



Sierra Pacific Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Advent 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

As the Sierra Pacific Synod, we are *on the way of Jesus together*, collaborating, caring, and connecting with one another. Scripture reminds us that we are not alone in the work of the gospel: “Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other...(Ecc 4:9-12). We can do more together than we can on our own. Through the struggles we face as the church in our current social, political, and religious climate, we lift up and encourage one another, embodying the hope of our calling. We believe God has a future for the Lutheran witness across the vast geography of our synod. And we are living into new possibilities together as the Body of Christ in the many and varied ministries we share.

One way to show our commitment to this relationship is by being a **monthly Mustard Seed Giver**. These **monthly gifts** of any amount are like mustard seeds. They make new ministries possible and help sustain the important work already happening. Former Synod Vice President and current Mustard Seed Giver Elaine Whitney of St. Francis, San Francisco bears witness:

I became a monthly supporter of our Synod when the "Mustard Seed" campaign was introduced. This made it easy for me to give to the Synod at a comfortable level. I give to our Synod because we are a faith community spread out over geographic distances and drawn together through our shared love for Lutheran ministry.

If you are already a Mustard Seed Giver, thank you! Your generosity has made an impact. You have helped us develop resources and events to encourage and support lay leadership. Over the past year, in addition to everything else we do together, **84 lay leaders** learned best practices for church councils, skills in pastoral care, and shaping new communities; **30 people** went through lay preaching course with Professor Shauna Hannan, **35** joined a Fresh Expressions retreat; and **100 lay leaders** joined a synod course on discerning faithful responses to political crises. In 2026 we will launch a Synodically Authorized Minister program to train and equip people to serve in the changing landscape of the church.

Your gift also helps us support new ministry initiatives like **young adult *Gather Communities*** developing in Sacramento and Reno; the discernment process in more remote parts of the synod with our Episcopal partners; and an exploration of a **new Arab Middle Eastern ministry** in the Bay Area. Your commitment helps us continue to walk alongside churches and rostered leaders in transition to where God is calling them next.

When we work together as a synod, we don't just survive, we adapt, learn, change, and thrive. So, if you are not yet a Mustard Seed Giver, we invite you to join us. Your monthly support will help sustain this work and ensure that collaborative ministry continues to flourish across our synod. As a Mustard Seed Giver, you'll be invited to special opportunities to hear updates and stories from Bishop Jeff and the Bishop's Team.

You can join today by clicking [HERE!](#)

Of course, you can also make a larger one-time gift to support the work we do together in 2026. Every act of generosity, whether recurring or one-time, helps ministries grow and bear fruit across our synod. To make a one-time gift electronically you can click [here](#) or mail a check to "Sierra Pacific Synod" PO Box 119, Berkeley, CA 94701.

Will you join us in planting seeds of hope and growth for the church we love?

Together, we can nurture the ministries that are shaping the future of the Gospel here in the Sierra Pacific Synod.

In Christ's hope,

Bishop Jeff Johnson, Simon Wong Synod Vice President
Jeffrey Pennington Synod Secretary, Scott Taylor Synod Treasurer
Sierra Pacific Synod Giving Team (Jim Kowalski, Carol Bentz, Kathryn Anderson, The Rev. Brandon Westengard, The Rev. Amy Kienzle, The Rev. Courtney Geibert)

PS. Forward this to a friend who would join you in generosity!