



TOGETHER INTO 2023



Bishop Jim Gonja (right), joins in a blessing of thee newly elected bishops for the Western Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church: (front L to R) Rev. Cedrick Bridgeforth, Rev. Dottie Escobedo-Frank, Rev. Carlo A. Rapanut.

Better Together in ministry

RMS congregations continue to proclaim the love and grace of Christ, even as they are challenged. A diminishing pool of available candidates and interim pastors is an opportunity to be more imaginative. In the Denver area, two congregations just miles apart formed a joint Parish Ministry taking advantage of the strengths and uniqueness of each congregation to be a place of grace and welcome in their neighborhoods. In New Mexico, two congregations 70 miles apart agreed to partner in ministry, sharing a pastor and discovering other ways to partner despite the distance. While the pastor leads worship in one congregation, worship is live-streamed to the opposite congregation. These congregations are *better together*.

8

ORDINATIONS

These new pastors and deacons are a among our 20 First Call ministers throughout the synod.

17

INSTALLATIONS

New pastors or deacons were welcomed to serve in a new ministry context.

19

CANDIDATES

They are supported by the RMS Candidacy Committee as they prepare for ministry.

NEXT FAITHFUL STEP CAMPAIGN EXCEEDS \$1.13 MILLION

We are extraordinarily grateful for gifts of over \$1.13 million in support of these initiatives:

RACIAL JUSTICE TITHE

provided for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainings, and a Racial Justice training event is planned for April 2023.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

has touched the lives of more than 200 people in fifteen ELCA synods and other denominations.

3E LILLY GRANT

and matching funds have provided over \$600,000 in grants in support of 123 ministers' financial health and wellness.

MESSIAH MOUNTAIN RETREAT CENTER

completed a beautiful and critical renovation of the Lodge.

THE LUTHERAN CENTER

replaced the parking lot, and improvements to the facility will happen soon.

Church in the world

We are the heart and voice of Christ, alive through our interface with the world.

The **Rocky Mountain Synod Disaster Response Team** has been meeting biweekly, then monthly, since the Marshall Fire in Boulder County (CO) in December 2021, coordinating our synodical response in partnership with two of our most-impacted congregations. The team secured a three-year grant from Lutheran Disaster Response to support the Chrysalis Initiative at Christ the Servant, Louisville, CO, a ministry to share the love of God in service to fire survivors and the surrounding community

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry – New Mexico (LAM-NM) mobilized the denominational leaders of the NM Conference of Churches as well as 500 members from 48 congregations to sign a letter in support of key legislation to cap storefront loans at 36%.

"**Thirsting For Water**" took place in September, a joint event of the **RMS Hunger Team**, **Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Colorado**, and the **RMS Creation Care Team** around the intersection of drought, water, food, energy, and public policy in our Western context, activating our Christian discipleship towards a vision of holistic wellbeing.

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Colorado (LAM-CO) participated in a successful campaign that resulted in voter approval of free meals for public school students across Colorado after Congressional pandemic-era funding ended.

The **RMS Global Church Network** is exploring new ways to connect RMS ministries with the work of missionaries and the global church.

Faith Formation

Youth and Adults attended the **ELCA Youth Summit** in November, as a catalyst to forming a new Synod Youth Council. For the first time in many years, an **RMS Youth Gathering** is planned for February 18-20, 2023 in Denver at Augustana Lutheran Church. And the **Faith Formation Network** gathers each month for support and relationship-building.

The Rocky Mountain Synod supports nine different **campus ministries** over four states. Of the nine, five are at church based sites, two are independent, and two are partly connected to a congregation. Between the nine sites, hundreds of students participate in community activities such as meals, time at local museums and other attractions, and worship opportunities.

STRENGTHENING CONGREGATIONS

Latino Basic Competency Training is supporting the development of new Latino Ministry Partnerships.

Excellence in Leadership (EiL) is transformative. Said one participant: *"EiL transfigured my ministry--and my life. I learned language for how to be an adaptive leader and was part of a small group that helped me practice that before and during the early days of the pandemic. I was challenged to do self-reflection in a safe way; I learned how leadership theories could weave together into a transformational tapestry."*

3E Vital Right-Shaped Ministry (VRSM) has engaged 27 congregations in developing Values, Mission, and Vision. VRSM helps congregations increase their vitality and to "right-shape" for the present and future.

VRSM provided **Excellence in Leadership (EiL)** grants to nearly 30 congregational groups from the Rocky Mountain Synod.

82 congregations have engaged in five different **Stewardship for All Seasons** programs provided by **3E**.