Leaving a Legacy

In the last year, two congregations in the C/SIS have concluded their local ministries. The synod is grateful that at the end of their lives, they desired to further the ministry of the church through gifts to a number of ministries, including final gifts of mission support — beyond their usual annual giving — and more than $100,000 to assist in starting new communities of faith.

Designated Giving in 2022 — $198,453

In addition to the synod budget, the C/SIS shares in ministry through other designated giving. These are gifts that originate from individuals, congregations, and interest from dedicated accounts for ministry through our synod. In 2022, designated giving included these ministries:

- Companion Synods — $21,846
- ELCA Disaster Relief — $24,969
- ELCA Fund for Leaders — $23,309
- ELCA Global Mission Support — $15,227
- ELCA Missionary Support — $17,324
- ELCA World Hunger — $40,263
- Lutheran World Relief — $3,805
- Partner Ministries — $51,710

Turning Over a New Leaf

After Roger French joined St. Mark's in Washington (Illinois) about 10 years ago, he began getting more involved in congregational life. While he had volunteered to serve as the back-up council recorder, it took a couple of invitations before he accepted the regular council recorder position, taking minutes at council meetings, having voice but no vote.

When a crisis arose among the council, the call committee, and eventually the entire congregation, tensions rose, and people left the congregation, leaving vacancies on the council and call committee and a lot of hurt and grief. Roger was surprised when he was asked to serve as the new council president, something he "never dreamed he would be asked to do." But he accepted the role to see the congregation heal and move forward.

While he felt encouraged in his role by those in the congregation, he discovered that the synod staff was also a tremendous source of support, advice, and encouragement, walking with him each step of the way. He was amazed to receive Bishop Roth's cell number and by the quick response from him and other synod staff. It went against the narrative he had been told. Because of turnover on the council and call committee, Pastor Ken Sandlin and Pastor Maureen Stein met with the council and call committee to review the call process, essentially repeating meetings they had done previously, and taking time to make recommendations for revising St. Mark's ministry site profile. All of this culminated in a successful call process. Roger is grateful for the all the time and support synod staff gave during the many months of crisis and transition, and for the encouragement that St. Mark's would get through the difficult time. Because of the love and support of the synod, represented by synod staff, Roger feels confident that St. Mark's will continue to heal. Leadership is striving to be more transparent, and people are stepping up into new roles.

Because of your congregation's generosity in providing mission support to the synod, the bishop and synod staff are available to congregations facing challenges and difficulties so they can experience renewed vitality and ministry, congregations that face challenges and difficulties can rely on the bishop and synod staff for support and guidance that translates into new vitality and renewed sense of mission and ministry.

Thank you for your mission support!

Central/Southern Illinois Synod

Narrative Budget for 2024

This narrative budget highlights the scope of synod ministry and how mission support dollars carry out Jesus' ministry on a wider scale. The ministry of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, which is tended to primarily by the bishop and synod staff, the synod council, and committees, may not be very visible to most people. But the generosity of congregations in providing mission support to the synod and the ELCA churchwide organization has a great impact on congregations, their leaders, and their ministry. Mission support, the financial contributions congregations forward to the synod, is one way congregations combine their efforts to care for one another's congregations and the greater church's ministry. Together we nurture growing disciples' faith and service, and strengthen the witness of the whole church through ecumenical and global church relationships.

$1,230,000 — 2024 projected mission support from congregations
$1,265,523 — 2024 projected outflow

Recipes for the Soul

Dr. Jillian M. Scherer, an active member of Trinity in Olney, lives out her baptismal vocation as a loving and supportive wife and mother of two children, as a private practice physician, and as a beloved child of God who nurtures her faith through worship, prayer, and education. Dr. Jillian loves to multitask and listens to books and podcasts while exercising. Listening to podcasts sparked her interest to know more about the authors and the topics discussed, and what began as a wellness plan for health transformed into a hunger to know more about the Holy Scriptures and God at work in the world. While isolated during the pandemic, Dr. Jillian began taking advantage of adult educational opportunities online. With a hunger to learn more about Lutheran theology, she began taking C/SIS Adult Faith Formation classes to prepare for Synod-Authorized Ministry. In doing so, her hunger to know more about God was quenched by engaging with other Christians in the program. Then she began to receive opportunities to provide lay leadership in area churches as a guest preacher. While she never imagined that she would engage in public speaking opportunities involving faith, she finds great joy in doing so.

As a member of Trinity, Dr. Jillian was invited to manage the kitchen during the synod-wide mission trip weekend in September 2022. While being in the kitchen and in charge of meals for a large group was not something Dr. Jillian believed she was gifted at, her heart nudged her to serve in this new capacity, and she knew she needed to make gathering around the table fun for herself and the others. Her recipe was "mix and mingle" as she led everyone to engage across the generations in "minute to win it games" and open mic joke telling. Joy, laughter, and excitement filled the air; young and old were sifted together as they nourished their bodies in food and table fellowship after a long day of service. Dr. Jillian saw God at work in the engagement of people of all ages having a great time serving, worshipping, and sharing in meals together.

Dr. Jillian's faith life has been enriched from her leadership in the mission weekend and in the exploration of her curiosity about who God is and how God works in the world. Dr. Jillian shared, "The more I learn about God through synod opportunities, the less God is confined to the four walls of a church building." Dr. Jillian believes her faith continues to be strengthened through what she is learning in adult faith formation courses about who God is and what God does. "God's love is more expansive than I once believed." Dr. Jillian professes that the health of the church is shown not simply in it's confessions but also in actions taken. She is grateful for the synod's faith formation opportunities and for the people that she continues to meet along her faith journey.

Ministry through the ELCA
$541,200 (44%)

The Central/Southern Illinois Synod designates a portion of mission support to carry out ministry through the churchwide organization, which partners with synods, other Lutheran churches across the world, and ecumenical church bodies to strengthen the witness and work of the global church. The proposed budget for 2024 decreases that portion to 44%, down from 50%; this is $73,843 less than the actual mission support forwarded to the ELCA Churchwide in 2022. Mission support dollars return to synods in a number of ways. Our synod congregations have received grants for stewardship education, feeding ministries, innovation, and new start exploration. The churchwide organization also fully funds the Director for Evangelical Mission position.

Providing Pastoral Ministry
$163,511 (21%)

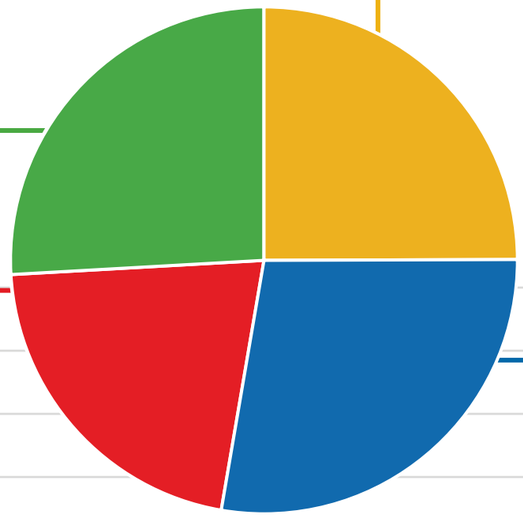
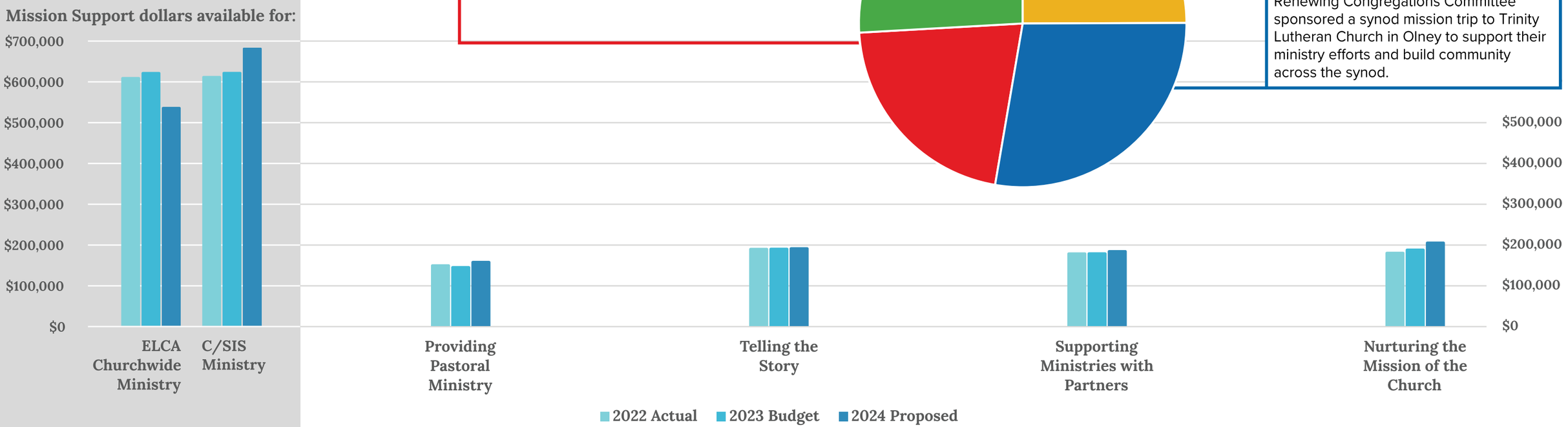
This includes pastoral care for congregations and rostered ministers in times of celebration and times of crisis, as well as providing for Word and Sacrament ministry in congregations during transition and vacancies. The Bishop and synod staff accompany and guide congregations through the call process from the time of a pastor's departure until calls are extended to new pastors and deacons. This involves meetings with councils and call committees, reading ministry site profiles and rostered minister profiles, as well as arranging for interim pastors and synod-authorized ministry appointments to congregations. As a way to connect with congregations and provide support to pastors in recent years, the synod staff has provided a Sunday video sermon every couple of months.

Telling the Story
$193,895 (26%)

As a synod we are called to witness to God's love in Christ for the world in the way we present ourselves as congregations and as a synod. In 2024, $193,895 (26%) is dedicated to equipping the synod staff and congregations to effectively communicate who we are and what we are about. Our full-time Director of Communications not only produces a twice-monthly synod newsletter but also works with congregations on their own websites and video communications. Our entire synod staff is crucial for gathering and disseminating information about ministry as a synod and across the synod.

Supporting Ministries with Partners
$183,614 (25%)

One-fourth of our synod budget supports ministries with partners. As a synod we cannot and do not wish to do everything ourselves. Our synod budget extends the scope of our ministry by financially contributing to the ministry of other organizations like seminaries, campus ministries at universities, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center, and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). Additionally, the Bishop cultivates connections with ecumenical partners and sits on the boards of Lutheran Campus Ministry of Illinois and LSSI.

Nurturing the Mission of the Church
$207,801 (28%)

About 28% of our synod's spending next year is expected to nurture the mission of the church. The Synod Council, committees, and working groups equip congregations for ministry and provide opportunities for disciples to grow in faith. With greater online access to adult faith formation courses, we have seen increased participation from around the synod. Online workshops for congregation presidents, treasurers, and other council members equip leaders to serve the body of Christ. The synod candidacy committee accompanies and approves candidates to serve as pastors and deacons in the ELCA. New pastors continue their formation through First Call Theological Education, a series of required learning retreats for pastors in their first three years of ministry. Last year synod staff produced resources and videos to encourage congregations to raise up people to serve as pastors, deacons, and synod-authorized ministers, and the New and Renewing Congregations Committee sponsored a synod mission trip to Trinity Lutheran Church in Olney to support their ministry efforts and build community across the synod.