



# Upstate New York Synod

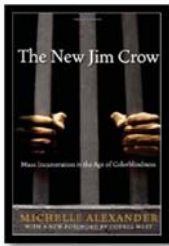
## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

### A REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

### Conference Assembly – Spring 2016

“[Christ] creates in himself one new humanity...thus making peace...” Eph 2:15b



#### Racial Justice

As your congregation and voting members move toward the June Assembly, please take time to read The New Jim Crow book and use the study guide, to participate in bible studies around this topic. We encourage you to attend your conference Spring Assembly

where the topic will also be addressed.

As part of carrying on the work of Christ in tearing down the barriers that separate us as a people of God, and removing the hostility that is between us, through the cross of Christ and the love poured out there, we hope you will join us in this important work of living into the kingdom of God.

#### Bishop's Convocation

Approximately ninety people attended the second annual Bishop's Convocation on March 12. Held at St. Michael's in Camillus, the focus of the convocation was the Use of the Means of Grace, setting a base line for our approach to Worship and Word and Sacraments.

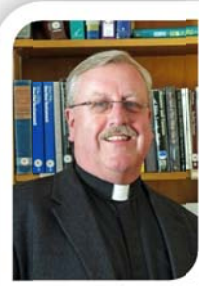


Pastor Kevin Strickland, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Executive for Worship for the ELCA, led the group through a visual presentation, conversation, small group discussion and hymn singing to ground those present in a deeper understanding of what it is we do as the church when we gather for worship.

Lunch was provided by folks from St. Michael's and enjoyed by all. A word of great thanks to all of the people at St. Michael's and Pastor Janet Fechner for hosting us so graciously on such a beautiful spring day. Plans are already underway for next year's convocation which will occur at approximately the same time on the calendar. Watch the Upstate Update for further details.

#### Synod Challenge

Within a couple of weeks of the 2015 Synod Assembly, where a deficit was announced for the budget, the people of God at Emmanuel, Stuyvesant Falls sent a letter and a check for \$218.00 requesting I challenge all the congregations of the synod to make similar contributions. As a result, we have been blessed with a total of \$3,902.00 given by generous congregations across the synod.



While the deficit was not eradicated, what took place was a willingness on the part of some to go above and beyond their normal giving in order to help support the work of the church in greater fashion. They have been a gift and a blessing.

Thanks to all who participated in the challenge. I am deeply appreciative of your gifts and giving and pray that God will continue to challenge all of us to consider our blessings and then give with generous hearts.

#### In Christ One New Humanity

#### 2016 Synod Assembly

*'Christ creates in himself one new humanity...thus making peace.'*

Ephesians.2:15b



Registration opens April 1, 2016. The registration fee is still \$95. Synod Assembly is open to all who want to attend, not just rostered leaders and congregational voting members. Mark your calendars NOW to join us June 5-7, 2016 in Rochester. Be sure that your congregation's voting members are signed up for the synod's Upstate Update where, beginning March 16, you will be able to find all the information about our 2016 Assembly. Sign-up on the synod website, <http://upstatenysynod.org> (bottom right corner)

## 2016 Churchwide Assembly

Those elected to serve as voting members to the 2016 ELCA

Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans are eagerly awaiting the opportunity before them. A pre-churchwide meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2016 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Fayetteville. This gathering gives them the opportunity to meet one another, review key agenda items and otherwise prepare for the work that will be before them at the Assembly.

*Please keep our Churchwide Assembly voting members in your prayers.*

Bishop John Macholz	Mr. Thomas Madden
Rev. Lee Miller III	Rev. Gail Wolling
Mr. Rick Mollenkopf Grill	Mr. Tom Henry
Mr. Jim Osborne	Mrs. Patsy Glista, AIM
Rev. Krista Mendoza	Mrs. Mary Schwartz
Ms. Sharon Hamilton	Mr. Ryan Lotocki
Rev. Pamela Hoh	Ms. Meridith Cavanagh
Mr. Sohail Akhtar	



## Upstate New York Synod Awarded \$25,000 for Congregational Renewal

In December, 2015 with the guidance of the Synod Council and Bishop Macholz, the Director for Evangelical Mission, Rev. Norma Malfatti, submitted a grant proposal for just over \$21,000 to the Always Being Made New: Campaign for the ELCA to help congregations in Upstate New York engage in a three-fold faith formation adventure centered in stewardship and generosity, mission and evangelism, and nurturing a new ecology of faith formation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The team that reviewed the proposal was so excited for Upstate New York's plans they awarded us \$25,000! Here's what it looks like:



The Generosity Project is a ½ day interactive and intergenerational workshop modeling a congregation's potential to connect and equip people of all ages as stewards of God's love and abundance. The Stewardship Table will be available to lead congregations through this beginning in the Fall.

Transformational Ministry is a 12-18 month process with 4 workshops led by the Regional Renewal Tables for congregation leaders to gain tools for spiritual renewal, evangelism, and mission to take back home and help their congregation grow in mission and ministry. This is not a boiler plate program that can be applied the same way in all places. Instead it is a process focused on connecting with God, connecting with each other, and connecting with the world – the three sections the Congregational Vitality Assessment that many have taken in our synod. The Regional Renewal Tables will be ready to host workshops this Summer.

Finally, six congregations in our synod will take part in Vibrant Faith University, a two-year online curriculum that helps leaders develop the knowledge, skills, and practices of faith formation that engages all ages intergenerationally; nurtures family faith and equips parents to talk about God and faith at home; utilizes and develops digitally-enabled strategies for faith formation; and much more. The six leaders will help form a new Faith Formation Table, share their experience with VFU and be a support team for congregations and their Faith Formation/Christian Education teams.

To learn more visit your Synod website or e-mail/ call Rev. Malfatti at [nmalfatti@upstatenysynod.org](mailto:nmalfatti@upstatenysynod.org) / 315-299-4955.

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## SYNOD COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

*Our Synod Council took the following actions over the winter months—*

- ◇ *Approved contracting with Benefit Resources to administer the synod's health reimbursements;*
- ◇ *Endorsed Bishop's signature on South Wedge Mission's covenant with the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester once it is finalized;*
- ◇ *Approved application of the Upstate New York Synod for recognized status as the responsible entity for Lutheran Disaster Response on our territory;*
- ◇ *Approved adoption of Synod's Employee Handbook; and*
- ◇ *Mission Support increased by \$8,000 this year. Synod Council expresses their heart-felt thanks.*

**Stay connected with your synod.** Find events, receive updates on healthcare, assembly and get the latest announcements. Sign up for the Upstate Update at <http://upstatenysynod.org>. Scroll down the right side and enter your email address today. The synod also includes resources and articles in **The Lutheran** magazine quarterly. The synod subscription plan is available at \$3.95 per subscription and includes the issues with our inserts.

Our Facebook page has been updated. Visit us at <https://www.facebook.com/upstatenysynod>