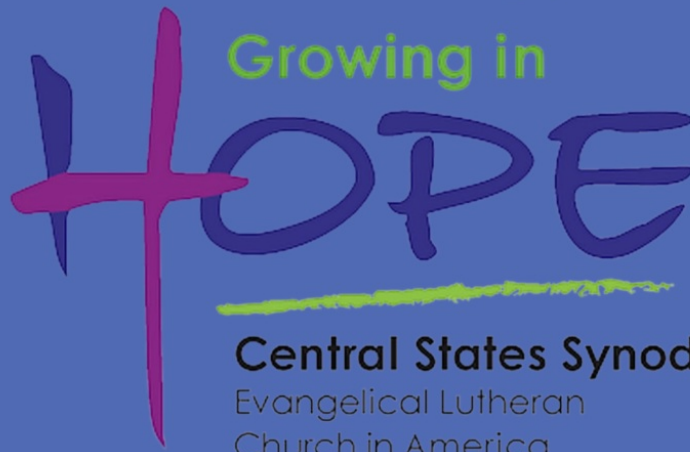




*Shepherd's Staff*



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF GOOD SHEPHERD

JULY 2024



**Josh Brecht**  
**Lead Pastor**

### **Report on Central States Synod Assembly 2024**

Pastors, deacons, and lay members from across the Central States Synod gathered in Olathe, KC June 6-8 for our annual Synod Assembly. This is an important moment in the life of the Church each year as we invite the Holy Spirit to guide us and learn more about our connectedness as the body of Christ.

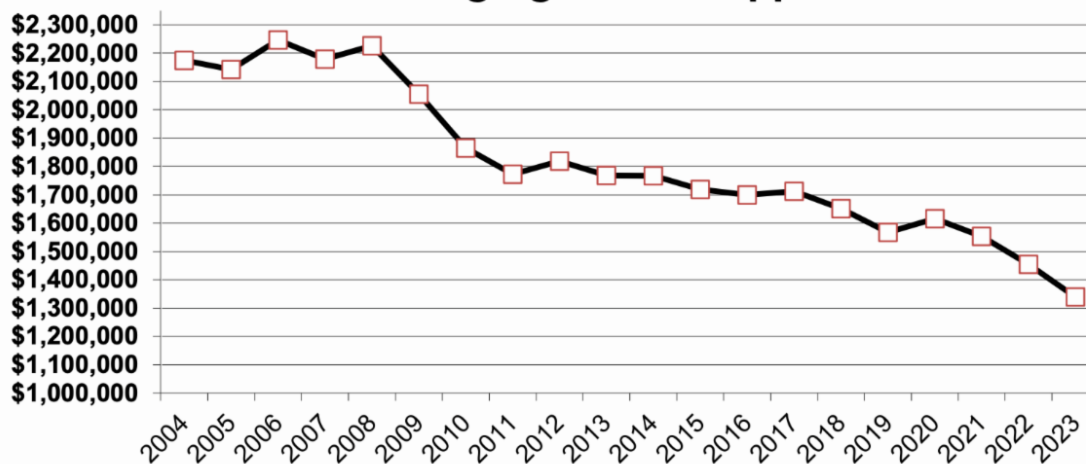
All our rostered leaders (Amy, Varinia, Gail, and I) attended, along with four Good Shepherd Members (Brianna Dehn, Kevin & Cindy Nichols, and Lanny Schnipper). While there are many aspects of the event, I would like to highlight a few notable updates and decisions.

#### **Annual Budget**

Our congregation supported the ministry of the Synod with \$74,000 (about 6% of our annual budget) and was proud that Good Shepherd was top financial supporter of the Central States Synod. This is especially important today because financial contributions to the Synod have been declining consistently over many years, beginning back in the great recession in 2009. The CSS budget had to make \$200,000 of cuts to the annual budget this year. While this is disappointing, I am grateful for the responsible, discerning, yet difficult decisions that had to be made.

One of the largest areas of concern for us were cuts to ministries that invest in the future of the Church. Significant cuts had to be made to Synod support of Campus Ministries, Camp Tomah Shinga, and Wartburg Theological Seminary and Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago.

## Annual Congregational Support 2004 - 2023



### Approval of a Welcome Statement and Designation as a Reconciling in Christ Synod

The Assembly voted to approve the resolution to become a Reconciling in Christ Synod. There was respectful and loving debate about the resolution, which then passed with a strong majority. Our Bishop thanked the Assembly for the way in which we exhibited kindness and respect for one another amid differing perspectives.

As I shared in an [earlier message](#), this designation does not mandate any changes for individual congregations. It does enable the Synod to support congregations with resources if they should seek to create their own statement of welcome or become an RIC congregation. This statement also emphasizes the synod's commitment to welcome all people at synod and conference events.

### Bishop Retirements

Bishop Susan Candea has announced her retirement at the end her term in 2025. Central States Synod will prayerfully discern our next Bishop at the 2025 Synod Assembly. This will be a very important moment for the future of our mission, and I invite us all to take part in the opportunities for conversation, input, and spiritual discernment that will be happening over the next 12 months.

The presiding bishop of the ELCA, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has also announced her retirement in summer of 2025. The ELCA will be electing a new presiding bishop, as well at the Churchwide Assembly.

### Plans for Future Growth?

Notably absent from the assembly were any clear plans for future growth such as launching new mission-start congregations in growing areas within Kansas and Missouri. I believe that God is still moving and calling to continue sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples. I believe there are areas in our city and our synod where people yearn for the kind of vibrant, joyful, faith community that we have at Good Shepherd. Several of us who serve larger congregations have begun talking about how we can collaborate and create a leading vision for new life and new congregations in our synod.

It is my joy and privilege to serve such a generous, faithful, and courageous congregation. Good Shepherd is a leader in our synod in so many ways, and I give

thanks to God for our congregation, for each one of you, and the gifts you bring to advance the kingdom of God in our world.

In Christ,  
Pastor Josh

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**Good Shepherd Connect Mobile App Login**

**Weekly Services Saturday 5pm (casual) and  
Sunday 9am (traditional) and 11am (contemporary)**  
[goodshepherdlutheran.com](http://goodshepherdlutheran.com) | 636-391-6685 | [Calendar](#)