



next  
faithful  
step **BETTER**  
**TOGETHER**



**Rocky Mountain Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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Denver, Colorado 80221

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Dear Beloved in Christ in the Rocky Mountain Synod,

I believe with all my heart that the Holy Spirit has long been inviting us as the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod into a time of transformation, that we might more fully become the vital church Christ needs us to be for the life of the world.

Today that journey of **church becoming** is being indelibly shaped by current realities, as we adapt to new ways of being church in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as we renew our commitment to faithfully engage the pandemic of systemic racism in order to foster a culture of authentic diversity.

One thing we know: the only way to move forward in this journey of becoming is to take the next faithful step, and to do so as **Christ's Church, Better Together**.

Our **Better Together: Next Faithful Step** campaign represents a faith-filled commitment on the part of your bishop and Synod Council to follow where the Spirit is leading our synod. Rooted in our existing synod strategic vision, we have chosen to invest time and resources in several key ministry initiatives.

As you will see in reviewing this prospectus, some of these initiatives reflect our deep investment in fostering **vital healthy leadership**, so that congregations, lay leaders, pastors, and deacons are all fully equipped for the changing challenges and opportunities of being church in our time.

Other initiatives invite our holy imagination about how our **key synod properties** might serve as catalysts for our mission of *proclaiming and embodying God's unconditional love for the sake of the world*.

Recently, the Synod Council approved a proposal to designate a **tithe** of our campaign to financially support **essential racial justice ministry** in our synod.

You may wonder why we are inviting your participation in a financial campaign during a time of economic uncertainty. The answer is simple. The God who leads us on the next faithful step of our life as **church becoming** is the God who inspires a **generosity born of gratitude**.

And there is SO MUCH for which to be **grateful** as Christ's followers in the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod! We have witnessed time and time again God's faithfulness in our shared ministry and witness. If our vision and mission now truly matter, nothing can stand in the way of the Spirit shaping us into the **church we need to be for the life of the world**.

With wholehearted hope and trust in the Lord who leads us, I invite you to join me and the rest of our synod leadership in taking our **Next Faithful Step** as **Christ's Church, Better Together**.

Yours in Faith,

Bishop Jim Gonia







## MESSIAH MOUNTAIN RETREAT CENTER (MMRC)



After faithfully stewarding the Messiah Mountain Retreat Center for over 60 years, our ELCA congregation Messiah Community Church is gifting the 28-acre retreat center to the Rocky Mountain Synod.

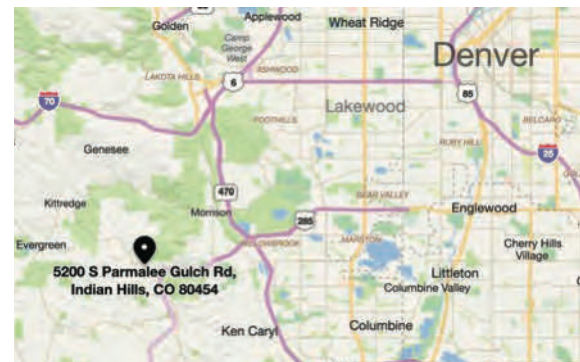
This soul-renewing space, located in the Denver foothills of the Rocky Mountains and backing to the Mt. Falcon open space, offers enriched outdoor ministry opportunities for Sabbath retreat while deepening our commitment to faith formation and spirituality, especially for those interested in adult faith formation.

Although this property came to us as a generous gift, there are a number of critical issues and improvement necessities that require our attention to ensure a safe and operational space. Beyond those immediate needs, and to mindfully incorporate this opportunity into the ministry of the Rocky Mountain Synod, a Mission Site Developer will be contracted to facilitate the strategic visioning and foundational work to determine how this property can be positioned for its next faithful step.



### Critical Property Issues and Improvement Needs:

- Lodge meeting area renovation
- Tuck pointing of stonework and cement block foundations
- Bathroom upgrades
- Replacing all Lodge exterior doors
- Fixing outdoor drainage issues
- Repairing and sealing windows
- Repairing decks and railings
- Replacing furnaces
- Electrical repairs and upgrades
- Renovating and winterizing the Cabin for year-round use
- Improving safety of outdoor chapel
- Updating Lodge kitchen appliances



**First Step: \$ 80,000**

**Next Step: \$ 200,000**

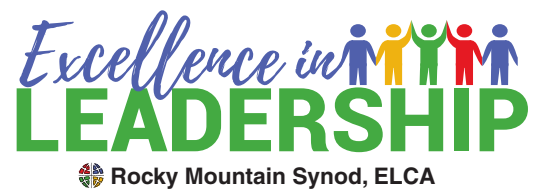
**Campaign Goal: \$ 280,000**

Messiah Mountain Retreat Center will address a growing need for adult faith formation within the Rocky Mountain Synod by improving the property and engaging a Mission Site Developer to define a strategic vision and foundation to align this property within the Rocky Mountain Synod. Therefore, the first step is to raise \$80,000 for critical property issues and improvement needs. The next step is to raise an additional \$200,000 to contract with a Mission Site Developer.





## EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP (EIL)



In the Rocky Mountain Synod, we believe congregational leadership is strongest when it is developed from within. However, congregations often fail to thrive when leaders are not equipped to present an inspiring vision that leads the community together toward this vision. Additionally, congregations often decline when leaders are unable to communicate deeply with one another. Systemic issues in congregations and other ministries can hinder communication and shared vision. Leaders are hindered by the limits of their knowledge of how best to understand themselves or those with whom they serve. By increasing our leadership capacity, the Church is strengthened. Healthy leaders give rise to a healthy ministry.

To foster better equipped leadership across the Rocky Mountain Synod, we have developed a comprehensive leadership education initiative called **Excellence in Leadership (EIL)**. Together, rostered and lay participants will engage in a series of in-depth classes offered at multiple regional locations to complete the two-year curriculum. The certification will equip participants to navigate wise, mature, and emotionally intelligent strategies so they can build and lead courageous, resilient, and faithful communities—for the sake of the world.

**First Step: \$ 250,000**  
**Next Step: \$ 100,000**  
**Campaign Goal: \$ 350,000**

Funds raised to support the Excellence in Leadership program will be used to minimize tuition costs for all participants, allow for the program to be offered at multiple training sites throughout the Rocky Mountain Synod, and ensure this educational program is able to adapt to changing leadership needs over time. Therefore, the first step is to raise \$250,000 needed to assist with the Excellence in Leadership education expenses. The next step is to raise an additional \$100,000 to ensure this program has the means to adapt and sustain this opportunity for years to come.



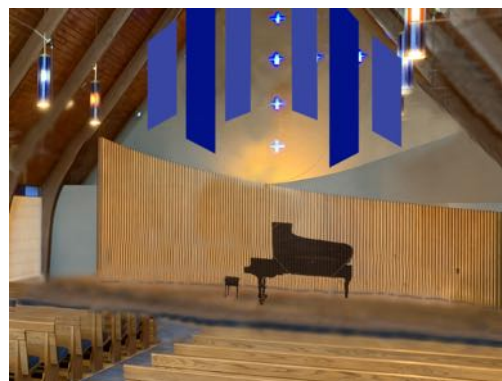


## THE LUTHERAN CENTER (LC)

The Lutheran Center is the home of the Rocky Mountain Synod Office of the Bishop and office space for community partners. Formerly home to the Valley Lutheran Church, the original facility was constructed uniquely with three separate buildings connected by an outdoor breezeway. This unique building plan creates expanding opportunities for ministry and gathering, allowing us to offer a ministry of hospitality. The Lutheran Center continues to be known as a place for groups and ministries to gather for large meetings, concerts, and a number of unique gathering opportunities.

To best support our ever-growing community, several updates and maintenance requirements are needed to best steward this facility:

- Rebuild the parking lot and improve the property drainage system.
- Create a flexible and comfortable meeting space in the church for concerts, educational experiences, and larger events, with an emphasis on being a resource to the neighborhood and community.
- Add a gender-neutral restrooms and a kitchenette to the main floor of the church to accommodate our special needs visitors.



Vision for an arts venue focussing on values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Conversations are underway with the Alliance for Music Education Equity (AMEE) to create a partnership with metro Denver arts organizations to transform the Valley Lutheran Church location to become a center for arts education and experiences in an underserved area.



**First Step: \$ 75,000**  
**Next Step: \$ 158,000**  
**Campaign Goal: \$ 233,000**

The Lutheran Center facility maintenance and improvements will provide an opportunity to enhance our community involvement and support the groups and ministries seeking a gathering place. Therefore, the first step is to raise \$75,000 to rebuild the parking lot and improve the property drainage system. The next step is to raise an additional \$158,000 to complete the required facility maintenance and improvement needs.

# EDUCATE, EQUIP, ENACT (3E)



**Educate, Equip, Enact (3E)** is the Rocky Mountain Synod's Lilly Endowment grant which has increased our capacity for healthy ministry since 2017. 3E has alleviated rostered ministers' education and medical debt, provided tools for congregations to increase generosity, and renewed focus on mission. 3E has been a catalyst for change and a well of hope.

The Lilly Endowment has extended this grant for another three years beginning January 2020. With this opportunity, we continue to renew our trust in God's abundance, build a path together toward healthy and financially sustainable ministry, and transform our culture around money for a hopeful future.

Going forward, 3E will focus on three key pillars:

- **STEWARDSHIP FOR ALL SEASONS**

A source of financial challenge in the church is the culture of scarcity that often prevails in faith communities. Stewardship for All Seasons roots faith communities in God's promise of abundant life and equips pastors, deacons, and congregational leaders to carry out fruitful, broad-range stewardship programs that enliven a culture of generosity. The goal is deepening our commitment to mission, empowering energized stewards, and establishing a culture of generosity in congregational DNA.

- **MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE FUND**

Ministerial Excellence Fund grants help pastors, deacons, and candidates develop stronger financial literacy skills and provide direct aid to help reduce or eliminate crippling debt. This fund focuses on education debt relief, medical debt relief, and assistance in emergencies. Leaders relieved of financial hardship increase their capacity and joy for healthy ministry.

- **VITAL RIGHT SHAPED MINISTRY**

Vital congregations create cultures that call their people to act out of shared values to live into the mission of God in their context—a mission fueled by their discernment of God's pull on them from God's future. A vital congregation will be innovative, nimble, and agile, willing to challenge assumptions. It will be willing to experiment, willing to engage in evaluation, and willing to trust God to guide their future.

Through a palette of resources, 3E will help congregations of any size see how the Spirit is prodding us to be agile and adaptive, to be freed from the "that's how we've always done it" mindset, and to respond in bold faith: "right-shaping" their ministries to align with God's call to mission to be Church Becoming.



**First Step: \$ 350,000**  
**Next Step: \$ 100,000**  
**Campaign Goal: \$ 450,000**

The Lilly Endowment awarded the Rocky Mountain Synod a dollar-for-dollar matching grant and challenged us to develop a strategy to sustain this critical program. Therefore, the first step is to raise \$350,000 needed to meet our Lilly Endowment matching grant requirement. The next step is to raise an additional \$100,000 to ensure this program has the infrastructure and sustainability to continue for years to come.



# NEXT FAITHFUL STEP BETTER TOGETHER

## EDUCATE, EQUIP, ENACT (3E)

The Lilly Endowment awarded the Rocky Mountain Synod a dollar-for-dollar matching grant and challenged us to develop a strategy to sustain this critical program. Therefore, the first step is to raise \$350,000 needed to meet our Lilly Endowment matching grant requirement. The next step is to raise an additional \$100,000 to ensure this program has the infrastructure and sustainability to continue for years to come.

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## FUNDRAISING GOALS

INITIATIVES	FIRST STEP	NEXT STEP
3E	\$ 350,000	\$ 100,000
EIL	\$ 250,000	\$ 100,000
MMRC	\$ 80,000	\$ 200,000
LC	\$ 75,000	\$ 158,000
Campaign Expenses	\$ 100,000	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 855,000</b>	<b>\$ 558,000</b>
Racial Justice Ministry Tithe	\$ 95,000	\$ 62,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 950,000</b>	<b>\$ 620,000</b>
<b>CAMPAIGN GOAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,570,000</b>	

## CAMPAIGN STANDARD OF GIFTS

# GIFTS NEEDED	3-YEAR COMMITMENT LEVEL	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
1	\$250,000	\$250,000
2	\$125,000	\$500,000
3	\$75,000	\$725,000
5	\$50,000	\$975,000
6	\$25,000	\$1,125,000
7	\$20,000	\$1,265,000
8	\$15,000	\$1,385,000
10	\$10,000	\$1,485,000
15	\$5,000	\$1,560,000
Many	<\$1,000	\$1,570,000
<b>TOTAL 300</b>		<b>\$1,570,000</b>



### CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR:

**Rev. Ron Beckman**  
rbeckman@rmselca.org

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## When do my gift payments for this campaign begin?

Unless you prefer a different timetable, the payment period begins anytime in 2020. Our Letter of Intent Form has a place for you to indicate how and when you will fulfill your commitment.

## What is the duration of the campaign?

The duration of the Campaign is three years: 2020, 2021, and 2022. However, if you feel that you can make a larger gift by extending the time, you are welcome to do so. You can also make a one-time gift or make gifts in less than three years.

## Do all gifts to the Campaign have to be cash?

No. Gifts of property, appreciated stock, mutual funds, cash value from insurance policies or policy loan proceeds, Certificates of Deposit (CD's), bonds, and annuities, or even personal property are just some of the ways you can give. You could also consider in-kind gifts needed for property improvements. All these gifts may be subject to restrictions and limitations so be sure to consult your financial adviser or tax accountant, as well as our Campaign Director to confirm proper receipt of your generosity. **Important Note: Do not sell property yourself or you will be unable to avoid capital gains tax.**

## Can I give a gift from my IRA?

If you are 70 ½ years of age or older and own an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you may have the option to transfer money directly from your IRA to the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA, up to \$100,000 per person, per tax year, without having to pay tax on the charitable gift. Contact your IRA provider and ask to complete a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

## What is the advantage of giving appreciated stocks or property?

You can avoid capital gains taxes and potentially receive a tax deduction for making a charitable gift. To make a gift of appreciated stock, have your broker transfer shares directly from your account to the Rocky Mountain Synod. Our Letter of Intent form includes stock transfer information.

## How can I make a gift or what if I have more questions?

Contact our Rocky Mountain Synod Campaign Director, Rev. Ron Beckman – or our ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner, Tina Kvitek to discuss your options and answer any additional questions: [www.rmselfca.org/synod/staff](http://www.rmselfca.org/synod/staff)

Also, be sure to check out the Campaign page on the Rocky Mountain Synod web page for more information and resources associated to each of our initiatives: [www.rmselfca.org/next-faithful-step](http://www.rmselfca.org/next-faithful-step)



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10/28/2020