

Northern Illinois Synod Bishop Election Report
Research and Evaluation
Office of the Presiding Bishop
January 2016

Territory

The Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America covers 13,000 square miles. The smallest area covered by a synod is the Saint Paul Area, 1,535 square miles; the largest area covered is Alaska, 571,951 square miles. The median territory covered is 22,000 miles. Twenty synods in the ELCA cover 10,000 square miles or less. Figure 1 shows the territory covered for the seven synods in Region 5 that border Northern Illinois.

Figure 1: Territory of the Synods in Square Miles

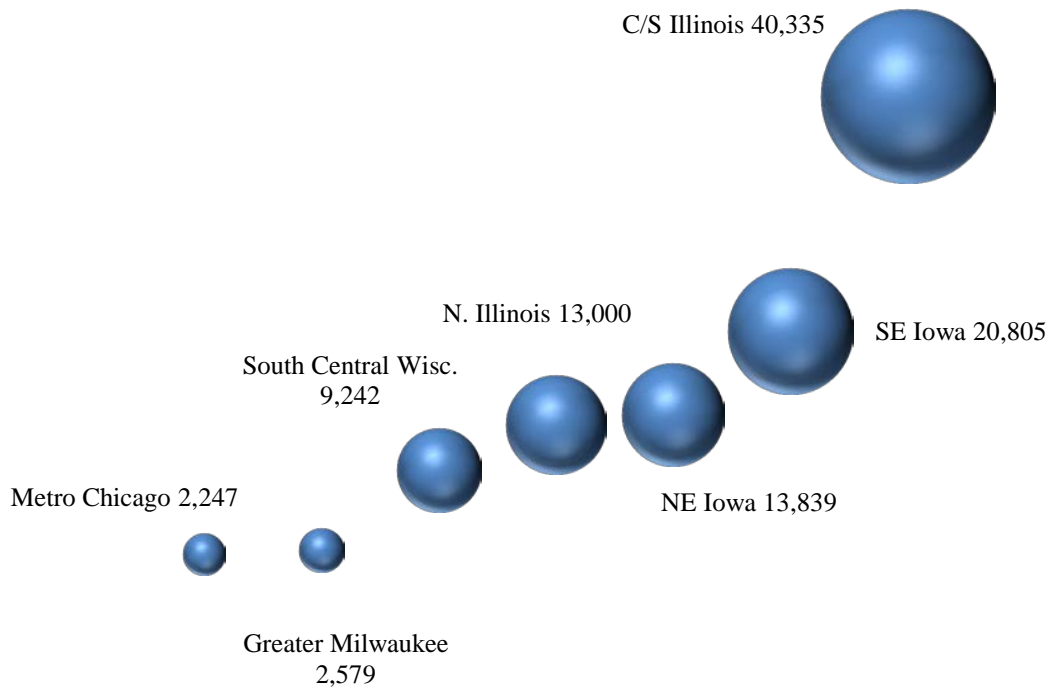
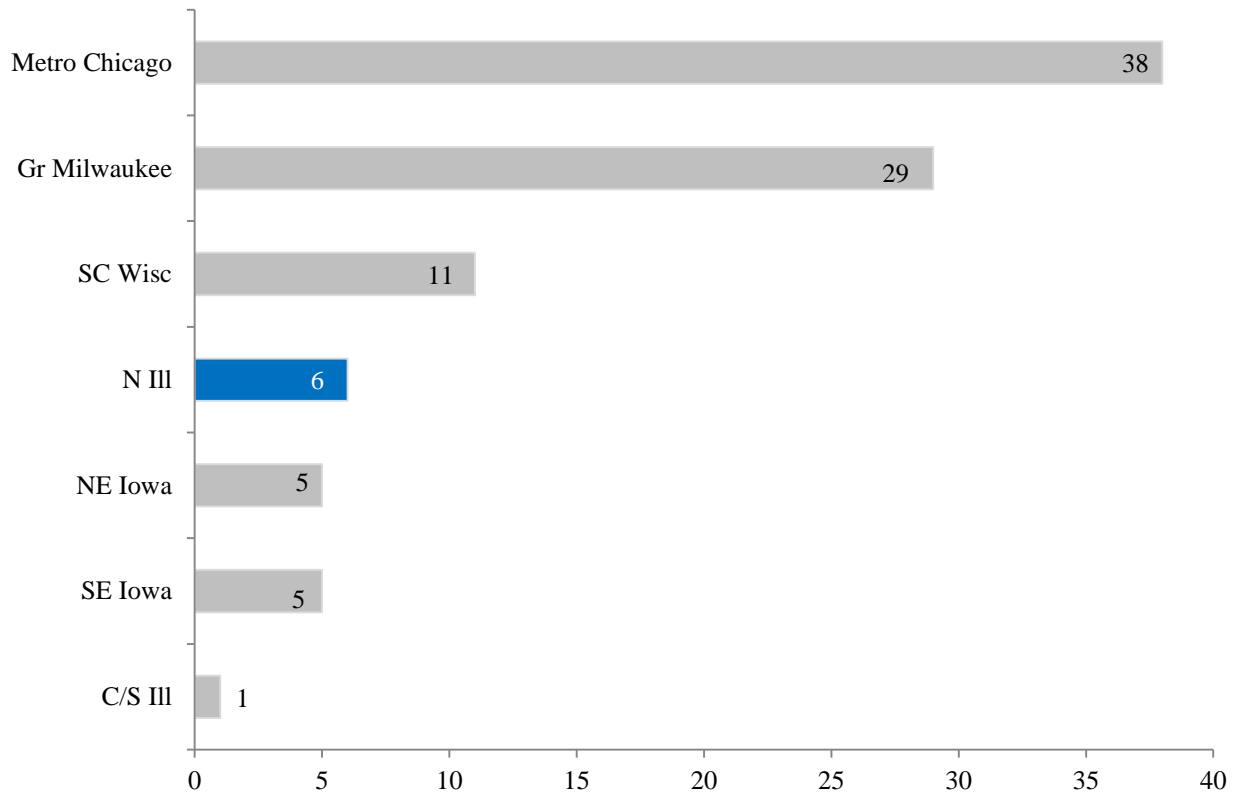


Figure 2 shows the number of Lutherans per square mile in these synods. There were 71,634 baptized ELCA Lutherans in the Northern Illinois Synod in 2014, which is six baptized members per square mile. This compares to almost 38 ELCA Lutherans per square mile in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod or one per square mile in Central/Southern Illinois.

According to the 2010 US Census, the population of the territory of the Northern Illinois Synod was 2,286,843. The 2015 estimate is 2,276,192, and the population is predicted to be 2,272,694 by 2020. Baptized ELCA Lutherans account for 3.1 percent of the population currently. In 2000, ELCA Lutherans accounted for 5.0 percent of the population (98,069 out of 1,952,499 people).

Figure 2: Baptized ELCA Lutherans per Square Mile



Baptized Membership and Worship Attendance

At the end of 2014, the Northern Illinois Synod had 151 congregations. In 2010, there were 154.

In 2014, the baptized membership of the synod was 71,634 or an average of 481 per congregation. The average size of a congregation in the ELCA is 401. Also, in 2014, the congregations of the synod baptized 804 children and 71 adults while also affirming the faith of 878 adults.

In 2014, the aggregate worship attendance on a typical Sunday in the synod was 17,703 (25% of the baptized members) with an average of 120 in worship per congregation. (The average for the ELCA in 2014 was 109 or 27% of the baptized.)

Sixty-four percent of the congregations in Northern Illinois had 100 or fewer people in worship in 2014 (see Figure 3) while these same congregations accounted for 32 percent of all worshipers in the synod. Fifty-three percent of the people in the pews on Sunday are in churches worshipping 150 people or more, yet these congregations account for 22 percent of all the congregations in the synod. In 2010, the aggregate weekly worship attendance in the synod was 20,886. The average number attending worship

per congregation in 2010 was 136. Since 2004, the percentage of congregations with 100 or fewer in worship has increased from 37 percent to 64 percent. The percentage of congregations worshipping over 200 per week has decreased from 27 percent to 13 percent in the same time frame.

Figure 3: Percent of Congregations and Worshipers by Typical Worship Attendance for the Congregations of the Northern Illinois Synod in 2014

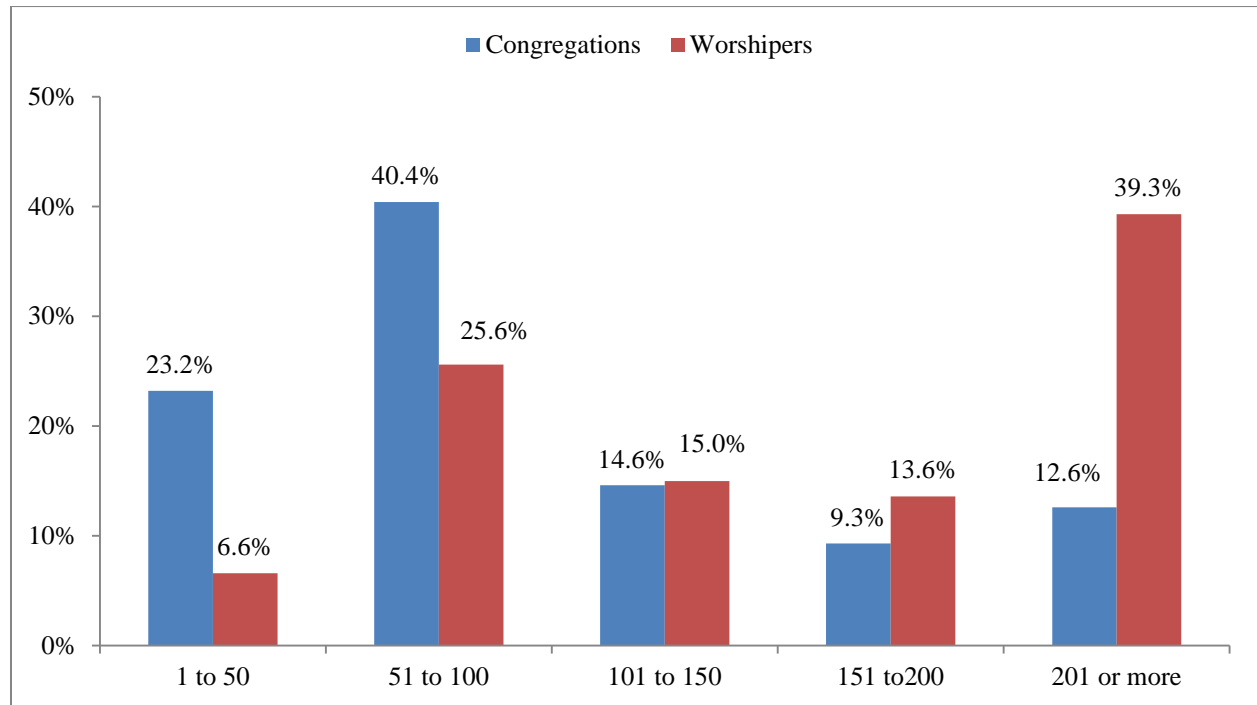


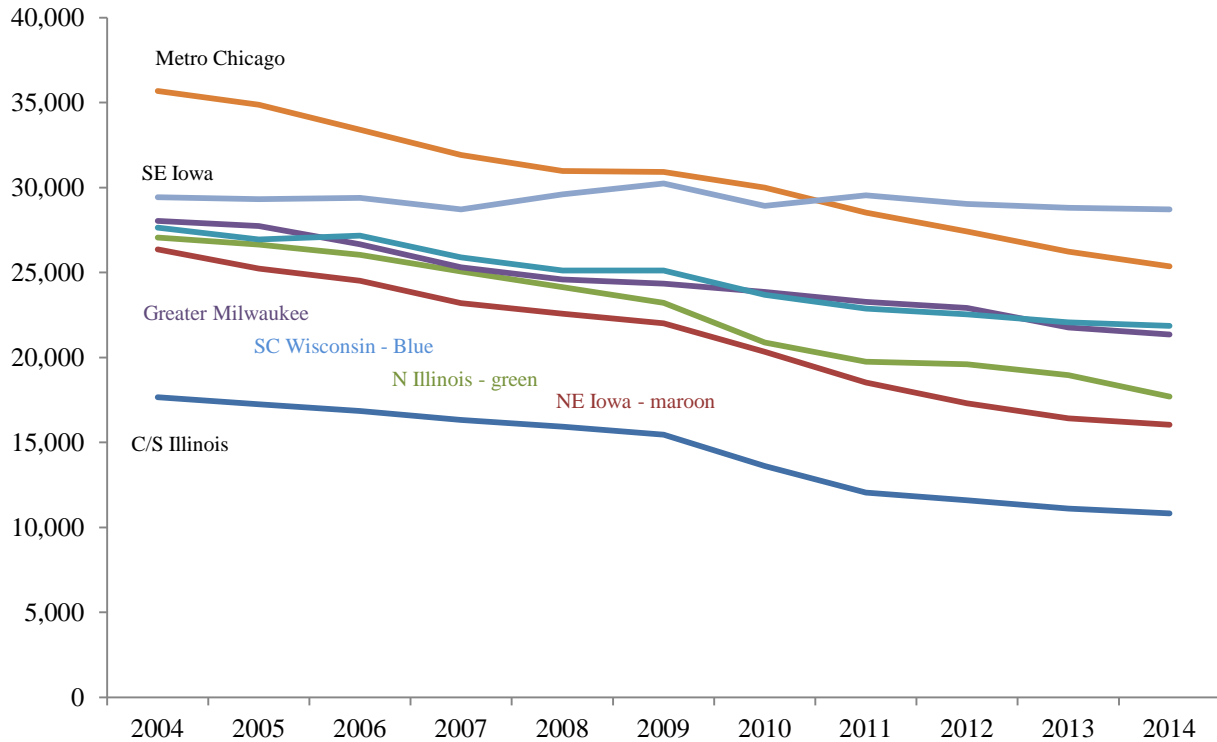
Table 1 provides a comparison of average weekly worship attendance for Northern Illinois and its six neighboring synods in Region 5.

Table 1: 2014 Average Weekly Attendance for Seven Synods in Region 5

Synod	Average Weekly Attendance	Percent of Baptized Members Attending Worship
Southeastern Iowa	28,721	30%
Metropolitan Chicago	25,359	29%
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	21,871	23%
Greater Milwaukee	21,360	28%
Northern Illinois	17,703	25%
Northeastern Iowa	16,038	22%
Central/Southern Illinois	10,835	26%

Figure 4 presents the trend in worship attendance for these same seven synods in Region 5 for 2004 to 2014. All synods other than Southeastern Iowa¹ show consistent losses over this ten-year period. The greatest percentage declines in worshipers were in Central/Southern Illinois and Northeastern Iowa (39% each). Northern Illinois declined by 35 percent over this time period. Metropolitan Chicago, Greater Milwaukee and the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin decreased by 29 percent, 24 percent and 21 percent, respectively.

Figure 4: Change in Worship Attendance from 2004 to 2014



Giving

Total giving (undesignated and designated giving) from the members of the Northern Illinois Synod in 2014 was \$34,704,209; the average amount given per attendee was \$1,960 (see Table 2).

In 2004, total giving to the congregations in the synod was \$37,526,929. The average amount given per worship attendee in 2004 was \$1,387 (\$1,738 in 2014 dollars). Despite giving more, these attendees have been unable to offset losses due to the overall decline in worship attendance.

The amount of total giving being spent on operating expenses has increased from 79 percent in 2004 to 91 percent in 2014.

Mission support is the amount of money given through congregations for the ministry of synods and the ELCA churchwide organization. In the Northern Illinois Synod, the amount of mission support given per worship attendee in 2014 was \$129 (see Table 3). Of these seven Region 5 synods, Northern Illinois

¹ The lack of decline in Southeastern Iowa is due to one large congregation, Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines.

was second only to Central/Southern Illinois in terms of mission support per worship attendee and higher than the average amount of \$104.

Table 2: Total Giving per Worship Attendee

Synod	Total Giving (Designated and Undesignated) per Worship Attendee	Total Giving per Worship Attendee - 2004²
Metropolitan Chicago	\$2,284	\$2,092
Central/Southern Illinois	\$2,143	\$1,677
ELCA All Synods	\$2,002	\$1,790
Greater Milwaukee	\$1,971	\$1,793
Northern Illinois	\$1,960	\$1,738
Southeastern Iowa	\$1,849	\$1,646
Northeastern Iowa	\$1,811	\$1,300
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	\$1,803	\$1,640

Table 3: Giving to Mission Support per Worship Attendee

Synod	Giving to Mission Support per Worship Attendee
Central/Southern Illinois	\$134
Northern Illinois	\$129
Metropolitan Chicago	\$116
ELCA All Synods	\$98
Greater Milwaukee	\$95
Northeastern Iowa	\$94
Southeastern Iowa	\$89
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	\$70

The Synod Office and Its Financial Resources

Section 10.21. of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* outlines the primary purposes of synod offices.

10.21. Each synod, in partnership with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

² Adjusted for inflation to reflect 2014 dollars. For example, the actual dollar amount for Northern Illinois in 2004 was \$1,387.

- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered leaders in the synod;
- b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

Despite the consistency of responsibilities, the amount of money available to synod offices to carry out these responsibilities varies widely. Table 4 shows mission support figures for these same seven synods in Region 5 in 2014. Mission support income to the Northern Illinois Synod was \$2,939,653; 55 percent was passed on to the churchwide organization.

Table 4: Mission Support for Seven Synods in Region 5 for 2014

Synod	From Congregations	Percent to Churchwide³	Amount to Churchwide	Amount Remaining in the Synod
Metropolitan Chicago	\$2,939,653	53.25%	\$1,565,365	\$1,374,288
Southeastern Iowa	\$2,554,460	53.50%	\$1,366,636	\$1,187,824
Northern Illinois	\$2,279,347	55.00%	\$1,253,641	\$1,025,706
Greater Milwaukee	\$2,036,573	55.00%	\$1,120,115	\$916,458
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	\$1,536,573	55.00%	\$845,115	\$691,458
Northeastern Iowa	\$1,515,485	40.00%	\$606,194	\$909,291
Central/Southern Illinois	\$1,450,270	56.00%	\$812,151	\$638,119

Figure 5 presents the amount of mission support income passed on from the congregations of Northern Illinois to the synod office.

³ The average percentage of mission support sent to the ELCA Churchwide Organization by the 65 synods in 2014 was 48.32 percent.

Figure 5: Congregational Giving to Mission Support for the Northern Illinois Synod from 2004 to 2014

