



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

OUR MISSION:

The Lower Susquehanna Synod is where the hungry are fed as we have been fed by Christ.



A Reconciling in Christ Synod

MISSION SNAPSHOT

As members of the ELCA, we believe that we are freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. With our hands, we do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name throughout the world.

Our Synod Welcomes All

In the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America we feed the hungry as we have been fed by Christ. In 2016, our synod became a Reconciling in Christ Synod. We welcome with full participation and inclusion all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Jesus Christ.

Our Welcome Statement was adopted by Synod Council in May of 2016 and amended February of 2017.

WHO WE ARE

We are a church whose unity is in Jesus Christ, who gathers us around word and water, wine and bread. Because we are grounded in God's love and forgiveness, we are equipped to live and serve here and now, in the world, with all its complexities, tensions and ambiguities. *The following missional priorities were established at our 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 Synod Assemblies and by our Synod Council's Mission Committee, Synod Council, and 2018 Bishop's Convocation:*

- **Equipping Leaders:** With Jesus as the model for our faith, we are committed to equipping leaders who understand, practice and live the Gospel.
- **Encouraging Cooperation:** Jointly rediscovering the power of the Gospel, we are nurturing life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world.
- **Engaging in New Mission:** For the sake of God's mission, we are growing discipling communities that encourage each other to discover and use our gifts in service to the world.

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD RENEWAL

In 2018, as synod together, we listened in various settings to what you value about our life and work together and identified areas God is calling us into deeper service. The following priorities were identified by 2018 LSS Assembly voting members:

- Deepen the faith of existing lay leadership and inspire new disciples to nurture vitality in all congregations.
- Deepen the faith lives of our youngest members in their first third of life.
- Strengthen our leaders to proclaim God's Word with passion and power.
- Teach about the relationship between Jesus, justice, and the Christian life.
- Develop new models for congregational life together that help us nurture deeper connections with God, one another, and the world.
- Start new missions that re-root us in gospel-starved communities.

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD QUICK FACTS

- **We are a church that believes Jesus is God's "Yes" to us.**
Our lives can be a "Yes" to others. The "Yes" of Jesus Christ compels and empowers us to be open and accessible within any community, within any context.
- **We are a church that is deeply rooted — and always being made new.**
Our roots are in Scripture, tradition and the Lutheran Confessions, as well as in the vibrant communities and rich histories of our congregations. These roots are an ongoing source of nourishment; they enable us to be a church, guided by the Holy Spirit, that is both resilient and always being reformed.
- **We are a synod with a 2018 synodical budget of \$2.7 million.**
41% of our budget supports external ministries (including ELCA Churchwide Ministries, United Lutheran Seminary, Lutheran Camping Corporation Outdoor Ministries, Lutheran Planned Giving, and Campus Ministry), 18% is designated for congregational renewal and new mission, and the remaining 41% of our synodical budget is allocated for general operations.
- **We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world — together.**
As one of the top World Hunger financial supporters in the ELCA, our synod feeds others as we have been fed by Christ globally and locally through our various feeding ministries.
- **We have approximately 86,000 baptized members in 233 worshipping communities,** which include congregations in rural, suburban and urban communities. We also have three synodically authorized worshipping communities (South Sudanese Worshipping Community, Communities of Hope, Peter's Porch). According to congregation reports submitted to the ELCA, in 2017, there were 20,371 active participants in the life of the congregations of our synod with an average of 88 in worship per congregation.
- **We are a synod with called leadership.**
We have 404 Ministers of Word and Sacrament, of which 194 are retired, and 39 Ministers of Word and Service, of which, 21 are retired.
- **We are a synod with 15% of our congregations in formal renewal initiatives,** and others preparing to begin this fall, our synod's R3 initiative, reFORM+ reNEW+ reVISION, aims to help individuals and congregations explore how God is already at work in our mission fields.
- **We are a church that is a catalyst, convener and bridge builder.**
Our faith calls us to see the world as interdependent. We work across denominations, faiths, organizations and sectors, locally and globally and share a common vision to uphold human dignity. We partner with various agencies and institutions on the territory of our synod. Locally we are part of the Lutheran Anglican Roman Catholic (LARC) Covenant and the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and work closely with denominations with which we have full communion relationships. Globally, we partner with the Konde Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.
- **We are a synod with an office located in Harrisburg, PA.**
Our bishop's staff includes three assistants to the bishop, a Director for Mission Interpretation, a Director of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry, a Director of Evangelical Mission for New Mission, a Director of Evangelical Mission for Congregational Renewal, and five support staff. Serving alongside our staff are vice president, treasurer and secretary.

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD, ELCA

900 S. Arlington Avenue, Suite 220B, Harrisburg, PA 17109

(717) 652-1852 * www.lss-elca.org