



## Advocacy Day in Albany

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Especially as many of our congregations are in the middle of confirmation/affirmation of baptism season, it might prove helpful to look at the five baptismal promises we actually ask our young people to affirm as they embark upon an adult life of faith:

- To live among God's faithful people.
- To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.
- To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.
- To serve all people, following the example of Jesus.
- To strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

While we'll never be perfect at living out any of these five promises (we're wholly saints and wholly sinners after all), golly, it's often that last promise—"to strive for justice and peace in all the earth"—where far too many of us as Lutherans tend to get a bit nervous.

We live in a highly polarized, divisive time when we're afraid to even talk with our own family members about the "politics" of building a more just society, never mind the folks sitting next to us on a Sunday morning.

Yet, it's especially amid such divisive times that it's more important than ever for our faith communities to provide moral leadership on how to build a more just society. In my congregation, Messiah Lutheran in Rotterdam, N.Y., we've had great success (and have connected with many new members, particularly young adults) by discussing how our faith might inform how we think about public policy issues (talking about supporting specific political candidates, however, is never appropriate).

How can faith inform how we think about public policy issues?



Luckily, if you or your congregation would like to grow in living out that fifth baptismal promise of striving for peace and justice in all the earth, there's a bunch of resources and opportunities out there to help. Here are just a few:

- Join us in Albany for Lutheran Day at the Capitol on Tuesday, March 13, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (stay tuned to the "Upstate Update" for more information).
- Read more about ELCA social teaching at [elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society](http://elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society).
- Check out the New York State Council of Churches at [nyscoc.org](http://nyscoc.org).
- Learn about the New Poor Peoples' Campaign at [poorpeoplescampaign.org](http://poorpeoplescampaign.org).
- Partner with Bread for the World at [bread.org](http://bread.org), especially If you're in issues related to hunger.

By using these and other resources (gosh there's a lot out there), you, too, can join the faith-inspired movement to build a more just society in New York, across the country and around the world!

May God's peace be with you,  
*The Rev. Dustin G. Wright*

## March 2018 Bishop's Convocation



Bishop John S. Macholz

March 10 will be the fourth annual Bishop's Convocation in this synod. While the site is still being determined, it will be in the Syracuse area as that seems to be a "central point" for many in the state.

Our focus this year will be on faith formation. We will take a look at what that means and how it plays in personal

and congregational life in worship, during educational opportunities, at home and in other places.

This direction will help us focus on the first of the 4 Gs—namely, grounded in Christ Jesus—as we work to deepen our faith and learn how to witness to that faith with others. It promises to be a wonderful opportunity for learning, fellowship and growth. Mark your calendars now and plan on joining us.

Watch the "Upstate Update" for more information regarding location and presenter. Hope to see you there!

Register online at [upstatenysynod.org](http://upstatenysynod.org) or call the synod office and speak to Karen Eadon at 315-299-4955. ¶

## Upstate New York Synod Leadership Guild

In the past, all first-call pastors have been required to participate in the Leadership Guild in Region 7 for the first three years of their ministry. The event was created to gather new pastors for worship and leadership formation. It's part of the compensation package, which congregations are made aware of when contacted to begin the call process. Recently, the Region 7 bishops decided to take a year off from the Leadership Guild to review its intent and purpose to see what is truly necessary to be of assistance in the first three years of their ministry.

In light of that, some of the Region 7 synods have planned their own programs to work with first-call pastors. In our Upstate New York Synod, we have scheduled a first-call event to take place at Notre Dame Retreat House on Jan. 21-23. The cost of \$300 per person is to be paid from the pastor's continuing education funds that are set aside in compensation packages.

It is my hope to direct our attention to the area of wellness and care for self as new pastors. To assist with that, I have invited the Rev. Cathy Schibler, our Portico representative, to be with us and share in the leadership. She has led similar workshops in the Northeastern Ohio Synod for a number of years and is a delight to work with. There will also be a time for fellowship, prayer and a focus on topics pertinent to ministry and growth.

This synod has proudly ordained and installed nine pastors into their first calls since the last Region 7 Leadership Guild. I'm truly excited about meeting with them, talking about the challenges they face, learning about their gifts, and being part of their eagerness to share those gifts with their congregations and the wider church. We will also look to the future and discern what would be most helpful for future gatherings.

*Bishop John S. Macholz*

# Recap of United Lutheran Seminary meeting

Synod Vice President Tom Madden and Bishop John Macholz attended a meeting at the Philadelphia campus of United Lutheran Seminary to which all Region 7 and 8 bishops and vice presidents were invited. The following are a few of the highlights of the time together as we begin this new journey as United Seminary.

These notes are from Elizabeth Meighan, executive assistant to the seminary president and director of human resources.



Theresa F. Latini

1. Theresa F. Latini, president of United Seminary, was introduced to the bishops and vice presidents. She shared some of the shifts in theological education being experienced across the U.S., and how these shifts will have an impact on the plans for and vision of United Seminary.

**2.** The co-deans of United Seminary, Dr. Kiran Sebastian and Dr. Kristin Largen, discussed the new competency-based curriculum.

**3.** The Rev. Trina Johnsten, vice president for enrollment and student services, shared the good news of the strong incoming class at United Seminary (78 new students enrolled in the fall) and the plans to continue strengthening the outreach and follow-up systems for potential students and inquirers.

**4.** Bishop Jim Dunlop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and Bishop Claire Burkart of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod shared ideas about cultivating a culture of call in our congregations and synods.

Overall, it was a good and fruitful time in conversation and prayer.

It was agreed that the next Bishops' Consultation would be Jan. 28, 2019, on the Philadelphia campus of United Seminary. ¶

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## Seminary Debt Assistance Fund

Beginning in 2016, Bishop John Macholz designated the Bishop's Appeal contributions to initiate a fund that would offer assistance to recent seminary graduates who are buried in debt from education loans. The bishop had extended this designation to 2017 as well. Just over \$30,000 has been raised so far through the proceeds from both the 2016 and 2017 Bishop John Macholz Golf Tournaments and individual donations. Applications and distribution parameters are now being worked on by the bishop and the Finance Committee, with the hope that grants will begin in 2018. The 2017 Bishop's Appeal continues through Jan. 31. Donate online at [upstatenysynod.org](http://upstatenysynod.org).

*Submitted by Karen Eadon, bookkeeper*

## Synod celebrates Campus Ministry Sunday

In October 2017 our synod celebrated the first Campus Ministry Sunday, lifting up the many ways that these ministries connect with you on campuses across our synod territory. We give thanks for our campus pastors and to those congregations that worked to lift up this ministry.

Our five campus ministries are partners in ministry, supported by your mission support dollars, and welcome involvement from congregations. In addition to these five ministries, some of our congregations have built relationships with colleges in their community.

### Save the Date!

#### E.L.C.A's Annual Upstate NY Synod Assembly

June 3-5, 2018

Rochester Riverside Convention Center  
Rochester, New York

Our host hotel for 2018 is  
the Hyatt Hotel at 125 E. Main St. in Rochester

This year our focus is on:

#### OUTREACH & EVANGELISM



*"Let your light shine before others ...  
and glorify your Father in Heaven."*



If your congregation hasn't reached out to the nearest campus ministry pastor yet, consider doing so soon.

- Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry, University of Albany ([ualbanycornerstone.org](http://ualbanycornerstone.org)).
- LuMin Buffalo serving campuses of University of Buffalo, Daemen, Buffalo State and commuters from five other colleges (Facebook at [LuMin of WNY](#)).
- St. Luke Lutheran Church Campus Ministry, Ithaca ([stlukeithaca.org/campus-ministry](http://stlukeithaca.org/campus-ministry)).
- RIT Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry ([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 ([lcmsyracuse.org](http://lcmsyracuse.org)).

Information is also available at [elca.org/Our-Work/Related-Ministries/Campus-Ministry](http://elca.org/Our-Work/Related-Ministries/Campus-Ministry) and Lutheran Campus Ministry Network, [lumin-network.com](http://lumin-network.com). ¶

We are very excited about our new and improved synod website. Check it out!

