

## The 4 Gs

By Bishop John Macholz

“Tell me about Jesus.” It’s a question I’ve asked candidates entering the synod’s candidacy program. It’s an attempt to get them to talk about him, share their early beginnings with him and tell me about how he is a companion on the way with them. It sounds like a simple question, doesn’t it? But it’s sometimes easier asked than answered.

As I began this ministry in the office of bishop 2 1/2 years ago, I often asked this question of people whose paths crossed mine as I moved about the

synod. I discovered that it is sometimes a challenging question to answer. Yet it seems to me to be the central question of our life and faith: Who is Jesus? If we can’t answer that, then we are in bigger trouble than I imagined.

In thinking about that reality, it seemed to me that this was a place to start as we seek to discern where the Spirit is leading us as a synod. It begins with

Jesus, and that suggests a strong grounding in the resurrected Lord and Savior whose new life we celebrate in the season of Easter. Yet we can’t stop at that point. It is from that understanding that the “Four Gs” came about:

**Grounded in Christ Jesus**  
**Growing in our Witness**  
**Giving of our Bounty**  
**Graced for the World**

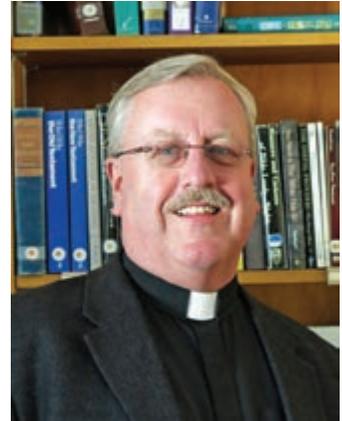
One leads into the other and creates a progression of steps to take as we grow into not only our faith but also the ability to proclaim it, share it and witness it to others and the world. How well do we know the redemptive narrative of Scripture? How comfortable are we in witnessing (I know, that’s an uncomfortable word for Lutherans) to others that

which we believe regarding the Risen Christ? How do we deepen and expand our understanding and ability to proclaim the good news of God in Christ in our everyday lives? So many questions, so little time.

As this goes to press we are finalizing a job description for a director of faith formation who will work with us collectively and individually as the church in this place to deepen our relationship with Jesus. Together we will return to the basics, which some of us have done already. The Small Catechism, Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, among other things, will be brought to the forefront. And, this should go without saying—prayer will surround us in the process as we move forward.

This plan and process is still in its infancy stages. At presstime in May, the Rev. Norma Malfatti, our director for evangelical mission, and I had visited five conferences to share the work. The final two visits were scheduled to be completed by synod assembly. As you read this, we should be beginning the journey together. Watch for continued information on this and new work beginning that will ground us in this Jesus as we look to share the good news with the world. Please join me as we begin.

In Jesus Christ,  
*John S. Macholz, bishop*



Bishop John S. Macholz



GROUNDING IN CHRIST JESUS  
GROWING IN OUR WITNESS  
GIVING OF OUR BOUNTY  
GRACED FOR THE WORLD

**The Upstate New York Synod** has a new look! In the spring and early summer our website underwent a major overhaul. Check it out and please send us your feedback.

# Celebrate Campus Ministry Sunday, Oct. 1

Our five campus ministries invite all congregations across the Upstate New York Synod to join in the first Campus Ministry Sunday on Oct. 1. As chaplains from these ministries met over the past year, some of the questions they pondered were:

- How can campus ministries connect with youth in congregations as they plan for college?
- How do congregations stay connected with their students who head off to college?
- Campus ministries encounter the ways that young adults experience faith and are impacting the world. How can this experience be shared with the larger church, especially our congregations?
- What are the best ways to reach out to the young adults on our campuses who do not know Jesus Christ and his church?
- How can we effectively help students bring God into the decisions they are making?
- How can congregations more readily engage with campus ministry?

Campus ministries, together with synod staff, have begun increasing our visibility. Beginning in February, each campus ministry began taking a turn sharing “Midweek Musings,” often written by students, for a month. In that month, an article is also written for the “Upstate Update.”

Oct. 1 is designated as “Campus Ministry Sunday.” Resources will be available in July to help congregations learn about campus ministry and promote and engage in activities for October. The resources, available at [upstatenysynod.org](http://upstatenysynod.org), include prayers, bulletin inserts and newsletter camera-ready pieces, as well as information on how to arrange for students to join you in your congregation to share their faith experiences while studying. If you can’t do Oct. 1, pick any Sunday

in October—the goal is to share information about this amazing ministry in our midst.

The mission of campus ministry in the ELCA is to invite people in academic settings to engage more deeply with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the community that bears his name so they can discover and fulfill their vocation as disciples. It is not just a ministry for Lutherans. Our campus ministries are supported in part by your congregation’s mission support to the synod, by ELCA dollars and through their own fundraising.

Here is a list of our synod’s five campus ministries and where to learn more about them:

- Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry, University of Albany; the Rev. Sandra Damhof, chaplain ([ualbanycornerstone.org](http://ualbanycornerstone.org)).
- LuMin Buffalo serving campuses of University at Buffalo, Daemen; Buffalo State; and commuters from five other colleges; the Rev. Steve Biegner, chaplain (Facebook at **LuMin of WNY**).
- St. Luke Lutheran Church Campus Ministry, Ithaca; the Rev. Rick Bair, campus pastor ([stlukeithaca.org/campus-ministry](http://stlukeithaca.org/campus-ministry)).
- RIT Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry; the Rev. Craig Swanson, chaplain ([rit.edu/studentaffairs/religion/lutherancampusministry.php](http://rit.edu/studentaffairs/religion/lutherancampusministry.php)).
- Lutheran Campus Ministries (LCM) at Syracuse University and SUNY-Environmental Science and Forestry; the Rev. Gail Riina, chaplain ([lcmsyracuse.org](http://lcmsyracuse.org)).

For ELCA information on campus ministries, visit [elca.org/Our-Work/Related-Ministries/Campus-Ministry](http://elca.org/Our-Work/Related-Ministries/Campus-Ministry). To learn more about the Lutheran Campus Ministry Network, a network of inclusive faith communities on and near campuses at more than 240 colleges/universities in the U.S., visit [lumin-network.com](http://lumin-network.com). ☒

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## Golf tournament

The third “Bishop John Macholz Golf Outing” will be held Monday, July 24, at Shadow Lake Golf and Racquet Club, 1850 Five Mile Line Rd., Penfield. The event begins with a shotgun start at noon, followed by dinner, banquet and beverages at 6 p.m. All proceeds from this event will again fund the Bishop’s Special Fund to offer debt assistance to new pastors rostered in our synod.

The outing is set up with a scramble format emphasizing fun without the pressure of keeping an individual score. Each player hits from the tee, then everyone plays from the best shot until the ball is in the hole. Ask someone, or three, or seven more to join you and the rest of us at this year’s event.

Contests, prizes, challenges, awards and auctions are all part of the outing’s evening activities. The



event is designed to help the Bishop’s Special Fund while building new relationships and having fun. If someone doesn’t play golf, we encourage you to come to dinner and the banquet.

Register now at [upstatenysynod.org](http://upstatenysynod.org). Prices are \$100/person and \$30/person for dinner/banquet. [L](#)

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## Coaching

By the Rev. Jeff Silvernail

*The gifts [Christ] gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12).*

One of the exciting things that is happening in the ELCA is the expansion of coaching ministry. Thinking of coaching, the images that come to mind might be of throwing chairs onto basketball courts or getting into the faces of refs, but that is *not* the kind of coaching we are talking about.

Let me explain. Though not listed in the passage from Ephesians, coaching is all about equipping the saints (each of us) for the work of ministry and building up the body of Christ (all of us together).

Coaching is a powerful tool that uses open-ended questions and deep listening to help a person or group figure out what God wants for them and how to do it. In other words, coaching helps you clarify your goals and figure out how to accomplish them.

I liken it to assisting you to find the key that unlocks the door that keeps you from accomplishing what you want or keeps you from growing in the way that you had hoped. Coaching is future-looking and goal-oriented.

While coaching can be useful with almost any personal or congregational goal, I work primarily in the area of stewardship.

To give you an idea of the areas in which coaching might be beneficial with stewardship, here are a few potential scenarios:

### Personal stewardship

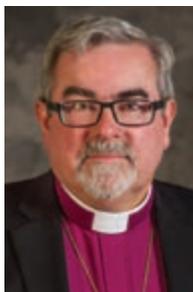
- Money goes out faster than it comes in.
- I think I would like to establish a family budget.
- I would like to get out of debt.
- I know I should do a will but it seems overwhelming.
- I would like to prioritize my financial goals.
- How can I get ready for retirement?
- How can I live on a fixed income?

*Continued on page D*

## Around the synod

### 2017 Synod Ministerium

The Upstate New York Synod will welcome Bishop Guy Erwin of the Southern California Synod at the Annual Ministerium Retreat to share with us “Reformation Then & Now: Luther’s Reforms in Context and Perspective.” Participants will explore how our history shapes our identity and equips us for the future. What were the principal ways Martin Luther’s reforms reflected and changed his context? What was needed, in Luther’s view? What was accomplished? What were the unforeseen consequences? How does this apply today? Bring your questions and ideas to participate in lively exchange.



All rostered ministers are invited to gather at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua Sept. 11-13. In addition to our time with Erwin, there will be workshops, fellowship and some free time to enjoy area sites. Register at [upstatenysynod.org](http://upstatenysynod.org).

Erwin earned a doctorate and two master’s degrees at Yale University and his bachelor’s degree at Harvard University. He engaged in seminary studies at Yale Divinity School and the universities of Tübingen and Leipzig in Germany. Most recently he was the Gerhard and Olga Belgum Professor of Lutheran Confessional Theology at California Lutheran University. He has served as the ELCA representative to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches since 2004.

### Healthy congregations training

The Upstate New York Synod is into year three of its participation in the ELCA Systems Academy. The Rev. Gregory Tennermann serves as the emotional systems coordinator for our synod’s program, in addition to continuing to consult with the Conflict and Healing Team, working with intentional interim pastors, organizing opportunities for leadership development around Bowen/Friedman Systems Theory, leading



and training others to lead *Healthy Congregations* workshops, and identifying coaches trained in systems theory.

Twenty-two people have been invited to participate in an upstate New York “mini-academy.” The group has met twice with the goal of encouraging leaders to learn more about systems and to begin thinking in new ways about their leadership in the families, congregations and groups that they participate within. Also, the Conflict and Healing Team has spent significant time reviewing its process in light of systems training. This fall, Tennermann, who is trained and certified by Healthy Congregations Inc., will offer training to expand the pool of facilitators who can lead Healthy Congregations workshops around our synod. Systems thinking is a strong tool for leaders to use as we are led by God’s Spirit into the future.

For more information, contact Tennermann at [gtennermann@upstatenysynod.org](mailto:gtennermann@upstatenysynod.org). ☒

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*Coaching, continued from page C*

- How do I prioritize career goals and decide on potential paths?

### Congregational stewardship

- We need to have more than one person work on stewardship.
- Our annual pledge drive is stale and is not producing desired results.
- How can our leaders think beyond paying bills?
- How can we get our people excited about our ministries?
- The same few people do most of the work at church, help!
- How can our budget better reflect our passions and aspirations?
- How can we encourage planned (legacy) giving?

If you would like to know more, please contact the Rev. Norma Malfatti, director for evangelical mission, or the Rev. Jeff Silvernail, pastor Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Clifton Park. ☒