



Metropolitan New York Synod
2019 Synod Assembly | Care for Creation



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2019 Metropolitan New York Synod ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION B:

**Reports from Synod Council, Staff, Conferences,
Committees, & Partner Organizations**

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DEAR SYNOD ASSEMBLY ATTENDEES,

Welcome to Metro New York Synod's 2019 Synod Assembly! This is an exciting Assembly for our synod, as we are electing a new bishop who will serve us for the next six years. The Planning Committee, Worship Committee, and synod staff have all been working very hard to make this a prayerful and positive experience as we discern the future of our synod.

I hope you take the time to read the Bulletin of Reports to see all of GOD'S WORK that is going on throughout our synod—with OUR HANDS. Please also be sure to visit our many committees and companions who have display tables set up outside the ballroom.

Our theme this year is Care for Creation. Keeping that in mind, please remember that we aim to do our best to be as much of a "paperless" assembly as we can be. Our agenda, all the reports, and the financial statements can all be found in the Guidebook and on our website. In addition, we will be using the voting devices as much as possible.

Again, on behalf of the 2019 Synod Assembly Planning Committee, I welcome you to the 2019 Synod Assembly.

May God richly bless us with the Holy Spirit in our three days together.

In Christ,

Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann, *Chair*
Synod Assembly Planning Committee

bulletin of reports:
SECTION B

2019 Metropolitan New York Synod ANNUAL ASSEMBLY



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Interim Bishop Donald J. McCoid

S. Dcn. Gayle Ruege

Senior Assistant to the Bishop

Ms. Susan Brandt

Director for Finance/Administration and Grant Management

The Rev. Percy Nyanjula Butiku

Assistant to the Bishop for Multicultural Mission

Mr. Roberto Lara

Director for Communications

The Rev. Jonathan Linman

Assistant to the Bishop for Faith and Leadership Formation

Dcn. Margy Schmitt Ajer

Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations

The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells

Director for Evangelical Mission/Assistant to the Bishop

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ANTI-RACISM Committee

CLAIMED Committee

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Missing Conferences, Committees or Partner Organizations did not submit a report.

WANT TO SEE YOUR REPORT HERE IN 2020?

Reports and accompanying photos should be sent to **Roberto Lara**, during the winter. Stay tuned to our assembly webpage for all the details on how to get involved with our annual assembly.

SYNOD COUNCIL REPORT

THE REV. ROBERT P. SCHOEPFLIN

Secretary, MNYS

This annual report of the Synod Council to the 28th Synod Assembly is to provide you with a summary of the actions that have been taken on your behalf since the Synod met in Assembly on May 11-12, 2018 at the Melville Marriott in Melville, New York. These actions are divided into appropriate sections as they relate to the work of the Synod Council.

NOTE: The Synod Council meeting on April 21, 2018 was held too late for its actions to be included in the Bulletin of Reports for the 2018 Synod Assembly. The actions taken by the Synod Council at its April 21, 2018 meeting are included in this report.

CALLS/ROSTER CHANGES

The Rev. Arden Strasser:

Interim Pastor, St. Luke's, Manhattan, effective March 1, 2018.

The Rev. Mary Chang:

Retirement status, effective April 1, 2018.

The Rev. Jeffrey Koenig:

Interim Pastor, St. John's, Poughkeepsie, effective June 1, 2018.

The Rev. Robert Rainis:

On leave from call status (with restrictions), effective March 11, 2018.

The Rev. Laurie Cline:

Retirement status, effective July 31, 2018.

The Rev. Robert Kasting:

Interim Pastor, St. John's, Lindenhurst, effective October 1, 2018.

The Rev. Carol Schneider:

Retirement status, effective September 1, 2018.

The Rev. Kimberli Lile:

On leave from call status, effective June 18, 2018.

Syn. Dcn. Donna-Mari Fieldsa:

On leave from call status, effective July 22, 2018.

Syn. Dcn. John Malone:

On leave from call status, effective June 1, 2018.

The Rev. H. Gaylon Barker:

Interim pastor, St. John's, Bellmore, effective October 15, 2018.

The Rev. Carla Meier:

Interim Pastor, St. John's, Bellmore, effective October 15, 2018.

The Rev. Scott Adams:

Interim Pastor, Trinity, Kingston, effective October 1, 2018.

The Rev. Gregory Fryer:

Resignation from ELCA roster, effective June 26, 2018.

The Rev. Karen Kuttler:

Retirement status, effective January 1, 2019.

Dcn. Marlene Lund:

Retirement status, effective July 1, 2018.

The Rev. Wilbert Miller:

Retirement status, effective February 1, 2019.

The Rev. Michael Poole:

Intentional Interim Pastor, Christ, Islip Terrace, effective January 13, 2019.

The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer:

On leave from call status, effective January 26, 2019.

The Rev. Marianne Tomecek:

On leave from call status, effective January 16, 2019.

The Rev. Dr. Deborah DeWinter:

Renewal of Invitation to Extended Service, First, Poughkeepsie, effective March 1, 2019.

The Rev. Michael Vanacore:

Invitation to Extended Service, Trinity, 46th Street, Brooklyn, effective January 1, 2019.



APPOINTMENTS

Constitution Review Committee

Mr. Ellis Farmer

Synod Diaconate Council

*Syn.Dcn. Roberta Detmers | Syn.Dcn. Donna-Mari Fieldsa
Syn.Dcn. Camille Holman*

Transitional Consultant, St. Peter's, 219th Street, Bronx

The Rev. Dr. Laurie Anderson (effective August 15, 2018)

Bridge Pastor, St. Andrew's, Smithtown

The Rev. Harald Peeders (effective September 17, 2018)

Term Pastor, St. James – St. Matthew's, South Ozone Park

The Rev. Romeo Dabee (January 1, 2019-December 31, 2020)

Interim Pastor, St. Andrew's, West Hempstead

The Rev. John Jurik

Leadership Development Grant Review Team

The Rev. Martha Cruz

Advisory Panel – Christ, Islip Terrace

*Dcn. Margy Schmitt Ajer | The Rev. Joanne Bond
Syn.Dcn. Steven Daniels | Ms. Renee Wicklund*

Strategic Plan

Ms. Renee Wicklund (interim chair)

Bishop Election Committee

The Rev. C. Anderson James

Congregational Consultation Team – St. Peter's, Bronx

*Ms. Barbara Johnson | Mr. John Litke
Mr. Cecil Spurlock-Shakelton*

Wider Church Grant Review Team

The Rev. Jeanine Owens

Candidacy Committee

The Rev. Kevin O'Hara

Reference and Counsel

*The Rev. Joel Brandt (chair)
The Rev. Chryll Crews
Mr. Eugene Hiigel
Dcn. Judy Hinsch
The Rev. John Jurik
Mr. Rob Sinanan*

Synod Worship Committee

*The Rev. Jared Stahler (chair)
The Rev. Leonard Duncan, Jr.
Ms. Guillermo Vaisman*

Natural Systems Process Advisory Panel

*Ms. Cynthia Corley
The Rev. Justin Johnson
The Rev. John Jurik
The Rev. Amy Kienzle
Syn.Dcn. Carlos Lopez
Syn.Dcn. John Malone
Syn.Dcn. Karen Maulen
Mr. Wally Nash
The Rev. Harry Schenkel
Ms. Renee Wicklund (Synod VP)*

Sanctuary Initiative

*The Rev. E. Fabian Arias (coordinator)
Syn. Dcn. Ingrid Compton
The Rev. Heidi Neumark
The Rev. Juan Carlos Ruiz
Mr. Christopher Vergara*

ELECTIONS

To Executive Committee:

*Mr. Christopher Vergara
Ms. Cynthia Corley
The Rev. Jeanine Owens
The Rev. Daniel Peter Penumaka*

RESOLUTIONS

1. ACTION SC18:04/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Arden Strasser as Interim Pastor for St. Luke's, Manhattan effective 1 March 2018.

2. ACTION SC18:04/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve retirement status for The Rev. Mary Chang, effective 1 April 2018.

3. ACTION SC18:04/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the appointment of Mr. Ellis Farmer to the Constitution Review Committee.

4. ACTION SC18:04/04

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council adopt the Financial Statements and Report for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2018 prepared by Tait, Weller & Baker, certified public accountants, noting that in the opinion of the auditors the financial statements taken as a whole present fairly the financial position of the Metropolitan New York Synod in conformity with generally accepted accounting principals.

5. ACTION SC18:04/05

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod retain the services of Tait, Weller & Baker, Certified Public Accountants, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2019.

6. ACTION SC18:04/06

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council adopt the Process for Election of the Bishop to be implemented in 2019 and present it to the 2018 Synod Assembly for affirmation.

7. ACTION SC18:06/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Jeffrey Koenig as Interim Pastor for St. John's, Poughkeepsie effective June 1, 2018.

8. ACTION SC18:06/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council grant authority to the synodical bishop to place limitations upon the availability for service of a rostered minister who is on leave from call.

9. ACTION SC18:06/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council place the Rev. Robert Rainis On Leave from Call status, effective March 11, 2018, with limitations and restrictions that include not available for call at this time.

10. ACTION SC18:06/04

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve retirement status for The Rev. Laurie Cline, effective July 31, 2018.

11. ACTION SC18:06/05

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council direct Bp. McCoid and the Natural Systems Advisory Panel to conduct the Town Hall Quadrant meetings as proposed and recommend to Peter Steinke that the Bridge Builder process begin after the newly elected bishop assumes office in 2019.

12. ACTION SC18:06/06

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Leadership Development Grants reviewed by the Leadership Development Grant Review Team and recommended by the Executive Committee.

13. ACTION SC18:06/07

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council adopt

the Policy for Synod Real Property Projects as presented.

14. ACTION SC18:06/08

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve an interim grant of \$25,000 to Fordham Lutheran Church to assist with ongoing expenses of the congregation during the project's development phase.

15. ACTION SC18:06/09

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council take no exception to the sale of the parsonage apartment owned by Atonement Lutheran Church (Jackson Heights) located at 3520 Leverich Street, B421, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.

16. ACTION SC18:06/10

RESOLVED, that accrued but unpaid salary in the amount of \$40,202.91 be paid to The Rev. Khader El-Yateem out of the Salam Mission Fund.

17. ACTION SC18:06/11

RESOLVED, that monies be paid out of the Salam Mission Fund to support the ministry of Salam Arabic Lutheran Church provided that the congregation engage in a process to formulate a ministry development plan.

18. ACTION SC18:06/12

RESOLVED that ACTION SC18:03/15 is rescinded and that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council accept an offer and enter into contract with Bethlehem SDA Church for a sale price of \$1,800,000 for the properties of the former Trinity, St. Albans.

19. ACTION SC18:06/13

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council accept the resignation of Abby Triebel and appoint Ms. Monica Gavryszewski to serve on the Synod Council until the 2019 Synod Assembly in the lay female/Hudson Conference seat.

20. ACTION SC18:06/14

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council appoint Mr. Thomas Sargent to serve on the Synod Council until the 2019 Synod Assembly in the lay male / Eastern Nassau Conference seat.

21. ACTION SC18:06/15

RESOLVED, that Mr. Christopher Vergara, Ms. Cynthia Corley, The Rev. Jeanine Owens, and The Rev. Daniel Peter Penumaka are elected to serve on the Executive Committee from June 2018 to June 2019.

22. ACTION SC18:06/16

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council join in the letter to Presiding Bishop Eaton.

23. ACTION SC18:09/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Robert Kasting as Interim Pastor for St. John's, Lindenhurst effective October 1, 2018.

24. ACTION SC18:09/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve retirement status for The Rev. Carol Schneider, effective September 1, 2018.

25. ACTION SC18:09/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend On Leave from Call Status to The Rev. Kimberli Lile effective June 18, 2018.

26. ACTION SC18:09/04

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend

On Leave from Call status to S.Dcn. Donna-Mari Fieldsa effective July 22, 2018 and renewal of On Leave from Call status to S.Dcn. John Malone effective June 1, 2018.

27. ACTION SC18:09/05

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Leadership Development Grants reviewed by the Leadership Development Grant Review Team and recommended by the Executive Committee.

28. ACTION SC18:09/06

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Congregation Capital Improvement Grants proposed by the Congregation Capital Improvement Grant Review Team and recommended by the Executive Committee.

29. ACTION SC18:09/07

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the proposed rate schedule for the 2019 Synod Assembly.

30. ACTION SC18:09/08

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend the contract with FAC 6309 Fourth Avenue LP for the property located at 6307 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn through March 1, 2019 in accordance with the terms of the Third Amendment to the Purchase and Sale.

31. ACTION SC18:09/09

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the 2019 Clergy Compensation Guidelines as presented.

32. ACTION SC18:09/10

RESOLVED, that the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Brooklyn, New York, be removed from the roster of congregations of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the ELCA, effective December 31, 2017.

33. ACTION SC18:09/11

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the sale of property located at 200-12 119th Ave, St. Albans, NY to Northeastern Conference Corporation of Seventh Day Adventists for the purchase price of \$1,800,000.

34. ACTION SC18:09/12

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council take no exception to the sale of the parsonage owned by St. James – St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (So. Ozone Park) located at 115-14 149th Avenue, South Ozone Park, NY 11420.

35. ACTION SC18:09/13

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council request that the Assembly Planning Committee acknowledge and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the passage of the 2009 CWA resolutions that embraced the welcome and inclusion of Gay and Lesbian people in our church at the 2019 Synod Assembly and will extend the welcome and inclusion to the LGBTQ+ community; and be it **RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council ask the ELCA Church Council to advise planners of the Churchwide Assembly to include observance of this anniversary in the program and worship of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

36. ACTION SC18:10/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Amended and Restated Operating Agreements for MNYS 129 Russell, LLC; MNYS 763 Prospect LLC; MNYS 585 East 163 LLC; MNYS 2424 Linden LLC.

37. ACTION SC18:10/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council

approve The Guidelines for Redevelopment Regarding Synodical Preservation recommended by the Executive.

38. ACTION SC18:10/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council designate Christopher Vergara as a lay male voting member to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and appoint Maritza Tamayo as the multicultural voting member to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

39. ACTION SC18:12/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. H. Gaylon Barker as Interim Pastor for Saint John, Bellmore effective October 15, 2018.

40. ACTION SC18:12/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Carla Meier as Interim Pastor for Saint John, Bellmore effective October 15, 2018.

41. ACTION SC18:12/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Scott Adams as Interim Pastor for Trinity, Kingston effective October 1, 2018.

42. ACTION SC18:12/04

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve retirement status for The Rev. Karen Kuttler, effective January 1, 2019.

43. ACTION SC18:12/05

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve retirement status for Deacon Marlene Lund, effective July 1, 2018.

44. ACTION SC18:12/06

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Leadership Development Grants reviewed by the Leadership Development Grant Review Team and recommended by the Executive Committee.

45. ACTION SC18:12/07

RESOLVED, that the synod council create a designated fund entitled Internship Support, to support future actions to promote internship for seminary students training for ordination as ELCA rostered ministers on the territory of the synod and to transfer \$27,000 of the 2018 budget year line item leadership development grants as initial funding. This fund will clear to the operating assets when it declines to 5% of its initial funding value.

46. ACTION SC18:12/08

RESOLVED, that based upon the facts recited and for the reasons set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth here, the Synod Council hereby approves of the formation by the Metropolitan New York Synod of MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC, a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, in which the Metropolitan New York Synod is and shall continue to be the sole member and manager, with the intention of conveying to MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC title to the Property. To the extent possible, it is the Synod Council's intention that, as a single member limited liability company, with the Metropolitan New York Synod as the sole member, MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC shall be tax exempt and shall not be required to file separate tax returns. No other assets shall be placed in MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC, and MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC shall have no liabilities. The sole purpose of MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC is and shall continue to be to hold, manage, and convey title to the real property formerly of Zion Brooklyn for, on behalf of, and at the direction and convenience of the Metropolitan New York Synod; and it is further

RESOLVED, that based upon the facts recited and for the reasons

set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth here, the Synod Council hereby approves of the transfer of title to the Property from the Metropolitan New York Synod to MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC, a single member limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, of which the Metropolitan New York Synod is and shall continue to be the sole member and manager, to hold, manage, and convey that real property on behalf of and at the direction and convenience of the Metropolitan New York Synod, its sole member and manager; and it is further

RESOLVED, that any two of the Trustees of Zion Brooklyn, acting in their capacity as Trustee, be and hereby are authorized, empowered and directed on behalf of the Synod to sign, verify and cause to be filed all documents and papers as may be required in furtherance of and to effectuate that conveyance; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that the dissolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC.

47. **ACTION SC18:12/09**

RESOLVED, the Property was appropriately transferred to the Metropolitan New York Synod from Zion Brooklyn as provided by 13.24 and Sections 17-c 2(a)(ii) and (iii) and 17-c 2(c)(ii) of the Religious Corporations Law of the State of New York; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Agreements having been extensively reviewed and discussed with the Synod Council and the Metropolitan New York Synod's legal counsel, are accepted, approved and adopted; and it is further

RESOLVED, that it is in the best interest of the Metropolitan New York Synod to engage the Purchaser to purchase the Property; and it is further

RESOLVED, that it is in the best interest of the Metropolitan New York Synod to enter into the Development Agreement with the Purchaser to construct the Project, assign the Development Agreement to the MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC and have Purchaser transfer the Community Facility Unit to MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC upon completion; and it is further

RESOLVED, that it is in the best interest of the Metropolitan New York Synod to lease the Property to the SCA, through MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC (subsequent to an assignment of the Lease); and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Purchase Price, the Developer Fee, Extension Fee and Rent to be paid by the Purchaser to the Metropolitan New York Synod or MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC is fair and equitable and such funds will be used to further the Metropolitan New York Synod's mission and ministry; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Broker's Commission is fair and reasonable is accepted and approved; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the dissolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod is not contemplated following the sale of the Property; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the execution of the Agreements by the Rev. Robert P. Schoepflin, as Secretary of the Metropolitan New York Synod, and acting solely and on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod and sometimes through MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed; and it is further

RESOLVED, that any one of the officers of the Metropolitan New York Synod acting solely and on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod through MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed to sign, verify and cause to be filed such petition or other paper or papers as may be required to obtain the approval as required by New York law based on the terms and conditions as recited in the Agreements; and, in the event that such approvals shall be obtained, to thereafter execute, acknowledge and deliver a deed and all such other documents as may be required to convey title to the Property and to pay all customary and/or required closing costs, transfer taxes, broker, attorney and other professional fees incurred in connection with the

sale of the property; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the net proceeds from the sale of the Property, after payment of the customary and/or required closing costs, transfer taxes, broker, attorney and other professional fees relating to the sale, be utilized in furtherance of the purposes for which the Metropolitan New York Synod was formed, in accordance with its Certificate of Incorporation and Constitution and By-Laws; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod will not become insolvent following the transfer of the Property; and it is further

RESOLVED, that to the best of my knowledge, no persons have raised, or have a reasonable basis to raise, objections to the sale of the Property.

48. **ACTION SC18:12/10**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the memorandum of understanding, dated November 16, 2018 (MOU) between PK Linden LLC and MNYS2424 Linden LLC.

49. **ACTION SC18:12/11**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the 2019 staff housing allowances as presented.

50. **ACTION SC19:01/01**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the minutes of the 2018 Synod Assembly as presented.

51. **ACTION SC19:01/02**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve retirement status for The Rev. Wilbert Miller effective 1 February 2019.

52. **ACTION SC19:01/03**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Michael Poole as Intentional Interim Pastor for Christ, Islip Terrace effective 13 January 2019.

53. **ACTION SC19:01/04**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council grant On Leave from Call status for The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer effective 26 January 2019.

54. **ACTION SC19:01/06**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council appoint the Rev. Joel Brandt, the Rev. Chryll Crews, Mr. Eugene Hiigel, Dcn. Judy Hinsch, the Rev. John Jurik, and Mr. Rob Sinanan, to serve on the 2019 Committee on Reference & Counsel effective 1 February 2019.

55. **ACTION SC19:01/07**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod establish a board restricted Sanctuary Fund with an initial resource of \$50,000 from unexpended funds in the 2018 budget and That the Sanctuary Fund be a resource for synod ministers to provide legal fees, application processing fees, bonds, and other critical resources for minors and young adults in or recently released from detention and That any residuum of the fund at the beginning of a fiscal year that is less than 5% of peak funding be returned to operating assets and That disbursement of funds be at the discretion of the office of the Bishop including the Assistant to the Bishop for Global and Multicultural Mission and sanctuary ministry designees of the office of the Bishop.

56. **ACTION SC19:01/08**

RESOLVED, that the terms of Monica Gabryzewski and Tom Sargent be extended through the 2020 Assembly when members for the next Synod Council cycle will be elected.

57. **ACTION SC19:01/09**

RESOLVED, that the Agreement negotiated and prepared by the Synod's legal counsel, Capell Barnett Matalon & Schoenfeld, LLP, for sale of the Property to Purchaser, for the price of \$1,800,000.00, in "as is" condition and subject to all approvals as required by New York law, is hereby approved; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the execution of the Agreement by the Rev. Robert P. Schoepflin, as Secretary of the Synod, and acting solely and on behalf of the Synod, be and hereby is ratified; and it is further

RESOLVED, that any one of the Officers of the Synod acting solely and on behalf of the Synod, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed to sign, verify and cause to be filed such Petition or other paper as may be required to obtain the approval as required by New York law of such sale to Purchaser based on the terms and conditions as recited in the Agreement, for the price of \$1,800,000.00, in "as is" condition; and, in the event that such approvals shall be obtained, to thereafter execute, acknowledge and deliver a Deed of Conveyance and all such other documents as may be required to convey title to the Property and to pay all customary and/or required closing costs, transfer taxes, broker, attorney and other professional fees incurred in connection with the sale of the property; and otherwise do all such things as may, upon advice of Capell Barnett Matalon & Schoenfeld LLP, counsel to the Synod, be reasonable, necessary, proper or convenient in order that the terms, provisions and agreements of the contract of sale be fulfilled and the transactions contemplated therein be effectuated; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the net proceeds from the sale of the Property, after payment of the customary and/or required closing costs, transfer taxes, broker, attorney and other professional fees relating to the sale, be utilized in furtherance of the purposes for which the Synod was formed, in accordance with its Certificate of Incorporation and Constitution and By-Laws; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the dissolution of the Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property.

58. ACTION SC19:01/10

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve Trexler Grants in the amount of \$1000 to the Rev. Percy Butiku to assist with travel to attend the 10th Asian Lutheran International Conference, Thailand and \$1000 to the Rev. Sonja Maclary to assist with travel related costs to the Quitman Archives at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

59. ACTION SC19:01/11

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve a Building for Mission Grant in the amount of \$200,000 to Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan, contingent on the congregational approval of the project at the annual meeting.

60. ACTION SC19:02/01

RESOLVED, that Synodical financial support of Leif Ericson Day School operations not be continued beyond the close of the 2018-2019 school year.

61. ACTION SC19:02/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council affirm the ministry of the administration, faculty and staff of Leif Ericson Day School and express our thanks to God for the Christian ministry and dedication of the school and for the young lives that have been formed.

62. ACTION SC19:02/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve Trexler Grants in the amount of \$1000 to the Rev. David Dockweiler to assist with travel costs in leading a mission trip to the San Lucas Toliman Mission in Guatemala in June 2019; \$750 to the Rev. Jennifer Boyd to assist with travel costs for her participation in the mission trip to the San Lucas Toliman Mission in Guatemala in

June 2019; and \$1000 to the Rev. Dr. Joanne Bond to assist with travel costs for continuing education in the Women's Empowerment Program of the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, Switzerland.

63. ACTION SC19:02/04

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee to list the property located at 585 East 163rd Street, Bronx, NY for sale.

64. ACTION SC19:02/05

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the proposed Mission Plan for the New Saint Peter's Church, Manhattan.

65. ACTION SC19:03/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Invitation to Extended Service to the Rev. Michael Vanacore serving Trinity Lutheran Church, 46th Street, Brooklyn effective 1 January 2019.

66. ACTION SC19:03/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council renew the Invitation to Extended Service to the Rev. Dr. Deborah DeWinter serving First Lutheran Church, Poughkeepsie effective 1 March 2019 – 28 February 2020.

67. ACTION SC19:03/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council recommend the Standing Rules to the 2019 Synod Assembly as presented.

68. ACTION SC19:03/04

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly that it adopt the proposed revised budget for 2019 and the proposed budget for 2020.

69. ACTION SC19:03/05

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Ten-Year Plan for 2019-2028 be adopted as presented.

70. ACTION SC19:03/06

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Leadership Development Grants reviewed by the Leadership Development Grant Review Team and recommended by the Executive Committee.

71. ACTION SC19:03/07

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve funding to Leif Ericson Day School in the amount, as requested, of \$177,150.

72. ACTION SC19:03/08

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council recommends adoption of SC17:06/06 by the 2019 Synod Assembly.

73. ACTION SC19:03/09

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod in full partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of New York, accept Mission Walk (MW), an Episcopal/Lutheran Journey as a multicultural, bilingual, assets-based Mission Development/Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) that will maintain a footprint within and reflect the South Bronx in all its diversity based on the grounded strategy for a transformative ministry.

74. ACTION SC19:03/10

RESOLVED, the Trustees are relieved of their duties and the full power and authority to hold, manage and convey the property of All Saints now exists solely with the Metropolitan New York Synod,

and any of the officers of the Metropolitan New York Synod are authorized and empowered to execute any document in connection with the property of All Saints with the approval of the Synod Council; and

RESOLVED, that the dissolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 585 East 163 LLC.

75. ACTION SC19:03/11

RESOLVED, the Trustees are relieved of their duties and the full power and authority to hold, manage and convey the property of Holy Redeemer now exists solely with the Metropolitan New York Synod, and any of the officers of the Metropolitan New York Synod are authorized and empowered to execute any document in connection with the property of Holy Redeemer with the approval of the Synod Council; and

RESOLVED, that the dissolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 2424 Linden LLC.

76. ACTION SC19:03/12

RESOLVED, the Trustees are relieved of their duties and the full power and authority to hold, manage and convey the property of Messiah now exists solely with the Metropolitan New York Synod, and any of the officers of the Metropolitan New York Synod are authorized and empowered to execute any document in connection with the property of Messiah with the approval of the Synod Council; and

RESOLVED, that the dissolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 129 Russell LLC.

77. ACTION SC19:03/13

RESOLVED, the Trustees are relieved of their duties and the full power and authority to hold, manage and convey the property of Transfiguration now exists solely with the Metropolitan New York Synod, and any of the officers of the Metropolitan New York Synod are authorized and empowered to execute any document in connection with the property of Transfiguration with the approval of the Synod Council; and

RESOLVED, that the dissolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 763 Prospect LLC.

78. ACTION SC19:03/14

RESOLVED, the Trustees are relieved of their duties and the full power and authority to hold, manage and convey the property of Zion Brooklyn now exists solely with the Metropolitan New York Synod, and any of the officers of the Metropolitan New York Synod are authorized and empowered to execute any document in connection with the property of Zion Brooklyn with the approval of the Synod Council; and

RESOLVED, that the dissolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 6309 Fourth LLC.

79. ACTION SC19:03/15

RESOLVED that the Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to: Take no action at this time either to affirm Vision and Expectations or to adopt Trustworthy Servants; and Create a task force comprising members of the Council and Conference of Bishops as well as pastors, deacons, and lay members of this Church. A majority of this task force shall be persons who self-identify as LGBTQIA+, persons of color, and/or persons whose first language is other than English; and Charge this taskforce to receive as information Trustworthy Servants and all related information and commentary conveyed to the Conference of Bishops and the Churchwide organization as well as to any other

interested parties (e.g. Reconciling Works, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries); and Charge this taskforce to discern and propose an inclusive process reflecting the interdependence of this Church to discern faithful ways forward; and Request that the proposed process be reported to the Church Council, petitioning Synod Councils and petitioning Congregation Councils for review and comment.

NOTE: The Synod Council meeting on April 27, 2019 was held too late for its actions to be included in the Bulletin of Reports for the Synod Assembly. The actions taken by the Synod Council at its April 27, 2019 meeting will be included in the report to the 2020 Assembly

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STAFF REPORTS



The Rev. Donald J. McCoid

INTERIM BISHOP

2019 **MNYS**
ANNUAL
ASSEMBLY



As I have been privileged to spend over a year in your synod's life, I have a few reflections I want to share.

When I arrived, I did not know much about the Metropolitan New York Synod. I began addressing the tasks of what needed to be done and the functions that needed attention. There

were certainly a lot of concerns, meetings, and appointments waiting.

As I met early in my ministry with you, with the staff, synod council, conference deans, the black pastors' group, strategic planning committees, and others, my experience began to transform from functioning to relating. The face I saw on MNYS—lay and clergy—was a loving, caring face. Individuals shared their stories and experiences. I caught a vision of what strategic planning could mean in the current and future mission of the synod. I also saw a generous synod.

To be sure, there were and are issues, concerns, problems, and people who were challenged by hurts, disappointments, and fears.

Why do I share this background and experience? I often hear generalizations that the "synod" is not caring, that there are too many divisions, that there are issues that exist and have not been addressed.

Well this is true, and yet....

One-on-one sharing, listening to one another, and focusing together on the Good News in Jesus Christ can and does change things! I have learned from you. I have shared with you. As we sit at the feet of God's Word, we will learn and share together in ways that the Holy Spirit provides.

In the eight Town Hall meetings, the family (you) offered comments about our life together. Each comment was recorded. In the wisdom of family systems, recommendations were made concerning the selection of a new bishop. I encourage your review of the characteristics of a bishop that you identified. It will guide the direction and future of our synod.

There are important questions we need to answer individually. Will you speak a good word for the church? For the synod? For the community that we share as Jesus' church? Will you work toward reconciliation, forgiveness, and a life together in love?

We are a Christian community. We are in touch with God's Word and have an understanding that critique in ministry is desired. Judgmental and personalized criticisms are not desired. Nobody says it better than Martin Luther — ***"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."***

What is this? or What does this mean? We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light." (Martin Luther)

We know how to quote Luther's 8th Commandment explanation, but we need to live it. This is especially true in this year, as we look toward the future—a future that needs to affirm union in Christ for each member of the MNYS.

At this 2019 assembly, we will elect a new bishop to serve a ministry of oversight and care for the next six years.

In any bishop's election, there will be people who support a variety of pastors. One will be chosen and she or he will need your love and support—even if the elected person is not one that you supported.

Will you pray and support the new bishop?

Will you be patient in giving time for the new bishop to settle into office, to make decisions about staffing and direction, to begin a time of being

present in the life of the synod, and a process of becoming aware of the stories of the synod, congregations, and members of the synod?

I believe there is much hope among members of our synod that we will find unity in our diversity that will focus prayer and support for the new bishop-elect.

I conclude my report ... and will conclude my ministry as interim bishop ... with appreciation for the time we have spent together, for your support, and for the ministry we shared. I may return to Pittsburgh, but my love and daily prayers will include the Metropolitan New York Synod, your newly elected bishop, your staff, and your future.

The staff of the MNYS has a commitment to work daily with the very full plates they have. Please know there is an understanding of the holiness of vocational call in what they do. It is my hope you will share your appreciation with our staff for what they do. I certainly appreciate the many ways they have shared love and support with me.

"May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

-2 Peter 1:2-15 (NRSV)

Synod Deacon Gayle Ruege

SENIOR ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP



*Glory be to you, O God,
for the rising of the sun, for
color filling the skies and for
the whiteness of daylight.*

*Glory be to you for
creatures stirring forth from
the night, for plant forms
stretching and unfolding,
for the stable earth and its
ageless rocks.*

*Glory be to you for the
beauty of your image
waking in opening eyes,
lighting the human
countenance.*

*Glory be to you, Glory be
to you.*

CELTIC CHRISTIANITY RESONATES DEEP WITHIN MY SOUL. This ancient faith tradition calls us to recognize that every living, breathing expression of creation is permeated with the character and presence of God. Celtic Christianity has helped me to view my life as one that is lived in community—with God, with creation and with each other. It is a partnership of mutual respect, care and concern, grounded and rooted in love. It is a trinitarian oneness we share in Christ.

I've made Celtic pilgrimages to sacred sites twice in the last 10 years. I made my first pilgrimage alone in 2009 and returned again in 2011, with a group of pastors, deacons and lay leaders from our synod. Both pilgrimages included time on the Isle of Iona, Scotland and on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne in the Northumbria region of Northern England. The experience was transformative for me as I (try to) live out my Christian vocation as a Lutheran.

Also deeply embedded in the ancient Celtic monastic communities was the centrality of hospitality—which has become an important part of all Christian communities and revolves around the welcoming of strangers, recognizing the equal value and dignity of all persons, while providing for their physical, social and spiritual needs. Several years ago, the Lutheran World Federation, in partnership with a coalition of faith-based organizations, published a declaration that included a code of conduct for faith leaders (initially suggested by the LWF president and backed by other participants) that presented the following affirmations for faith leaders:

A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat her or him as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same.

Together with faith leaders, faith-based organizations and communities of conscience around the world, I affirm:

My faith teaches that compassion, mercy, love and hospitality are for everyone: the native born and the foreign born, the member of my community, and the newcomer.

I will remember and remind members of my community that we are all considered "strangers" somewhere, that we should treat the stranger in our community as we like to be treated, and challenge intolerance.

*But where the glistening is lost
sight of, where life's colors are
dulled and the human soul grows
hard, we pray for grace this day,
we pray for your softening graces.*

Sounds of the Eternal – A Celtic Psalter

We are grateful that Roberto Lara and Pr. Butiku have worked with the SENT Committee and the Anti-racism Initiative this past year, to coordinate trainings, educational events, and provide opportunities to participate in advocacy marches that address the justice issues of racism and inclusion.

Over the years, people coming to our synod office have joined the staff for noon worship in our chapel. We frequently open our worship using Philip Pfatteicher's *Book of Festivals and Commemorations* reflecting on the life and witness of the early and modern-day saints. We are inspired by the commitment, dedication and witness of the saints that faithfully used their God-given gifts in mission, ministry and service to others. We've been comforted and affirmed in coming to understand that the church has faced the same joys and struggles for centuries—and though the church may falter—God's grace prevails!

With that said, I'm inspired by the commitment, dedication and partnership of modern-day saints who are living out their Christian vocation by using their God-given gifts in mission, ministry and service to others, as we travel on the road together as synod:

I give thanks to God for Bishop McCoid and our remarkable synod staff for working tirelessly (days, nights, weekends) in this interim year. Bishop McCoid brought a pastoral presence steeped with the wisdom, experience, and faith-filled leadership that our synod needed to successfully navigate this transitional time.



Pastor Jonathan Linman coordinated several study days and retreats for our Deans, Synod Council, synod staff, pastors and synodical deacons, while attending to the synod's candidacy process and representing the ELCA in several judicatory dialogs. **The resources**

he developed for faith formation have been used in congregations and conferences, and shared with sister synods.

Roberto Lara continues to enhance our public presence and has raised us to new levels of communication. We welcomed the return of **The Lutheran New Yorker**, and Roberto will introduce the newly-developed Children's App as a Christian education tool at our assembly. Roberto provides the Synod Council with a quarterly metrics review of the traffic our different communication channels receive—we marvel at the level of engagement we are now experiencing. **Our synod assemblies reflect the technological advancements that keeps us connected, informed and relevant.**

In addition to **Margy's work with congregations in transition, she has been partnering with the CLAIMED Committee in the development and expansion of our synod's focus on First Thirds Ministry (0-30 yrs).** She lends support to Pr. Becca Seely in campus ministry and to Pr. Linman with the Candidacy process.

Sue Brandt continues to perfect the MNYS grant process, from the submittal of the application through to the award of the grant. Churches applying for congregation capital improvement grants, individuals and groups applying for leadership development grants, and organizations applying for our Wider church grants, continue to grow and increase. She works with our Treasurer and Financial Management Committee in the oversight of our finances, and with **Mark Goodwin** in the management of synod properties.

Our synod's rich and varied diversity is a gift, and so is

Pr. Butiku. Our partnership with our companion synod in the Northwest Diocese of Tanzania is strong, and Kibeta English Medium Primary School continues to flourish. Annual multicultural and anti-racism events are offered and are well-attended.



Pr. Lamont Wells and Branden Dupree manage, support and supervise 31 partnership congregations in varied phases of development and growth in our synod, which is a considerably larger number than any other synod in the ELCA. Mission is at the forefront of the Strategic Plan, and our synod is on the cutting edge of mission development projects. We are grateful for the ELCA's confidence in us and

for their partnership that provides the human and financial resources necessary to support these congregations.

María Rodas and Regina Daniels provide the critical and essential administrative support necessary to meet the ministry demands in each of the staff's portfolios. Both started their work in our synod office in September 2017. To say they serve us well would be an understatement. They not only meet our needs—but go above and beyond.

I'm inspired by the dedication and commitment of our rostered ministers and lay leaders serving on our Synod Council, on our committees, in our congregations and at specialized ministry sites. We are on this journey together, at this particular time and place, to be both witness and worker. We each have God-given graces to receive and faithfully employ. Marked with the Cross of Christ forever, we are Claimed, Gathered and Sent for the sake of the world. The ancient Celtic monastic communities on Iona and Lindisfarne have evolved into the modern day Iona Community and the Northumbria Community respectively. Both are ecumenical, global communities of Companions and Friends from around the world, connected by their commitment to live out their Christian faith in



a changing world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer believed that the renewal of the church would come from a new type of monasticism, which only has in common with the old an uncompromising allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount.

I close with a version of the Beatitudes, based on Matthew 5:3-10:

Blessed are those who know their need, for theirs is the grace of heaven.

Blessed are the humble, for they are close to the sacred earth.

Blessed are those who weep, for their tears will be wiped away.

Blessed are the forgiving, for they are free.

Blessed are those who hunger for earth's oneness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the clear in heart, for they see the Living Presence.

Blessed are those who suffer for what is right, for theirs is the strength of heaven.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they are born of God.

Glory be to you, O God. Glory be to you.

For all of God's creation!

Ms. Susan Brandt

DIRECTOR FOR FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION AND GRANT MANAGEMENT



2018 completed my first year as your Director of Finance, Administration and Grant Management. This was a year of learning and transition. I am grateful to be a team member of Synod Staff, and to work with the Financial Management Committee, Gathered Strategy Committee and Synod Council. Their care and dedication to the synod is commendable.

Finance and Administration

It's been a busy year. Adding grant management to this position makes for a very full schedule. I'd like to highlight changes in two financial areas:

1. Monthly Financial Reporting
2. Audit Report

Monthly Financial Reporting

The synod has five funds: Fund 1-Operating Budget, Fund 2-Unrestricted Board Designated Funds, Fund 3-Temporarily Restricted Funds, Fund 5-Permanently Restricted Funds (Endowment) and Fund 7-S13.24 Properties (Synod Owned). The Synod Council receives two reports Statement of Financial Position and Revenue of Expenses-Operating Budget. I felt the Synod Council wasn't seeing the synod's whole financial picture so mid-year I added two additional reports. The first report is Designated, Temporarily and Permanently Restricted Funds. This report lists all Fund 2, 3, and 5 and their activities for the year. The second report is titled Expense Report for Fund 7 – S13.24 Properties. This is a simple report to show all activities related to synod owned properties. I also reformatted the main reports. In the Revenue and Expense – Operating Budget Report I added the YTD as % of Annual Budget column. I think this heading helps the council get a quick picture of the current state of operating revenues and expenses. These four year-end reports are inserted at the end of my report.

These additional reports work to make the synod's finances more transparent. I, with John Litke, Synod Treasurer and the Financial Management Committee, Ed Wagner, Chair, will continue to look at ways to improve financial communication.

Audit Report

The Audit Report prepared by Tait, Weller & Baker LLP, is a comprehensive look at the synod's finances. This year Audit Report includes Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) new rules for nonprofits. Instead of the terms Undesignated, Temporarily Restricted, and Restricted you'll see Without Donor Restrictions and With Donor Restrictions for presentation purposes. It is still okay to use those terms for internal reporting.

Items to note:

Page 5 Consolidated Statements of Financial Position includes Leif Ericson Day School.

Page 6 includes a new report titled Consolidated Statement of Functional Expenses.

Revenue and expenses in the Audit Report include Funds 1, 2, 3 and 5. See page 25 for Fund 7.

[Click here to see the Audit Report](#)

Grant Management

The synod's grant program falls under the Gathered Strategy Committee whose objective is to ensure that Word and Sacrament ministry is provided in the metropolitan New York area. The Gathered Strategy Committee is committed to vibrant congregations and leaders that will carry this ministry into the future. The grant program is one tool to achieve success for this strategy.

Congregational Capital Improvement Challenge Grant

The Capital Improvement Challenge Grants are intended to assist congregations seeking to improve their property in order to improve and provide for Word and Sacrament ministry in our Synod.

In 2014, the Gathered Strategy Committee initiated the Congregational Capital Improvement Challenge Grant (CCIC Grant) program offering grant funds up to 1 million dollars over five years (\$200,000 per year). The Gathered Strategy Committee soon realized the need was great and to-date grants awarded during those five years totals **\$2,042,373**.

The CCIC grant funds available for distribution in 2019 are \$250,000, with the maximum grant awarding being \$25,000.

The grant review team takes seriously their responsibility of recommending funds for distribution.

Here is the timeline for 2019:

- April 30, all ELCA/Synod Annual Reports need to be submitted for grant consideration – no exceptions
- June 3, 5:00 p.m. Grant applications are due into the synod office – no exceptions
- September 21, the Synod Council votes on the review team’s recommendations
- September 30, congregations receive notification of any grant awarded them.

2018 CONGREGATIONAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT CHALLENGE GRANTS AWARDED

CONGREGATION	PROJECT	GRANT
Abiding Presence, Bronx	Worship Renewal Project	\$ 4,000
Christ, Freeport	Roof	\$ 14,000
Christ, Staten Island	Sewer hook-up	\$ 29,855
Christ, Wantagh	Storm damaged preschool playground	\$ 26,350
Faith, Syosset	Parsonage/ hot water & furnace	\$ 3,448
First, Poughkeepsie	Exterior wall & window repair	\$ 8,138
First, Poughkeepsie	Handicap entrance & exterior doors	\$ 4,500
Good Shepherd, Brooklyn	Parsonage	\$ 7,500
Grace, Forest Hills	Restroom-handicap	\$ 3,563
Grace, Greenwood Lake	Parking lot	\$ 12,500
Grace, Malverne	Roof	\$ 30,000
King of Kings, New Windsor	Restroom	\$ 1,005
Our Savior, Patchogue	Roof	\$22,025
Our Saviour, Manhasset	Gas furnace /hot water heater/water fill	\$ 22,500
Our Saviour's, Brooklyn	Exterior stone & roof repair	\$ 8,772
Our Saviour's, Brooklyn	Pointing	\$ 5,428
Redeemer, New Paltz	Roof	\$ 30,000
St. John's, Lindenhurst	Restroom renovation	\$ 7,500
St. Luke's, NYC	Parsonage	\$ 30,000
St. Paul's, Bronx	Roof	\$ 3,230
St. Paul's, Bronx	Wheel chair ramp	\$ 2,610
St. Paul's, East Northport	Window replacement	\$ 26,350
St. Paul's, Rye Brook	Boiler	\$ 20,000
St. Peter's, Baldwin	Boiler	\$ 20,000
St. Peter's, Huntington Station	Roof	\$30,000
St. Peter's, Port Jervis	Wheel chair ramp	\$ 5,388
Trinity, Astoria	Church roof	\$ 30,000
Trinity, Brewster	Exterior wall-mold-siding	\$ 12,000
Trinity 100th, NYC	Gutters/pipes	\$ 20,000
Trinity, Wyandanch	Window replacement	\$ 12,038

Leadership Development Grants

Continuing education and formation help our leaders serve more effectively and confidently in this particular season of mission. This grant provides a special focus on supporting programs that will specifically nurture education, training, and formation for leadership skills and qualities that complement the aims of the Claimed, Gathered, and Sent Strategies.

The Gathered Strategy Committee named Leadership as their top priority, and accordingly increased their budget recommendation to \$150,000. The Rev. Jonathan Linman, Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation is available to discuss leadership grant possibilities. Contact me with any questions about the grant process. See more details and timeline at <http://www.mnys.org/leadershipdevelopment/>.

2018 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GROUP GRANTS AWARDED

Pr. Linda Bell	\$4,500	Workshop "Roll Away the Stone: A Journey of Forgiveness"
Pr. Lamont Wells	\$7,500	Train the trainer module based on Clay Christensen strategy
Pr. Richard Hill	\$4,000	CEM "Faithful Innovation in a Disruptive Age", Nov 3 2018
Vicar Suzanne Campise	\$7,500	Stewardship365 for Redeemer, Kingston
Synod Dcn Ingrid Compton	\$7,500	Crossroads: Anti-racism training for "Growing in Faith" CE
Bishop Donald McCoid	\$7,500	Conference Lutheran-Catholic dialogue
Pr. Keven O'Hara	\$2,000	PRC Workshop on dynamics of church life
Pr. Aaron Baughman	\$7,500	Ecumenical effort/ certified parent educator to lead monthly support group
Pr. Carol Fryer	\$3,700	Spiritual Care volunteer training
Roberto Lara	\$5,000	Train congregation leaders on communication efforts and digital presence
Roberto Lara	\$7,500	Create a series of informational resources for congregation communication
Pr. Jonathan Linman	\$3,825	Monastic retreat for (15) pastors and deacons, Jan 2019
Pr. Gary Mills	\$7,500	Multiple-day anti-racism training
LD Grant Review Team	\$27,125	Funds for Internship Housing

2018 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INDIVIDUAL GRANTS AWARDED

Pr. Jonathan Linman	\$3,000	Develop resource/course/event: Monastic spirituality & everyday life & ministry
Pr. Sonja Maclary	\$3,000	Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process at the Mennonite Peace Center
Synod Dcn Gavin Schwen	\$3,000	Tuition to Nyack Theological Seminary
Pr. Joseph Mantovani	\$3,000	Holy Land, January 2019
Pr. Patty Avila	\$2,500	Communication coaching
Pr. Justin Lathrop	\$2,500	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 2)
Pr. Nicole Schwalbe	\$2,500	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Patty Avila	\$2,500	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Wolfgang Laudert	\$2,500	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. John Flack	\$2,500	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Jared Stahler	\$2,500	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Jeanine Owens	\$1,255	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Eric Mull	\$3,000	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Christopher Chantelau	\$2,500	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Maritza Ortiz-Cruz	\$3,000	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Leticia Alanis	\$1,150	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)
Pr. Danielle Miller	\$2,850	Leading Multi-Staff Ministries: Flourishing in Complexity"
Pr. Robert Weber	\$2,350	Leadership Skills for Clergy (session 1)

Sower's Project Grants

The Sower's Project is an initiative of Lutheran churches in the Metropolitan New York Synod to seed grassroots ministries in our communities and encourage them to grow and thrive. Anyone may nominate a community where they think a new ministry is needed or a leader equipped to "sow" a new ministry. And if you've got an idea for a ministry idea that you want to try, you can nominate yourself! What matters is finding ways to share the gospel with people who aren't currently hearing it. Initial "Seed" grants of up to \$10,000 will be given for pilot projects with a scope of 6-12 months.

2018 SOWER'S PROJECT GRANTS AWARDED

Meghan Morris	\$10,000	Downtown Ecumenical Campus Ministry
The Rev. Aaron Baughman	\$10,000	One River Mission Retreat Center

Wider Church Grant

These grants are intended to help fund programs outside of our synod's regular operating budget.

General criteria for grants: Must be a 501(c)3 organization in existence for three or more years, the grant cannot be used for capital needs, hunger programs are not eligible for these grants, individuals and congregations may not apply for these grants, and organizations that have received a grant in each of the prior three (3) years may not apply for a grant in the current year.

*In 2018,
twelve grants
were awarded,
totaling
\$125,000.*



2018 WIDER CHURCH GRANT AWARDED

Asian and Pacific Ministries Domestic Mission	\$10,000
Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, Inc.	\$5,000
Camp for Peace Liberia	\$20,000
Christ for the World Chapel	\$8,000
Fellowship of Reconciliation, Inc.	\$8,000
Friends of Mwangaza, Inc.	\$7,000
Lutheran Counseling Center	\$10,000
Maureen's Haven	\$5,000
New York Interfaith Power & Light	\$2,000
Parish Resource Center of Long Island, Inc.	\$5,000
Seafarers and International House Inc.	\$25,000
Trinity's Service and Food for the Homeless	\$20,000

[Click here to see the Metro NY Synod Statement of Financial Position](#)

[Click here to see the Metro NY Synod Revenue and Expense - Operating Budget: Audited](#)

[Click here to see the Metro NY Synod Designated, Temporarily and Permanently Restricted Funds](#)

[Click here to see the Metro NY Synod Expense Report for Fund 7 - S13.24 Properties.](#)

The Rev. Percy Nyanjula Butiku

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP FOR MULTICULTURAL MISSION



INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN CONFERENCE August 9-13, 2018 | Moshi- Tanzania

This conference was organized by the African National Ministries Steering Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The theme of the conference was Reconnecting, Re-rooting and Growing, **“Ubuntu”—I am because We are.**

The conference focused on the significance of strengthening the relationship between African National

Ministries of the ELCA and the African Lutheran Churches in Tanzania, based on partnership, interdependence, and mutual support. The conference was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

There were several forums. One, for example, dealt with supporting theological reflection among African Lutherans, with reference to specific cultural issues and the development of resources in the areas of worship, Christian Education, and Theological Education for the benefit of African Lutheran Ministries.

The conference discussed how to establish relationships between the two entities, relating to service, proclamation, mission, justice, and evangelism contexts that will help churches respond faithfully to God’s mission among the African Lutherans in the diaspora and their partners on the continent.

Through ELCA, New Starts for African nationals are employing innovative models for starting new congregations: reaching out in areas experiencing rapid population growth, and connecting to changing communities and emerging young populations.

There are six caucuses in the African nationals, which are grouped as follows: West Africa; Southern Africa; Eastern Africa; Ethiopia, which includes Oromo and Amharic groups; South Sudan; and Eritrean.

I recently led workshops on, “A theology of new starts, African national ministries in the ELCA, and African National Leaders coaching in a foreign land.” The workshop was held in Las Vegas, from February 6th to 8th, 2019, for newly-arrived asylum

seekers from Congo and Southern Sudan.

10TH ASIAN LUTHERAN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE January 23-30th, 2019 | Udon Thani, Thailand

I attended the 10th Asian Lutheran International conference as part of my global mission work.

It was an educational experience for me, especially how the conference engaged their young adults in preparation and participation throughout the conference.

It made me see our weakness in engaging our young people in our ministries—it is something worth doing.

Background

The Asian Lutheran International Conference (ALIC) was initiated at the Fifth Assembly of Asian and Pacific Islanders (AAPA-ELCA) in 1997. The AAPA-ELCA has officially organized this International Conference, ever since.

Purpose

- To address common concerns faced by Asian Lutherans, by promoting dialogue and networking.
- To be a forum for supporting theological reflection among Asian Lutherans, with reference to specific cultural issues and the development of resources in the areas of worship, Christian education, and theological education for the benefit of Asian Lutheran ministries.
- To address the issues of leadership development for Asian ministries and theological education by creating an opportunity for interaction with leaders and theologians of Asian background.

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA AND THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA BISHOPS’ SUMMIT August 6-9, 2018 | Moshi- Tanzania

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, which has 26 dioceses, was represented by 150 people and 18 Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, five independent Lutheran Organizations, and ELCA Global mission staff, who gathered in Moshi, Tanzania for a summit, from August 6-9. Worship was spirit-filled, conversations were fruitful, and there was deep reflection on companion relationships that exist between the ELCA and ELCT.



Challenge in the companionship relations

Our companionship has been long needed to be redefined. The world has changed, and the Church has changed. ELCA is in decline; ELCT is growing. In former times, partnership was very strong, but recently has been shrinking, and there is a need to strengthen it.

This summit gave both sides opportunity to learn from each other; looking at the two cultures and their financial capacities, and reminding each other that we both believe in Jesus Christ and are both in lives of service. When we work together, it brings joy, and when they walked to Emmaus, they walked together. This is a mission for both sides, and two is better than one. Talking together brought mutuality.

It was good to see both sides talking about what brings joy in the companionship relationship. Here are some of the things that were agreed on:

- Cultural differences - priorities and values are different and are sometimes misunderstood because of language barriers
- Distance - we live so far apart from each other and travel expenses are excessive
- Lack of resources on both sides, regarding economic issues
- Understanding of accompaniment (colonial model of mission)
- Learning from successes and failures
- We are oceans apart, but have a shared vision and one faith
- Power imbalance (perception of this power)
- Government procedures
- Communication
- Imbalance of resources among synods

Accompaniment Values:

Mutuality:

1. Diocese offers us evangelism
2. How ELCT is serving communities by evangelism
3. Our mission as holistic
4. Use the diocese strategic plan to share the priorities, before any support is given
5. Pray for each other
6. Empowerment

The Path forward

Through the Area Desk, which is primarily the Regional Representative for East Africa and the Relationship Manager, a process will be established for working together with the ELCT on tracking engagement, keeping all diocese and synod leaders informed, and looking into a process for moving forward with all bishops, staff and committees in the ELCA and ELCT, including a diocese without companions, or with companions that are not fully engaged.

The joint committee is already beginning to plan a second summit for 2021. The committee will begin to take a leadership role in preparing presentations, discussions, directions, and worship for the second summit.

MULTICULTURAL MISSION

BUILDING BRIDGES

Parishioners from across the metropolitan New York Synod gathered at New Hope Lutheran Church, Jamaica, Queens, to celebrate the diversity of the synod. The Multicultural Committee hosted "Building Bridges," an event-filled afternoon featuring presenters, speakers, and artists from around the world.

The day was opened in prayer, in Spanish, English and Swahili, followed by warm greetings to the assembly from Bishop Donald McCoid.

Presenters shared powerful testimonials of their experiences migrating to the United States and being accepted into the country and especially into the Church. These stories led to passionate group discussions about issues immigrants face today and the church's role in accepting, embracing, and supporting them. For some participants, this was their first time discussing immigrants in their community.

Discussions became a seed planted in the hearts of the participants to always think of people new to their community, and welcome them with the love of God.

All participants enjoyed delicious cuisine from the Caribbean for lunch, and tasty European treats for dessert.

Before joining together for worship, participants were entertained by the mariachi band and dancers from Escuela de mariachi Angeles de NY, Malinche Nicaraguan dancers, and dancers from Renacer Argentinian.

The Assembly left united and invigorated to build bridges in their church, communities, and throughout the synod.

ANTI-RACISM TRAINING 2018

In our Anti-racism training last year, we added two new trainings that were needed by the community. In addition, the bilingual training was presented in both English and Spanish, and in the Urban Leaders Institute, we intentionally offered training regarding internalized racism.

The following is feedback from some of the members who attended.

What I learned from the Urban Leaders Racism Training:

- What stuck out for me, in a profound way, was how wide-reaching Internalized -Racism is.
- It is like a living, breathing, growing virus bent on dehumanizing, crippling and destroying those it is aimed at. But, beware! If not eradicated, it will, like all viruses, eventually become uncontrollable and destroy us all.
- I am most grateful for the Anti-Racism training because it has opened my eyes to the fact that I have lived with Internalized Racism and its negative effects all my life, without even realizing it.
- I was born in the Caribbean, lived and went to school in Canada, got married and live in Brooklyn, New York, and because of that training, can say Yes!
- I have faced Internalized Racism each and every day of my life, from infancy to now, as did my mother and father, their parents, and their parents' parents. What an eye-opener!
- What I learned from that session has freed me to understand the "why" of many things I have struggled with in the past.
- Through Christ, I seek to help others who meet and greet me with pre-conceived ideas of who I am and what I am capable of being and doing because of the color of my skin. I understand that first, we are all God's Children, and like it or not, we are more alike than we think.

—Deacon Ingrid Compton of St. Stephens Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, NY

Bilingual Anti-Racism Training

The following is a view of one of the members who attended the training.

We spend a lot of time and energy discussing systemic racism in the church but, it is rare to have a space to discuss the internalized racism many people of color carry in their interactions within our church. I was so grateful for the synod-sponsored training that focused specifically on internalized racism.

The fact that the training was bilingual helped broaden the number of people who could participate and benefit from this education. I highly recommend to the synod to continue to find time and means for these types of trainings and conversations, and to continue to offer it in multiple languages.

Christopher Vergara
Sion/Saint Peters, Manhattan

ANTI-RACISM TRAINING

Growing in Faith - The NY Diakonia Program

*"Racism dehumanizes all of us. Dismantling racism heals us all." **
*"Racism goes beyond personal prejudice..." **

From The Rev.. Rebecca Pollicino, Executive Director, Growing in Faith: NY Diakonia Program

Thanks to the generosity of the MNYS through a leadership grant, and assistance from the Anti-Racism Committee, we were able to provide this vital anti-racism training from Crossroads at no cost to the participants. They provided funds to cover the cost of our presenters, and a light breakfast and lunch.

Although this training was hosted by Growing in Faith: NY Diakonia Program, we invited all our MNYS brothers and sisters to attend, and a few of them did just that.

We felt it was of vital importance that our students participate in anti-racism training, which is why it is now included in our "Daily Life of a Christian" unit. However, we also wanted to ensure that past graduates of our program had access to this important training. Despite having been offered at a few locations throughout the MNYS, some of our students felt more comfortable discussing this sensitive subject with their own cohort.

On Saturday, November 17, 2018, we held an all-day workshop at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in

Bellerose, NY. The church donated the space, so we did not incur any additional charges.

What a success this seminar was! We had over 50 participants from all over the synod attend this all-day workshop. Our incredibly diverse community provided rich discussion and learning for all involved. Every single person in attendance, even those who had been hesitant at first, remarked that they were so incredibly moved by the experience and grateful that they attended.

The Crossroads trainers were very impressed with the deep discussions that took place during this event. They offered time for some participants to share stories of their experience with racism, which was both heartbreaking and eye-opening for many of us in attendance.



The discussions were so lively that no one wanted them to end. In fact, after the workshop was over, many asked if we could have a follow-up workshop to continue our discussions and delve even deeper into this important topic. The presenters from Crossroads were excited that we got so much out of the session and that we requested more time to grow in our learning from each other. Our Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Percy Butiku, is following up with them regarding future opportunities.

Our sincerest thanks to the MNYS Leadership Grant Committee and the MNYS Anti-Racism

Committee for providing us with the funding to make this day possible. We would have never been

able to provide this training without it. We look forward to working with you again, to provide a follow-up in the future.

CARE FOR CREATION

I am grateful to all the Pastors and Lay leaders who have made all these trainings possible. We have plans for more Anti-racism training in the near future, as we take steps toward eradicating the sin of racism in our midst.

Mr. Roberto Lara

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS



JESUS WAS THE ULTIMATE COMMUNICATOR, BUT HE DIDN'T JUST TALK OR LISTEN TO PEOPLE.

He connected with people and used many more tools than just words. The primal intent of communication for Jesus was *connection*. In his actions and in his guidance, He was trying to transform people, not simply give them information.

As leaders, we have these same responsibilities.

Through communication we

are the ultimate evangelists, spreading the gospel with great enthusiasm. In our digital age, our modes of communication are plentiful, diverse, and perpetually changing. What remains constant, though, is our mission to communicate all the good things God has done, and to share the news with our synodical community and beyond. With advocacy being a huge part of our calling, we have also included cross-channel strategies, to let the world know about our radically welcoming mission.

A bold rebrand:

In 2018, we rebranded our image. As with any rebrand, our goal was rooted in a commitment to strengthen our message and allow it to evolve, while supporting our core message and connecting to our audiences in a new and authentic way. From print to digital, all our public-facing communications offer a cohesive look and feel that dynamically illustrate our synod culture as a united community. Our strategic rebrand has also helped to distinguish our organization from others, and works to tell the good news in impactful and engaging ways.

A Powerful Paper Trail: The Word in Print

Our first Mission Support print campaign was implemented in December 2018, which garnered high engagement and helped to improve many mission support trends in our synod. Additionally, over the last few months, we have breathed new life into our print publication, *The Lutheran New Yorker*, dedicating our first issue to the impending process of electing our next bishop.



Jesus was the ultimate communicator, but He didn't just talk or listen to people. He connected with people and used many more tools than just words. The primal intent of communication for Jesus was connection. In his actions and in his guidance, He was trying to transform people, not simply give them information.

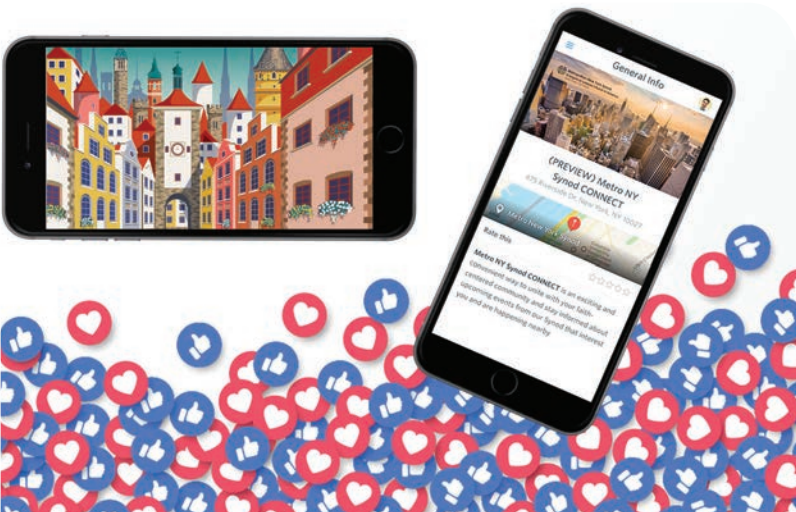


A Determining Digital Footprint

A large component of our rebrand included a new, streamlined and optimized website. Since its launch, we have seen considerable increases in our user analytics, acquisitions, sessions, and page view rates. Because a website serves as an open window into our community, we have worked hard to guide our new visitors and prospective parishioners through our dedicated “Find a Church” initiative. A search engine rooted within the synod network, this advanced feature helps potential new members make an easier journey from visiting our website to identifying and joining a congregation located near them. A good website also acts as a platform for important data capture. With more traffic to our site, we have increased our email list by 39.5%, with an open rate of 48.9%, 23.9% above the industry standard. Additionally, we have achieved an impressive click-through rate of 19.57%, 17% above the industry standard. Because of the high open and engagement rates on our weekly newsletters, we have been given the “All Star Award 2018” by Constant Contact, helping us to continue to becoming an industry leader in our evangelical communication tactics.

A Social Synod

Social media continues to be a direct portal to our target audience. During this year, we have increased our followers by 57.67%, and our content reaching 1347.21% more people, when compared with insight reports from last quarter. With social media being predominately a visual platform primed for compelling imagery and videography, our video views have seen an increase of 41,914% from the previous year—the optimum way to share our brand, our message and the celebrations of our community.



Connecting with Our Youth

In an effort to engage our young adult population on multiple platforms, we have also launched our Metro NY CONNECT mobile app. An easy way to access important synodical events, it is also a great place to share memories and photographs with members of the synod, while connecting to other users and building a stronger network. We are also working on an app for younger children that will have age-appropriate games, music and Bible stories that align with our welcoming and community-driven Lutheran identity.

We will implement congregational mini-sites within our mnys.org to provide an up-to-date web presence for all our houses of worship.

The (Digital) Front Doors of Our Congregations

Our plans for 2019-20 will follow on a path of continued communication and progressive tactics. **We will implement congregational mini-sites within our mnys.org to provide an up-to-date web presence for all our houses of worship,** and have an even greater hyperlocal focus of information.

Looking into the Future

We are also pleased to introduce a series of **Communications Best Practices Workshops** to help empower our congregations. This series will include how-to tutorials that speak to the setup of a basic website, building and creating an impactful email program, and how to build and curate a branded and engaging social media platform.

Methods of communication have changed with each time period spanning history. Throughout the Bible, even God altered the way He/She communicated with His/Her people. While God appeared to some face-to-face or in visions and dreams, He/She communicated to others through prophets, priests, angels, or scrolls. He/She even wrote His/Her message on a wall and on tablets of stone.

Before He left earth, Jesus gave the command, **“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15). The specifics on how the disciples were to “go” were not outlined and we must continue to work with diligence and servitude to carry on the Good News through any means necessary.**

Thank you for being part of our message every day and for helping to build a strong and committed community of evangelists who share the word and the love of the Lord.

MNYS COMMUNICATIONS



OUR YOUTH

Because we care about the little ones in our congregations and their faith formation, we will launch our first, stand-alone mobile app for our children.

We also care for our youth, and in order to engage with more young adults in our synod, we launched our **Metro NY CONNECT** mobile app.

METRICS *at a* GLANCE

BRANDING

From print to digital, all our public-facing materials offer a cohesive look-and-feel, illustrating our synod-culture as a united community. This strong and cohesive branding design distinguishes our organization from others, and facilitates sharing the Good News in impactful ways.



SOCIAL MEDIA



FOLLOWERS: **57.67%**
REACH: **1347.21%**
VIDEO VIEWS: **41,914%**

*More than 58.1K minutes viewed (!!!)

MODERN DAY EVANGELISM

Through communication we are the ultimate evangelists, spreading the Gospel with great enthusiasm. In our digital age, our communication modes are plenty, diverse, and always changing. What remains constant is our mission to communicate all of the good things God has done, and to share the news with our synodical community and beyond. As advocacy is a huge part of our calling, we have also included cross-channel strategies to let the world know about our radically welcoming mission.



MISSION SUPPORT

Our first Mission Support print campaign was implemented in December 2018, garnering excellent results for engagement, and improving many mission support trends in our synod.



EMAIL

In addition, our email program is growing and getting stronger.



CONTACT LIST: **39.5%**
OPEN RATE: **48.9%**
CLICK THRU RATE: **19.57%**

WEBSITE

In the first year of launching our redesigned website, we saw fruitful results, with considerable increases in our user, new user, sessions, and pageview rates.



NEW USERS: **69.44%**
SESSIONS: **49.73%**
PAGEVIEWS: **42.96%**



PRINT



- 2019 saw the rebirth of our beloved print magazine, The Lutheran New Yorker, with our first issue dedicated to the process of electing our next bishop.
- Advocacy is a large part of our calling, and this year, we included cross-channel strategies to let the world know about our radically welcoming mission.
- These strategies helped to increase traffic on our website, specifically our "Find a Church" page, with thousands of potential new members.

The Rev. Jonathan Linman

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP FOR FAITH AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION



Since the resignation of Robert Rimbo as Bishop in January of 2018, our synodical life together has been dominated by the theme of transition. It has been an enormous privilege and a grace to work with our Interim Bishop, Donald McCoid. While this interim period has put some initiatives on hold until a new Bishop takes office, the work of synod staff members has continued with diligence. Ministry and mission go on. What follows is my annual

report as Assistant to the Bishop for Faith and Leadership Formation.

Faith Formation

The gifts of strength, courage, and persistence to “Care for Creation” have their source in elemental features of God’s creation itself – the divine Word that speaks creation into existence in the first place, and the Holy Spirit’s power made known in creaturely elements such as words, water, bread, and wine. These essential things are central also to my calling as Bishop’s Assistant for Faith and Leadership Formation. So it is as a pastor in Christ’s Church that I have many opportunities to **preach** the gospel, to **preside** at worship, and to **teach** the faith.

I am regularly given opportunities to live out this three-part calling as I share in God’s work of forming people in faith for the sake of our mission to care for creation. During 2018 and the first three months of 2019, I have had the privilege of engaging in formal teaching ministry on 31 occasions. I also have enjoyed opportunities to formally preach and preside 42 times during this same period. Additionally, I have had occasion to lead informal worship at least 89 times since my last report, when staff members, volunteers, and our guests gathered daily for prayer in our synod office chapel. In addition to teaching at synod and congregational events, I also give expression to teaching ministry through writing. At the invitation of our Communications Director, Roberto Lara, I have written brief theological and spiritual reflection essays on various topics that appear occasionally in our Synod’s electronic newsletter.

Another centerpiece of my work involves meeting with God’s people in our Synod, and sometimes beyond. More often than not, these encounters turn into occasions of Mutual Conversation and Consolation, that two-way street where Jesus meets us when two or three gather in his name. I recorded 375 such scheduled occasions in the past year – this is in addition to the spontaneous encounters in and out of the office, as well as phone calls and email correspondence that are not scheduled, but which nonetheless are significant and require the expenditure of both time and energy.

The programmatic Faith Formation focus of my call also involves me in the work of the Claimed Committee and its initiatives related to our synodical strategic plan, especially in communicating the Lutheran message and deepening commitment to Lutheran identity. Recall that since the adoption of our strategic plan, each program year has featured themes central to Lutheranism – Mutual Conversation and Consolation; Confession, Forgiveness and Reconciliation; and Reformation 500. During 2018 – 2019, our theme has been **“Gospel Proclamation – For Such a Time as This.”** For Luther, proclaiming the gospel in preaching is a means of grace. But, gospel proclamation is not limited to the work of solo preachers in the pulpit. Music, drama, dance, visual arts, and more can also proclaim the good news of God’s grace to the world. Various retreats and events in the past year explored the nature of gospel proclamation, expansively understood, for our day.





Retreats and Events

Central to my portfolio is shepherding the conceptualization, planning, and leadership of the various retreats and other faith formation-related events sponsored by our Synod or hosted by local congregations. Included are retreats for Synod Council members, our Deans, those in Candidacy, Synod Deacons, and our annual Bishop's Retreat for ELCA Rostered Ministers, which in 2018 featured world-renowned preacher, bishop, author, and theologian, William Willimon. In addition to these retreats, I also planned and led the following faith formation events:

- Two Lenten Days of Reflection with the pastors of the Peconic and Western Suffolk Conferences on Luther's Large Catechism (last year), Bible Study on the Acts passage of Paul preaching in Athens, and conversation on Luther's view of preaching (this year).
- A Bible Study for the annual meeting of Lutheran Men in Mission.
- A day-long retreat for the Staten Island *diakonia* group on Confession and Forgiveness.
- Two adult forums at Saint Peter's Church, Manhattan, and a Bible Study at King of Kings New Windsor, on Luther's view of preaching.
- A day-long event on "Gospel Proclamation – for Those who Listen," for the Staten Island Conference.

Resources

In order to support providing thematic content to our various retreats and faith formation events, I ordinarily develop resources each year to herald our annual theme. Here are the resources I created in the past year to aid our explorations of "Gospel Proclamation – For Such a Time as This":

- An interactive, conversational Bible Study on Paul preaching in Athens, recorded in Acts, as a means for exploring and better understanding the ministries of proclamation in our own age.
- A guided conversation focusing on various quotes from Martin Luther on the nature of preaching, again in service of exploring ministries of proclamation today.

- A session focusing on what it means to listen to preaching as a way of enhancing listeners' capacities to get the most out of sermons. This format gives lay people and their pastors the rare gift of talking with each other about the nature of preaching, an aspect of worship that is such a prominent feature of our life together.
- Materials for use in local conferences and other settings for worship, prayer, conversation, and Bible Study, in service of nurturing a spirit of discernment as we approach the election of a new synodical bishop.

Monastic Spirituality in the Benedictine Tradition

A major feature of the faith formation dimension of my calling this year focused on attending to my own deepening faith formation – physician, heal thyself. In early January of 2018, I was approved to take a two-month-long sabbatical in the summer of 2018, which centered on spending a total of six weeks at two different monasteries (one Episcopal and one Lutheran) for 24/7 immersion into the ways and routines of Benedictine Spirituality. In addition to living the Benedictine life for those weeks, my sabbatical project focused on reading about a dozen commentaries on Benedictine Spirituality, writing about the congruences between Lutheran theology and spirituality and the Benedictine way, and developing materials for a monastic retreat, which could also be developed as a seminary course, for those in public ministry. This retreat is designed to explore, in conversation, how to incorporate major themes of Benedictine Spirituality into the non-cloistered busy life of ministry. In January of 2019, I led a pilot version of this retreat for 13 pastors and synodically rostered deacons from our Synod, which was well-received by each participant, and which will lay the foundation for my offering this kind of experience again to rostered ministers of our church. I thank God for the generosity of our Synod in making available both individual and group Leadership Development grants to cover the costs of these experiences for me and for the other retreatants.

Leadership Formation

We cannot engage in creation care without the leaders to do God's work with their hands. The Leadership Formation dimension of my work involves me in the Leadership Development emphases of our strategic plan's Gathered Committee, the charge of which directs us to "recruit, equip, and support pastors and lay leaders to execute our plan for mission." This three-part charge to recruit, equip, and support leaders finds its expression in the following areas of responsibility in my portfolio:

Candidacy for ELCA Rostered Ministers

Representing the Bishop on the Candidacy Committee, helping to shepherd our many candidates for ELCA rostered ministries, and providing administrative oversight to the Candidacy process all comprise the most labor-intensive centerpiece of my work in Leadership Formation. Staff members Maria Rodas and Margy Schmitt-Ajer also assist in the work of our Candidacy Committee.

In terms of our charge to recruit, equip and support leaders as it pertains to numbers, we have 25 persons formally enrolled in the various stages of the Candidacy process, most for ordained ministry. There are at least an additional 20 persons who have had discernment conversations with me who feel drawn to public ministry in our church.

Areas of special focus for the Candidacy Committee in this past year include the following:

- Final development of a tracking system and accompanying documents that make available at a glance exactly where candidates are in the Candidacy process, what they have accomplished in the process and what remains for them to do. This system will be enormously helpful to whoever will attend to the Candidacy process when a new bishop calls her/his own staff.
- A training event that nurtured deepened awareness of the needs, opportunities, and realities of persons in our care from LGBTQIA+ communities, that we may create still more safe places for persons in our Candidacy process.
- Plans are underway for anti-racism training that is specific to the Candidacy process for members of the Candidacy Committee.
- Plans are also in place also to use chaplain(s) (who are not members of the Candidacy Committee) to offer the ministry of presence and care for our candidates, especially those from marginalized communities.

Synodical Deacons Program

Another focus for my Leadership Formation efforts involves me in our Synodical Deacons program that expresses the church's care for creation via local ministries of Word and Service. I represent the Bishop on our Synod Deacons' Council, which shepherds synod deacon candidates through its own unique formation process. This past year, two persons were set apart as synodical deacons. In the coming year, we anticipate that 11 will likely be set apart as synodical deacons. I also assist in the education of our synodical deacons, teaching a one-day course two times a year on the biblical, historical, theological, and ecumenical dimensions of the ministry of deacons.

In response to stated need, since supply preachers are increasingly difficult to find, a new course in preaching is now being offered to synodical deacons for whom preaching is a feature of their ministry. This course will periodically be scheduled and led by Pastor David Grainson, a member of the Synodical Deacons' Council.

Fund for Leaders Program

Our Synod's share in the ELCA Fund for Leaders Program, which I oversee in our Synod, makes it increasingly more affordable for our candidates for public ministry to attend ELCA seminaries, especially United Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, by virtue of our special Huneke Fund. We were blessed by God to be able to award \$126,198 to 10 ELCA seminary students for the 2018-2019 academic year to assist with, and in many cases to fully cover, tuitions costs. Additionally, we provided modest financial support to some of our candidates enrolled in non-ELCA seminaries and others in Candidacy who needed to take courses at ELCA seminaries required for their specifically Lutheran Learning and Formation.

Leadership Development Grant Program

The Leadership Development Fund of our Synod is another way we equip and support our clergy, ELCA and Synodical Deacons, along with other lay leaders. During the past fiscal year, our Synod awarded 18 individual and 14 group grants for a total of \$150,000, to assist in the ongoing formation of our leaders. Sue Brandt manages this program, but I serve also on the Leadership Grants Review Team, which has the happy privilege of awarding grants to our leaders for their ongoing formation and training. The design of this program is to challenge and inspire our leaders to be proactive in identifying and taking responsibility for their particular leadership formation needs and opportunities, enrolling in reputable continuing education programs as individuals, or as groups in creating events at which known, expert leaders offer their gifts to the many who attend.

Leadership Development grants in the past year assisted with costs for events and experiences related to a wide variety of topics and themes, including: forgiveness and reconciliation; emotional processes in family systems; faithful innovation in a disruptive age; parent education training; pilgrimage to the Holy Land; coaching for better communications and digital presence for mission and ministry; photography and video editing in the service of enhancing communications ministries; stewardship training; specialized anti-racism training; leadership skills for clergy drawing from areas of focus in Masters of Business Administration degrees; Lutheran – Catholic Dialogue; spiritual care volunteer training; immersions in monastic spirituality; and leadership training for multi-staff ministries.

Trexler Travel and Study Grant Program

Still another grant program unique to our Synod that supports ongoing formation for clergy is the Trexler Travel and Study Grant Program. I oversee this program, convening ad hoc teams of staff members to make recommendations to Synod Council for approval of grant applications. During the past fiscal year, we awarded a total of \$4,000 to four pastors, to support their ongoing formation, mostly for continuing education experiences involving travel abroad, including study travel in Asia and Guyana.

Relationship with Seminaries

By virtue of my role with the Candidacy process, I serve as our Synod's staff liaison with seminaries, both affiliated with our church and other traditions. In this capacity, I work with seminary administrators, staff, and faculty members as we partner together in the education and formation processes to recruit, equip and support leaders for mission, often with special focus on identifying contextual education and internship sites, as well as attending to the Lutheran learning and formation needs of those enrolled in non-ELCA seminaries.

Work on Internship Sites and Support

A special current focus of the work of the Leadership Development aspect of the Gathered Committee's ministry is to seek ways to support seminary internship sites in the territory of our Synod. Metropolitan New York offers unique and compelling mission opportunities and unique ministries that could serve our wider church well in its formation of pastors and deacons. However, costs to congregations for remaining or becoming internship sites can be prohibitive, especially when it comes to expenses for housing seminary interns. With this in mind, this year's Synod budget, to be approved at our Assembly, includes a budget line item to assist congregations, particularly with housing costs related to the seminary internship program. If approved, we will develop, in the coming months, plans for how specifically to make this financial assistance available to local ministry settings. To support these efforts, I have also created a listing of current and recent internship sites, along with a listing of other possible sites among congregations and ministry settings in the territory of our Synod. This listing can be made available for discernment among representatives of our seminaries, our local congregations, and our Synod for identifying and supporting future possible sites.



Ecumenical Efforts

Ecumenism and interfaith relations are also a feature of my portfolio as a staff member in the Bishop's office, to assist with our efforts at nurturing relationships with other churches and faith traditions in our Synod, and in service to our wider church. Here are highlights of my ecumenical involvements in the past year:

- Participation in the Lutheran-Catholic Ascension Day Vespers at St. Vincent Ferrer Church in Manhattan
- Attendance at a meeting of the Lutheran-Methodist Full Communion Coordinating Committee, of which I am Lutheran Co-Chair, at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, to plan an ecumenical formation event for members of our two churches
- Participation in the planning of a series of Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue events in November of 2018 that featured the two Co-Chairs of International Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue. Professor William Rusch, and Pastors Jared Stahler and Amandus Derr did the major planning for these events, which were funded in part by a synodical Leadership Development Grant.
- Attendance at meetings in Baltimore of the current round of U.S. Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, of which I am a member, in the context of which we put finishing touches on our book-length report, the fruit of seven years of this round of dialogue, on "Faithful Teaching" in the Church.
- Finally, I was featured as keynote speaker on "Christian Spirituality for Spiritual Leadership of Parish Communities" for the annual Clergy Day of the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

Conclusion

In addition to the initiatives and activities here described, I would add that the coming months will focus on making certain that the ministry areas I have responsibility for will be in good and decent order for a newly elected Bishop and her/his staff members.

Finally, and very simply, I give thanks to God for the many and various opportunities given me to share in God's work of forming people in the faith and for leadership in our church, and for the care of creation, for such a time as this!



Deacon Margy Schmitt Ajer

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP FOR CONGREGATIONS



This year, our synod assembly theme is “Care of Creation.” What an important theme for us to reflect on as we think about playing our part in working to care for all that God has made. While the theme immediately makes us think of environmental concerns, it is good to expand our thinking to think of the whole of creation, which includes all of God’s people as we gather in faith communities, as we serve our communities, and as we proclaim the gospel to a world in desperate need of

God’s love, grace, and mercy.

So, as we think about caring for God’s creation, it makes sense to also reflect on how we care for God’s people and God’s church, as well.

Transitions, Mobility, and the Call Process

Whether it is a congregational call or the calling of a new bishop, we need to trust that God is indeed at work, and open ourselves up to the leading of the Spirit.

- At any given time, we have approximately 20 congregations in some form of transition. Most of them are actively working through the process of calling a new pastor, but some are “on hold,” as together we work through what the next part of their journey looks like. Seven are currently interviewing candidates for call. An additional two congregations are close to recommending candidates for call, and three congregations have called pastors in the last several months.
- In addition to working with congregational councils and call committees, it is my joy to have many conversations with pastors who are discerning that God may be calling them to something new. Some of these folks are from our synod, while others are throughout the church, but all are trying to be faithful in listening to the call of the Holy Spirit in their lives. It is truly a joy to hear their stories, to get to know the gifts they bring, and to walk with them on their discernment journeys.
- I continue to believe that this process works best when all partners involved know and trust one another. To that end, I continue to meet face to face with congregations, councils, and call committees to establish relationships, work to reduce anxiety, and support the process. I continue to find

joy in meetings throughout the synod in this way.

- Ok...most of you have heard me say this multiple times by now, but I will say it again: the call process is a conversation of mutual discernment between a candidate and call committee as they seek together to discern the work of the Holy Spirit. Whether it is a congregational call or the calling of a new bishop, we need to trust that God is indeed at work, and open ourselves up to the leading of the Spirit.

Interim Pastors

- We currently have about 10 active, intentional interims serving in our congregations. They meet bi-monthly to share updates and resources, ask questions of one another, and work together on issues that affect the work they do.
- Interim pastors play an essential part in caring for that part of God’s creation referred to as “congregations in transition.” Providing stable, pastoral leadership, reducing anxiety, and helping a congregation establish a vision for mission are among the various ways that interims help a congregation prepare for new pastoral leadership.

First Thirds of Life

- Caring for the younger members of our faith communities is the focus of the work I share with the Claimed Committee. There are ministries taking place throughout our synods, for children, youth, and young adults, and we are working to increase and connect them.
- We have received a grant from the ELCA to contract with a young adult ministry coordinator for one year, to find out what is happening with young adult ministries throughout the synod, and to build a network of those ministries and individuals.
- We are working on a childrens’ app that will enhance supplemental faith formation in children. We are planning to launch parties for the app throughout the synod, to gather children together to celebrate Jesus. Stay tuned!
- I attended the ELCA Youth Extravaganza in January as a sign of partnership and support with those leaders from throughout our synod. I am grateful to Synod Deacon Charlie Germaine for the work he has done to bring those leaders together.
- In June, I will be attending the ELCA Campus Ministry staff gathering, along with Becca Seely, our LMHE executive director. This is a way to support campus ministry in our synod, through making connections and building relationships. One of the goals for first thirds ministry this year is to provide some seed money to congregations or conferences that are interested in starting ministry with local campuses.

Conference Deans

- I continue to serve as the staff liaison to the conference deans, who meet regularly to share what is happening in their conferences with the staff and each other. This is also a good opportunity to update them on things taking place in the synod. The work of the deans, along with congregations and synod staff, is a good example of the importance of being church together.
- I also continue to meet with individual deans and conferences, as invited, to strengthen our partnership in the work we do together.

Candidacy and Assignment

- I continue to work with Pastor Linman and the Candidacy Committee, especially in support of candidates as they are approved and enter the process for assignment and first call. It is a privilege to be on this journey with them.

Beyond the Synod

- I am on the planning team for a gathering of ELCA deacons in Regions 7 and 8, which will be held September 26-28. This is an important part of leading our church into a deeper understanding of being a church of word, sacrament, and service, and of strengthening the ministries of those called to Word and Service ministry.
- In February, it was my privilege to participate in the ELCA gathering for Bishops' assistants throughout the church. It was a rich time of connecting with colleagues doing similar work, of sharing ideas and resources for ministry, and for personal enrichment and education. Thank you for this opportunity.

I continue to believe that all these connections, both within the Metropolitan New York Synod, and throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, help us live out our calling to be "Church Together." This is the foundation of my call and my ministry, and also, I believe, the call and ministry of each of us. It is part of how we care for each other, for all those we serve, for the weary world we live in, and for all of God's creation!



The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells

DIRECTOR FOR EVANGELICAL MISSION/
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP



Jesus said, "I will build my church." – Matthew 16:18. As the Director for Evangelical Mission, I am tasked with directing the flow of Mission between our three expressions: churchwide, our Metropolitan New York Synod and our local congregations.

An idea or vision for a new ministry begins locally. DEMS are unique, as we are called to invite leaders within our synods to participate in communal discernment

and missional exploration. We start conversations and bridge partnerships around shared interest and commitments, for new word and sacrament ministries. Understanding that God's currency is relationship, we committed this year to deepening relationships with our ecumenical partners and building bridges with those on the margins of society.

The growing diversity of people, situations and cultures adds other layers of complexity to the ministry of new congregational development. Ethnic audiences, multicultural communities, various geographical settings, young adult/post-modern groups, and ecumenical ministry initiatives all contribute to the new opportunities we have to grow and be church differently. Diverse socio-economic communities and others who live on the margins of society are also ways for us to be open to new populations as we engage with genuine attempts to listen, learn, walk alongside, serve and witness in our territory.

Brothers and sisters, God is actively mobilizing people to do new things, to change lives, to transform communities and to renew the church for the sake of the world. Theological education, without cultural and community connection, is not enough. Each context and ministry audience is unique and calls for creative approaches to learn, understand and design appropriate ways to engage and involve people in creating new communities of faith.

I want to highlight two examples but first I ask, Who are your conversation partners? How are you connecting with those who need to be reminded that they matter? **THE POWER OF ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS**

THE POWER OF ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS

There are a lot of concerns due to the decline of many of our congregations, with some leading to Holy Closure, but we must remember the great commission in **Matthew 28**... "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations..." Understanding that we must capitalize on our strengths, our assets and our ecumenical partnerships, we have given birth to a new ministry.

Rev. Gladys Diaz of the Episcopal Diocese of New York has shepherded Transfiguration/New Hope for all Saints, and San Juan Batista, all in the Bronx, to Holy Closure and is currently in the early stages of creating Mission Walk: An Episcopal/Lutheran Journey; a joint ministry to bring God's good news to the critical area of the South Bronx.

As you may know, the South Bronx community has historically been portrayed as an area of high concentrations of poverty, violence, and opioid and other addictions. In a community where it is difficult to find healthier options and safe spaces, Mission Walk is in the best position to create spaces where people can gather to find spiritual nourishment and can flourish as individuals and collectively in a faith community. The empowerment and inclusion of all people in the multicultural field is what shapes Mission Walk, by centering discipleship and formation beyond a traditional church model.

The vision is built by the participants. The leadership will develop through joint work among clergy, laity and representatives from the Metropolitan New York Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

We are just getting started. Come join us. BRIDGING THE MARGINS





BRIDGING THE MARGINS

Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan better known as TLC for NYC, led by Rev. Heidi Neumark, is a growing, racially- and class-diverse, justice-seeking community of faith on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Does this sound like a community on the margins, or a community of dreams?

The dictionary tells us that the word margin can be defined as 1) the edge or the border of something, or 2) an amount by which something is won or falls short.

Through their own visioning, Trinity Lutheran of Manhattan lives out its commitment to God and to one another by championing diversity, discipleship and service. It is also committed to be loving, concerned, joyful, and courageous, and committed to the people it serves. Trinity has uniquely positioned itself through its work and community partnerships to be where:

- ***the vulnerable are supported***
- ***the rejected have a place at the table***
- ***the homeless are housed***
- ***the hungry are fed***
- ***immigrants find sanctuary and workers are justly paid.***

Despite facing real external threats, Trinity Lutheran of Manhattan continues to invest in creating the synergy for groups in their space, making them a hub of community

and activity on the Upper West Side. The Gospel is lived out most amongst those who could be considered the least. You see there is much joy and richness, as well as challenges and struggles to be



faced. Let TLC for NYC be a reminder of who matters. Let TLC for NYC show that celebrating diversity, building community and seeking justice in Jesus' name can redefine any margin and will change the amount by which we come close to or fall short of the kingdom of God.

I'll close this report with the same two questions from earlier: Who are your conversation partners? How are you connecting with those who need to be reminded that they matter?

Let's be prayerful and energized to seize this opportunity for growth in mission, discipleship and generosity, and to contribute even more to our future work together.