



NORTH/WEST LOWER MICHIGAN SYNOD

E V A N G E L I C A L L U T H E R A N C H U R C H I N A M E R I C A

North/West Lower MI Synod Council Meets on February 7, 2026

The N/W Lower MI Synod Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met via Zoom on Saturday, February 7, 2026. This council serves as the synod's board of directors and interim legislative authority between meetings of a synod assembly.

This meeting included the following activities and actions:

- Welcomed two new voting members to [Synod Council](#):
 - **Ms. Teague Meckstroth** (Cross of Christ - Petoskey) - filling the unexpired Synod Council Young Adult term (Female – Lay or Rostered) ending August 31, 2027 vacated by Pr. Kate Van Valkenburg as she moved to the synod staff.
 - **Ms. Anna Scheck** (Grace – Hastings) – filling a new (additional) Synod Council Young Adult term (Male or Female – Lay or Rostered) ending August 31, 2028.
- Approved Synod Council Minutes from December 2, 2025. Received Executive Committee Minutes from December 2, 2025.
- Received updated constitutions from two congregations: Messiah – Bay City and St. Luke's – Grand Rapids.
- Appointed the Rev. Timothy Jahn (Messiah, Bay City) as chair of the NWLM Synod Worship Committee.
- Continued planning for the **2026 Synod Assembly** on May 15-16, 2026 at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Portage, MI:
 - Appointed the following Synod Assembly Committee Chairs:
 - Nominations: Rev. Kari Fast (Trinity, Grand Rapids)
 - Elections: David Marquette (St. Peter, Battle Creek)
 - Credentials: Rev. Kevin O'Bryan (Zion, Freeland)
 - Reference & Resolutions: Rev. Jonathan Reid (Immanuel, Suttons Bay)
 - Approved the 2026 Synod Assembly Offerings, including a planned “special” offering of pennies, to be divided evenly between “Samaritas – New American Services” and “Lutheran Disaster Response – Ukraine”.
 - Moved proposed “2027 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines” (including a recommended 3.0% increase to Rostered Minister salary models) forward to the 2026 Synod Assembly for consideration.

- Approved the 2027 Synod Assembly to take place May 14-15, 2027 at Trinity – Midland. Discussed possible locations for future Synod Assemblies (starting in 2028), including Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Traverse City.
- Previous decisions & actions related to the 2026 Synod Assembly:
 - Approved the theme **“Connected”** (aligned to Revelation 5:13) along with the high-level agenda and other initial logistics
 - The first “pre-assembly” day on Friday (from approximately 1 PM to 8:30 PM) will include workshops, a keynote speaker, dinner with celebration of synod anniversaries and will conclude with Evening Prayer.
 - The second “business” day on Saturday (from approximately 9 AM to 3 PM) will serve as the official “Synod Assembly” business meeting to address required business, elections, consideration of memorials and/or resolutions, etc. The day will begin with worship with Eucharist and lunch will be provided.
 - Approved Synod Assembly deadlines and registration fees:
 - February 17, 2026: “Early Bird” Registration Begins - \$50/day for voting members and visitors and \$25/day for each display table leader.
 - March 20, 2026: “Early Bird” Registration Ends – registrations continue at a rate of \$75/day for voting members and visitors and \$25/day for display table leaders.
 - March 20, 2026: Proposed Resolutions, Memorials, and Nominations Due.
 - March 27, 2026: Materials and Reports for the Assembly Book Due.
 - April 24, 2026: Final Registrations End.
 - Additional Notes:
 - Voting members, visitors and display table leaders must register in advance using the online registration form. There will be no partial day or walk-in registrations at the event.
 - All registrations include planned meals and refreshments.
- Received the Report of the Treasurer, including:
 - Review of financial statements for the first 11 months (through December 2025) of the 2025-26 fiscal year (ending 1/31/26). Income and spending continue to be in line with expectations based on the approved budget and planned grant and ministry support activities.
 - Continued discussion to finalize a proposed 2027-28 (FYE 01/31/28) budget for consideration by the 2026 Synod Assembly.
- Next Synod Council Meetings:
 - Financial Training: Sat., February 28, 2026 at University – East Lansing and Zoom
 - Executive Committee: Tues., March 31, 2026 at noon via Zoom
 - Synod Council: Sat., April 11, 2026 at 10 AM via Zoom