



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

First time for electronic voting at synod assembly

By Michelle Josephson

The 2018 Upstate New York Synod Assembly was held June 3-5 and used electronic voting for the first time. This new tool allowed for a more streamlined voting process, giving more attention to the assembly business at hand.

Officer elections

- Vice President Thomas Madden was easily re-elected to a third term.
- Synod Treasurer Fred Risser was appointed to continue his service for a two-year term or until his successor is found.

Consultation Committee

- Lay seat: Marcia Brown of North Park, Buffalo.
- Lay seat: Karen Douglass of Atonement, Syracuse.
- Clergy seat: The Rev. Ivy Gauvin of St. Timothy, Bemus Point.
- Clergy seat: The Rev. Paul Shoop of Messiah, Rochester.
- The Rev. Rahel Hahn of Zion/St. John, Seward, was elected to fill a seat that was left vacant.

Discipline Committee

- Lay seat: Thomas Henry of St. Mark's, Baldwinsville.
- Lay seat: Beth Van Doren of Faith, Cicero.
- Clergy seat: The Rev. Serena Mollenkopf-Grill of Town Line, Alden.
- Clergy seat: The Rev. David Roppel of St. Mark's, Baldwinsville.

Synod Council

- Central Crossroads Conference: Ann Maher of Trinity, Herkimer.
- Niagara Frontler Conference: The Rev. Jeremiah Smith of Parkside, Buffalo.
- Young adult at-large seat: Ian Macdonald of Zion, Clarence Center.

Electing voting members to the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly was the most complex ballot this year, with a field of 33 nominees for 11 positions.

Lay and clergy seats:

- Gregory May of St. Stephen, Syracuse.
- Marcia Brown of North Park, Buffalo.

- Laurie Duchene of St. Mark, Kenmore.
- Judith Mica Guerin of Redeemer, Binghamton.
- The Rev. Jeffrey Silvernail of Prince of Peace, Clifton Park.
- The Rev. Lori Kochanski of Holy Spirit, Albany.
- The Rev. Deborah Johnson of St. Timothy, Geneseo.

Two at-large seats for people of color or with primary language other than English:

- The Rev. Jeniffer Tillman of West Central Rensselaer County Parish.
- Saah Nue Quigee of St. Luke, Ithaca.

One at-large youth seat:

- Ben Wendel of St. Luke's, Ithaca.

One at-large young adult seat:

- The Rev. Hannah Benedict of St. Mark's, Baldwinsville.

At the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, elections will be held for the ELCA Church Council. The assembly nominated two pastors from Upstate New York to stand for election:

- The Rev. Pamela Hoh of Prince of Peace, Clifton Park.
- The Rev. Dustin Wright of Messiah, Schenectady.

We ask that you keep each of these leaders in your prayers as they step into their roles this coming year to carry forward the business of the synod.

A special thank you to our generous donors for your contributions to the assembly; to our neighboring synods and local leaders for sharing your experiences with electronic voting; to our selected vendor, Qwizdom, for providing excellent service and support; and to all of our members for your attendance and active participation. ٤



Michelle Josephson is assistant to the bishop for operations.

Synod assembly was more than elections

Several resolutions and memorials were considered by the synod assembly. A memorial regarding the upcoming 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church was revised by Reference and Counsel into three action items:

- A memorial to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly calling for attention to and action against all barriers, discrimination and harassment faced by women preparing for and serving as ordained ministers in this church.
- A resolution to the ELCA Church Council to develop strategies to address inequity and injustice in compensation, seminary debt and participation by all ordained women in this church, especially women of color.
- A resolution stating that the 2020 Upstate New York Synod Assembly will celebrate and recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordi-

nation of women, while also taking steps to address the issues of inequity in compensation and participation that still exist.

On June 5, the assembly also adopted without amendment a resolution titled “Toward an Open and Healthy Expression of Human Sexuality,” calling the ELCA Church Council to consider revising current policies regarding sexuality within monogamous relationships for ordained ministers. Resolutions advocating for the human rights of Palestinian children and calling on congregations and individuals to participate in the 2018 Poor People’s Campaign were also adopted. The 2019 Mission Plan was adopted without amendment. ✚

Submitted by Michelle Josephson, assistant to the bishop for operations, with contribution from the Rev. Katie Yahns. St. Peter, Sherrill, N.Y.

After the synod assembly, we retreat

Each year in June, synod staff, deans and the Synod Council look forward to their retreat at Notre Dame Retreat Center in Canandaigua, N.Y. From June 21-23, the computers are down, the phones are off and we’re dressed to play outside games. We surround ourselves in prayer, team-building, thought-provoking ideas and conversation.

The first half of the retreat included the bishop’s staff and deans. We discussed rostered deacons, conference deacons and congregational deacons; the call process; and assembly election results. The Rev. Lori Kochanski, assistant to the bishop for faith formation, led us in a “Wonder” workshop,

and Jennifer Genovese, psychotherapist and synod program and ministry consultant, led us in discussion around depression/addiction and suicide. We closed with eucharist and lunch on Friday.

The second half of the retreat included the pastoral staff,

deans and Synod Council, joined by the new council dean representative, the Rev. Gail Wolling. All new Synod Council members were welcomed.

This group was also greatly enriched by Kochanski’s “Wonder” workshop. All enjoyed outdoor activities and fellowship, closing with worship and lunch on Saturday.

Here, in this place, we grow into not only our faith, but also the ability to proclaim it, share it and witness it to others and the world through conversation. ✚



Kathy Neugent is executive assistant to Bishop John S. Macholz.

Clergy self-care through a different lens

By Jennifer Cornish Genovese

“Oh no—not again! One more person is going to tell me I should take care of myself, spend more time with my family, set boundaries, get more sleep, eat healthy foods, start exercising, stop smoking, limit my drinking and work less!” Pastors already know how to do this—they just tend to put themselves last on the care list, if

they make it on the list at all. After God, they take care of their congregations, their communities, their families, but not themselves. Some pastors are even resistant to engaging in self-care at all. Perhaps the issue isn’t clergy self-care. Maybe it’s time to look at this issue through a different lens. Instead of clergy self-care, let’s start thinking about “clergy care.”

Over 300 Lutherans celebrate summer gathering

We learned again what it means to walk with Jesus at the 86th Lutheran Summer Gathering at Silver Bay on Lake George. Almost 300 Lutherans came from across the country to worship; swim and sail; play tennis, bocce and shuffleboard; to rock on the inn porch; and to study God’s word.

Chaplain Lee Miller II and the Revs. Gladys Moore and Arden Strasser served as our faculty; Chris Schaefer was our teen leader. Joe Krupa was our fabulous musician. We had a campfire complete with s’mores and camp songs, a carnival, chair volleyball, talent show, and the Lutherans were victorious over the Silver Bay EMPs (employees) in the annual softball game.

Bishop John Macholz joined us for a few days and shared his perspective on the ELCA’s mission and challenges. Kelly Harris, a former Young Adults in Global Mission volunteer in Rwanda, and Arden Strasser, a former missionary in Zambia, shared their experiences. Steve Tamm, Silver Bay YMCA CEO, updated us on the camp’s plans and challenges for the future.

Check out photos on facebook ([facebook.com/LutheranSummerGathering](https://www.facebook.com/LutheranSummerGathering)). Our website is lutherans-silverbay.org. On Twitter and Instagram we are **SBLutherans**. The Metropolitan New York and Upstate New York synods sponsor the program.

Plan to join us next year—July 13-20, 2019!

Marie C. Jerge, dean
Lutheran Summer Gathering at Silver Bay

Why would pastors be resistant to engaging in self-care? It’s possible that some believe self-care is akin to being selfish rather than self-affirming. Others equate it with being alone and independent. This may lead to isolation, resulting in separation from supportive clergy colleagues. Yet a critical part of self-care is being able to receive care from others. Pastors are far more comfortable giving care than receiving it. Clergy care involves giving care and receiving care. It is pastors caring for one another, while at the same time receiving care from one another. It is the giving and receiving of care that makes health and healing possible for pastors.

How can pastors care for each other and receive care from one another? They must do it together.

1. Pray for each other and with one another. Pray together, joining hands, hearts and souls.
2. Spend time together. Meet regularly for friendship, companionship and fun (not just to develop sermon ideas for Sunday). Go for a walk; share a meal or cup of coffee. Just do it together, with another pastor.
3. Support each other. Rejoice together in times of celebration; mourn together in times of loss.
4. Most importantly, be willing to receive care from another pastor. Receiving care is a form of self-care.

For where two or three gather in my name, I am there among them (Matthew 18:20). ㄥ



Jennifer Cornish Genovese
is the synod program
and ministry consultant.

Life and ministry on the edge

By the Rev. Norma E. Malfatti

As I write this article, I'm at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center for Senior High Week's "Life on the Edge." Each day 54 high schoolers are learning about and contemplating seeing Jesus in the stranger, at the feast and on the cross, on the way and at the very boundaries of our physical and emotional comfort zones. The truth of the matter is, this edge is where Jesus always is—take a look through the Gospels, read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) or any of Jesus' encounters in the book of John and you will see him loving, lifting up and bringing life to people on the edges of society.

Again and again in Scripture, God invites people to life on the edge, whether it's freeing the Israelites

from slavery, caring for the stranger and outcast, marrying a young pregnant girl, giving children to the elderly or encouraging faithfulness to people who have lost everything (see Jeremiah, Isaiah and Revelation 2-3).

As I'm asking the campers this week, I invite you to contemplate where you see Jesus on the edge of your community. Where do you join Jesus in sharing life and love on the edge? ☩



Norma E. Malfatti is director for evangelical mission and assistant to the bishop.

Practicing our faithful "yes" to God

By the Rev. Lori A. Kochanski

At the Faith Alive! "playshops" in July we talked a lot about our own "yes moments" and the times in Scripture where God's followers modeled saying "yes." Then we explored what saying "yes" might mean for our faith practices and formation.

We pushed beyond the stories about saying "yes" and started wondering about the next part—the "now what?" Because when we say "yes" we are actually saying, "Yes, and now what?" It's just like Jesus' first followers who said "yes" and kept showing up to figure out how this "yes" kept unfolding.

During the playshops, Frank, a member of the learning group, shared about a faith-filled time in his life. He told us about Chauncey who was studying to become a doctor. Chauncey was someone who had said "yes" to teaching the high school Sunday school class. Frank remembers how this teacher began every class by asking what the youth had been up to the night before. He said Chauncey was able to listen to anyone's story and relate it to Scripture. The class grew and grew because of how the youth knew they were listened to and because they could see themselves in God's Bible stories. Chauncey said "yes." Frank said "yes." Other teenagers said "yes." They were witness to God saying "yes." Chauncey went on to become a doctor, and Frank is still growing and giving in his faith.

I wonder what would happen if we took more time as faith communities to listen to the sacred stories each of us has to share—the stories of our life where we have said "yes" or "no" or "maybe."

What would it look like if we made a collective commitment to learn some of those "yes" stories of Scripture by heart and then shared them with others as a way to connect what we did last night to what God has been up to since the beginning of creation?

This fall, as part of faith formation and practice, I hope you will choose a "yes" story from Scripture. Spend time reading it over and over until you know it by heart. Then share it—in your home, with friends or even in church. For an extra challenge, choose a story that is new to you. Or maybe one you never really understood. To get you started, I will share the stories we used at the playshops: Moses, Jeremiah, Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, David, Samuel, Esther, Mary, Anna, Elizabeth, Peter, Lydia, Priscilla, Saul.

My prayer in this faith practice is that we can stay grounded in knowing what it means to say, "Yes, now what?" to God every day. ☩



Lori A. Kochanski is assistant to the bishop for faith formation.