

Acronym Meanings

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Sierra Pacific Synod often uses acronyms or words that are not commonly used outside of the church. As we continue to strive to be an inclusive church, it's important to define the acronyms and words we use in the church.

General ELCA Terms

ELCA - The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Denomination of which our Synod is a part of.

Region 2 - One of nine regions of the ELCA, of which our Synod is a part of. Region 2 includes the Southwest California Synod, Pacifica Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, and Grand Canyon Synod. Regions are comprised of synod's who are geographically close to one another and often collaborate on events, candidacy, mobility, and other business items.

SPS - The Sierra Pacific Synod, the name of this Synod.

Churchwide - The term referencing the head office and leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Churchwide offices are located in Chicago, IL and are overseen by the Presiding Bishop.

Presiding Bishop - The elected clergy representing the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was elected to office in 2013 and re-elected to a second 6-year term in 2019. The Presiding Bishop is elected at the Churchwide Assembly every six years.

FCTE - First Call Theological Education, of which all newly-ordained Pastors and Deacons participate in during their first three years of service. In the Sierra Pacific Synod, FCTE is done in collaboration with Region 2.

Churchwide Assembly - Every three years, elected representatives from all 65 Synods of the ELCA gather for the Churchwide Assembly. This multi-day Assembly is similar to a Synod Assembly in that elections occur, resolutions are voted upon, and updates on ministry happening throughout the church are given. The 2022 Synod Assembly is August 8-12, 2022 in Columbus, Ohio.

Synod Terms

Synod - A geographical group of congregations that are a part of the ELCA. The Sierra Pacific Synod has around 180 congregations that come together to create one Synod. There are 65 Synod's throughout the ELCA.

SAWC - This stands for Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community, which is a worshipping community that is not yet developed as an independent congregation and is receiving support from the Synod and Churchwide.

Conference - A group of geographically close congregations within the Sierra Pacific Synod. Each Conference elects a Dean, who is a Rostered Leader serving in a congregation within that Conference, to organize, lead, and pass along important information to the congregations of that Conference. The Sierra Pacific Synod has 9 Conferences. You can see a full list of the congregations in each Conference and who serves as Conference Dean [here](#).

1. **Conference 1: The Redwood Mountain Conference** - Includes 21 congregations that span from the California/Oregon border, the Humboldt County coastline, and down to the North Bay of Santa Rosa. This Conference is the largest geographically in our Synod.
2. **Conference 2: The Bridges Conference** - Includes 22 congregations that span from the wine country of Napa, down to the East Bay of Oakland and Berkeley. This Conference also includes Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.
3. **Conference 3: The Capitol Valley Conference** - Includes 23 congregations located in the greater Sacramento region, including Fairfield, Vacaville, Davis, and Roseville. This Conference also includes The Belfry Campus Ministry at UC Davis and the Lutheran Office of Public Policy in Sacramento.
4. **Conference 4: The Sierra Nevada Foothills Conference** - Includes 18 congregations that span across the Sierra Nevadas and include all seven of the Nevada congregations. This Conference also includes the Lutheran Engagement and Advocacy in Nevada (LEAN) organization.
5. **Conference 5: The San Francisco Peninsula Conference** - Includes 21 congregations, primarily located in the greater San Francisco area and the South Bay. This Conference also includes the San Francisco Night Ministry, Farming Hope, and the Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry at Stanford.
6. **Conference 6: The El Camino Real Conference** - Includes 24 congregations throughout the Silicon Valley, from the greater San Jose area down along to Monterey Peninsula. This Conference also includes Mt. Cross Ministries.
7. **Conference 7: The Mt. Diablo Conference** - Includes 22 congregations that span from the hills behind the East Bay to down south in Fremont. This Conference also includes the primarily office of Lutheran Social Services of Northern California.
8. **Conference 8: The Sierra Central Valley Conference** - Includes 13 congregations that begin in the vineyards and farm lands of the Central Valley and span up to the base of the Sierra Nevadas just below Yosemite.
9. **Conference 9: The Central San Joaquin Conference** - Includes 15 congregations in the greater Fresno area, and includes our southernmost

congregation in Porterville. This Conference also includes the Lutheran Campus Ministry of Fresno and the Lutheran Hunger Network of Fresno.

Synod Leadership

Synod Council - The Synod Council is an elected board of Rostered and Lay Leaders, with 14-28 members, that includes at least one youth and at least one young adult, who's role is to:

- Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod
- Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly
- Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly
- Provide for an annual review of the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of ELCA, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard
- Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- And more, found [here](#)

Bishop - The Minister of Word and Sacrament elected by the Synod Assembly to:

- Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
- Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) all approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.
- Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
- Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
- Exercise leadership in the mission of this church.
- Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church.
- Oversee and administer the work of this synod.

Vice-President - Elected by the Synod Assembly, this lay person is the highest ranking lay leader in the Synod, serves on the Executive Council, and helps oversee the operations of the Synod Council.

Secretary - Elected by the Synod Assembly, this lay person serves on the Executive Council and shall:

Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.

Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.

In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.

Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

Treasurer - Elected by the Synod Assembly, this lay person or Rostered Leader serves on the Executive Council and shall provide and be accountable for:

Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.

Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.

Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church.

Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.

Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, - 12 - Revised February 5, 2022 together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.

Giving of corporate surety in the amount determined by the Synod Council, which shall be in the custody of the secretary, and the premium therefore shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

DEM - Director of Evangelical Mission.

Discipling Team - A group of lay and Rostered Leaders appointed by Synod Council to serve on specific teams, responsible to the Synod Assembly and reporting to the Synod Council often. The Discipling Teams include:

The Word Team: responsible for leading and assisting congregations and individuals in spiritual growth through study and personal application of scripture.

The Witness Team: responsible for leading and assisting congregations and individuals in public affirmation of faith through word and deed.

The Leadership Team: responsible for supporting and nurturing pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the rosters of this synod and identifying and encouraging qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

The Sacrament Team: responsible for assisting congregations in equipping believers for baptismal life.

The Service Team: responsible for leading and assisting congregations and individuals for action in the arenas of advocacy and social ministry.

The Stewardship Team: responsible for leading and assisting congregations in growing faithful stewards of God's gifts of time, talents and resources.

The Racial and Ethnic Ministries Team: responsible for assisting congregations and individuals in ways of dismantling racism and growing in cross cultural experience, knowledge and hospitality.

Committee - A group of lay and Rostered Leaders appointed by Synod Council to serve on specific committees. For a full list of the Committees of the Sierra Pacific Synod, click [here](#).

Clergy/Rostered Titles

The Rev. - The Reverend, an Ordained Pastor of Word and Sacrament.

Pr. - Pastor, Ordained in Word and Sacrament.

The Rev. Dr. - The Reverend Doctor, used for an Ordained Pastor of Word and Sacrament who also holds a Doctoral Degree.

Deacon - A Rostered Leader in the ELCA who is Ordained in Word and Service.

OLFC - On Leave from Call, a Rostered Leader (Pastor or Deacon) who is without a call.

Interim - A Rostered Leader called to serve a congregation in-between two called people. Interims are usually called by the Synod Council.

Intern - A seminary student, usually seeking a Masters of Theology or working towards becoming a Rostered Leader, who serves on staff as part of their Theological Education.