

**APPROVED ON JANUARY 17, 2026**

**SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**STAFF**

The Rev. E. Patricia Avila	2027
Mr. Devon Brooks	2029
<b>Ms. Monique Davis</b>	<b>2026</b>
<b>Ms. Mary Downing</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>*Bishop Paul Egensteiner</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>*S.Dcn. David Ehlers</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>S.Dcn. Philip Jenks</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>*Mr. John Litke, Treasurer</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>The Rev. Sonja Maclary</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Ms. Lily Sage Mathias</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Ms. Sonja Meberg (Young Adult)</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>The Rev. Ernie Mossi</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>The Rev. Kevin O'Hara</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>The Rev. David Parsons</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>Ms. Cynthia Roberti</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>*S.Dcn. Denise Rutherford Gill</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>*Mr. Thomas Sargent</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>*The Rev. Robert Schoepflin, Sect.</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>Mr. Cecil (Chip) Spurlock-Shackelton</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>The Rev. Arden Strasser</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>The Rev. Gary Squire</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Mr. Peter Teichmann</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>*Mr. Christopher Vergara, VP</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>*The Rev. Kristin Wuerffel</b>	<b>2029</b>

none present

**GUEST**

**Bishop-Elect Katrina Foster**

**Bold = present**

*Italics = excused absence*

**\*Member of Executive Committee**

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Call to Order: VP Vergara at 9:04 am  
Opening Prayer: Bishop Egensteiner  
Observer: Denise Rutherford-Gill

1. Approval of Agenda: adopted as presented

2. Old Business

3. New Business

A. MNYS Staff Organizational Chart

Bishop-elect Foster reviewed the new staff organizational chart. This chart is a comprehensive overview of the various staff positions in the office of the bishop.

B. MNYS Staff Position Descriptions

Bishop-elect Foster presented the development/redevelopment of staff position descriptions, highlighting Chief of Staff and the A2B roles.

C. MNYS Staff Salary Guidelines FY26

The EC, in consultation with the bishop-elect, developed salary guidelines for FY26 to provide clear, transparent, and equitable pay across positions. The salary guidelines were developed based on MNYS salary history, national data from the ELCA Synod Compensation Survey Reports, and publicly available salary information from other Metro New York judicatories and nonprofit organizations. These guidelines aim to keep us aligned with national trends, account for the high cost of living within our synod and remain competitive with peer organizations in the Metro New York area.

D. MNYS Compensation Addendum

Working with the adopted salary guidelines, the compensation addendum outlines the salaries for hired, called and contracted roles in the office of the bishop.

E. Hires

- a. Chief of Staff – Rev. Dr. J. Elise Brown

**ACTION SC25:07/01**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the hiring of The Rev. Dr. J. Elise Brown to serve as Chief of Staff effective 1 August 2025.**

**ADOPTED**

- b. Chief Financial Officer – S. Dcn. Donna Mari Fieldsa

**ACTION SC25:07/02**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the hiring of S. Dcn. Donna Mari Fieldsa to serve as Chief Financial Officer effective 1 August 2025.**

**ADOPTED**

- c. Chief Operations Officer – Karen Falco

**ACTION SC25:07/03**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the hiring of Karen Falco to serve as Chief Operations Officer effective 1 August 2025 on a part-time basis.**

**ADOPTED**

**F. Calls**

- a. Assistant to the Bishop for Discipleship and Congregations – Rev. Nicole Schwalbe

**ACTION SC25:07/04**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Nicole Schwalbe to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Discipleship and Congregations effective 1 September 2025.**

**ADOPTED**

- b. Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelism and Congregations – Rev. Patricia Avila

**ACTION SC25:07/05**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Patricia Avila to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelism and Congregations effective 1 September 2025.**

**ADOPTED**

- c. Bishop Paul Egensteiner: On-Leave from Call effective 3 August 2025

**ACTION SC25:07/06**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve on-leave from call status for The Rev. Paul Egensteiner effective 3 August 2025.**

**ADOPTED**

G. Staffing Updates

- a. Executive Administrative Assistant to Bishop and Chief of Staff – Blessing N. Tawengwa. Starting 1 August 2025.

H. Synod Council Appointments

- a. Cirah Spurlock-Shackelton – Youth Representative

**ACTION SC25:07/07**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council appoint Cirah Spurlock-Shackelton to a two-year term on the Synod Council as the Youth Representative effective 1 August 2025.**

**ADOPTED**

- b. The Rev. Leticia Alanis

This appointment is to fill the vacant seat left by Rev. Patricia Avila's call to the office of the bishop.

**ACTION SC25:07/08**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council appoint The Rev. Leticia Alanis to a two-year term on the Synod Council effective 1 August 2025.**

**ADOPTED**

- I. 60 Oliver Street, Valley Stream (former New Hope Valley Stream)

**ACTION SC25:07/09**

**RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the sale of 60 Oliver Avenue, Valley Stream to Islamic Center of South Shore for \$2,500,000, all cash.**

**ADOPTED ( 21 members present. 21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions)**

J. Sensitive Locations Litigation

VP Vergara reported that MNYS, because of our unique location, and history of immigration work and advocacy was approached by AMMPARO churchwide leadership to be a possible plaintiff in a Sensitive Locations Litigation. Churches were considered a "sensitive location" where ICE agents would not enter, much like schools, hospitals, and courthouses. This has changed in this administration, and the case is being made that it is an infringement on first amendment rights. As a synod we have a unique place to share information about possible "damages" our ministry sites are facing as people may be afraid to come to church for worship or the services they may find. We will be looking at worshiping communities that might be affected by this change in policy and sharing that information. This work is being led by Gilbert Legal and Democracy Forward. Updates will be provided as this moves forward.

K. Outgoing Staff

The EC will work on developing a clear severance policy so both the staff and us have clarity moving forward.

L. Letter from Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education/Village Campus Ministry

VP Vergara reported that The Rev. Becca Seely wrote a letter to let us know the news about LMHE's new name, Village Campus Ministry and their separation from the Atlantic District of the LCMS.

M. Observer's Evaluation

N. Closing Prayer: Bishop Egensteiner at 10:54 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert Schoepflin, Secretary