

ARKANSAS OKLAHOMA SYNOD

God's Grace in Motion

+together we are God's grace in motion

We believe that **+together** we can do more, be more, and see more as the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod – loving God, one another, and our neighbors more deeply.

The Synod acts to strengthen, encourage, and support ministry by providing grants, showing up, consulting, facilitating workshops and retreats, and worshipping together in the name of Jesus.

+together, as synod, we inspire the Church to be the Church. **With your help, we more effectively proclaim and embody the Good News of Jesus** to our broken world in bold and grace-filled ways.

+together, as synod, we move out of our congregation's silos to share ideas, challenges, and hopes. **With your help, we create resources, share wisdom, and listen to each other** as we discover ways to build on our strengths. The Holy Spirit is using the synod to bring people, congregations, communities, and even the world together in Jesus' name.

+together, as synod, we are CHURCH beyond our walls - beyond the stained glass. **With your help, we can bring our best creativity and thinking for where grace calls us to act.**

How might God be inviting you to be part of God's Grace in Motion through the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod?

WHEN GOD'S GRACE IS IN MOTION...

People are fed.

The Synod's Hunger Team has created a synod-wide hunger network where churches can share information and help each other problem-solve and think of new ideas. The team also promotes grants and other resources to help churches sustain their feeding ministries.



No one stands alone.

The Synod and Synod staff are a vital resource for congregations and leaders. In 2019, Bishop Mike and Pastor Liz traveled over 44 thousand miles as they visited 109 congregations, conducted 51 worship services, led 14 workshops, held 31 consultations, and helped coordinate 10 programs.



Leaders are empowered.

The Synod's Candidacy Committee has helped 37 people better discern God's call for them. The Rev. Carrie Ballenger shares, *"I appreciated knowing that people were praying for me while I was in classes, doing internships and field education, all the while raising a family."*

The Synod has awarded over \$133 thousand in grants to seminarians since 1995. The Synod also hosts annual workshops and conferences for both rostered and lay leaders.



New ministry is cultivated.

The Synod and ELCA financially support, provide training, coaching, and accountability structures so new starts have the best possible chance to thrive. The average new start takes between 7-10 years to become self-sustaining. We look at our new congregations like the Neighborhood and Comunidad de Esperanza with excitement and joy.



Youth are inspired.

The Synod's Lutheran Youth Organization, Youth Leading Youth Growing in Faith, allows our youth to go take charge. The youth plan, organize and lead all their activities (with the generous help of adult "champions" who make LYO a priority). There are opportunities for faith, fun, learning, and sharing for youth from 6th to 12th grade. *"The Synod and LYO have provided me with a space that I know is safe and a place I can be myself. Over the years, the LYO has become a place where it has been made known to me that I am loved by God and everyone around me. I love going and seeing everyone; when we all come together, I see God working in all of us."* Elise Lantagne.



THE DIFFERENCES YOU'VE MADE

Living God's Abundance Grants

Living God's Abundance (LGA) Grants provide seed funds to help congregations and clusters start new or grow current ministries. Funds are made possible by generous members like yourselves and administered by the Synod. Here are just a couple of examples of the great work these grants and your support has made.

Ecumenical Homeless Ministry in Tulsa, OK -

The congregations of Fellowship and Joy in Tulsa have used LGA funding to help bring the Family Promise network and organization to Tulsa, OK.

Family Promise is a nonprofit that works with local churches to provide shelter, food, and hospitality for homeless

families on a rotating basis. Pastor Jon Myers of Joy shares, "[the] LGA grant was enormously helpful in getting a Family Promise network off the ground in Tulsa... this network has helped dozens of families meet short-term shelter, food and child care needs, and positioned them for better long term employment, housing and money management."

Holy Cross Digital Hub

The Congregation of Holy Cross in Mountain home used LGA funds to hardwire internet into their fellowship hall, so they could serve as a "hub" for synod activities that are made

available online. Given the large geographical area of our Synod, having hubs where people can meet close to their homes helps us reach and include more people. Holy Cross was also able to use their hub to participate in a multi-state event, *Hope in the Heartland*, which focused on strengthening small congregations.

Training and Support for the Congregations

In 2019 LGA funds helped send synod members to the ELCA Congregation Vitality Training in Baltimore, MD for training

and support. Members from the Covenant Congregations in Oklahoma City met with other congregations for a training about consolidating or merging congregations,

which they are considering. Those who went reported back that they learned a great deal from the presenters and gained wisdom and courage from those who have just been through it. Another team from Comunidad de Esperanza was sent and met with other new start ministries. The lay leaders came back energized, with strong networks with other Latinx ministries and ready to take the lead with their pastor to grow the congregation. For both teams, the congregations, the Synod (LGA) and ELCA churchwide all contributed financially to make it possible for everyone to participate.

As of the fall of 2019, the synod has given out over \$44,000 in LGA grant support.

Become a Synod Sustainer today!

Synod Sustainers commit to contributing to synod ministries above and beyond their support for their local congregation on a regular basis. Becoming a Synod Sustainer is easy! Just fill out this form and drop it in the mail to the synod office at 4803 S. Lewis Ave, Tulsa OK, 74105, or fill it out on our website at aokelca.org.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Congregation: _____

Pledge Amount: I plan to give \$ _____, Monthly Quarterly Semiannually Annually

How did you learn about the Synod Sustainers program?

Website Newsletter Church Bulletin Handout Friend Other: _____

What do you enjoy about being a part of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod?

Please make checks payable to "Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod" and put "Synod Sustainers" in the memo. Thank you!