



## Section C – Synod Ministry Reports

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## Candidacy Committee

The Candidacy Committee accompanies candidates in their journey toward becoming Rostered Ministers. A Pastor is a Minister of Word and Sacrament. A Deacon is a minister of Word and Service. People who have discerned a call to rostered ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America enter into the candidacy process and work to develop an understanding of four basic principles: 1. We are church; 2. We are Lutheran; 3. We are church together; and 4. We are church for the sake of the world.

The path to rostered leadership in the ELCA is a partnership between candidates, congregations, synods, seminaries and the Churchwide expression of the church. The Candidacy Committee encourages all members of the synod to identify, nurture, support, and encourage persons who possess gifts for rostered ministry in the ELCA. Please send names and contact information to Pr. Beaman or Pr. Bright.

### Candidates

The various stages of Candidacy continue to ebb and flow as is the norm. As of March 2024, there are ten people in the Candidacy process. This includes three applicants, one currently on internship, one beginning internship this summer/fall, two recently approved/assigned and two on leave from candidacy. We also have at least two people who are actively discerning a call to ministry who have not as of yet completed an application. Four of the candidates are/will be in the distributive learning programs.

### Committee Members

Rev. Rosanne Anderson	Bishop Craig Satterlee
Rev. Haley Vay Beaman (Chair)	Rev. Dr. Joy Schroeder (Seminary Representative)
Rev. Christina Bright (Director)	Rev. Denise Russell (Candidacy and Leadership Manager, Region 6)
Mr. Kirk Hoffman	Rev. Travis Wilson
Ms. Mary Sue Kamens	
Mr. Robert Kamphuis	
Rev. Jonathan Reid (Secretary)	

Please continue to keep our candidates and committee members in prayer as future leaders are preparing for ministry in the church.

Peace be with you,

Rev. Christina Bright  
Director of Candidacy

## Creation Care Resources

### The Environmental Stewardship Task Force

Past Synod Assemblies have urged individuals and congregations to take action and advocate in defense of our wounded creation and support of those communities most impacted by the climate crisis. We of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force want to offer a few resources to help in understanding the Climate Crisis and suggestions for taking action.

#### Organizations:

- Lutherans Restoring Creation: This is your one stop source for educational and inspirational reading; for creation centered worship materials; for upcoming events and webinars and suggestions for effective actions and advocacy.
- League of Women's Voters and Sierra Club: This fall both of these organizations will survey candidates for public office about their perspective on climate policy and make their responses available to the public.
- Michigan Interfaith Power & Light: Several of our congregations have worked with this organization in setting up green teams, exploring renewable energy projects and hosting events. Project Director Jennifer Young can provide counsel on solar installations at no cost or with very attractive low interest loans from member investors.
- Synod's Environmental Stewardship Task Force: We can provide coaching for green teams either beginning or existing and speakers/preachers for your climate focused events/worship. Contact Pastor Paul Busekist, [paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org](mailto:paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org)

#### Books and Videos:

Lutherans Restoring Creation has many suggestions for reading and viewing on their website. Here are two books and one video that we call to your attention.

1. The Planet You Inherit:
2. Letters to My Grandchildren When Uncertainty's Sure Thing by Larry Rasmussen
3. Climate Church, Climate World: by Jim Antal
4. "The Most Important Thing You Can Do to Fight Climate Change", TED talk by Katherine Hayhoe

#### Donations and Advocacy

You become the resource through financial support of the organizations that are effective in caring for creation. You also have the power of voice and vote and prayer in promoting effective responses to the climate crisis in your church, local communities, elections at every level.

We on the Environmental Stewardship Task Force imagine the Spirit brooding over God's wounded creation and asking all of us... **If not now, when? If not you, who?"**

## Global Mission Table

*Pastor Megan Crouch, Chair*

Greetings and peace to you all from the Global Mission Table and from our Companion Synods in Honduras and Papua New Guinea. 2023 was a big year for our synod's global mission efforts and 2024 is shaping up to be an even bigger one.

The first big development is the sad news that our relationship with the Latvian Lutheran Church has come to an end. The Latvian Lutheran Church has historically been more aligned with the policies and practices of the Missouri Synod and has also found partnership with the Russian Orthodox Church to be helpful to their ministries. Our churches have been growing apart for years, but the war in Ukraine and ELCA support for Ukraine have all but ended our relationship with Latvia. While it is always sad to see a partnership come to end, we trust that God is walking with us and with our former partners in Latvia and will continue to work in the world through both our church bodies.

Our partnership with the churches in both Papua New Guinea and Honduras remains strong!

In PNG we had two exciting developments. C.J. Clark organized funds to help finish building a new church in Lei, and for the first time in many years the ELCA is sending a missionary team to serve in PNG for four years. Pastor Andrew Romevik will be teaching at Martin Luther Seminary and his wife Meredith is a nurse. They will be serving with their two children Hans and Betrice. We ask that the synod hold them in prayer over the next several years! Finally, we are looking forward to sending a small team of delegates from our Synod to the PNG Consultation this July. This is an opportunity to collaborate with our partners there and explore what our next steps will be as ministry partners.

We are seeing wonderful work happening through our partnership with the ICLH in Honduras. In 2023 our synod sent \$15,000 to help support the Health for Life Ministry run by the Lutheran Church of Honduras. This program provided health screenings and treatments for 54 children throughout the country. Children were treated for stomach parasites, UTIs, tonsillitis, various rashes and skin conditions, and more. Children also received dental care, having cavities filled, teeth extracted when needed, and getting fluoride treatments. The program also trained volunteers to raise awareness about common health conditions and helped people get basic cancer screenings and treatment. Finally, this program supports several HIV/ Aids Support groups. Our Synod sent two delegates to meet with the ICLH to the Latin American / Caribbean Consultation in Texas last fall to talk about how we can continue this amazing work. We are sending a mission team of six people to visit communities and ministry sites, hold a training workshop for new health volunteers, and provide spiritual care and encouragement for our partners there.

While we can often feel like we are alone in doing God's work, it is important to remember that God's Work is being done by hands all around the world. People are being fed, healed, taught, nurtured, and loved by the church in many lands and languages. In John 3:16-17 we are reminded that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'" In our partnerships with our companion synods, we see that God is indeed at work throughout the world, and that none of us are alone in doing God's Work with Our Hands.

## New and Renewing Mission Table

The New and Renewing Mission Table works within the synod to promote outreach through community engagement, evangelism, supporting ministries in poverty, cultivating new worshipping communities, supporting congregational vitality resources, and supporting campus ministries and congregational outreach. In 2023 the table:

- Supported funding to Zion Saginaw and Trinity, Battle Creek as Strategic Congregation. These are congregations doing significant ministry in economically challenged areas that need some basic financial support to keep ministry going. Zion closed October 1, 2023, and sold their building to a neighborhood congregation which will continue many of their community programs
- Provided funding and support to Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities including United Campus Christian Fellowship – campus ministry at Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids Community College, and Kendall School of Design; and South Sudanese Christ Lutheran, Wyoming (current support on hold pending raising up of a new servant leader)
- Provides funding for MissionInsite which is a demographic resource used by the Director for Evangelical Mission to provide demographic profiles of the community surrounding congregations and projections for the future. Providing demographic information to guide community outreach and programing
- Distributed \$52,500 (including a \$13,000 grant from the ELCA) to four Lutheran Campus Ministries in our synod: One Community at University Lutheran – E. Lansing; United Campus Christian Fellowship – Grand Rapids; Immanuel, Mt. Pleasant; and Matrix – Kalamazoo
- Manages an endowment fund with grants available for new outreach ideas for congregations. The grant application is on the New and Renewing Mission Table pages on the synod webpage <https://www.mittensynod.org/mission/outreach-committee-new-and-redeveloping-congregations/> similar to Connect Grants
- Provides support for congregational vitality including access to the ELCA’s online Vital Congregations Training.
- REVIVE: Current projects include providing copies of You Are Witnesses to These Things books for evangelism to congregation councils. Currently over 140 copies of the book have been distributed to 15 congregations.

### **Committee members**

Pastor Kara Shaw, Chair  
Richard Klender  
Pastor Kjersten Sullivan  
William Butchart  
Pastor Nikki Smith  
Mitchel Anderson

Pastor Sarah Samuelson  
Pastor David Sprang, Assistant to the Bishop and  
Director for Evangelical Mission

## Publicly Engaged Church Table

Publicly Engaged Church Table, with the help of the Holy Spirit, declares the good news of Jesus to a world so desperately in need of it through works of restoration and reconciliation in the communities of our Synod. In pursuit of justice and peace we begin each meeting with God's word, prayer and reflection, and lift up social justice issues such as Christian Nationalism, immigration, decisions affecting transgender youth, abortion, human trafficking, the implementing of countless voter restrictions laws, Ukraine/Russia. We wrestle with how to live out our Christian faith in response.

Task forces address some of these issues:

- **Human Trafficking**
- **Open Hearts, Open Church**
- **Disability Ministries**
- **Hunger**
- **Environmental** – see the Creation Care Resources included in this booklet of reports

Grounded in God's love and forgiveness, a publicly engaged church is well equipped to live and serve here and now, in the world, with all of its complexities, tensions and ambiguities. Each year the Publicly Engaged Church Table awards grants up to \$1,000 to encourage and support ministries serving local communities. These grants may be used as 'seed' money to begin a new ministry, to continue an established ministry, or to expand and enhance an ecumenical effort. Invitations for grant applications should be distributed in October.

## Paul E. Trapp Memorial Fund Endowment Grant Committee

The Paul E. Trapp Memorial Fund Endowment Grant was established for people orientated ministry in the North parts of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. The Sunrise and Traverse conferences as well as the northern part (north of M-61 approximately) of the Bay Conference make up the service area for the Trapp Grant. Each year the committee reviews grant applications and uses spendable interest earnings from the Trapp Endowment to fulfill grant requests. Typically grant requests are funded for \$1500-\$2000, depending on how many applications are received and how much money we have to disburse. In order to fund as many grants as possible, the committee made the decision that \$2000 is our maximum grant amount.

This year the Trapp Grant Committee Awarded a total of \$17,596 to various northern ministry projects:

- Food Pantry at Bethany Lutheran, Kaleva, MI
- Kid's Club and Blessing Box at Christ the King Lutheran, Gladwin, MI
- Paper Pantry at Cross of Christ Lutheran, Petoskey, MI
- Community Outreach at Feast of Victory Lutheran, Acme, MI
- Martin Luther King Jr. projects at Grace Lutheran, Alpena, MI
- Coats for Kids and Feeding the Hungry at Grace Lutheran, East Tawas, MI
- Little Free Food Pantry and Library at New Life Lutheran, Spruce, MI
- Community Meals at Peace Lutheran, Gaylord, MI
- Community Gatherings at St. James Lutheran, Moltke, MI
- Gratitude Lunches at St. Paul Lutheran, Alpena, MI
- Supporting Families in need at Trinity Lutheran, Ocqueoc, MI

Grant Applications for use in the following year are typically available in November/December, funds are disbursed by the end of January for use in that calendar year. In other words, applications for Trapp Grants for 2025 will be available in November/December of 2024, and disbursed in January of 2025.

### **Committee Members**

Rev. Christina Bright, Rev. Paul Busekist, Rev. Emily Olsen, Ms. Denise Palmer, Bishop Craig Satterlee, Rev. David Sprang

The committee extends thanks to Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek for providing fund updates, answering all of our questions, and processing disbursements. The committee would also like to thank Ms. Ann Stavros for sending out grant applications, and routing questions, concerns, and information to the appropriate people! Thank you both!!

Respectfully, and on behalf of the committee,

Rev. Christina Bright