holy Spirit who uses gospel proclamation – in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations – to create and sustain this faith. As a Lutheran church, we give central place to this gospel message in our ministry.

We understand to be Lutheran is to be ecumenical – committed to the oneness to which God calls the world in the saving gift of Jesus Christ, recognizing the brokenness of the church in history and the call of God to heal this disunity.

We are church together

Just as God has joined us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in baptism, we are also joined to others, not only in the ELCA and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), but in all communities of Christian faith around the world. In Christ none of us lives in isolation from others. Jesus is our peace and has broken down the walls that divide us – walls of judgment, hatred, condemnation and violence – and has made us into one, new human community (Ephesians 2:14-15). This spiritual communion depends only on God's mercy that comes to us in the word and sacraments. That alone is enough for unity, and so we yearn for this communion with all Christians at the Lord's table.

Because God gives us our unity in Christ, we are able to see and respect the diversity within Christ's body. We receive it as a gift and embrace it, rather than treating it as a threat or a problem to be solved (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). We respect and honor the diversity of histories, traditions, cultures, languages and experiences among us in the ELCA and in the larger Christian community of faith. We seek full participation of all in the life and work of this church and will strenuously avoid the culture of any one group becoming the norm for all in the ELCA. And we strive to address the ways that racism, sexism, classism and other forms of injustice limit participation and harm people, communities and the whole body of Christ. In all these relationships the ELCA serves reconciliation and healing with other Christians, while repentantly acknowledging its failings and wrongs, trusting in God's forgiving mercy.

We are church for the sake of the world

Christ has freed us from sin and death, even from ourselves, so that we can live as ministers of reconciliation in loving and generous service of our neighbors (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). In Jesus Christ, all of life – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Freed by the transformative life of Christ, we support ELCA members as they give themselves freely in transforming service with the neighbor. Through a wide range of daily vocations and ministries, we nurture faith, build alliances and gather resources for a healed, reconciled and just world. As church together, we faithfully strive to participate in God's reconciling work, which prioritizes disenfranchised, vulnerable and displaced people in our communities and the world. We discover and explore our vocations in relation to God through education and moral deliberation. We bear witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ through dialogue and collaboration with ecumenical partners and with other faiths. In all these ministries, God's generosity flows through us into the life of the world.

Congregations

ELCA congregations are centers for evangelical mission, where people of faith celebrate, learn and connect with one another and others around the world through service and weekly worship. We are a church that belongs to Christ. There is a place for you among our 8,900 congregations across the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace. For us as the ELCA, this faith comes through the good news of Jesus Christ and gives us the freedom and the courage to wonder, discover and boldly participate in what God is up to in the world.

Synods

We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world — together.

The ELCA's 65 synods vary greatly in size, geography, membership, staffing and program. Our smallest synod has 30 congregations — the largest nearly 300. The synods are grouped into nine regions, which are points of connection for them and the churchwide organization. Synods unite the work of congregations within their areas, serve as regional support, and guide pastoral and other staff candidates. In order to strengthen the relationship between synod leaders and the churchwide office, many churchwide teams relate to and support the work of the synods.

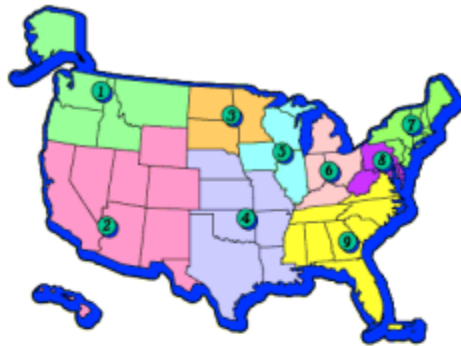
Churchwide Organization

Since our beginning in 1988, the ELCA has been one church body organized in three expressions — congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. Each expression has its particular functions but all three together share a common mission of doing God's work in the world and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. Together, they ensure a solid foundation of leadership, active involvement in communities, opportunities for dialogue and diverse perspectives, creative partnerships, and support for members and ministries of the ELCA.

The churchwide organization is based out of the Lutheran Center in Chicago and functions with the ELCA's 65 synods and nearly 10,000 congregations across the 50 states, Caribbean and U.S. Virgin Islands. The churchwide organization's work and functions are guided by the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council and four elected officers. Its staff and elected officers work at the Lutheran Center and in other locations around the world serving as administrators, advisors, conveners, partners and resource people for the ELCA and its ministries.

The ELCA also nurtures important connections with Lutheran, ecumenical and interfaith partners, and related organizations. We work alongside 27 colleges and universities related to the ELCA, 7 seminaries, more than 2,000 schools and early childhood education centers, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social service agencies, and other agencies and institutions across the country and throughout the world. The work God calls us to do in the world is never done alone or in isolation, and the churchwide organization plays a key role in developing and supporting a culture of interdependence, diversity and common mission across all expressions of the ELCA and its partners.

ELCA Synod Relations



Regions, Synods and Bishops

- 1A Alaska – Shelley Wickstrom
 - 1B Northwest Washington – Shelley Bryan Wee
 - 1C Southwestern Washington – Richard Jaech
 - 1D Northwest Intermountain – Kristen Kuempel
 - 1E Oregon – Laurie Larson Caesar
 - 1F Montana – Laurie Jungling
 - 2A Sierra Pacific – Mark Holmerud
 - 2B Southwest California – Murray Finck, interim bishop
 - 2C Pacifica – Andrew Taylor
 - 2D Grand Canyon – Deborah Hutterer
 - 2E Rocky Mountain – James Gonia
 - 3A Western North Dakota – Craig Schweitzer
 - 3B Eastern North Dakota – Tessa Moon Leiseth
 - 3C South Dakota – Constanze Hagmaier
 - 3D Northwestern Minnesota – William Tesch
 - 3E Northeastern Minnesota – Amy Odgren
 - 3F Southwestern Minnesota – Jon Anderson
 - 3G Minneapolis Area – Ann Svenningsen
 - 3H Saint Paul Area – Patricia Lull
 - 3I Southeastern Minnesota – Regina Hassanally
 - 4A Nebraska – Brian Maas
 - 4B Central States – Susan Candea
 - 4C Arkansas-Oklahoma – Michael Girlinghouse
 - 4D Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana – Erik Gronberg
 - 4E Southwestern Texas – Sue Briner
 - 4F Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast – Michael Rinehart
 - 5A Metropolitan Chicago – Yehiel Curry
 - 5B Northern Illinois – Jeffrey Clements
 - 5C Central/Southern Illinois – S. John Roth
 - 5D Southeastern Iowa – Amy Current
 - 5E Western Iowa – Lorna Halaas
 - 5F Northeastern Iowa – Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, interim bishop
 - 5G Northern Great Lakes – Katherine Finegan
 - 5H Northwest Synod of Wisconsin – Laurie Skow-Anderson
 - 5I East-Central Synod of Wisconsin – Anne Edison-Albright
 - 5J Greater Milwaukee – Paul Erickson
 - 5K South-Central Synod of Wisconsin – Joy Mortensen-Wiebe
 - 5L La Crosse Area – Chris Boerger, interim bishop
 - 6A Southeast Michigan – Donald Kreiss
 - 6B North/West Lower Michigan – Craig Satterlee
 - 6C Indiana-Kentucky – William Gafkjen
 - 6D Northwestern Ohio – Daniel Beaudoin
 - 6E Northeastern Ohio – Laura Barbins
 - 6F Southern Ohio – Suzanne Dillahunt
 - 7A New Jersey – Tracie Bartholomew
 - 7B New England – James Hazelwood
 - 7C Metro New York – Paul Egensteiner
 - 7D Upstate New York – John Macholz
 - 7E NE Pennsylvania – Christopher deForest
 - 7F Southeastern Pennsylvania – Patricia Davenport
 - 7G Slovak Zion – Wilma Kucharek
 - 8A Northwestern Pennsylvania – Michael Lozano
 - 8B Southwestern Pennsylvania – Kurt Kusserow
 - 8C Allegheny – Michael Rhyne
 - 8D Lower Susquehanna – James Dunlop
 - 8E Upper Susquehanna – Barbara Collins
 - 8F Delaware-Maryland – William Gohl
 - 8G Metropolitan Washington, DC – Leila Ortiz
 - 8H West Virginia-Western Maryland – Matthew Riegel
 - 9A Virginia – Robert Humphrey
 - 9B North Carolina – Timothy Smith
 - 9C South Carolina – Ginny Aebischer
 - 9D Southeastern – Kevin Strickland
 - 9E Florida-Bahamas – Pedro Suarez
 - 9F Caribbean – Idalia Negron-Caamaño
- Presiding Bishop – Elizabeth Eaton
Secretary – Sue Rothmeyer