

**RESOLUTION #1 CONCERNING
ELCA PRISON AND RE-ENTRY MINISTRY**

WHEREAS, Jesus says: “I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Matthew 25:35-36); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urges individuals, congregations, and synods to call “the criminal justice system must acknowledge the disparities, and address the implicit and explicit racism that persists within; it must recognize the special needs of juvenile offenders; it must stop the privatization of prison facilities; and finally, it must foster the full reintegration of ex-offenders into community”; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Corrections New Jersey has an incarceration rate of 341 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities), meaning that it locks up a higher percentage of its people than almost any democratic country on earth;(<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/NJ.html>)and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has a recidivism rate (re-offense rate leading to re-incarceration) of 30.4% respectively; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Synod has no known prison ministry and no known reentry ministries and no known advocacy arm for the incarcerated or the formerly incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, it is shown that being a part of a spiritual group lowers recidivism rates,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the New Jersey Synod Council create a Task Force that will encourage congregations and individuals of the Synod to participate and partner in prison and jail visitation ministry; create communications and support advocacy for the imprisoned, involuntarily housed and those on probation; as well as help to create a framework for congregations to work alongside and welcome formerly incarcerated individuals into the congregation’s life and mission.

Submitted By:

The Rev. Erich Kussman, St. Bartholomew, Trenton

RESOLUCIÓN #1 SOBRE MINISTERIO DE PRISIÓN Y REINGRESO DE ELCA

CONSIDERANDO, Jesús dice: “Fui forastero y me invitasteis a entrar, necesitaba ropa y me vestisteis, estuve enfermo y me cuidasteis, estuve en la cárcel y vinisteis a visitarme.” (Mateo 25: 35-36); y

CONSIDERANDO, la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América insta a las personas, congregaciones y sínodos a pedir que “el sistema de justicia penal debe reconocer las disparidades y abordar el racismo implícito y explícito que persiste en su interior; debe reconocer las necesidades especiales de los menores delincuentes; debe detener la privatización de las instalaciones penitenciarias; y finalmente, debe fomentar la plena reintegración de los exdelincuentes a la comunidad”; y

CONSIDERANDO, que el Departamento Correccional de Nueva Jersey tiene una tasa de encarcelamiento de 341 por cada 100.000 personas (incluidas prisiones, cárceles, centros de detención de inmigrantes y centros de justicia juvenil), lo que significa que encarcela a un porcentaje más alto de su población que casi cualquier país democrático en la tierra; (<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/NJ.html>) y

CONSIDERANDO, que Nueva Jersey tiene una tasa de reincidencia (tasa de reincidencia que conduce a un nuevo encarcelamiento) del 30,4% respectivamente; y

CONSIDERANDO, el Sínodo de Nueva Jersey no tiene ningún ministerio penitenciario conocido, ni ministerios de reingreso conocidos, ni ningún brazo de defensa conocido para los encarcelados o los ex encarcelados; y

CONSIDERANDO, que está demostrado que ser parte de un grupo espiritual reduce las tasas de reincidencia,

POR LO TANTO, SE RESUELVE que el Consejo del Sínodo de Nueva Jersey cree un Grupo de Trabajo que alentará a las congregaciones y a las personas del Sínodo a participar y asociarse en el ministerio de visitas a prisiones y cárceles; crear comunicaciones y apoyar la defensa de los encarcelados, los alojados involuntariamente y los que están en libertad condicional; así como también ayudar a crear un marco para que las congregaciones trabajen junto con personas anteriormente encarceladas y les den la bienvenida a la vida y misión de la congregación.

Presentado por:

El reverendo Erich Kussman, San Bartolomé, Trenton

**A RESOLUTION # 2 CONCERNING
A CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE IN THE HOLY LAND.**

WHEREAS the Gateway Mission District, along with the support of others throughout the New Jersey Synod, stand in solidarity with those affected by the hostilities,

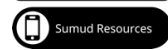
WHEREAS the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, which includes the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, are calling for a ceasefire, "...that allows for the speedy disbursement of relief supplies throughout the Gaza strip..." (Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, "Statement on the Recent Attack on Crowds Gathering to Receive Humanitarian Aid," March 1, 2024, <https://www.lpj.org/en/news/hoc-statement-on-the-recent-attack-on-crowds-gathering-to-receive>)

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Conference of Bishops is, "... calling for a permanent bilateral cease-fire in Gaza," ELCA Conference of Bishops calls for permanent bilateral cease-fire in Gaza, March 3, 2024, <https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8217>

WHEREAS the hostilities in the Holy Land do indeed have an effect on the lives of Lutherans in New Jersey, in their communities, schools, neighborhoods, and beyond;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod in assembly stand in solidarity with those affected by the hostilities in the Holy Land calling for a ceasefire. And be it further,

RESOLVED that the New Jersey Synod identify places and moments of solidarity with our neighbors living in the Holy Land and share resources widely to encourage support among churches, including, but not limited to: contacting governmental representatives, financial support of Lutheran Disaster Response (specifically designating it for the Middle East Crisis), and by engaging with resources from Sumud, the ELCA's new name for our church's engagement in accompaniment, awareness-building and advocacy for justice in Palestine and Israel.



Name and signature of individual submitting the resolution.

The Rev. Sarah E. Fryman

Grace Lutheran Church Bayonne, NJ; Gateway Mission District

Date: March 5, 2024

Additional submitting names/signatures: The Rev. Kimberly Vaughn, The Rev. Nancy Truscott, Vicar Juan Manuel Arias-Perea, The Rev. Margarette Ouji, The Rev. Menzi R. Nkambule, The Rev. Mona Fitch-Elliott, The Rev. Kathryn S. Irwin, The Rev. Carmine Pernini, The Rev.M. Danielle McCleary, The Rev. Courtney D. Smith-Westerlund, and The Rev. Gary LeCroy

RESOLUCIÓN # 2 SOBRE UN LLAMADO A UN ALTO EL FUEGO EN TIERRA SANTA.

CONSIDERANDO, que el Distrito de la Misión Gateway, junto con el apoyo de otros durante el Sínodo de Nueva Jersey, se solidariza con los afectados por las hostilidades; y

CONSIDERANDO, que los Patriarcas y Jefes de las Iglesias en Jerusalén, que incluye a la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Jordania y Tierra Santa, están pidiendo un alto el fuego, “...que permita el rápido desembolso de suministros de socorro en toda la franja de Gaza...” (Patriarcas y Jefes de las Iglesias en Jerusalén, “Declaración sobre el reciente ataque a multitudes reunidas para recibir ayuda humanitaria”, 1 de marzo de 2024, <https://www.lpj.org/en/news/hoc-statement-on-the-ataque-reciente-a-las-multitudes-reunidas-para-recibir>); y

CONSIDERANDO, que la Conferencia de Obispos de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América está “...pidiendo un alto el fuego bilateral permanente en Gaza”, la Conferencia de Obispos de la ELCA pide un alto el fuego bilateral permanente en Gaza, 3 de marzo de 2024, <https://www.elca.org/Noticias-y-Eventos/8217>; y

CONSIDERANDO, que las hostilidades en Tierra Santa efectivamente tienen un efecto en las vidas de los luteranos en Nueva Jersey, en sus comunidades, escuelas, vecindarios y más allá,

POR LO TANTO, SE RESUELVE que el Sínodo de Nueva Jersey en asamblea se solidarice con aquellos afectados por las hostilidades en Tierra Santa que piden un alto el fuego; y

ADEMAS SE RESUELVE, que el Sínodo de Nueva Jersey identifique lugares y momentos de solidaridad con nuestros vecinos que viven en Tierra Santa y comparta ampliamente recursos para fomentar el apoyo entre las iglesias, incluyendo, entre otros: contactar a representantes gubernamentales, apoyo financiero de la Respuesta Luterana a Desastres (designando específicamente para la crisis de Medio Oriente), y colaborando con recursos de Sumud, el nuevo nombre de la ELCA para el compromiso de nuestra iglesia en el acompañamiento, la creación de conciencia y la promoción de la justicia en Palestina e Israel.



Nombre y firma de la persona que presenta la resolución: La reverenda Sarah E. Fryman
Grace Lutheran Church Bayonne, Nueva Jersey; Distrito de la Misión Gateway

Fecha: 5 de marzo de 2024
Nombres/firmas adicionales que envían: Rev. Kimberly Vaughn, Rev. Nancy Truscott, Vicario Juan Manuel Arias-Perea, Rev. Margarette Ouji, Rev. Menzi R. Nkambule, Rev. Mona Fitch-Elliott, Rev. Kathryn S. Irwin, el reverendo Carmine Pernini, el reverendo M. Danielle McCleary, El reverendo Courtney D. Smith-Westerlund y el reverendo Gary LeCroy.

Proposed 2025 Spending Plan for the New Jersey Synod

February 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026

This proposed spending plan provides the financial support for carrying out the synod’s missions and objectives. This plan was developed in collaboration with the Fiscal Management, Administration and Property Committee. **The Synod Council recommends approval of this plan by the Synod Assembly.**

Income Supporting the Spending Plan is primarily Mission Support from congregations supplemented by distributions from restricted funds, bank interest, support from ELCA churchwide, and Thrivent Choice dollars.

	2023 Actual		2024 Approved Spending Plan		2025 Proposed Spending Plan	
Mission Support	1,661,627	84%	1,700,000	82%	1,600,000	78%
Restricted Fund draws		10%		17%		18%
Restricted support for Mission Development	126,708		142,500		142,500	
OSEF support for Bishop's Office	-		100,000		105,000	
Health Benefit Assistance	-		10,000		10,000	
United Seminary Endowment support	10,000		10,000		10,000	
Endowment support for Candidacy	16,393		29,000		29,360	
Stewardship support	1,042		1,000		1,000	
Endowment for Staff Housing Support	-		6,000		6,000	
Endowment to Support Cross Roads	20,000		20,000		26,000	
Wurffel Administrative Support	8,000		6,700		8,000	
EMU Support	8,700		8,600		-	
Mission Development - Property Manager	13,174		22,000		25,240	
ELCA support to the NJ Synod		< 1%		< 1%		< 1%
ELCA support for Mission Director	10,000		10,000		10,000	
Other income		5%		< 1%		4%
Individual Contribution Support	3,001		-		-	
Special Giving Operations Support	1,728		-		-	
Thrivent Choice	1,343		1,000		1,200	
Interest Income - All Banks	92,154		6,000		80,000	
Total Income	1,973,869		2,072,800		2,054,300	

Mission Support is the congregation gifts to support the work of our synod. Mission Support provided 84% of the spending plan income in 2023 and is forecast to provide 78% of income in 2025.

Restricted Fund draws describes the money drawn from restricted funds to support synod programs that satisfy fund restrictions. This money supports congregations and missions within New Jersey, the United Lutheran seminary, pastoral candidates, Cross Roads Camp, programs supporting church pastors, stewardship programming, and management of the synod properties. The approval of this spending plan explicitly approves spending this money from these restricted funds.

Other Income includes personal gifts to the synod, Thrivent Choice dollars and bank account interest. Interest income was significantly higher in 2023 because of this year’s increase in interest rates. The 2024 number was set early in 2023, before we knew the interest rates would increase.

Ministries and Expenditures

Section 1: ELCA Churchwide and Ministry Partners supports partners in ministry within New Jersey, within our ELCA region and across the churchwide organization. Half of Mission Support gifts received by the synod are given to ELCA churchwide.

	2023 Actual	2024 Approved Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan
ELCA Share of Mission Support	831,326	850,000	800,000
United Lutheran Seminary	100,000	100,000	100,000
Cross Roads Outdoor Ministries	30,000	30,000	36,000
Lutheran Archives Center	2,500	2,500	2,500
New Jersey Interfaith Coalition	500	500	1,000
Seafarers and International House	2,000	2,000	2,000
Diakonia	1,500	1,500	1,500
	967,826	986,500	943,000
Percentage of spending plan	49%	48%	46%

46% of the proposed spending plan supports ELCA Churchwide and Ministry Partners.

Section 2. Strengthening Congregations focuses on the processes and programs that strengthen congregations' capabilities and facilitate collaborative ministry across our synod.

	2023 Actual	2024 Approved Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan
Assistants to the Bishop and staff support	310,585	317,927	325,242
Youth Ministry program	40,500	40,500	40,500
Synod Continuing Education	-	2,000	2,000
Discipling and Witness Team	-	1,000	1,000
Justice and Peace Mission Teams	950	1,000	1,000
Synod Communications	5,904	9,000	9,000
Stewardship Resource Development	1,161	1,000	1,000
	359,101	372,427	379,742
Percentage of spending plan	18%	18%	18%

Strengthening Congregations within the New Jersey Synod includes:

- Ministering to congregations and pastors in need
- Assistants to the bishop and staff personnel supporting congregations
- Youth Ministry leadership, programs and grants
- Advocacy Ministry leadership
- Discipleship and Witness Mission Team
- Justice and Peace Mission Team
- Synod-wide communications
- Development and production of congregational Stewardship resources

Strengthening Congregations makes up 18% of our 2025 plan.

Section 3: Outreach Supporting Congregations

	2023 Actual	2024 Approved Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan
Congregational Vitality	129,333	142,500	142,500
Percentage of spending plan	7%	7%	7%

Congregational Vitality enables new expressions of ministry in our Synod, assists the start-up of new missions and revitalizes existing congregations. During 2023 the synod supported Bridge of Peace in Camden; Christus in Camden; Santa Isabel in Elizabeth; Trinity in Jersey City; St Stephan-Grace in Newark; Misión Luterana Reconciliación in Pennsauken; St. John in Passaic; Morning Star in Ridgefield; St. Matthew in Secaucus; St Bartholomew in Trenton; and the Santa Isabel Ministry to Immigrants in Detention.

Section 4: Office of the Bishop guides and supports congregations and clergy, synodical church and legal processes and nurtures church leadership.

	2023 Actual	2024 Approved Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan
The Bishop and staff support	227,674	230,854	240,085
Candidacy and seminarians	16,393	29,000	29,360
Pastoral supply coordination	3,600	3,600	3,710
First Call Pastoral support	7,267	7,200	7,420
Ecumenical and interfaith programs	1,300	1,300	1,300
Synod ordinations and special events	1,305	3,000	3,000
Synod Assembly and Assembly reserve	-	12,500	12,500
	257,537	287,454	297,375
Percentage of spending plan	13%	14%	14%

The bishop’s office leads and administers:

- Congregational vacancy and call processes
- Seminarian formation and identifying clergy candidates
- Guidance, training and help to all first-call pastors
- Interaction and dialogue with other religious and ministry partner organizations
- Synod gatherings such as the Synod Assembly and Ministerium Day
- Pastoral supply for congregations

14% of the proposed synod spending plan supports the Office of the Bishop.

Section 5: Oversight and Planning for the Sake of the Mission provides for the administrative requirements of running the synod organization including travel for staff and volunteers, maintaining the synod properties, managing finances, fulfilling legal and regulatory obligations, and planning for our future.

	2023 Actual	2024 Approved Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan
Staff support	110,441	113,336	116,140
Staff Travel Expenses	14,786	18,000	17,000
Volunteers Meeting & Travel	5,534	6,000	6,000
Audit, Legal and Insurance	39,315	38,000	40,000
Property management	57,250	68,300	74,670
Supplies and services	32,189	39,500	37,100
	259,514	283,136	290,910
Percentage of spending plan	13%	14%	14%

Summary

The proposed Spending Plan supports the key Synod missions and programs, balancing expenses with expected revenues.

	2023 Actual	2024 Approved Spending Plan	2025 Proposed Spending Plan
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,973,311	2,072,017	2,053,527
TOTAL INCOME	1,973,869	2,072,800	2,054,300
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	557 < 1%	783 < 1%	773 < 1%

The Synod Council recommends approval of this proposed 2025 spending plan.