



Northeastern Iowa Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Synod Profile

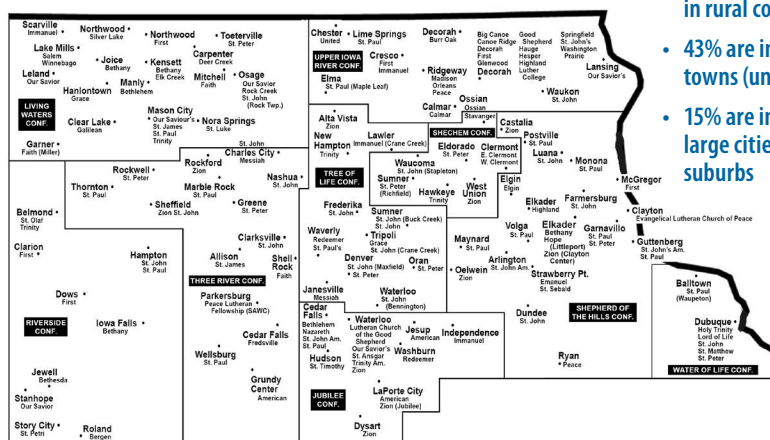
A resource to use for the bishop election at the 2020 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly on June 12-14, 2020.

WHO WE ARE

The Northeastern Iowa Synod of the ELCA is made up of 145 congregations, one synodically authorized worshiping community and more than 69,278 baptized members walking together to strengthen the witness and service of the whole church.

In addition, one ELCA seminary and two ELCA-affiliated colleges are located within the Northeastern Iowa Synod, as well as two outdoor Bible camp ministries and a campus ministry.

We are organized into nine conferences serving 24 counties in Northeastern Iowa.



SIZE OF THE COMMUNITIES WE LIVE IN:

- 42% of congregations are in rural communities
- 43% are in small cities or towns (under 10,000)
- 15% are in medium to large cities and their suburbs

CURRENT ISSUES

At its most recent assembly, the Northeastern Iowa Synod adopted resolutions for minimum salary guidelines, proposed mission goals, and support for refugee children.

It also adopted resolutions to encourage congregations to post and/or publish Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's pastoral letter dated May 30, 2019, on the topic of abortion and to hold public conversations regarding the contents and conclusions of the ELCA Social Statement Abortion (1991); and memorialized the Churchwide Assembly to adopt the social statement *Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action*.

An ongoing barrier to achieving our mission goals has been our struggle with matters of sexuality and sexual misconduct of our clergy.

WHAT WE DO

The Northeastern Iowa Synod makes Christ known by strengthening the witness and service of the whole church.

WE SUPPORT AND DEVELOP LEADERS

- **Candidacy** supports and mentors candidates who have been called to serve in a rostered ministry.
- **H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Endowment** provides scholarships for seminary students.
- **First Call Theological Education** supports pastors during the first three years of their first calls.
- **Colleague Groups** are formed around common interests, such as first call pastors, geographical location, senior pastors, and interim ministries.
- **Fall Theological Conference** provides rostered ministers and spouses time to relax, rejuvenate and be refreshed with their colleagues.

- **Day of Renewal** is an annual mini-retreat that gives rostered ministers a day to step away from Lenten schedules and responsibilities.

Living Waters Retreat

Centers offer rostered leaders and their families a place to renew physically, emotionally and spiritually.

- **Youth Ministry Network** works to develop and support professional youth leaders in congregations.

- **"Bread for the Day"** is given to all rostered and congregational leadership in the call process.

ROSTERED MINISTERS SYNOD STATISTICS

Word & Sacrament: 215

- Active: 104
- Retired: 103
- On leave from call: 8

Word & Service: 13

- Active parish: 3
- Retired: 9
- On leave from call: 1

Congregations are supported through consultations, the call process, educational programs, cooperative ministries, assemblies, mission projects, networking opportunities, youth programs, online support, disaster response, and synod-wide events.

- 41% very small (1-50)
- 41% small (51-150)
- 15% medium (151-350) suburbs

- 55% (ELCA 54%) saw a decline of at least 3%
- 28% (ELCA 29%) had stable attendance
- 17% (ELCA 17%) had an increase of at least 3%

Congregations work interdependently. By sharing gifts and talents and tapping available resources, congregations can creatively assist each other in their ministries.

- **Disaster Response** offers resources to help congregations mitigate and respond to disasters.
- **Hunger** works toward the goal that no man, woman or child shall go hungry.
- **Generosity** supports and strengthens congregations and leaders in their life of discipleship and stewardship.
- **Companion Synod – Hungary** builds relationships between the Northeastern Iowa Synod and the Lutheran Church in Hungary.
- **Companion Synod – Namibia** builds relationships between the Northeastern Iowa Synod and the Lutheran Church in Namibia.
- **Men's Ministry** develops men's ministries through workshops, retreats and resources.
- **AMMPARO Welcoming** stands in solidarity with immigrants and refugees.
- **Racial Justice Advocacy** combats racism in congregations and communities.

- ## OTHER MINISTRIES:

- **Women of the ELCA** is a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- **Barnabas Uplift** is a partnership between the Northeastern Iowa Synod and congregations to lift Iowans out of poverty.
- **S.A.F.E. Ministry Team** focuses on education, prevention and healing of sexual abuse within congregations.
- **WIYLD** – Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership Discipling Event.
- **Abdelkader Project** founded to promote cultural literacy and respectful engagement with other faiths.
- **Cultivating Vitality** is a two-year partnership between congregations and the Northeastern Iowa Synod to develop leadership, deepen discipleship and strengthen outreach.

The Synod Profile Committee developed a survey of four questions. The survey was used to expand participation in the discernment process and provide data, in addition to information collected at a synod gathering.

The survey was made available online or on

paper to attendees of the June 14-16, 2019, Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly and to any member who requested it online. There were 108 respondents out of 330 attendees. Responses were accepted from June 14 to July 25, 2019. As we look to the future, survey results will guide our discernment and begin the transition with a new bishop.

- One-third of congregations feel good about thriving.
- Two-thirds of congregations don't feel it is possible to thrive in five years.
- Key leadership qualities needed in the next bishop are a strong visionary, a caring and personable approach, and a strong communicator.
- The new bishop should expect support, a willingness to collaborate and openness to explore new ways to be church together from congregations and rostered and lay leaders of this synod.
- The respondents would like the new bishop to initiate conversations about the changing nature of the ELCA, rural ministries, justice and ecumenical partnerships.

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