

# **SYNOD MINISTRY PROFILE**

**FOR THE 2023 BISHOP ELECTION**



**NORTHWEST INTERMOUNTAIN SYNOD OF THE ELCA**

245 E 13TH AVE, #A  
SPOKANE, WA 99202-1114

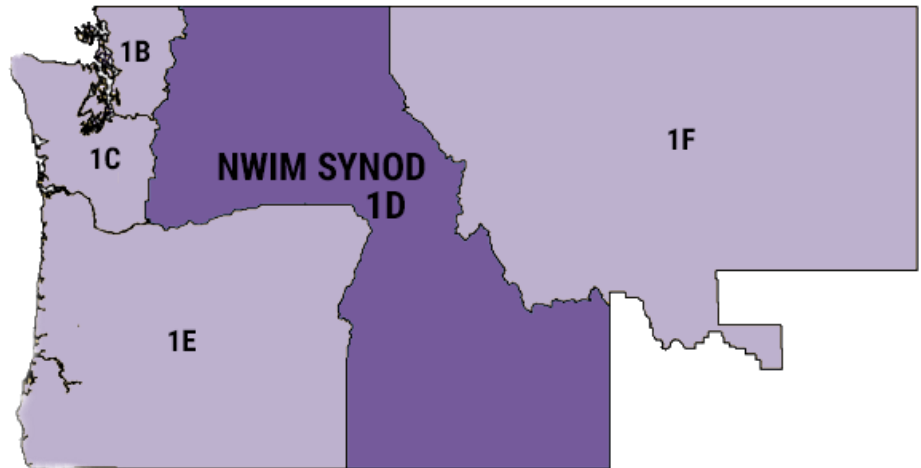
509-838-9871  
[WWW.NWIMSYNOD.ORG](http://WWW.NWIMSYNOD.ORG)

# WHO WE ARE



## Region 1

- 1A Alaska
- 1B Northwest Washington
- 1C Southwestern Washington
- 1D Northwest Intermountain
- 1E Oregon
- 1F Montana



## NWIM Synod

- Word and Sacrament Roster - 160
- Word and Service Roster - 9
- 18,000 + baptized members
- Congregations/Ministry sites - 89
- Outdoor Ministry - 3 sites

- Lutherhaven
- Luther Heights
- Holden Village

### Campus Ministry - 3 sites

- Eastern WA University
- University of Idaho
- WA State University

## Size of congregations:

1-50 members:	10
51-150:	38
151-350:	29
351-500:	4
500-1000:	5
1000 +:	2

**Our 2022 synod budget is \$801,001,** supports four full-time staff other than the Bishop, and administers two Endowment Funds.

## Ministry Partners

- Lutheran Campus Ministries at:
- Eastern Washington University. <https://www.elmateastern.org/>
- University of Idaho <https://www.facebook.com/lcm.uidaho/>
- Washington State University <https://www.facebook.com/lutherancampusministrywsu/>
- International Companion Synod: Ulanga-Kilombero Diocese in Tanzania <https://nwimsynod.org/globalmission-news>
- Holden Village: <https://www.holdenvillage.org/>
- Luther Heights Bible Camp: <https://lutherheights.org/>
- Lutherhaven Ministries : <https://www.lutherhaven.com/>
- Grunewald Guild: <https://grunewaldguild.com/>
- Lutheran Community Services (Spokane, Kennewick, Boise): <https://lcsnw.org/>
- Faith Action Network: <https://fanwa.org/>
- Our synod relates to PLU, Luther Seminary, and PLTS



# KEY SURVEY RESULTS

## *What We Heard From Our Synod*

The Bishop Election Team conducted an online survey in the fall of 2022, to gather information about the missional vision of the members of our synod. The results are intended to help those discerning a call to Bishop as well as to guide the voting members of the Synod Assembly. What follows is a generalized summary, with responses in order of frequency. [Complete results are available on the synod website here.](#)

### **Primary hopes for synod in next six years:**

- Expand engagement and integration with and within our congregations, clusters, leaders and the synod
- Increase accessibility, communication and contact with Bishop and synod staff
- Improve efficiency of synod processes
- Emphasize social issues
- Advance lay leadership
- Highlight Lutheran theology

### **With regard to local congregation/ministry which aspects of ministry are most compelling or challenging:**

- Local community aid and involvement
- Congregational programs - worship/faith formation/support/youth
- Declining or aging membership and facilities
- Stewardship/finances
- Transitioning from covid disruption

### **Most important attributes and abilities of synod's next Bishop**

(top three selected from list of ten):

- Strategic leadership/vision (81% of respondents ranked this in the top three)
- Pastoral care
- Preaching/proclaiming the Gospel

### **What should be top priority(ies) of the new Bishop?**

- Strengthening relationships with and among pastors, lay leaders, congregations, clusters, communities
- Articulating mission/vision/strategy to guide and unify congregations
- Providing tools, training and resources
- Representing the Gospel, Lutheran theology and the Christian church to our world

### **Other things that respondents wanted to share with candidates discerning this potential call: (most frequent responses)**

- Trust God
- Prioritize
- Relate
- Pastor our pastors



# BEING BISHOP

## *So What's it Like?*

Sometimes folks ask me if I enjoy being bishop, a role I've held for the past six years here in the Greater Milwaukee Synod. I usually say that "enjoy" is not the best verb, since while there are certainly some enjoyable aspects to this call, sometimes, it's just plain hard. I will say, however, that I love this call.

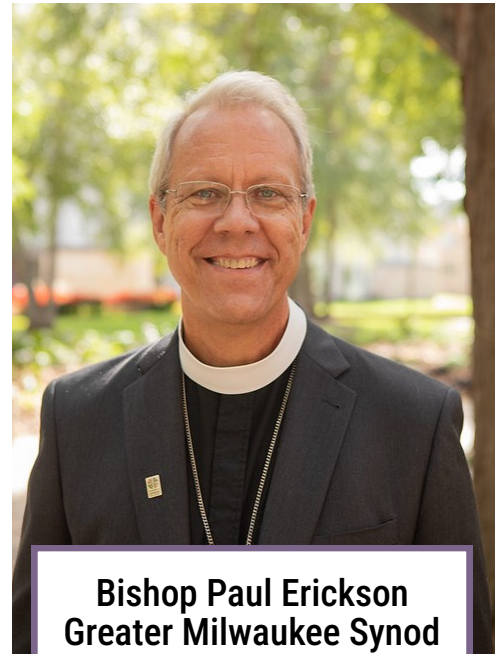
Our governing documents say that the bishop serves as the synod's pastor, providing pastoral care and leadership for the congregations, pastors, and deacons in the synod. There are lots of regional and personal variations on how to do this, just as there are lots of ways to fulfill the call to be a congregation's pastor. There are, however, a few characteristics that will serve someone well in this call, regardless of who they are or where they serve.

First, bishops need to be rooted and grounded and shaped by love. I know, this is true for all Christians, but it's especially true for bishops. Love for the Gospel, God's timeless message of reconciling and transforming grace; love for the church, this painfully broken and marvelously beautiful vessel of God's grace and love; and love for the people God calls us to serve, the rostered ministers and lay leaders of our congregations, but also those neighbors near and far whom invites us and equips us to love. Amid all the uncertainties and challenges of life and ministry, a bishop's job is to remind us that if what we're doing doesn't help us deepen and expand our love of God and neighbor, it's not worth doing.

Second, bishops are well-served if they have the ability to step back, take a deep breath, and help us see the big picture. So much of what comes across our desk or into our email inbox are questions and challenges coming from folks who are anxious, confused, and/or concerned. Bishops need to avoid getting swept up in the details and emotions of a particular situation to remind us all what's really at stake and to help us keep sight of what's most important (see point one).

Third, I've always found it helpful to lean into the Apostle Paul's words that we are called to be "stewards of God's mysteries" (I Cor 4:1). Even though bishops are called into a specific position of leadership, we don't own or even fully understand this church. We are called to care for it, guide it, challenge it, strengthen it, and then get out of the way, letting God's Holy and life-giving Spirit take charge.

This is an amazingly challenging call, filled with all manner of ups and downs and twists and turns, but I love serving as a bishop, and I'm grateful for all who answer the call to love and serve God's people in this way.



**Bishop Paul Erickson**  
**Greater Milwaukee Synod**  
Domestic companion synod  
of Northwest  
Intermountain Synod

