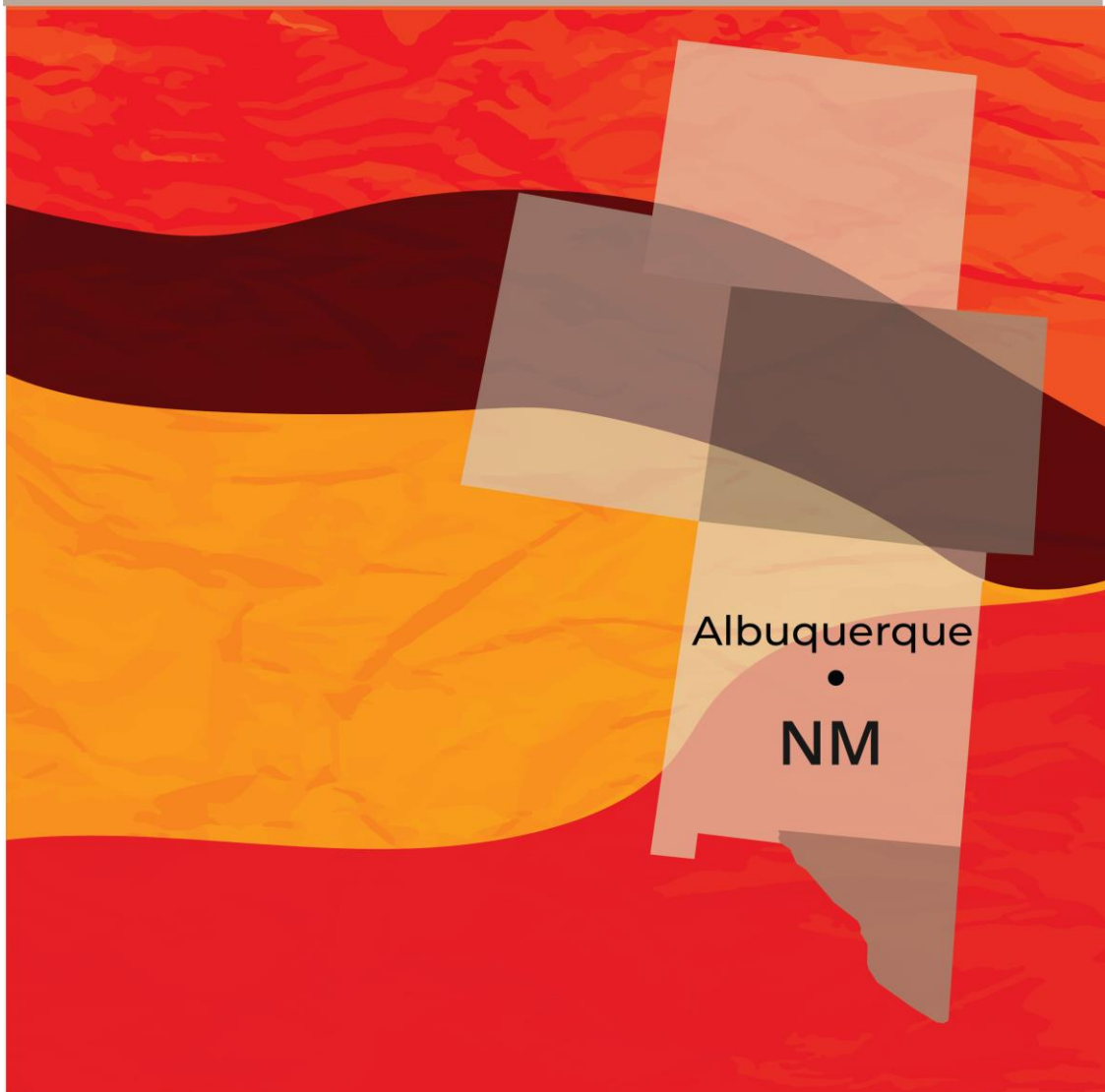


2025 Assembly Handbook

May 22–24, 2025 | [Albuquerque, NM](#)

[Embassy Suites by Hilton & Convention Center](#)

Dios está aquí.
God is Here.



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THE ASSEMBLY: “Dios está aquí. God is Here.”

Through sharing the Good News of God’s presence, we will worship God, learn together and pray for the future of our ministries.

What to Bring

- Internet capable mobile device (smart phone or tablet) is required for voting
- Mobile device, computer etc for accessing documents, websites
- Water bottle
- Bible & journal
- Comfortable clothing for warm weather and walking shoes

Parking

- Parking is \$8/day upon arrival at the Embassy Suites for both visitors and registered guests at the hotel

ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE

Thursday, May 22

| Time | Event |
|------------|---|
| 11:00 a.m. | Exhibit set up begins |
| 12:00 p.m. | Registration Opens—Embassy Suites, Convention Center Entrance |
| | Voter Help Desk Open |
| 2:00 p.m. | Assembly is Convened in the Assembly Hall (Sandia Ballroom) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening of Assembly<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Land Acknowledgement○ Bishop’s Opening Reflections• Opening Business<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Credentials Report, Rules of Procedure, and Program○ Reference and Counsel – Memorials & Resolutions○ Introductions○ Nominations for Committees• <u>Dave Jarvis</u> (Executive Director of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp) Retirement Blessing• Synod Council Officer Reports |
| 4:15 p.m. | Break |
| 4:30 p.m. | Workshop 1 <i>*See Workshop Descriptions or HERE</i> |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural Ministries and Communities: Reflecting <i>the Richness and Unity of the Body of Christ</i> (<i>Sierra I</i>) • Synod Budget Overview (<i>Sierra II</i>) • Equipping Lay Leaders for Ministry, with, without, or alongside a rostered leader (<i>Sierra III</i>) • At a Crossroads (<i>Ocotillo II</i>) |
| 5:30 p.m. | Hotel Cocktail hour (One complimentary drink card per hotel guest, valid for two drinks daily) |
| 5:45 p.m. | Dinner (<i>Sandia Ballroom</i>) |
| 7:30 p.m. | Opening Worship at <u>St. Paul's Lutheran Church</u> (offsite) 1100 Indian School Rd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102 (<i>limited transportation available, carpooling is encouraged</i>) |

Friday, May 23

| Time | Event |
|----------------|---|
| 6:00–9:00 a.m. | Breakfast (complimentary to hotel guests in atrium) |
| 8:30 a.m. | Morning Prayer - Campus Ministry, Pastor Rhonda Newby-Torres (<i>Sandia Ballroom</i>) |
| 8:50 a.m. | Plenary 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop's Report & Vice President's Report • Resolutions & Memorials • Voting • Holy Stories featuring Emmy Baylis (Youth Synod Council Rep/Churchwide Rep), Pastor Rhonda Newby–Torres and Luis De Vargas (NM Campus Ministry, Luther House) |
| 11:00 a.m. | Break (Sponsored by Clergy Financial Resources) |
| 11:15 a.m. | Workshop 2 <i>*See Workshop Descriptions or HERE</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission for Renewing the Lutheran Church (<i>Sierra I</i>) • 2025–2026 Synod Budget Overview (<i>Sierra II</i>) • Congregational Ministry Team (<i>Sierra III</i>) • Pastoral Leadership Transitions (<i>Ocotillo II</i>) |
| 12:00 p.m. | Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest Lunches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Madagascar Companion Synod Update (<i>Sierra I</i>) ◦ World Hunger Network (<i>Sierra II</i>) ◦ Rocky Mountain Synod Women's Organization (RMSWO) (<i>Sierra III</i>) ◦ Rocky Mountain Synod Women's Organization (RMSWO) (<i>Ocotillo II</i>) |
| 1:30 p.m. | Plenary 3 (<i>Sandia Ballroom</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements • Election Report/Follow–up Election • Consideration of Budget, Questions, and then Budget Vote |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 2:30 p.m. | <p><u>My Father's House</u>, a documentary that tells the story of how a community center that celebrates diversity came to be.</p> <p><i>Pastor Marcel Narucki, Co-Founder & Director of Multi-Faith & Community Affairs and <u>Village Exchange Center</u></i></p> |
| 3:30 p.m. | Break |
| 3:45 p.m. | RMS Mission and Vision (Bp Meghan) (Sandia Ballroom) |
| 4:45 p.m. | Churchwide report with Mary Campbell, Program Director <u>AMMPARO</u> |
| 5:30 p.m. | Hotel Cocktail hour (<i>One complimentary drink card per hotel guest, valid for two drinks daily</i>) |
| 5:45 p.m. | Dinner (Sandia Ballroom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruth Hoffman, Council VP Farewell and thank you for Ruth's years of service in the Synod. Rostered Leader Anniversary Celebration A word from <u>Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains</u> (LFSRM) President & CEO, James Horan |
| 7:00 p.m. | <p><u>Choose Your ABQ Adventure</u> (off-site) <i>(limited transportation available, carpooling is encouraged)</i></p> <p><i>*Sign-up <u>HERE</u></i> <i>*Each activity has a capacity limit, so early selection is encouraged to help hosts plan.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beer & Hymns (<u>St. Luke Lutheran Church</u>) Sip & Paint (<u>All Saints Lutheran Church</u>) Labyrinth Presentation & Experience (<u>St. Paul's Lutheran Church</u>) Campus Ministry—Open house at the <u>Luther House</u> <u>Evening Bosque Stroll</u> <u>Explore Albuquerque</u> (on your own) |

Saturday, May 24

| Time | Event |
|-----------------|--|
| 7:00–10:30 a.m. | Breakfast (complimentary to hotel guests in atrium) |
| 7:00 a.m. | Morning Prayer (Outside hotel), led by Pastor Kate Davidson of <u>Lord of the Mountains</u> in Dillon, CO. |
| 9:30 a.m. | Plenary 4 (Sandia Ballroom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Voting time, if needed. God is here! Guided takeaways What three areas will you focus on for congregational health, leadership, and outreach? How can Synod assist in these efforts? |
| 11:00 a.m. | Closing Worship & Sending |

ASSEMBLY DETAILS

Offerings

- Assembly Offerings will benefit Betela Seminary, Campus Ministry and Camping Ministries
- Cash, check, and [online donations](#) are all welcome—Thank you for your generosity!
- Checks should be made payable to “Rocky Mountain Synod” Scan the QR, select “Synod Assembly Offering” from the Tithely menu and enter your information.



- Never scanned a QR code? Aim your phone camera at the code and tap on the link that appears on your screen.

Synod Stories

Our 2025 theme is “Dios está aquí. God is here.” Share how you've experienced God's presence in your life or ministry, and if you'd like, a photo that accompanies your story.

**With your permission, stories and photos may be featured at the Assembly and in Synod communications.*

Click [HERE](#) to share your story

ABQ Adventures

(Signups Needed)

Get ready for a Friday evening of community, creativity, and connection at the **Friday Night ABQ Adventure**—a highlight of the Synod Assembly designed to bring participants together in fun and meaningful ways, all hosted by local ELCA

congregations in Albuquerque! *(Limited transportation available, carpooling is encouraged)*

**Each activity has a capacity limit, so early selection is encouraged to help hosts plan.*

[SIGN UP HERE](#)



Adventure Options Include:

- 🎨 **Sip & Paint** at All Saints Lutheran Church **(30 limit)**
Create your own Sandia Mountains masterpiece under the guidance of a local artist, with food and drink included.
- 🎵 **Beer & Hymns / Open Mic Night** at St. Luke's Lutheran Church **(150 limit)**
A spirited evening of music, song, and community with local musicians and an open mic—refreshments provided.
- 📷 **Bosque Trail Sunset Stroll** **(50+ limit)**
Enjoy the beauty of Albuquerque's nature with a guided walk along the scenic Paseo del Bosque Trail.
- 🕯️ **An Evening at the Labyrinth** at St. Paul Lutheran Church **(20 limit)**
A reflective outdoor experience blending spirituality, movement, and mindfulness under candlelight. Led by Pastor Kate Schlechter
- ☕ **Campus Ministry Open House** at Luther House **(25 limit)**
S'mores, music, and fellowship hosted by the UNM/NM Tech Campus Ministry—featuring a brass band!
- **Explore [Old Town/Sawmill District](#) (on your own)**

Workshop Descriptions

This year's Synod Assembly offers a variety of workshops to equip leaders, members, and ministry teams. Topics include congregations in transition, leadership, the synod budget and more. Whether you're experienced or new, these sessions will inspire ideas, build connections, and strengthen your ministry. **Workshop blocks will be offered twice, one on Thursday, May 22, 4:30pm and another block on Friday May 23, 11:15am.** Assembly Workshops include:

Thursday May 22, 4:30pm

Multicultural Ministries and Communities: Reflecting the Richness and Unity of the Body of Christ | **Sierra I**

Led by Pastor Quirino Cornejo and Vicar Margarita Reyes

Explore how ministries and congregations can truly become more Culturally Diverse & Inclusive by engaging in Cross–Cultural & Racial Equity Learning.

2025–2026 Synod Budget Overview | Sierra II

Led by Lisa Guthrie & Jon Johnson

Preview and ask questions about the proposed two-year Synod budget ahead of Assembly approval.

Equipping Lay Leaders for Ministry | Sierra III

Led by Pastors Diana Linden-Johnson & Katie Emery

Discover tools to strengthen lay leadership with or without a rostered leader—covering pastoral skills, SAM, and leadership programs.

At a Crossroad | Ocotillo I

Led by Pastor Sara Wirth

Explore four pathways for congregations in discernment: revitalization, partnerships/mergers, maintenance, and holy closure.

Friday May 23, 11:15am

Commission for Renewing the Lutheran Church | Sierra I

Led by Ralie Deffenbaugh

Hear updates and recommendations from the [Commission on renewing the Lutheran Church](#), from a Rocky Mountain Synod representative.

2025–2026 Synod Budget Overview | Sierra II

Led by Lisa Guthrie & Jon Johnson

Preview and ask questions about the proposed two-year Synod budget ahead of Assembly approval.

Congregational Ministries Team | Sierra III

Led by Pastors Travis Norton & Andrea Kragerud

Learn how congregations are creatively engaging God’s mission and revitalizing ministry in diverse contexts.

Pastoral Leadership Transitions | Ocotillo I

Led by Pastors Diana Linden-Johnson, Sara Wirth & Katie Emery

Learn about leadership transition options including the call process, TEEM, and Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAM).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following information will assist voting members in the discharge of responsibility. The material obtained from the [Constitution and Bylaws of the Rocky Mountain Synod](#) is identified by the symbol: "RMSC."

- [READ MORE](#)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The *Glossary of Terms* is a quick reference guide to key [ELCA](#) terminology, helping users—especially newcomers and leaders—understand the church's structure, roles, and processes. It supports informed participation in the [ELCA's](#) mission by clarifying terms related to governance, leadership, regions, education, and assemblies.

- [READ MORE](#)

RULES OF PROCEDURE

The *Rules of Procedure* guide the Synod Assembly's business to ensure order, fairness, and efficiency. Based on the RMS Constitution and Robert's Rules of Order, they define voting rights, speaking privileges, and participation. Voting members include elected lay representatives, rostered ministers, and designated individuals, with emphasis on diversity. Non-voting participants may have voice, including church officials and ministry reps. The bishop presides, with other roles handled by synod officers. The rules also cover elections, proposals, voting, and debate time limits.

- [READ MORE](#)

Additional Information for voting: Red and green cards are provided in your assembly packet.

- Please hold **ONE** card high as you are voting **in favor (Green)** or **opposed (Red)** an assembly action.
- Do not lift the two cards together, as that is visible from the rear of the hall and gives a false vote impression.
- Assembly Voting Members will use a cell phone or tablet for elections with the BallotClick voting application.
- As part of registration, each participant will upload the application and login to ensure that everyone is ready to vote.

- Nominations from the floor will be received. You can nominate yourself, and no second is required for nominations. Prior to coming to the microphone, please ensure that the individual being nominated is willing to serve.

Voting Member Responsibilities

1. Study the pre-assembly materials.
2. Attend all sessions of the assembly.
3. Participate in all legislative actions. Vote. Be present in the Assembly Hall during all voting. If an issue is not clear, ask the chair for clarification.
4. Share the information and actions of the assembly with your congregation!
5. Teach your congregation what you learned and help your congregation to know about the work of ministries beyond your congregation.

2025 Nominations

We will be electing one Synod Council member and several committee positions. Click the link below to learn more about the positions and nominations.

- [VIEW AVAILABLE COUNCIL & COMMITTEE POSITIONS AND 2025 NOMINEES](#)

MEMORIAL AND RESOLUTIONS

In the [ELCA](#), memorials and resolutions are formal ways for individuals, congregations, or synods to address church issues. They are discussed and voted on at synod assemblies or larger gatherings.

- **Memorials:** Petitions requesting changes in church policy, doctrine, or practice, usually directed to higher bodies like the Churchwide Assembly.
- **Resolutions:** Statements expressing a synod's stance on an issue, often to show support, concern, or solidarity, without requesting action.

These documents give the synod a voice in shaping the church's direction on key issues.

We have **ONE MEMORIAL** and **THREE RESOLUTIONS**.

- [READ MORE ABOUT EACH MEMORIAL AND RESOLUTION](#)

SYNOD BUDGET INFORMATION

RMS Budget information & documents:

- The [RMS](#) 2025/2026 Proposed Two-year Budget is available [HERE](#)
- The Year-end Financial Report as of 1/31/25 is available [HERE](#)
- The 2024 Congregational Mission Support is available [HERE](#)

A pre-Assembly Financial Meeting will be offered via ZOOM. ALL Assembly Voters are encouraged to attend. Two in-person opportunities “Workshops” (see Synod Assembly schedule) will be offered.

- **Thursday, May 15, 6:00 p.m.**
 - **ZOOM MEETING ROOM**
[Join Zoom Meeting](#)
Meeting ID: 494 372 9991
Passcode: Lutheran
One tap mobile: +17207072699, 4943729991# US (Denver)
+17193594580, 4943729991# US

SYNOD COUNCIL

- Bishop Meghan Johnson Aelabouni
- Ruth Hoffman (Vice President)
- Sharen Kamp (Secretary)
- Lisa Guthrie (Treasurer)
- Pr Gary Sandberg (Metro South)
- Pr Matthew Weber (Boulder/Broomfield)
- Pr Samm Melton–Hill (At-large Rostered)
- Pr Tim Orlowski (North NM)
- Jeff Fairfax North CO
- Ray Ferry (At-Large Lay Male)
- Pr Carrie Baylis (SE CO)
- Pr Debra Jimenez (Utah)
- Cynthia Bailey (Young Adult)
- Lynette Schurdevin (At-Large Lay Female)
- Ken Maldonado (Metro West)
- Emmy Baylis (Youth)
- Pr Jeff Swanson (Border)
- Pr Joshua Bruns (Wyoming)
- Pr Chelsea Achterberg (Metro East)
- Person of color/primary language other than English:
Andraïne Sinaga
- Person of color/primary language other than English:
Laura Garcia Villalpando

Current Synod Council composition:
Lay=11; Rostered=10

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP STAFF

- **Bishop Meghan Johnston Aelabouni**
- **Pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey**, *Special Assistant for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*
- **Father Quirino Cornejo**, Synod Minister for *Director for Evangelical Mission–South & Synod Minister for Multicultural Witness*
- **Pastor Chris Davis**, Synod Minister for *Director for Evangelical Mission–North and Synod Minister for Generosity*
- **Pastor Diana Linden-Johnson**, - Synod Minister for Rostered and Lay Leadership
- **Pastor Katie Emery**, Temporary *Synod Minister for Transition Support*
- **Jon Johnson**, Finance Director and Human Resources
- **Kurt Rager**, Director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, New Mexico
- **Deacon Mary Stoneback**, Synod Minister for Strategic Communications & Events
- **Yvonne Wilken**, Administrator
- **Pastor Sara Wirth**, *Synod Minister for Transitions and Healthy Ministries*