

## 2020 Budget Proposal Greater Milwaukee Synod

**Overview:** The Greater Milwaukee Synod council is recommending to the synod assembly a budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2020-21 that projects general mission support income (offerings received from congregations) at \$1.9 million, and total revenue of \$1.971 million. Total expenditures are projected to be \$2.043 million, resulting in a projected deficit of \$71,199. The most significant change from prior years is the reduction in the percentage of mission support received that we would share with the ELCA churchwide expression, from 55% to 52.5%.

**History:** The Greater Milwaukee Synod has historically been among the synods that share the highest percentage of mission support, and up until 2011, it varied between 60% and 62%. At the 2010 synod assembly, it was reduced in the 2011 synod budget to its current level of 55%. One other synod has its percentage at 55% (Northern Illinois), and the ELCA average is 49.5%.

Overall, mission support levels have been slowly declining, from a high of \$2.7 million in 2006-07 to a low of \$1.88 million in 2018-19. It is worthy of note, however, that designated giving by individuals and congregations in the synod to ELCA-related ministries (World Hunger, Missionary Support, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and our synodical partnerships in Meru, Tanzania and El Salvador) have steadily increased, from approximately \$600,000 in 2009 to over \$1.3 million in 2018 (this figure includes the \$971,625 sent through the synod office and over \$330,000 sent directly to the ELCA Churchwide office by congregations and individuals).

**Rationale:** The synod currently has approximately \$217,000 in undesignated reserve funds. The projected deficit for this year, 2019-20, is \$103,000, reducing the reserve funds to approximately \$114,000 at the start of 2020. If we were to maintain our percentage of mission support shared at 55% for 2020, we would increase the projected deficit from \$71,199 to \$119,373, completely depleting our reserve funds. In order to maintain current synod staffing levels and our commitments to Lutheran Campus Ministry and our other ministry partners, the recommendation from the synod council is to reduce the percentage shared with the ELCA Churchwide expression to 52.5%.