



Upstate New York Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Conference Assembly - Spring 2019

Grounded, Growing, Giving and Graced



Michelle Josephson
Assistant to the Bishop
for Operations

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2019

Our 2019 Synod Assembly is focused on the second of the Upstate NY Synod's 4-G's: *Growing in Our Witness*. Our gathering will support attendees in learning what it means to be a witness of God's love for others so that they, may too, feel His light and love within their own lives and witness It's transformative power.

With each new assembly, we try to make changes that will improve the experience of those in attendance while enabling them to come away with their cups full and spirits ready to step back into the world with new-found knowledge and connection(s).

Last year, we were able to streamline the voting experience through our partnership with Qwizdom and their services in assisting us with electronic voting for the very first time. We are very pleased to announce that this was a success and to also let you know that we will be using electronic voting again this year. Thanks to several generous donations last year, this additional service did not impact the bottom line of the synod as much as anticipated and we were able to keep the increase felt by our attendees to a minimum. We are very grateful for this support!

This year, we are moving even further into a "paperless" event with a more in-depth use of Guidebook throughout the assembly. What does this mean for you, the participant and/or sponsoring congregation? Congregations will be sent all of the pre-assembly material ahead of time, as in previous years, and will be asked to print this material for their attendees. This material will be a part of the Synod Assembly Upstate Updates so that all subscribed to the newsletter will receive and can print it as well. Printing by the synod office will be available as a paid for option at registration, but we ask that congregations help us to keep the event costs down by providing this support for their delegates if at all possible. If you would rather not print, but see everything online, we have a tool for that! All material will also be available on Guidebook, our event user interface tool, where you can view documents, receive real-time updates of event happenings and even interact with other participants, synod staff and speakers. This tool has amazing capabilities and we are thrilled to utilize more of them at assembly this year.

As we have done in previous years, we will hold Guidebook training at the start of the assembly, but encourage attendees to "get their feet wet" with the tool even before stepping into the convention center. The more you play with it, the more you will love all that you find within its virtual walls.

While we like to introduce the new, we don't want to change something if it works well. We are again offering childcare services for those that will need care for their children while they attend the event. This young ones will partake in their own version of assembly and work on a special gift from their group just for our Bishop. We will also have the gift shop and bookstore available in addition to our Mission Expo and educational workshops. The bookstores are being stocked with books recommended from our own synod leadership with a focus on this year's theme, growing in our witness. Be sure to stop when you have a minute or two of downtime.

That is all for now as I don't want to spoil anything that you will see in the Synod Assembly Upstate Updates that come out every other week via email. If you haven't already subscribed to those, be sure to do so at www.upstatenysynod.org so that you get all of the details of this year's Assembly as they are revealed and come to the event feeling ready to take in the learning opportunities, wonderful energy and new business of the year.



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

"IT IS THE LORD!"

JOHN 21:7

**LEARNING TOGETHER ACROSS THE
SYNOD: FUN WITH FAITH
FORMATION
SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2019**

Part of what I have noticed in this first year in my role as Associate to the Bishop for Faith Formation is the challenge of finding the best place and way to gather as a large group to learn and grow together. This synod wide faith formation opportunity is a way to connect with others through use of the same written materials on the same day with no need to travel in order to encounter scripture in potentially new and different ways

The hope of the day is that all together we will focus on the ways we encounter Jesus as people who walk together. At the center of this multi-generational learning is the Gospel of the day from the Revised Common Lectionary. This effort also coordinates with the Upstate New York "Faith Alive" strategic plan and this year's focus of being grounded in Jesus.

The planning team for this day of Learning together across the synod was intentional about creating opportunities that will meet folks wherever they are in age and faith. The playful, active model of faithful learning practice will be available on the synod website. In addition of material for learning ministries there will be pieces to use in worship.

Though participation and use of the materials you will be building relationships with God and one another while knowing others are doing the same thing.

Planning to participate? Make a plan about how to use the special Faith Formation curriculum in learning and liturgy on May 5. Email me at Pastor Lori Kochanski (lkochanski@upstatenysynod.org) with your intent to participate so that you can stay up to date with the latest news about this effort. Then look on the [synod website](#) for links to the related materials.



Rev. Lori Kochanski
Assistant to the Bishop
for Faith Formation

**Online Course Offerings for Faith
Formation in 2019**

I find great hope and promise in creating spaces for the purpose of faith formation and leadership development that span the entire synod. It is sometimes a challenge to create those spaces in multiple places in order to fit multiple needs. In order to encourage those who have a desire to learn more and grow beyond the things offered in each congregation

I am developing online course offerings using technology to connect teachers and learners in a space that will encourage vigorous conversation and deep learning.

The initial courses are in development. I will lead the first course, "Art as a Spiritual Discipline," in July 2019. In the Fall of 2019 we will offer a course for lay folks called "Street Theology: A Look at Sin, Mercy, Salvation, Grace and Justice." The teachers for the theology course will be Bishop John Macholz, Pastors Lee Miller, Pastor Jo Page, Pastor Diane Wheatley and Vicar Samantha White.

In addition, I will offer one time book groups and Bible Studies via Zoom (a technology that allows many to meet and have conversation from the comfort of their home and offices). Send me your suggestions for books to read together and discuss.

More information about how to sign up for these courses will be found in the Upstate Update though the end of Spring and into summer. Any questions, suggestions and inquiries can be directed to lkochanski@upstatenysynod.org.

SAVE THE DATES:

**Lutheran Summer Conference at Silver Bay
July 13-July 20, 2019**

**Churchwide Assembly
August 3-August 10, 2019**

**Synod Ministerium
September 16-September 18, 2019**



**Synod
Assembly
Registration
Opens
April 1, 2019**

Upstate NY Synod Assembly
May 30th - June 1st, 2019
Rochester, NY