



Metropolitan New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

2018 Metropolitan New York Synod ANNUAL ASSEMBLY



building bridges

“ Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds,
not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging
one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. ”

—HEBREWS 10:24-25

SECTION B:

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

WELCOME

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Reports from Synod Council, Staff, Conferences, Committees and Partner Organizations

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Building Bridges
Construyendo Puentes

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DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

On behalf of the Assembly Planning Committee, welcome to the 2018 Metro New York Synod Assembly! We are so very glad you will be with us for two days of Building Bridges within our synod. We have a full agenda for you, with elections, resolutions, reports and presentations from various committees, task forces and partner organizations, and of course, a chance to meet and listen to our interim bishop, the Rev.

Donald J. McCoid. The Planning Committee has been working very hard to assure that although the agenda is full, there will still be time for you to greet old friends, meet new ones and learn a bit more about our synod.

Our agenda group has tried to accommodate every request for agenda time and forum or workshop time. We will have multiple times to attend these, as well as attending hearings on all the resolutions that were submitted by the deadline. Our Friday evening Festival Eucharist will even include an ordination this year!

We are trying to continue to build on themes from past assemblies, and hope that this year's theme of Building Bridges offers you an opportunity to see how our synod is building bridges, not only in our congregations, but also in the world—as it relates to **immigration, LGBTQ, racism, hunger, and women's issues**. Through our presentations, reports and display tables, you will learn how all these issues, plus many, many more, are being addressed here at MNYS. Together, we can learn how to build bridges between each other and help each other.

In this bulletin of reports, you will find much information about the assembly, our synod's different ministries, our ministry partners, both here within our synod and churchwide. Included in Section A are also the biographies of the nominated persons for Synod Officers, Synod Council, Churchwide Assembly, Consultation Committee, and Discipline Committee.

I hope you enjoy seeing all the pictures of the many different bridges. Who knew there were so many? Let us prayerfully begin our journey and then cross the many bridges within our synod, both symbolically and physically.

In Christ,

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

bulletin of reports:
SECTION B

2018 Metropolitan New York Synod ANNUAL ASSEMBLY



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Interim Bishop Donald J. McCoid

Synod Deacon 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 of Communications

The Rev. Jonathan Linman

Assistant to the Bishop for Faith and Leadership Formation

Deacon 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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Claimed Committee

Gathered Committee

Sent Committee

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Hudson (Ulster and Dutchess counties)

Delaware Hudson (Orange, Rockland & Sullivan counties)

Tappan Zee (Putnam and Westchester counties)

Eastern Nassau

Western Nassau

Southwest Nassau

Peconic (Eastern Suffolk County)

Western Suffolk

Southeast Queens

Western Queens

Northeast Queens

Brooklyn Bridges

South Shore Brooklyn

Southwest Brooklyn

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WANT TO SEE YOUR REPORT HERE IN 2019?

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 27th 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 11-13, 2017 at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, New York. These actions are divided into appropriate sections as they relate to the work of the Synod Council.

CALLS AND TRANSITIONS

The Rev. Kimberli Lile:

On leave from call status, effective March 15, 2017.

The Rev. ann Tiemeyer:

On leave from call status, effective May 15, 2017.

Synod Deacon Richard Ferolito:

On leave from call status, effective November 13, 2016.

Synod Deacon Gloria Taylor:

On leave from call status, effective November 13, 2016.

ELCA Deacon Margaret Schmitt Ajer:

*Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations,
effective June 1, 2017.*

The Rev. James Rowe:

On leave from call status, effective July 24, 2017.

The Rev. Emily Scott:

On leave from call status, effective May 5, 2017.

Synod Deacon Robert Michaelis:

On leave from call status, effective January 31, 2017.

The Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo:

Retirement status, effective July 1, 2017.

The Rev. Eric Mathsen:

Retirement status, effective August 1, 2017.

Mr. Kevin Vandiver:

*Pastor/Mission Developer, Transfiguration, Harlem,
effective September 15, 2017.*

The Rev. Richard Ajer:

Interim Pastor, Trinity, Rocky Point, effective October 1, 2017.

Synod Deacon Luanna Schilling:

On leave from call status, effective August 1, 2017.

The Rev. Dr. Deborah DeWinter:

*Renewal Contract for Extended Service, First, Poughkeepsie,
effective September 30, 2017.*

The Rev. Samuel Silaban:

Chaplain, LSSNY, effective November 1, 2017.

The Rev. Robert Vogl:

On leave from call extension, effective September 7, 2017.

The Rev. Patt Kauffman:

Retirement status, effective November 1, 2017.

The Rev. Dr. J. Elise Brown:

*Executive Minister, Marble Collegiate Church,
effective September 29, 2017.*

The Rev. Kimberly Lile:

*Chaplain, St. Mary's Hospital for Children, Bayside,
effective December 1, 2017.*

The Rev. Thomas E. Taylor:

Interim Pastor, Redeemer, Kingston, effective January 1, 2018.

The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer:

*Interim Pastor, Trinity Lower East Side,
effective December 1, 2017.*

The Rev. Susan Nagle:

Retirement status, effective December 1, 2017.

The Rev. Leigh Pezet:

Retirement status, effective January 1, 2018.

The Rev. Paul Schmiede:

Retirement status, effective March 1, 2018.

Synod Deacon Frank Ali:

Resignation from Synod Diaconate, effective October 6, 2017.

Mr. Leonard A. Duncan, Jr.:

*Mission Developer, Jehu's Table, Brooklyn,
effective May 1, 2018.*

The Rev. Dr. Deborah DeWinter:

*Renewal of Invitation to Extended Service, First, Poughkeepsie,
effective March 1, 2018.*

The Rev Lorraine Peterson:

*Chaplain, Stony Brook University Hospital,
effective April 1, 2018.*

ELCA Deacon Judith Hinsch:

Retirement status, effective April 1, 2018.

The Rev. Donald Lemke:

Retirement status, effective April 1, 2018.

The Rev. Arthur Pettersen:

Retirement status, effective January 1, 2018.



APPOINTMENTS

Interim Bishop – MNYS

The Rev. Donald J. McCoid

Constitution Review Committee

Mr. David Mohr

Synod Diaconate Council

Ms. Regina Daniels | The Rev. Dolores McKay

Advisory Panel – Our Saviour’s, Brooklyn

*The Rev. Khader Khalilia | Synod Deacon Jon Malone
The Rev. Lamont Wells*

Advisory Panel – St. James-St. Matthew’s, Ozone Park

*The Rev. Romeo Dabee | Mr. Eugene Hiigel
Deacon Margy Schmitt Ajer*

Congregational Consultation Panel – Our Saviour, Mineola

*Bishop Robert Rimbo | The Rev. Richard Ajer
The Rev. Mary Lou Baumgartner | Ms. Janet Siry*

Stewardship Table

*Ms. Patricia Baughman
Ms. Patty Longenecker Boughman*

Capital Improvement Grant Review Team

*The Rev. Gary Schulz | The Rev. Joanne Bond
Mr. William Henderson | Mr. Frank Suttell
The Rev. Jeanine Owens | The Rev. John Flack
Mr. John Litke | Mr. Mark Goodwin
Ms. Jasmine Downer | Ms. Barbara Meberg*

Assembly Planning Committee

*Deacon Carleen Miller
The Rev. Marcia Parkinson-Harrison | Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann*

Interim Pastoral Ministry

*The Rev. Robert Wollenburg, St. Lydia’s, Brooklyn
The Rev. Dennis O’Rourke, Faith, Syosset*

Innovation Team / Gathered Strategy

The Rev. Paul Walley

Candidacy Committee

*The Rev. Dr. J. Elise Brown, Chair
Ms. Madelyn Soussoudis, Vice-chair*

Environmental Stewardship Committee

The Rev. Aaron Baughman

Reference and Counsel

*The Rev. Joel Brandt, Chair
The Rev. Chryll Crews
Mr. Eugene Hiigel
The Rev. John Jurik
Mr. Rob Sinanan
Ms. Renee Wicklund*

Nominations and Elections Committee

*The Rev. Kevin O’Hara, Chair
Ms. Tammy Daniels
Mr. Zachary Dean
Synod Deacon Jasmine Downer
The Rev. Wolfgang Laudert
Synod Deacon Karen Nurmi
The Rev. James Smith*

Anti-racism Strategy Enabler

The Rev. Marianne Tomecek

Synod Worship Committee

Synod Deacon Ingrid Compton

Audit Committee

Ms. Barbara Hansen (3-year term commencing Feb. 1, 2018)

ELECTIONS

To Executive Committee:

*Mr. Christopher Vergara
Synod Deacon Carlos Lopez
The Rev. Jeanine Owens
The Rev. Harry Schenkel
Ms. Cynthia Corley (to replace Carlos Lopez)*

RESOLUTIONS

1. ACTION SC17:04/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve On Leave from Call Status for The Rev. Kimberli Lile, effective March 15, 2017; The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer, effective May 15, 2017; Synod Deacon Richard Ferolito, effective November 13, 2016; Synod Deacon Gloria Taylor, effective November 13, 2016.

2. ACTION SC17:04/02

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

3. ACTION SC17:04/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to Deacon Margaret Schmitt Ajers to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations, effective June 1, 2017.

4. ACTION SC17:04/04

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council acknowledge and thank Pr. Kathleen Koran for her exceptional work / service as Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations and Susan Brandt for the development of the Conference Informational Booklet that provides a valuable overview of our synod ministry sites.

5. ACTION SC17:04/05

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council adopt the Financial Statements and Report for the year ending January 31, 2017 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 principles.

6. ACTION SC17:04/06

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod retain the services of Tait, Weller & Baker, Certified Public Accountants, for the year ending January 31, 2018.

7. ACTION SC17:04/07

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the Procedure for Appeal of Decisions under S13.24 as item G to the Rules and Procedures for the Synod Assembly for adoption by the Synod Assembly.

8. ACTION SC17:04/08

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council list for the sale the property located at 42-15 165th Street, Flushing, NY, formerly Messiah Lutheran Church.

9. ACTION SC17:04/09

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the sale of the property located at 85-15 101st Avenue, Ozone Park, NY, formerly known as Christ, Ozone Park, to Ushi Shafran for \$2,700,000 or an affiliate.

10. ACTION SC17:04/10

RESOLVED, that for the reasons set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth, the SYNOD, pursuant to Section 13.24 of its constitution does hereby take charge and control of the property of TRANSFIGURATION to hold, protect, preserve, manage, and convey it on behalf of the SYNOD, and it is further, **RESOLVED**, that the following are hereby appointed as trustees, with the with full power to hold and manage the property of TRANSFIGURATION on behalf of the SYNOD in all regards relating directly or indirectly to the taking charge and control of the property of TRANSFIGURATION and in holding,

protecting, preserving, managing and conveying such property of TRANSFIGURATION on behalf of the SYNOD, to wit:

The Rev. John Flack; The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells; Dr. Carlos Lopez. **RESOLVED**, that the signature of any two of the Trustees acting to take charge and control of the property of TRANSFIGURATION and to hold, protect, preserve, manage, and convey the property of TRANSFIGURATION on behalf of the SYNOD shall be binding upon and considered as the act of all of the Trustees. No person or party acting in reliance of the signature of one such Trustee as binding upon all Trustees shall be charged with notice of any revocation or change of such authority unless he, she or it shall have received actual written notice thereof. No person or party shall be required to look behind the signature of such Trustee.

11. ACTION SC17:06/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve On Leave from Call Status to the Rev. James Rowe; effective 24 July 2017; the Rev. Emily Scott, effective 5 May 2017; Synod Deacon Robert Michaelis, effective 31 January 2017.

12. ACTION SC17:06/02

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve Retirement Status to the Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo, effective 1 July 2017; the Rev. Eric Mathsen, effective 1 August 2017.

13. ACTION SC17:06/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council accept the resignation of Mr. Frank Suttell as Treasurer effective immediately, and express its sincere appreciation to him for his ministry to the Synod and the Synod Council.

14. ACTION SC17:06/04

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.

15. ACTION SC17:06/05

RESOLVED, that for the reasons set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth, the Synod does hereby consent to the closing of Redeemer and approves of the Presbytery seeking the approval of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to the closing of Redeemer.

16. ACTION SC17:06/06

RESOLVED that Sanctuary not only means the provision of shelter but is a

- RESPONSE to raids, detentions, deportations, and the criminalization of immigrants and refugees, a
- STRATEGY to fight individual cases of deportation, to advocate for an end of mass detention and amplify immigrant voices, a
- VISION for what our communities and world can be, and a
- MORAL IMPERATIVE to take prophetic action of radical hospitality rooted in the ancient traditions of our faith communities;

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod declare itself one of the first major metropolitan Sanctuary Synods of the ELCA ready to help protect refugees and undocumented people from arrest and deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers (ICE), in partnership with organizations like Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, The New Sanctuary Coalition, The New York Immigration Coalition, New York Legal Aid Society, and the ELCA's AMMPARO program by:

- Developing a network of Sanctuary Congregations
- Coordinating accompaniment trainings – being silent advocates during check-ins or hearings

- Creating a plan for awareness building around issues of immigration and refugees
- Advocating for just immigration policies including fairness in admitting and protecting refugees; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod endorse, fully support, & help train congregations seeking to be Sanctuary Congregations, creating a network of sanctuary in our synod, whose work would include but not be limited to:

- Help congregations explore why and how to identify themselves as Sanctuary Congregations
- Reaching out to nearby immigrant congregations or communities
- Expand or Redevelop existing programs with a focus on reaching out to immigrants and refugees
- Create and distribute "Know Your Rights Cards" to undocumented persons
- Reach out and network with other Sanctuary Congregations to share support and information
- Provide short term respite sanctuary during immediate crisis
- Train in and participate in accompaniment program
- Participate in the ELCA's AAMPARO program for unaccompanied minors.
- Encourage participation in Jericho Walks around Federal Plaza
- Host Immigration Consultations with legal professionals for immigrants; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt a similar resolution for the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

17. ACTION SC17:06/07

RESOLVED, that Mr. Christopher Vergara, Dr. Carlos Lopez, The Rev. Harry Schenkel and The Rev. Jeanine Owens are elected to serve on the Executive Committee from June 2017 to June 2018.

18. ACTION SC17:06/08

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the sale of the property located at 42-15 165th St, Flushing, NY 11358, formerly known as Messiah Lutheran Church, Flushing NY to Apex USA Development LLC for \$7,700,000.

19. ACTION SC17:06/09

RESOLVED, that the contract of sale 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 \$2,750,000.00, 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 contract of sale by the Rev. Robert P. Schoepflin, as Secretary of the Synod, and acting solely and on behalf of the Synod, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed; 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 or papers 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 contract of sale, for the price of \$2,750,000.00, 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; and it is further

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

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

20. ACTION SC17:06/10

RESOLVED, that the contract of sale 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 \$2,300,000.00, 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 contract of sale by the Rev. Robert P. Schoepflin, as Secretary of the Synod, and acting solely and on behalf of the Synod, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed; 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 or papers 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 contract of sale, for the price of \$2,300,000.00, 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; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that the Synod will not become insolvent following the transfer of the Property.

21. ACTION SC17:06/11

RESOLVED, that the Commitment Letter and Term Sheet having been extensively reviewed and discussed with the Synod Council and the Synod's legal counsel, are accepted, approved and adopted; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council will execute the Commitment Letter; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council will review the final draft of the Guaranty Agreement, Loan Documents, Lease, Construction Agreement and deed for the Properties and confirm that they the Conditions have been satisfied prior to executing the Guaranty Agreement; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Synod will guarantee the Loan if, and only if, the Conditions are satisfied; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the following are hereby appointed as trustees:

The Rev. Harriet Weiber, The Rev. Lamont Wells, and Ms. Denise Rutherford-Gill (“Trustees”), with the with full power to make business decisions on behalf of the Synod in all regards relating directly or indirectly to guarantying the Loan; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the signature of any two of the Trustees acting to execute the Commitment Letter on behalf of the Synod shall be binding upon and considered as the act of all of the Trustees. No person or party acting in reliance on the signature of such Trustees as binding upon all Trustees shall be charged with notice of any revocation or change of such authority unless he, she or it shall have received actual written notice thereof. No person or party shall be required to look behind the signature of such Trustees.

22. **ACTION SC17:06/12**

RESOLVED, that for the reasons set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth, the SYNOD, pursuant to Section 13.24 of its constitution does hereby take charge and control of the property of TRINITY to hold, protect, preserve, manage, and convey it on behalf of the SYNOD, and it is further,

RESOLVED, that the following are hereby appointed as trustees, with the with full power to hold and manage the property of TRINITY on behalf of the SYNOD in all regards relating directly or indirectly to the taking charge and control of the property of TRINITY and in holding, protecting, preserving, managing and conveying such property of TRINITY on behalf of the SYNOD, to wit: The Rev. Marcia Parkinson-Harrison; The Rev. Lamont Wells; Ms. Cynthia Corley.

RESOLVED, that the signature of any two of the Trustees acting to take charge and control of the property of TRINITY and to hold, protect, preserve, manage, and convey the property of TRINITY on behalf of the SYNOD shall be binding upon and considered as the act of all of the Trustees. No person or party acting in reliance of the signature of one such Trustee as binding upon all Trustees shall be charged with notice of any revocation or change of such authority unless he, she or it shall have received actual written notice thereof. No person or party shall be required to look behind the signature of such Trustee.

23. **ACTION SC17:09/01**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to Kevin Vandiver to serve as Pastor – Mission Developer at Transfiguration, Harlem, effective 15 September 2017.

24. **ACTION SC17:09/02**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to the Rev. Richard Ajer to serve as Interim Pastor for the congregation of Trinity, Rocky Point effective 1 Oct 17.

25. **ACTION SC17:09/03**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve On Leave from Call Status for Synod Deacon Luanna Schilling, effective August 1, 2017.

26. **ACTION SC17:09/04**

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.

27. **ACTION SC17:09/05**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council ratifies the appointment of the Congregational Capital Improvement Grant Review Team with stated terms of service as presented.

28. **ACTION SC17:09/06**

RESOLVED, that Ms. Cynthia Corley is elected to the Executive Committee to serve until the June 2018 Synod Council meeting

when a new Executive Committee will be elected.

29. **ACTION SC17:09/07**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the recommended COLA of 1.60% and a minimum housing allowance of \$20,000 for the 2018 Clergy Compensation Guidelines.

30. **ACTION SC17:09/08** (adopted by unanimous email vote September 19, 2017)

RESOLVED, that the contract of sale negotiated and prepared by the Synod’s 3 legal counsel, Capell Barnett Matalon & Schoenfeld, LLP, for sale of the Property to Purchaser, for the price of \$7,500,000.00, 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 contract of sale by the Rev. Robert P. Schoepflin, as Secretary of the Synod, and acting solely and on behalf of the Synod, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed; 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 or papers 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 contract of sale, for the price of \$7,500,000.00, 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 4 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; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that the Synod will not become insolvent following the transfer of the Property.

31. **ACTION SC17:09/09**

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

RESOLVED, that it is in the best interest of the Synod to engage the Purchaser to purchase the Property, construct the Project and transfer the Community Facility Unit to the Synod pursuant to the Agreements; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the Purchase Price and the Developer Fee to be paid by the Purchaser to the Synod is fair and equitable and such funds will be used to further the 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 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 Synod, and acting solely and on behalf of the Synod, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed; 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 or papers 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 Agreements; 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 obligations of the Agreements 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 Synod will not become insolvent following the transfer of the Property; and it is further

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

32. **ACTION SC17:09/10**

RESOLVED, that the Lease having been extensively reviewed and discussed with the Synod Council and the Synod Council's legal counsel, is accepted, approved and adopted; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that it is in the best interest of the Synod to enter into the Lease with the SCA for the Community Facility Unit; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the rent to be paid by the SCA to the Synod pursuant to the Lease is fair and equitable and such funds will be used to further the Synod's mission and ministry; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the execution of the Lease by the Rev. Robert P. Schoepflin, as Secretary of the Synod, and acting solely and on behalf of the Synod, be and hereby is authorized, empowered and directed; 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 or papers as may be required to obtain the approval as required by New York law of such lease to the SCA based on the terms and conditions as recited in the Lease; and, in the event that such approvals shall be obtained, to thereafter execute, acknowledge and deliver documents as may be required to lease the Community Facility Unit 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 obligations of the Lease be fulfilled and the transactions contemplated therein be effectuated; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the rent received under the Lease will 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 to the best of my knowledge, no persons have raised, or have a reasonable basis to raise, objections to the lease of the Community Facility Unit.

33. **ACTION SC17:10/01**

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 30 September 2017 – 30 September 2018.

34. **ACTION SC17:10/02**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Samuel Silaban as Chaplain, serving Lutheran Social Services New York and Eger Lutheran Homes and Services effective 1 November 2017.

35. **ACTION SC17:10/03**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend On Leave from Call Status to The Rev. Robert Vogl for two (2) years, renewable annually effective 7 Sep 2017.

36. **ACTION SC17:10/04**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council acknowledge retirement status for The Rev. Patt Kauffman effective 1 November 2017.

37. **ACTION SC17:10/05**

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.

38. **ACTION SC17:10/06**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council consider and approve the proposal for merger submitted by the congregations of the Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Cedarhurst and St. John's English Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lynbrook with the following provisions:

1. The merged congregation be named St. John – Incarnation Lutheran Church
2. The merged congregation's financial plan includes a stewardship plan that supports mission and ministry in partnership with the Metropolitan New York Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
3. The merged congregation gift a portion from the proceeds of the sale of the Incarnation property to the Metropolitan New York Synod.

39. **ACTION SC17:10/07**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council list for the sale the properties of the former Trinity Lutheran Church, located at 200-02 119th Avenue, St. Albans, NY and 119-11 200th Street, St. Albans, NY.

40. **ACTION SC17:10/08**

RESOLVED, that Kathleen Koran, Frank Suttell and Rebekah Thornhill be removed as authorized signatories on the synod's account with HSBC Bank and that Susan Brandt and Margaret Schmitt Ajer be added as authorized signatories on the HSBC account.

41. **ACTION SC17:10/09**

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 June 30, 2018 in accordance with the terms of the Second Amendment to Purchase and Sale Agreement.

42. **ACTION SC17:12/01**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Dr. J. Elise Brown as Executive Minister for Marble Collegiate Church, Manhattan, effective 29 September 2017.

43. **ACTION SC17:12/02**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Kimberli Lile as Chaplain / Manager of Spiritual

Care, St. Mary's Children's Hospital, Bayside, NY, effective 1 December 2017.

44. ACTION SC17:12/03

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Thomas E. Taylor as Interim Pastor for Redeemer, Kingston, effective 1 January 2018.

45. ACTION SC17:12/04

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer as Interim Pastor for Trinity Lower East Side Lutheran Parish, Manhattan, effective 1 December 2017.

46. ACTION SC17:12/05

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve retirement status for The Rev. Susan Nagle, effective 1 December 2017; The Rev. Leigh Pezet, effective 1 January 2018; and The Rev. Paul Schmiede, effective 1 March 2018.

47. ACTION SC17:12/06

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council accept the resignation of Frank Ali from the roster of Synodical Deacons effective 6 October 2017.

48. ACTION SC17:12/07

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.

49. ACTION SC17:12/08

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve a Trexler Grant in the amount of \$1000 to the Rev. Flora Hartford to assist with travel for a group study trip to the Holy Land.

50. ACTION SC17:12/09

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council adopt the 2017 Investment Policy Statement developed by the Financial Management Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee.

51. ACTION SC17:12/10

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the proposed rate schedule for the 2018 Synod Assembly.

52. ACTION SC17:12/11

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the 2018 staff housing allowances as presented.

53. ACTION SC17:12/12

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council take no exception to the request of New York Finnish Lutheran Church, Manhattan to list the property located at 661 41st Street, Apartment 3B, Brooklyn, NY for sale.

54. ACTION SC17:12/13

RESOLVED, that the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Chappaqua, NY, be removed from the roster of congregations of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the ELCA.

55. ACTION SC17:12/14

RESOLVED, that for the reasons set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth, the SYNOD, pursuant to Section 13.24 of its constitution does hereby take charge and control of the property of HOLY REDEEMER to hold, manage, and convey it on behalf of the SYNOD, and it is further,
RESOLVED, that the following are hereby appointed as trustees,

with the with full power to hold and manage the property of HOLY REDEEMER on behalf of the SYNOD in all regards relating directly or indirectly to the taking charge and control of the property of HOLY REDEEMER and in holding, managing and conveying such property of HOLY REDEEMER on behalf of the SYNOD, to wit: The Rev. Harriet Wieber; The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells; and The Rev. Robert Schoepflin.

RESOLVED, that the signature of any two of the Trustees acting to take charge and control of the property of HOLY REDEEMER and to hold, manage, and convey the property of HOLY REDEEMER on behalf of the SYNOD shall be binding upon and considered as the act of all of the Trustees. No person or party acting in reliance of the signature of one such Trustee as binding upon all Trustees shall be charged with notice of any revocation or change of such authority unless he, she or it shall have received actual written notice thereof. No person or party shall be required to look behind the signature of such Trustee.

56. ACTION SC17:12/15

RESOLVED, that for the reasons set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth, the SYNOD, pursuant to Section 13.24 of its constitution does hereby take charge and control of the property of TRANSFIGURATION to hold, manage, and convey it on behalf of the SYNOD, and it is further,

RESOLVED, that the following are hereby appointed as trustees, with the with full power to hold and manage the property of TRANSFIGURATION on behalf of the SYNOD in all regards relating directly or indirectly to the taking charge and control of the property of TRANSFIGURATION and in holding, managing and conveying such property of TRANSFIGURATION on behalf of the SYNOD, to wit: The Rev. Dr. Fernando Otero; The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells; and John Litke.

RESOLVED, that the signature of any two of the Trustees acting to take charge and control of the property of TRANSFIGURATION and to hold, manage, and convey the property of TRANSFIGURATION on behalf of the SYNOD shall be binding upon and considered as the act of all of the Trustees. No person or party acting in reliance of the signature of one such Trustee as binding upon all Trustees shall be charged with notice of any revocation or change of such authority unless he, she or it shall have received actual written notice thereof. No person or party shall be required to look behind the signature of such Trustee.

57. ACTION SC17:12/16

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 September 1, 2018 in accordance with the terms of the Second Amendment to the Purchase and Sale Agreement.

58. ACTION SC18:01/01

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council adopt the By-Laws; Certificate of Incorporation; Conflict of Interest Policy; Whistleblower Policy for Evangelical Lutheran, Inc. and confirm the election of the following persons as its Board of Directors: Barbara Hansen, the Rev. Marc Herbst, Eugene Hiigel, Kathleen Schmidt, the Rev. Robert Schoepflin, Frank Suttell, Wendy Bean Tannenbaum, Christopher Vergara, and Karen Woolley.

59. ACTION SC18:01/02

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 Synod of MNYS 2424 Linden LLC, a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, in which the Synod is and shall continue to be the sole member and manager, with the intention of conveying to MNYS 2424 Linden LLC title to the real property formerly of

Holy Redeemer known as and by street address 2424 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn, New York 11205, (Block 4502, Lot 1). To the extent possible, it is the Synod Council's intention that, as a single member limited liability company, with the Synod as the sole member, MNYS 2424 Linden LLC shall be tax exempt and shall not be required to file separate tax returns. No other assets shall be placed in MNYS 2424 Linden LLC and MNYS 2424 Linden LLC shall have no liabilities. The sole purpose of MNYS 2424 Linden LLC is and shall continue to be to hold, manage, and convey title to the real property formerly of Holy Redeemer for, on behalf of, and at the direction and convenience of the 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 real property formerly of Holy Redeemer, known as and by street address 2424 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn, New York 11205, (Block 4502 Lot 1) from the Synod to MNYS 2424 Linden LLC, a single member limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, of which the 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 Synod, its sole member and manager; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that any two of the Trustees of Holy Redeemer, 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 Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 2424 Linden LLC.

60. **ACTION SC18:01/03**

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 Synod of MNYS 129 Russell LLC, a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, in which the Synod is and shall continue to be the sole member and manager, with the intention of conveying to MNYS 129 Russell LLC title to the real property formerly of Messiah Greenpoint known as and by street address 129 Russell Street, Brooklyn, New York 11222, (Block 2686, Lot 16). To the extent possible, it is the Synod Council's intention that, as a single member limited liability company, with the Synod as the sole member, MNYS 129 Russell LLC shall be tax exempt and shall not be required to file separate tax returns. No other assets shall be placed in MNYS 129 Russell LLC and MNYS 129 Russell LLC shall have no liabilities. The sole purpose of MNYS 129 Russell LLC is and shall continue to be to hold, manage, and convey title to the real property formerly of Messiah Greenpoint for, on behalf of, and at the direction and convenience of the 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 real property formerly of Messiah Greenpoint, known as and by street address 129 Russell Street, Brooklyn, New York 11222, (Block 2686, Lot 16) from the Synod to MNYS 129 Russell LLC, a single member limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, of which the 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 Synod, its sole member and manager; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that any two of the Trustees of Messiah Greenpoint, 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 Synod is not contemplated

following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 129 Russell LLC.

61. **ACTION SC18:01/04**

RESOLVED, that for the reasons set forth above, all of which are included and incorporated herein and made a part hereof as if fully set forth, the SYNOD, pursuant to Section 13.24 of its constitution does hereby take charge and control of the property of ALL SAINTS to hold, manage, and convey it on behalf of the SYNOD, and it is further, **RESOLVED**, that the following are hereby appointed as trustees, with the with full power to hold and manage the property of ALL SAINTS on behalf of the SYNOD in all regards relating directly or indirectly to the taking charge and control of the property of ALL SAINTS and in holding, managing and conveying such property of ALL SAINTS on behalf of the SYNOD, to wit: The Rev. Dr. Fernando Otero; The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells; and Ms. Cynthia Corley. **RESOLVED**, that the signature of any two of the Trustees acting to take charge and control of the property of ALL SAINTS and to hold, manage, and convey the property of ALL SAINTS on behalf of the SYNOD shall be binding upon and considered as the act of all of the Trustees. No person or party acting in reliance of the signature of one such Trustee as binding upon all Trustees shall be charged with notice of any revocation or change of such authority unless he, she or it shall have received actual written notice thereof. No person or party shall be required to look behind the signature of such Trustee.

62. **ACTION SC18:01/05**

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 Synod of MNYS 585 East 163 LLC, a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, in which the Synod is and shall continue to be the sole member and manager, with the intention of conveying to MNYS 585 East 163 LLC title to the real property formerly of All Saints known as and by street address 585 East 163rd Street, Bronx, New York 10456, (Block 2621, Lot 10). To the extent possible, it is the Synod Council's intention that, as a single member limited liability company, with the Synod as the sole member, MNYS 585 East 163 LLC shall be tax exempt and shall not be required to file separate tax returns. No other assets shall be placed in MNYS 585 East 163 LLC and MNYS 585 East 163 LLC shall have no liabilities. The sole purpose of MNYS 585 East 163 LLC is and shall continue to be to hold, manage, and convey title to the real property formerly of All Saints for, on behalf of, and at the direction and convenience of the 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 real property formerly of All Saints, known as and by street address 585 East 163rd Street, Bronx, New York 10456, (Block 2621, Lot 10) from the Synod to MNYS 585 East 163 LLC, a single member limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, of which the 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 Synod, its sole member and manager; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that any two of the Trustees of All Saints, 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 Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 585 East 163 LLC.

63. **ACTION SC18:01/06**

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 Synod of MNYS 763 Prospect LLC, a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, in which the Synod is and shall continue to be the sole member and manager, with the intention of conveying to MNYS 763 Prospect LLC title to the real property formerly of Transfiguration known as and by street address 763-765 Prospect Avenue, Bronx, New York 10455, (Block 2676, Lot 79). To the extent possible, it is the Synod Council's intention that, as a single member limited liability company, with the Synod as the sole member, MNYS 763 Prospect LLC shall be tax exempt and shall not be required to file separate tax returns. No other assets shall be placed in MNYS 763 Prospect LLC and MNYS 763 Prospect LLC shall have no liabilities. The sole purpose of MNYS 763 Prospect LLC is and shall continue to be to hold, manage, and convey title to the real property formerly of Transfiguration for, on behalf of, and at the direction and convenience of the 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 real property formerly of Transfiguration, known as and by street address 763-765 Prospect Avenue, Bronx, New York 10455, (Block 2676, Lot 79) from the Synod to MNYS 763 Prospect LLC, a single member limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of New York, of which the 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 Synod, its sole member and manager; and it is further **RESOLVED**, that any two of the Trustees of Transfiguration, 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 Synod is not contemplated following the transfer of the Property to MNYS 763 Prospect LLC.

64. **ACTION SC18:01/07**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council appoint the Rev. Joel Brandt, the Rev. Chrystl Crews, Mr. Eugene Hiigel, the Rev. John Jurik, Mr. Rob Sinanan, and Ms. Renee Wicklund to serve on the 2018 Committee on Reference & Counsel effective 10 February 2018.

65. **ACTION SC18:01/08**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council appoint the Rev. Kevin O'Hara, Ms. Tammy Daniels, S. Dcn. Jasmine Downer, Mr. Zachary Dean, the Rev. Wolfgang Laudert, S. Dcn. Karen Nurmi, and the Rev. James Smith to the 2018 Committee on Nominations and Elections effective 15 February 2018.

66. **ACTION SC18:01/09**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve Trexler Grants be awarded to the Rev. Joel Brandt in the amount of \$1000 and to the Rev. Robert Schoepflin in the amount of \$1000 to assist with travel for a group study trip to the Holy Land.

67. **ACTION SC18:02/01**

RESOLVED, that Trexler Travel and Study grants in the amount of \$1,000 each are hereby granted to The Rev. Robert Fritch and The Rev. John Heidgerd.

68. **ACTION SC18:02/02**

RESOLVED, that the calls of The Rev. Jonathan Linman, The Rev. Lamont Wells, The Rev. Percy Butiku, and Deacon Margy Schmitt Ajer, to serve on Synod Staff, are hereby extended until a newly

elected bishop takes office.

69. **ACTION SC18:02/03**

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the provisions of Section S8.54 of the Constitution of the Metropolitan New York Synod, the Synod Council hereby appoints The Reverend Donald J. McCoid as Interim Bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod (the "Synod"), effective March 12, 2018. Compensation and benefits shall be contracted for this position and shall be approved by the Executive Committee within the limits of the 2018 budget of the Synod, and the Vice President of the Synod is hereby authorized to sign the Letter of Agreement setting forth such terms.

70. **ACTION SC18:03/01**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council approve the minutes of the 2017 Synod Assembly as presented.

71. **ACTION SC18:03/02**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to Leonard A. Duncan, Jr. as Pastor / Mission Developer for Jehu's Table, Brooklyn, NY, effective May 1, 2018.

72. **ACTION SC18:03/03**

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 March 1, 2018 – 28 February 2019.

73. **ACTION SC18:03/04**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council extend a call to the Rev. Lorraine Peterson as Chaplain, Stony Brook University Hospital effective April 1, 2018.

74. **ACTION SC18:03/05**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council acknowledge retirement status for Deacon Judith Hinsch effective April 1, 2018; The Rev. Donald Lemke effective April 1, 2018; and The Rev. Arthur Pettersen effective January 1, 2018.

75. **ACTION SC18:03/06**

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.

76. **ACTION SC18:03/07**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council Ten-Year Plan for 2017-2026 be adopted as presented.

77. **ACTION SC18:03/08**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly that it adopt the revised budget for 2018 and the proposed budget for 2019.

78. **ACTION SC18:03/09**

RESOLVED, that Barbara Hansen is appointed to a three-year term on the Audit Committee, February 1, 2018 through January 31, 2021.

79. **ACTION SC18:03/10**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council present the proposed agenda on May 11, 2018 for adoption by the Synod Assembly.

80. **ACTION SC18:03/11**

RESOLVED, that The Rev. Robert Schoepflin is nominated for another term as Synod Secretary.

81. **ACTION SC18:03/12**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council re-elect to the Leif Ericson DaySchool Board of Directors Joanne Cavalleri for service through the 2020 annual meeting, and Catherine Adams and Gail Adamski for service through the 2021 annual meeting.

82. **ACTION SC18:03/13**

RESOLVED, that Kathleen Koran, Kathleen Schmidt and Frank Suttell be removed as authorized signatories on the synod's two accounts with Walden Asset Management and that Susan Brandt, Gayle Ruege and Margaret Schmitt Ajer be authorized signatories for the two Walden Asset Management accounts, Metropolitan New York Synod IMA and Metropolitan New York Synod TEF IMA.R.

83. **ACTION SC18:03/14**

RESOLVED, that Susan Brandt, Gayle Ruege and Margaret Schmitt Ajer be authorized signatories for each HSBC account opened for MNYS LLCs.

84. **ACTION SC18:03/15**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council accept an offer and enter into contract for a sale price of \$1,700,000 or more for the properties of the former Trinity, St. Albans.

85. **ACTION SC18:03/16**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod remove Kathleen Schmidt as trustee and appoint Susan Brandt as trustee for the property located at 6309 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn.

Actions of Executive Committee

1. ACTION EC18:01/01

RESOLVED, that 2018 compensation for synod staff named as Assistant to the Bishop: The Rev. Jonathan Linman – \$124,916; The Rev. Lamont Wells - \$33,700 (synod share is 25% of total); The Rev. Percy Butiku - \$107,687; Dcn. Margy Schmitt Ajer - \$112,200; S.Dcn. Gayle Ruege - \$112,283.

2. ACTION EC18:02/01

RESOLVED, that the 2018 compensation for Interim Bishop Donald McCoid shall be \$145,600.

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 Synod Assembly. The actions taken by the Synod Council at its April 21, 2018 meeting will be included in the report to the 2019 Assembly.

STAFF REPORTS



The Rev. Donald J. McCoid

INTERIM BISHOP

2018 **MNYS**
ANNUAL
ASSEMBLY



Dear Friends in Christ,

As I write the words of this report, I have been present as your interim bishop for only a few weeks. I have had opportunity to meet with our synod council, the conference of deans, strategic planning leadership, and several committees. This orientation has been helpful, but it has been even more helpful to have the opportunity to relate to others—but more helpful has been being able to relate to others, to hear their stories and hopes for the synod. I

give thanks to God for thoughtful leaders and staff who have welcomed me and supported my introduction to the synod.

This has not been an easy time for the Metropolitan New York Synod. With the resignation of your bishop, there has been expressed uncertainty about the present and future direction of the synod. Many of these feelings center on transparency, being able to share views, trust, and the hope for spiritual and ecclesial renewal.

I do not pretend to be the answer to the feelings and needs of our synod. But **I do pledge to you my desire to explore with you the way forward to establish the best climate possible for the Metro NY Synod.** This way forward must be with the One who is the way, the truth and the life. Union in Christ has a power for our life together in God's love.

The world knows so many divisions. Our country is pulled apart by many forces that have created polarization, skepticism, hurt and cynicism. Race and class divisions are very noticeable in our life. Fear of violence and fear for our future and for the children and youth of our nation is a reality.

Does the Church have something to say to our nation and world? What do you propose as a follower of Jesus Christ? Do we have divisions that get in the way of our sharing the good news and reaching out to a world in need?

We should not “confuse unity with uniformity.”

As I look for mentors in my faith and life, I do often read statements by Pope Francis. I believe his quest for unity among Christians is real. He has stated that we should not “confuse unity with uniformity.” This is a slogan that should live in ecumenical circles, but I contend that this is something that would help establish a good climate in MNYS.

Is there a rich diversity among the members of our synod? Do differences exist in our synod? Will we be able to find unity in Christ that helps us celebrate our diversity, live with differences, and live our lives in the love that God provides and the Spirit supports?

Pope Francis offered these words about unity: ***“The unity of Christians is an essential requirement that flows from the depth of our being believers in Jesus Christ.”*** ***With that reality, “We call for unity, because we invoke Christ.”***

We should not “confuse unity with uniformity.”

As your interim bishop, I want to be bold in asking each of us to invoke Christ in our life together as a synod. These cannot be taken as pious words. ***There are tensions and worries, but our strength and future as a synod depend upon individual and corporate renewal for the sake of our Lord and for the sake of His Church.***

I pray daily for the months ahead as this synod considers and elects a new bishop. May the Holy Spirit guide and support your consideration of your next bishop. May the Holy Spirit unite us as one in Christ in these days, months and years ahead.

Ending this report, I share Paul's words to the Colossians—and us—for such a time as this.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ...so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.”
Colossians 4 - NRSV

Synod Deacon Gayle Ruege

SENIOR ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP



"We build too many walls and not enough bridges."
Sir Isaac Newton

There is something about bridges that resonates deep within me. I'm drawn to and inspired by them. I love to look at them, cross over them and in my adult years, walk them. Bridges join and connect. Bridges lead us from here to there—across obstacles and challenging terrains. It's in walking bridges that I've discovered that bridges are not just physical crossings, but have a social,

emotional dimension. **Bridges, by design, are about bringing people together.** They link the past, present and future. I've walked the Brooklyn Bridge, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Tower Bridge, the Chain Bridge, some of New England's covered bridges and many others. For me, walking a bridge is a communal experience.

I am simultaneously aware of those walking the bridge with me, those who walked before me, and mindful that there will be many after me. Most meaningful for me, when I walk a bridge, is the transcendent presence of the bridge builders. I stand in awe of and gratitude for their collective effort and commitment to make a way, a path that benefits the future community. It seems the bridge mysteriously holds the energy of the architect, designer, civil engineer and all the hands that fashioned

*Bridges,
by design,
are about
bringing
people
together.*

steel, concrete, cables or wood into these magnificent, unifying structures.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, we have made the commitment to become an evangelizing community that builds bridges between races, ecumenical and inter-religious communions, and our diverse communities.

Our 2017 Reformation 500 focus launched us into our 2018 theme of Building Bridges. As Lutherans, we acknowledge and have responded to the call to be bridge builders. Jesus has called us to build bridges of welcome—build bridges of friendship—build bridges of community. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we have made the commitment to become an evangelizing community that builds bridges between races, ecumenical and inter-religious communions, and our diverse communities.

In June 2017, the Synod Council voted to become a Sanctuary Synod as we continue to be vocal about social justice issues and advocates of immigration reform.

Our anti-racism initiative continues to offer training events that broaden our understanding of systemic racism and challenge us to remove those walls and barriers. For decades, ELCA Lutherans have been a bridge in building ecumenical and inter-religious relationships and partnerships. The November 1st Reformation 500 Commemorative Eucharist at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine was a public witness to our synod's commitment to this important work and its ongoing movement. Scores of synod leaders serve as the architects, designers, engineers and hands that are faithfully building these bridges for both the existing and future communities.

Transition, in and of itself, is a bridge. A bridge that spans a period of time that involves the collective effort of many who share the common understanding of its purpose, has a unified commitment to its completion and exhibits the dedication, perseverance and often, personal sacrifice to build it.





The last twelve months ushered in a time of transition for our synod and our synod staff. Synod staff are called to be “people bridges” in a variety of ways. They bring people together and often serve as the connecting agent that get us from here to there across obstacles and challenging terrains. Since our last Assembly, we said goodbye to former bishop, Robert Rimbo, Pr. Kathleen Koran, Kathy Schmidt and Rebekah Thornhill. Each fulfilled their call and exercised faithful stewardship of their God-given gifts and skills in service in and through our synod. ***We give thanksgiving for their partnership during their appointed time.***

Thankfully, God called new “people bridges” to our synod staff, equipped with the necessary gifts and skills, but most importantly, with hearts committed to ministry and service. We welcomed Dcn. Margy Schmitt Ajer, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations; Maria Rodas, Administrator to the Executive Staff; Regina Daniels, Executive Administrator; Roberto Lara, Director for Communications; and Interim Bishop Donald McCoid. Susan Brandt was promoted to the position of Director for Finance, Administration and Grant Management, and Branden Dupree to the position of Assistant to the Director for Evangelical Mission—stellar additions to an equally stellar staff. The role of synod staff, as the bridge between our rostered ministers, lay leaders, local congregations and churchwide organization, is simultaneously demanding, challenging and fulfilling. We are grateful for your ongoing prayer and support.

May we walk this bridge of transition as a communal experience, showing grace and care to our companions on the span, while remaining mindful of those who will benefit most by its completion. May the transcendent presence of the Triune Bridge Builder guide and direct our steps across this bridge to health, wholeness and a renewed commitment to partnership in ministry.

***Guided by the Holy Spirit,
we have made the
commitment to become an
evangelizing community
that builds bridges between
races, ecumenical and
inter-religious communions,
and our diverse communities.***



Ms. Susan Brandt

DIRECTOR FOR FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION AND GRANT MANAGEMENT



I tell people “I have the best job in the synod office—I get to tell people they have been awarded grant funds.” Last year, it became even better as I transitioned into my new position as Director of Finance, Administration and Grant Management. I am grateful to be serving the synod in this new role. Thank you to Kathy Schmidt who postponed her retirement until December 31, providing the time necessary to train the new staff members. And, what a great, dedicated team

we have. I am looking forward to what this year has to offer—but let’s look at what happened last year.

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. They are committed to vibrant congregations and leaders who will carry this ministry into the future. The grant program is one tool to achieve success for this strategy.

Congregational Capital Improvement Challenge Grant (CCIC 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 budgeted \$200,000 per year for five years for the CCIC Grant. Once the committee saw the great need, they responded with an increased budget for 2015. To date, \$1,642,373 has been awarded—that is a 64% increase over the original \$1,000,000 budgeted for the strategy goal of vibrant congregations. This year \$400,000 is the recommended budget for the CCIC Grants. This figure is less than that of last year, but still double the original plan.

I work with a wonderful grant review team that takes seriously the responsibility of distributing these funds. Both the grant review team and congregations requested more time for follow-up questions during the application process. Here is the timeline for 2018:

- April 19, – CCIC Grant applications are available online
- June 7, 4:00 pm, Grant applications are due into the synod office – no exceptions
- September 21, Synod Council votes on the review team’s recommendations
- September 30, Congregations receive notice of any grant awarded them



2017 GRANTS AWARDED:

CONGREGATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	GRANT AMOUNT
Abiding Presence, Fort Salonga	parking lot & reset dry wells & covers	\$8,000
Atonement, Jackson Heights	furnace	\$3,500
Atonement, Jackson Heights	entrance doors	\$2,000
Christ, Freeport	basement floor	\$10,000
Christ, Freeport	parsonage roof & siding	\$10,000
Christ, Staten Island	window & painting in kitchen & hall	\$7,500
Christ's, Woodstock	fellowship hall roof	\$5,300
Christ's, Woodstock	parsonage roof	\$3,000
Christ's, Woodstock	parsonage windows & doors	\$5,000
Epiphany, Hempstead	sound system	\$8,500
Good Shepherd, Roosevelt	parsonage h/c	\$14,000
Grace, Yorktown Heights	roof	\$7,100
Holy Cross, Commack	basement renovation	\$20,000
Holy Trinity, Bellerose	parsonage renovation	\$13,661
Holy Trinity, Flatbush	update 2 bathrooms/parish house	\$7,500
Holy Trinity, Flatbush	parish house kitchen	\$10,000
Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre	new roof	\$40,000
Hope, Selden	roof	\$8,000
Messiah, Staten Island	lift equipment	\$15,050
New Hope for All Saints, Bronx	roof	\$18,960
New Hope for All Saints, Bronx	replace tiles	\$4,500
New Hope, Jamaica	rewire parish house	\$4,965
Our Redeemer, Seaford	renovate kitchen	\$25,000
Redeemer, Kingston	roof	\$4,350
Redeemer, Kingston	encapsulation of lead-based ext paint	\$4,650
Redeemer, Kingston	organ work	\$6,350
Redeemer, Queens Village	roof	\$17,834
Redeemer-St. John's, Brooklyn	roof	\$8,000
St. Andrew's, Yorktown Heights	parsonage renovation	\$15,000
St. Barnabas, Howard Beach	replace parish hall floor	\$23,000
St. David's, Massapequa Park	architect re: building parsonage	\$10,000
St. John's, Lynbrook	roof	\$9,000
St. John's, Mamaroneck	parking lot/driveway	\$5,000
St. Paul, New City	asbestos removal/boiler	\$25,000
St. Paul's, Red Hook	roof	\$40,000
Trinity, Rocky Point	parsonage renovation	\$30,000
Trinity, White Plains	water/sewer at parsonage	\$30,000
Trinity, Wyandanch	roof	\$18,600
Zion, Staten Island	facade work	\$15,000

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.

In 2017, the Leadership Development Grant budget was increased to \$100,000 and became available to lay leaders. Twenty-six grants were awarded, totaling \$83,259.

GROUP GRANTS

Rev. Marc Herbst	\$4,550	An Understanding of Jesus in His Jewish Context
Rev. Richard Hill	\$7,500	Seeds of Hope: a conversational approach to transformation
Ms. Joyce Stahl	\$2,500	Art and Worship Weekend
Ms. Nicole Hudson, ADLA	\$7,500	ADLA Bi-annual Assembly (lay leaders)
Rev. Marcia Parkinson-Harrison	\$7,500	ADLA Bi-annual Assembly (rostered leaders)
Rev. Ernst Mossl	\$1,500	Five "Healthy Congregations" workshops
Rev. Jared Stahler	\$7,500	Panel Discussion & Solemn Vespers: Committed to Unity in Christ
Rev. Joel Brandt	\$4,000	Preaching Perspectives at ULS Gettysburg

INDIVIDUAL GRANTS

Rev. Danielle Miller	\$2,200	The Hatchery, LA
Rev. Samuel Silaban	\$3,000	Voice accent coaching - 8 hours
Mr. Roberto Lara Aranda	\$1,500	The Theological Community of Mexico interfaith conference, as a presenter
Rev. Justin Kosec	\$3,000	Leading Multi-Staff Ministries: Flourishing in Complexity
Ms. Karen Maulen	\$3,000	Classes at LTSP
Rev. Kevin O'Hara	\$1,000	ELCA Clergy Gathering in Atlanta
Ms. Leticia Alanis	\$3,000	CPE at Lutheran Services New York Alliance
Rev. Rebecca Seely	\$2,500	EnLIGHTen Essentials Conference/Learning Group
Rev. Arden Strasser	\$3,000	Workshop & coaching OpEd/Auburn Seminary
Ms. Patricia Komornik	\$2,054	Stephen Leaders training
Ms. Lauraliz Morales-Silva	\$1,200	Intro to Pastoral & Spiritual Care at UTS
Rev. Terrence Walsh	\$1,255	Interim Ministry training
Rev. Lena Warren	\$3,000	3-week Multi-staff training
Rev. Kevin Vandiver	\$2,500	NT Greek at New York Theological Seminary
Rev. Sarah Geddada	\$3,000	Master's in Sacred Theology degree
Ms. Natalie Romero	\$1,150	Extravaganza: ELCA Youth Ministry Network
Rev. Harry Schenkel	\$2,000	Travel to Rome and Israel
Rev. Ann Tiemeyer	\$2,350	Interim Ministry training

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 him with any questions about the grant process. See more details and timeline at <http://www.mnys.org/leadershipdevelopment/>

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 in which 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.

LAST YEAR, FOUR SOWER'S PROJECT GRANTS WERE FUNDED

Southwest Brooklyn Lutheran Council	\$10,000	Immigrant Welcome Center
Babylon Interfaith Homeless Initiative	\$10,000	Weekly Homeless Shelter in Deer Park
Kevin Bowen	\$10,000	Communications Internship Program
The Rev. Dr. Joanne Bond	\$10,000	Evangelism Outreach Program

*In 2017,
twelve grants
were awarded,
totaling
\$125,000.*

Wider Church Grant

These grants are intended to help fund programs outside 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 2017, TWELVE GRANTS WERE AWARDED, TOTALING \$125,000.

African Descent Lutheran Association (national)	\$15,000
Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, Inc.	\$10,000
Camp for Peace Liberia	\$20,000
Christ for the World Chapel	\$5,000
Fellowship of Reconciliation, Inc.	\$10,000
Holden Village	\$10,000
Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing	\$7,000
Lutheran Social Services of New York	\$8,000
New York Interfaith Power & Light	\$10,000
Parish Resource Center of Long Island, Inc.	\$5,000
Pinecrest Lutheran Leadership Ministries, Inc.	\$10,000
Seafarers and International House Inc.	\$15,000

The Rev. Percy Nyanjula Butiku

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP FOR MULTICULTURAL MISSION



GLOBAL MISSION United Nations: *Peace Through Religion Responsibility of Religions and Governments for Peace.*

On December 5th, 2017, the United Nations co-sponsored an ecumenical meeting addressing the “Responsibility of Religions and Governments for Peace.” The meeting was held under the auspices of the German Federal Foreign Office at German House, in New York. I attended on behalf of the Synod.

This meeting brought together religious leaders, civil society representatives, policymakers and representatives of multilateral organizations. Discussions focused on identifying the main challenges to cooperation across different religions and the conditions needed for effective cooperation in the future.

All attendees agreed that religion is an important source of understanding, peace and stability for many people. National governments and the international community should therefore consider measures to strengthen the potential of religious actors to support peace and build bridges.

PEACE THROUGH RELIGION.

There is absolutely no doubt about the fact that many conflicts and wars would have been far bloodier without the influence of religious peace actors. In addition to their commitment to peace and a thoroughly realized responsibility for peace, religious leaders stand out because, in many cases, they enjoy more trust from the parties in conflict. Religious peacemaking was done with success in Mozambique, Benin, and recently in Colombia—where representatives of the Catholic Church have played an important, behind-the-scenes role in the Colombian peace process, because they enjoyed the trust of all parties involved in the conflict.

The religious motivation for peacemaking makes sense, because all religious traditions are known to promote peace and reject violence. In many places, religious actors are regarded as dependable and persistent; they resist major dangers and are often capable of negotiating peace that lasts years.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH NORTH WESTERN DIOCESE OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA.

Since 1963, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) has grown from 500,000 members to 6.1 million, approximately 13 percent of the population of Tanzania.

During a time when global Christianity was in decline in membership, ELCT and other Christian churches in East Africa thrived. Now, the ELCT and the environment in East Africa offer a learning opportunity in effective evangelism for the global Lutheran Church.

Through a Global Ministry of Evangelism Projects in Tanzania, 20 ELCA synods have companion relationships with 20 dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Because of the support from the 20 ELCA synods, many dioceses in Tanzania have been able to undertake many projects to enhance the life of their members in the fields of education, health and agriculture. This opportunity has helped dioceses to send more people to seminaries or evangelism school. Evangelism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania is given a lot of weight. Their evangelists are sent out to open churches in places that need them. Because of this, the Evangelical Church in Tanzania is growing rapidly.

ACCOMPANYING THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA

The Companion Synod Program began in 1990 as a part of the Mission 90 initiatives of the newly-formed ELCA. At that time, there were 20 ELCT dioceses partnered with 20 ELCA synods. As of now, there are 25 ELCT dioceses, with the probability of more in the not-too-distant future.

In May 2017, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania’s Presiding Bishop Shoo extended the offer to host the international gathering of all diocesan and synodical bishops at the international summit to take place in August of 2018 in Moshi, Tanzania.

All perspectives and voices are needed as we re-vision what is feasible before joining our ELCT partners at the summit.

The consultation put together a small group representing all regions. I was appointed to be one of the members of the group. This group will meet to put together forward-looking strategies for our future accompaniment with our brothers and sisters in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). All 20 ELCA synods with companionship dioceses in Tanzania were represented.

**SUPPORT
PEACE
&
BUILD
BRIDGES**



2018 ELCA-ELCT SUMMIT

The Global Mission of the ELCA, together with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, is organizing a summit to be held in Moshi, Tanzania, from **August 7-8, 2018.**

All synods of the ELCA with companionship dioceses in Tanzania have been invited to participate.

RATIONALE FOR THE 2018 ELCA/ELCT SUMMIT

The Companion Synod Program was developed in the 1990s as a part of the ELCA churchwide initiative, Mission 90. Each ELCA synod was partnered with at least one international companion church in regions designated by the Global Mission unit. At that time, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) was comprised of 20 dioceses, and each of the 20 was paired with an ELCA synod for mutual accompaniment.

Over the past 26 years, through the development of new dioceses from what were mission areas, ELCT has grown from 20 dioceses to 25, with the anticipation of even more in the coming years. While we celebrate this growth of Christ's church, it also results in the reality that five ELCT dioceses have no companion synod. As new ELCT dioceses are formed and have no ELCA companion synod, it is important to explore new ways of engaging. It is also necessary to strengthen the relationship between ELCT and ELCA, as they envision the future together.

The gathering in Moshi, Tanzania, will enable both sides to have in-depth conversations that will be guided by the principles of accompaniment. This will also be the time to strengthen our relationships, set a new vision and direction for our future engagement, and nurture and equip each other in the spirit of accompaniment.

"RE-VISIONING REFORMATION IN ASIA."

February 1-7, 2017 Medan, Indonesia.

The Asian Lutheran International Conference (ALIC) met in Medan, Indonesia, on February 1-7, 2017, for the 9th Biannual Asian-Lutheran International Conference (ALIC),

"Re-Visioning Reformation in Asia." It was attended by more than 150 delegates, mainly from the ELCA Asian/Pacific Islander Association, including locals who represented nine caucuses: Chinese, Hmong, Indian, Indonesian, Laotian, Japanese, Korean, Filipino and Thai.

Most of these churches have partnerships with the ELCA through the Global Mission companionship program.

The Rev. Dr. Pongsak Limthongviratn, Program Director for Asia and Pacific Islander Ministries, was the coordinator of the conference. The keynoter, The Rev. Dr. J. Paul Rajashekar of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, spoke on the "Significance of the Reformation for the Church." Mrs. Manhei Yip from Hong Kong spoke on the "Impact of the Reformation on Asian Christianity," while Prof. Rospita Sihaan from Indonesia spoke on "Re-visioning the Reformation in Asian Cultural Context."

The Rev. Andrew Yee led a panel of young adults for the entire afternoon, with the theme being "Reformation and New Generation."

Protestant Christian Batak Church, Indonesia, has a 4.3 million membership and is the largest Lutheran Church in Asia. It is the 7th largest in the Lutheran World Federation. At the same time, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, 204,847,000, which is almost 90% of the entire population. As a result, Christian witness and solidarity is very powerful.

The Asian Lutherans officially began Reformation Anniversary observance on February 1st, 2017. I was invited by ELCA and was asked to participate in several workshops and speak at the Assembly. The Asian Lutheran International Conference was a great experience of learning, working, worshipping, praying, playing, and getting to know one another.

TANZANIA COMPANIONSHIP COMMITTEE

Tanzania Companionship Committee is the bridge of support between this synod and the North-Western Diocese of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The committee hosts visitors from Tanzania, raises funds, coordinates the endowment fund for educational ministries, and works to deepen and strengthen the relationship between the MNYS and the North-Western Diocese of the ELCT. Our primary focus is commitment to Christian education in the diocese, especially by supporting American teachers at Kibeta English Medium Primary School (KEMPS). Ms. Melanie Nelson, a retired teacher, is our teacher at the school.

She has been in Tanzania almost a year; her husband David joined her last November. She is there to represent the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and our Synod, as well.

Melanie was born in Minnesota, but lived most of her life with her family in Texas. She has a BA in Elementary Education. We received very good references for her from many people who knew her.

Melanie was well-received in Bukoba by Bishop Keshomshahara and General Secretary Pastor E. Kigembe. The students at KEMPS received her warmly, lining up along the driveway while singing, throwing flowers and waving branches of leaves.

Ms. Nelson attended Arusha Kiswahili School for learning Kiswahili. She took a three-week Kiswahili beginners course.

Melanie Nelson's Story:

Reaching out and finding an opportunity to become a part of a culture, and a community, other than my own has always been on my bucket list. Along with that comes one of my faults, a failure to reach out and act on my desires, wants, and wishes. So, without doing much of anything, I left that bucket list item to God, that God to whom "all desires are known and from whom no secrets are hid!"

That wasn't enough, because I am quite stubborn. So, over the years, God has taught me to allow myself quiet moments for listening to those 'still small voices' sent my way, and also to be open to where they may lead. And that is definitely what happened!

I am here in Bukoba, Tanzania, as a volunteer, teaching at Kibeta English Medium Primary School, a.k.a. KEMPS. It's a school filled with life, learning, happiness, and God's love. I am here because I was open to the possibility and also because MNYS chose to send me. I am thankful for this school community that has embraced me, and also for the opportunity to continue to experience those crazy, unforgettable teaching moments that give flavor to my days. And let me tell you that yesterday was full of flavor. It was no salt-and-pepper day.

One of my assignments is teaching Healthcare & Environment to Standard I, which would be our First Grade. This particular class has 43 students. Yes, that's right, 43. My husband, David, is here with me and I have enlisted him as my teaching assistant. He knows not to plan anything on Tuesdays because he's mine on that day, and this past Tuesday was no exception. The two morning periods went well. They most always do because the children are fresh and ready for the day, and so are we. The end-of-the-day afternoon triple has been the challenge and this week I had a plan—divide the students into three groups for three different activities related to what we were studying. David would take one group outside, while I worked with groups inside and then we would rotate. I was feelin' good about this Tuesday's afternoon triple!

If we were in the U.S., David would have received an exceptionally good rating for his teaching on Tuesday afternoon, and this veteran teacher would have been placed on a growth plan. The kids were lost. The room became noisy and chaotic. The lesson I had planned was so "out-of-the-box" that we barely got started before it was time to end. It had become noisy and chaotic. Simply stated, I forgot to find a balance between what I know about good teaching practices in the United States and

what KEMPS knows about good teaching practices in Tanzania. I plowed ahead with what I thought was best. I forgot about "pole, pole" or "slowly, slowly." My lesson didn't work. Thank goodness for next week and a second chance. I am learning.

The Metro New York Synod has been "pole, pole" here, building a relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and KEMPS, over time. Your solid and constant steps in this community are visible: the building of a dining hall, water tanks,

student scholarships, school supplies, the salary for an English teacher, library donations, pen pals, and much more. Through your support, diligent learning takes place here. I am thankful. Thankful for your work, And now my work. We continue to learn together and are unified in this mission because we know that we are all God's people. God is the glue that binds us together, and we all know that a school staple is glue! How fortunate we are here at KEMPS to have our glue supplied by God.

ROSTERED MINISTERS GATHERING— ON THE WAY-TOGETHER

August 7-10, 2017 | Atlanta, Georgia

This event was organized by the Churchwide Office and was the first Rostered Ministers Gathering. We came together in Atlanta, as a church, in asking where and what God is calling us to, together working toward a more just world, together in our ecumenical and interfaith engagements, and together serving the world in Jesus' name.





Many workshops were educational and uplifting. I attended Advocacy as Public Witness, Leadership Development, Cross-Generational Faith Formation, and Racism and the Church. It was an opportunity for learning, fellowship, and spiritual uplifting.

ELCA AFRICAN NATIONAL MISSION DEVELOPERS August 23-26, 2017 | Denver, Colorado

The ELCA Domestic Unit gathered Mission Developers from African Nationals, Asian, New Start, Churches Starting Churches, Multicultural Urban Starts, Postmodern New Starts, Network for Homeless, and Justice Ministries Leaders.

I participated in these trainings as a facilitator for the African Nationals on Spiritual Grounding Journey for Congregations, Heart and Soul of the Mission Developer, and Boundaries.

URBAN LEADERS INSTITUTE

This is a ministry of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is organized through the synod by the Black Pastors Group. Urban Leaders Institute is a three-day conference for ordained and lay leaders that includes workshops on a variety of topics. Internalized racism is a featured workshop topic this year. The Institute will meet from **July 18–20, 2018**, at the synod office. All are welcome.

ANTI-RACISM TRAINING

Our synod is committed to confronting the sin of racism and dismantling the personal and systemic walls that divide, hurt and oppress God's children. We continue to implement the 2015 Synod Assembly-adopted resolution committing to training as many people as possible in anti-racism. On Oct. 21, 2017, a training on systemic racism was held at Redeemer – St. John's Lutheran Church in Brooklyn. Most pastors and lay leaders from the Brooklyn Conference attended.

More trainings are planned for this year. On Mar. 24, 2018, training will be held at St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Smithtown, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We will start with a light breakfast. A bilingual training will be held in July (date and venue to be determined). An Urban Leaders Institute training on Internalized Racism will be held on **July 19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**, at the MSNY offices, 475 Riverside Drive.

WELCA

On Sept. 16, 2017, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America held its annual meeting at Wartburg. I represented our Synod.

This organization includes women who gather in more than 7,000 locations in the United States and the Caribbean, for service, study, advocacy, fellowship and more. WELCA embraces all kinds of ministries that support and mobilize women to act boldly regarding their faith in Jesus Christ.

The issue of human trafficking was discussed, and a decision was made to continue doing all possible to condemn this practice and help those who find themselves in this situation.

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commit themselves to grow in faith, affirm their gifts, support one another in their callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the Church, society, and the world.

KISWAHILI MINISTRY

This is a ministry of our Synod serving the East African nationals who speak Kiswahili. I am their pastor. I am there for them for prayers, sickness, funerals or anything else that might need pastoral attention. Recently, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested a few members of our Kiswahili community—the reason given was invalid papers. I went to court to appeal for their release. I knew they had valid papers. In court, the ICE agents said the members were arrested because the authenticity of their papers was in question. Their green cards were then checked and they were found to be authentic, and the individuals were released. Between the months of February and March, this happened four times.

We meet and worship at Wartburg's United Lutheran Church in Mt. Vernon, where Rev. Carol Fryer is the pastor.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The Multicultural Committee of the Metropolitan New York Synod hosted **"A Celebration of Diversity"** on April 14, 2018, at New Hope Lutheran Church in Jamaica, Queens. People from various ethnic groups gathered to share their personal journeys as immigrants. We learned about our personal diversity and our diverse synod, through gifts of dance, song, musical performance, art, and food. The theme was "Building Bridges." We finished with worship.

Mr. Roberto Lara

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS



"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ." —Ephesians 4:15

"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." — Matthew 28:20. I can certainly witness that Christ has been with us, among us, a sure and abiding presence as we lived through the highs and lows of a momentous year. My job as Director of Communications for the Metropolitan New York

Synod is to ensure that all communications that are deployed from the synod, for both our internal and external audiences, are done so with the highest professional standards.

The pinnacle for us this year, in terms of momentous events, was our synod's Reformation 500 commemorations. The Communications Department was kept busy promoting Reformation events, both synodical and congregational, via our various channels (print, email, social media, among others) culminating in spectacular content around our joyous "Reformation 500: Committed to Unity in Christ" commemorative eucharist and festive reception at The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine.

"Remember, we may live in a new world, but the old rules still apply. Powerful communications have always been about getting people to pay attention and take action."—Fard Johmar

Our Reformation 500 Press Kit was an extremely useful tool that helped us create awareness, not only about our event, but also about our organization as a welcoming and inclusive sanctuary synod, with local and global media outlets. We gained great press coverage thanks to these efforts, and based on those wonderful results, we decided to implement this strategy on a regular basis. Visit our website to take a look at our MNYS Press Kit.



Our most challenging issue, with certainty, was the resignation of our former bishop. In the light of an allegation of an extramarital affair with a consenting adult, Dr. Robert A. Rimbo

stepped down from his post on January 24, two years before his tenure was to end. The greatest minds in public relations probably would not agree on the best strategy for dealing with an organizational crisis of this magnitude. But, in partnership with Rubenstein PR, and the ELCA Communications and PR departments; and guided by the Holy Spirit, we moved forward to develop and implement a crisis-management strategy. The hallmarks of the plan included early, direct and plainspoken internal communication around the allegation, and a determined commitment to keep press coverage to a minimum. Countering a media frenzy would have taken vital energy away from the mission of our synod and the wider church.

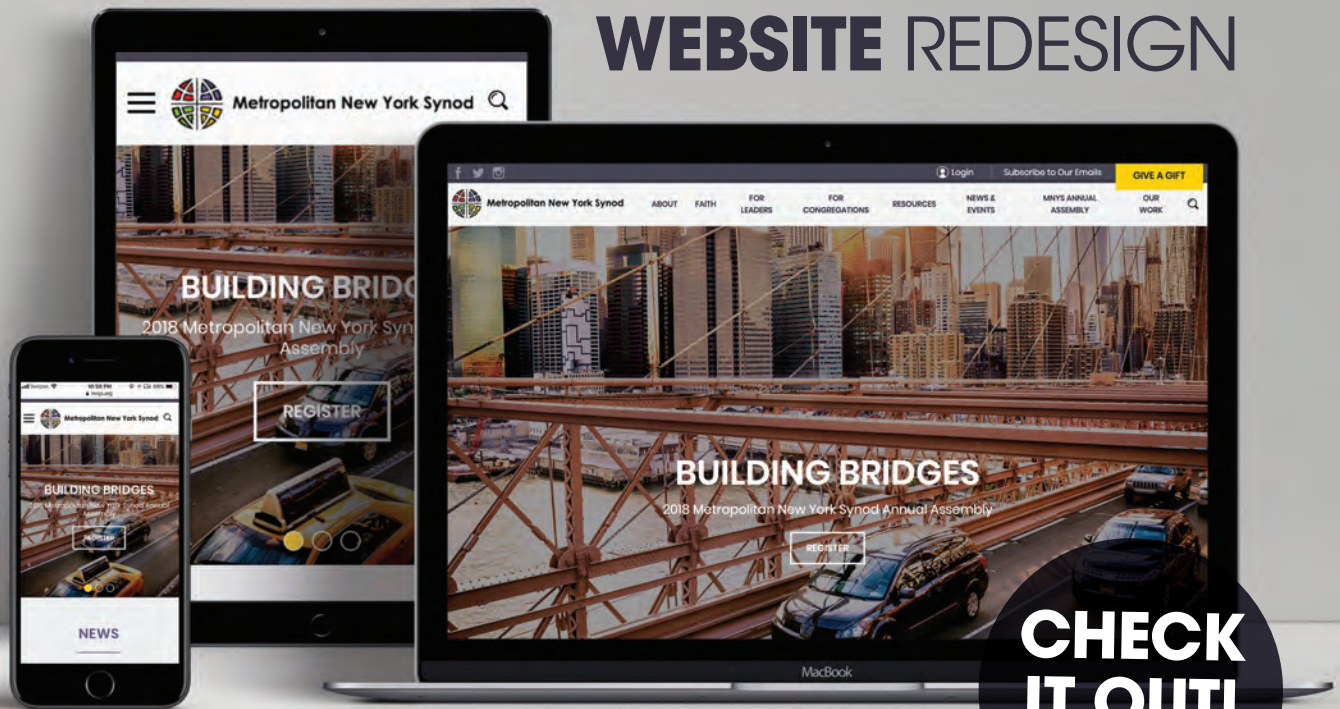
"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ".

—Ephesians 4:15

As it turned out, despite inquiries from major media outlets, including the New York Times, we were able to avoid press coverage.

We look forward to a new year filled with new beginnings, and embrace the words of our interim bishop, The Rev. Donald J. McCoid, set forth in his first pastoral letter: "Let us move forward with God's work. Let us move forward in peace and courage." And to that we say, "Amen."

WEBSITE REDESIGN



“REFORMATION 500: COMMITTED TO UNITY IN CHRIST” COMMEMORATIVE EUCHARIST AND FESTIVE RECEPTION

- Creating Awareness
 - » In one month (September 18 to October 17), we were able to increase our registered guest list by 600 percent by implementing a very aggressive digital marketing strategy (email and social media)
- Media Relations Efforts
 - » Foxnews.com (national website with a reach of millions) and New York Lifestyles Magazine (circulation of nearly half a million) featured articles covering our November 1st event
- We Were Trending
 - » Leading up to the Committed to Unity in Christ event, and during the first week of November, our Facebook engagement increased by **1294%**

WEBSITE REDESIGN

- On April 17, we launched our new website
 - » Template was redesigned to be responsive, and was optimized with the latest SEO best practices, to ensure visibility in very competitive search engines, including Google Search
- This recalibrating has afforded our website greater visibility. Now, when an individual does a “Lutheran” keyword search, mnys.org “shows” on page one of search results.
 - » **Page one receives 98 percent of total user clicks. Appearing on page one creates more opportunities for our churches to connect with potential new members.**

METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD “BRANDING”

- We redesigned all our communications platforms—digital and print—with compelling, modernized graphics. Our redesign initiative was created with all our existing audiences in mind and with the goal of reaching a younger digital or millennials audience.

- Our website has been retooled and launched. It is intuitive, easy-to-follow and easy-to-read.
- **Hope you are enjoying our new image!**


DIGITAL AND PRINT CHANNELS: GROWING STRONG

- **Newsletter**
 - » Template was redesigned and optimized
 - » Personalization has been incorporated, when appropriate, to promote greater engagement
- **We are growing**
 - » In 4Q17 and 1Q18, we increased our email subscription list by **31.7%**
**Compared to 4Q16 and 1Q17*
 - » Average Total Unique Clicks increased by **65.48%**
**Compared to 4Q16 and 1Q17*
- **We Are Engaging! Strong, Open Rate at 52.9%**
 - » Average Religious Organization ORs, as of December 2017, is **24.03%** –SmartInsights.com
 - » Average OR in marketing and advertising is **17.81%**, and in non-profit organizations is **24.98%** – SmartInsights.com
- **Social Media**
 - » Goal: Creating and sharing relevant, engaging content.
 - » **Video performance went up by 21,381% video views, and 120,871% minutes viewed!**
 - » MNYS Facebook and Instagram posts reached 2902 people per day, during 1Q 18. This represents a growth performance of **649.21%** when compared with the same quarter, last year.

METRICS REVIEWS

- The Communications Department creates a performance metrics and content metrics review on a quarterly basis, as a report to the Synod Council.
- We are able to make recommendations to the Strategic Plan Committees based on review findings.


MNYS COMMUNICATIONS: METRICS AT A GLANCE



WEBSITE

- users ↑ **103.53%**
- sessions ↑ **87.24%**
- pageviews ↑ **72.15%¹**
- new visitors ↑ **117.46%¹**

new website launched:
April 17, 2018 | [click to visit](#) ▶




REFORMATION 500

- video views ↑ **21,381%**
- minutes viewed ↑ **120,871%**
- avg. post reach **11,376 people**




received **NATIONAL ATTENTION** from major media outlets

click here to experience this magnificent event again ▶




SOCIAL MEDIA

- facebook followers ↑ **32.87%¹**
- social posts reached ↑ **649.21%**


MNYS Facebook & Instagram posts have reached almost **3,000 fans per day**, since September 17, 2018



EMAIL

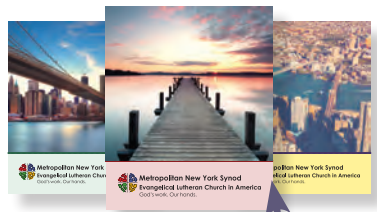
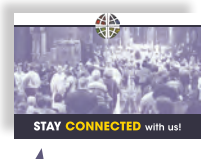
- open rates ↑ **52.9%²**
- total unique clicks rate ↑ **13.44%¹**

new email launched:
January 9, 2018 | [SUBSCRIBE](#) ▶



PRINT

cross-channel effect on email list ↑ **32.30%¹**

worship bulletin redesign | **postcard design**



P.R. EFFORTS

NATIONAL ATTENTION
Foxnews.com (national website, with millions in reach) and **New York Lifestyles Magazine** (circulation of nearly half a million) featured articles dedicated to our November 1st event.

PROTECTING OUR MISSION
Despite inquiries from major media outlets, including the **NYTimes**, we were able to avoid negative press coverage during our former bishop's resignation.

¹When compared with same period during 2016-17. ²Average Religious Organization Open Rate is 24.03%.

It is a privilege to serve as the **Director of Communications** for the **Metropolitan New York Synod**. At such a time as this, when the average New Yorker has access to overwhelming amounts of information and a quantifiably diminishing attention span, please know that my door is always open for questions, to give recommendations, to receive suggestions, and to help you create or develop a communications strategy for your ministry site.

Let's keep sharing the good news in every possible way.

The Rev. Jonathan Linman

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP FOR FAITH AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION



FAITH FORMATION:

For the sake of our mission to “build bridges, not walls,” God invites us to engage in ongoing discernment, as the Holy Spirit prompts each of us to ask, “What would God have us do for such a time as this?” Helping people to ask this question is a focus of my work as Assistant to the Bishop for Faith and Leadership Formation, but it’s also a daily reality for me personally. As I discern my own call, I find that it centers on three areas in whatever context I happen to lead or serve. The three areas

are the call by God to **PREACH** the gospel, **PRESIDE** at worship, and **TEACH** the faith.

Happily, 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 bridge-building mission in the world. In 2017, I had the privilege of engaging in formal teaching ministry on 26 occasions. I also had opportunities to formally preach and preside 26 times. So, on an average of at least once a week, I was preaching, presiding and/or teaching. Additionally, I was privileged to lead informal worship at least 60 times when staff members, volunteers, and guests gathered 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 a number of brief theological and spiritual reflection essays on a variety of current topics that appear regularly 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 433 such scheduled occasions during 2017. Then the gospel of consolation also finds its way into any number of unscheduled conversations at events and meetings, during phone calls, and even in email exchanges, which are not recorded in my calendar. Thanks be to God for the

ways in which these means of grace build bridges with the people of God in our care and contribute to their faith formation!

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 in communicating the Lutheran message and deepening commitment to Lutheran identity. During 2017, these efforts centered on our many and various observances of the **500th Anniversary of the Reformation**, a singular opportunity at this juncture in the long history of the church. I believe we rose to the occasion and made the most of this unique opportunity for commemoration. During the year-and-a-half of Reformation 500-related events (from June 2016 to November 2017), there was an average of an event every week and a half. The events, some sponsored by our synod, took place in our local ministry settings, and elsewhere, and included my participation or the participation of other synod staff members.

Click here to see my full report on our Synod’s Reformation 500 events and initiatives. ▶

*preach
the gospel,
preside at
worship,
and teach
the faith*

LEADERSHIP FORMATION:

We cannot build bridges in mission and ministry 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 labor-intensive centerpiece of my work in Leadership Formation. This past year saw major transition, with the retirement of Pastor Jeffrey Kolbo as Candidacy Committee Chairperson and Coordinator, and with other administrative staff transitions in our synod office. Pastor Elise Brown is now the Candidacy Committee Chairperson, and I have taken on the other, coordinating roles once held by Pastor Kolbo. 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 over 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, and who feel drawn to public ministry in our church. Our church needs pastors and deacons, especially in synods elsewhere in the country. Thanks be to God that we are “not lacking for business” here in the Metropolitan New York Synod, and that we are doing our part to offer leaders to our church, for such a time as this! [Click here to see the report of the Candidacy Committee.](#) ▶

SYNODICAL DEACONS PROGRAM

Another focus of my Leadership Formation efforts involves me in our Synodical Deacons program which builds bridges between the church and world in servanthood ministry. I represent the Bishop on our Synod Deacons’ Council, which shepherds synod deacon candidates through its own unique formation process. This past year saw a record number of candidates for our synodically-rostered diaconate, 17 to be set apart. I also assist in the formation 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.

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 \$128,550 to 13 ELCA seminary students for the 2017 – 2018 academic year, to assist with, and in many cases to fully cover, tuition costs. At

the time of this writing, allocations have not yet been made for 2018 – 2019, but we will be able to offer a total of \$126,200 in scholarship aid to students in our care at our ELCA seminaries.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Leadership Development Fund of our Synod is another way in which 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 eight group grants for a total of \$83,259 to assist in the ongoing formation of our leaders. Sue Brandt manages this program, but I also serve 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 includes challenging and inspiring our leaders to be proactive in identifying and taking responsibility for their particular leadership formation needs and opportunities. They are encouraged to enroll in reputable, continuing education programs as individuals, or, as groups, creating events at which known, expert leaders offer their gifts to the many who attend.

TREXLER TRAVEL AND STUDY GRANT PROGRAM

Still another grant program, unique to our Synod, which 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 \$5,000 to five pastors, to support their ongoing formation, primarily for continuing education experiences involving travel abroad.



FIRST CALL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

ELCA-Rostered Leaders in their first three years of called ministry are expected to participate in First Call Theological Education. Seminaries cannot possibly teach everything leaders need to know for faithfully and effectively undertaking ministry in a rapidly changing church and world. This program is designed to fill in the gaps for ongoing education and formation. First Call Theological Education has shifted from centering on an annual Leadership Guild retreat sponsored by all the synods in Region 7, to a program that is specific to our Synod. At the time of this writing, Margy Schmitt-Ajer and I are working to tailor-make First Call Theological Education for our 15 or so new pastors and deacons, in ways appropriate to their particular ministry settings' needs and opportunities.

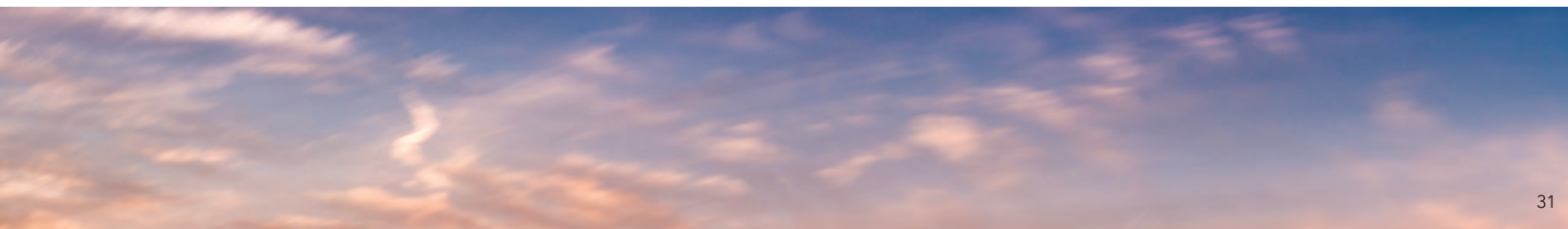
RELATIONSHIP WITH SEMINARIES

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 with 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. Here's a highlight of my role with our seminaries in the past year: I had the privilege of teaching the second-to-last course ever offered at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in late June of 2017, shortly before United Lutheran Seminary came into being. This intensive format course focused on faith practices for leadership in public ministry. I taught—and learned greatly from—a multi-cultural group of 22 students representing a number of different Christian traditions. The Holy Spirit's energy in this course was palpable, and ministered to everyone in the course, this professor included.

RESOURCES FOR LEADERSHIP FORMATION AND DISCERNMENT

Finally, a current focus of my Leadership Formation efforts involves the development of a worshipful resource to assist those in local ministry settings to host events that center on discernment for all of God's baptized people—and not just those considering a call to rostered public ministries. Luther believed that each and everyone has a call from God to do something to further God's work with our hands, and thus, should be encouraged to ask the question, "What would God have me do now with my life?" This resource will provide materials for Bible Study, worship, prayer, and conversation, which become the vehicle through which participants can ask their discerning questions.

In short and very simply, I give thanks to God for the many and various opportunities given me, especially during the Reformation 500 anniversary year, to share in God's work of forming people in the faith and for leadership in our church, for the sake of the world, for such a time as this!



Deacon Margy Schmitt Ajer

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP FOR CONGREGATIONS



It is hard to believe that a year ago, I was with you as a guest at the Assembly, as I prepared to start this latest segment of my call journey. It continues to be clear to me, in spite of the challenges we've faced together, that the Spirit indeed was at work in bringing me to this synod and to this work. For that I am so very grateful!

TRANSITIONS, MOBILITY, AND CALL PROCESS

• At any given time, we have approximately 30 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 we work through together what the next part of their journey looks like. Seven congregations are currently interviewing candidates for call and four congregations have called new pastors in the last several months.

- I am taking some time to review and revise the current call process and manual to reflect current realities, and to allow for flexibility in how this process serves different contexts. I like to say that the process exists to serve the church, not the other way around.
- 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. It has been a joy to get to meet folks throughout the synod in this way.
- In all of this, I continue to emphasize that the call process is a mutual conversation of discernment between a candidate and call committee, as they seek together to discern the direction of the Holy Spirit. I know some of you are already tired of hearing me say it, but there are no perfect congregations, or perfect pastors. There are only communities of faith, and faithful leaders who together dream about the future ministry and mission to which God is calling.

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.
- In addition to intentional interims, we continue to utilize coverage pastors, who support congregations in transition

with pastoral care and church council support. A new category that is developing is the bridge pastor, who serves a congregation in the "between" times.

This might occur before a congregation decides on its next steps, or when an interim leaves before a new pastor is called.

FIRST THIRDS OF LIFE

- I continue to work with the Claimed strategy, to develop a "network of networks" for the many ministries we have serving the first third of life: children, youth, campus ministry, schools, etc.
- I attended the ELCA Youth Extravagance in January, as a sign of partnership and support with those leaders from throughout our synod who attended. I am grateful to Synod Deacon Charlie Germaine for the work he has done to gather those leaders together.
- At the ELCA youth gathering that will be held this summer, each synod has a "Synod Day" event. Marrett Arfshten, our synod day director, deserves our thanks as she carries out plans for that day.
- Connections with First Thirds of Life leaders, through the ELCA, helps to strengthen our ministry and provide support for those within our synod who do this work.
- I serve on the board for Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education, and have worked to support its ministries and leaders. I am grateful to Pastor Becca Seely for the work she does as executive director on behalf of us all.


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 happening 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 to strengthen our partnership in the work we do together.

FIRST CALL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- FCTE is a mandated program of the ELCA, designed to gather all pastors and deacons together through their first three years of rostered ministry. In Region 7, there was a history of this being done as a regional partnership. However, it is now the responsibility of each synod to carry it out.

It continues to be clear to me, in spite of the challenges we've faced together, that the Spirit indeed was at work in bringing me to this synod and to this work. For that I am so very grateful!



You may notice that a recurring theme in all of this concerns relationships, connections, and being on the journey together.

- Pastor Jonathan Linman and I are working together in developing what this will look like in our synod. We had our first meeting with our first call pastors and deacons in January, to begin building the cohort, and to hear from these leaders as to what would be most helpful to them. There is follow-up to that meeting taking place now.

CANDIDACY AND ASSIGNMENT

Although not listed in my job description, it is my joy and honor to have been invited into synodical candidacy work in support of the staff work that Pr. Linman does with the committee and candidates. My particular role is to work with candidates from the time they are approved through the receipt of a first call. It is always a privilege to be invited into the journeys of those who have been called by God into public ministry.

BEYOND THE SYNOD

- In January, I served as a presenter on the development of the ministry of word and service for the Region 2 Deacon Gathering. I am also on the planning team for a similar gathering in Regions 7 & 8. These gatherings are important as we live into what it means to serve as a Deacon in this church, and as we work on sharing a common understanding of this new roster.
- I have met twice with Lutheran students at Union Theological Seminary, on various aspects of ELCA polity and practice. One of those presentations included ELCA students from

Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. It has been a joy to meet with students, and to help them connect to the church they hope to serve.

- On May 8, I presented at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary on being a church grounded in Word, Sacrament, and Service.
- I understand all these opportunities as ways of connecting us all with the larger church of which we are a part.

You may notice that a recurring theme in all of this concerns relationships, connections, and being on the journey together. That is the foundation of my call and my ministry, no matter what form it takes. It is the only way I know how to do the work I am called to do!

One of the historic roles of the deacon is to be in service to and on behalf of the Bishop (whoever that may be!). I rejoice that this call allows me to do just that, as well as to serve alongside all the folks on this amazing staff. For that, and for all of you, I give thanks to our gracious God!

The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells

DIRECTOR FOR EVANGELICAL MISSION/
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP



Who is the most generous person you have ever met? In what ways did they show their generosity?

My position calls for accountability of the constant interdependent nature among our three expressions: churchwide, our Metropolitan New York Synod, and our local congregations. I prefer to look at our work together as a triptych, as I spend much of my time within the areas of Stewardship, Mission Support, and Congregational Vitality. Understanding that God's

currency is relationship, the synod staff is committed to building and deepening relationships within our synod and among our ecumenical partners, in order that all this can serve to help us be nimble and innovative for Gospel work in this fast-changing world we share.

STEWARDSHIP

One of the key areas I've engaged this year has been Stewardship. The goal of stewardship ministry is to help God's people grow in their relationship to Jesus, using their time, talents and finances, which have been entrusted to each of us. To address this need, I revamped the Stewardship table with very specific goals:

- Telling our stories in a personal way and saying "thank you" using our various voices
- Engaging our "Ask, Thank, Tell" strategy, which has clear, year-round direction for our synodwide mission work
- Strengthening our congregational relationships, many of which have traditionally been in the space of giving "zero"

Congregations should be more open to being generous, but more than adding to a healthy budget, must understand the connection between local stewardship and how it seeds many initiatives, activities and new ministries.

MISSION SUPPORT

All shall give as they are able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you. (Deuteronomy 16:17)

As you have read in my February letter, "Mission" is the broad term used to describe all the ministries of this church, not just those involving ELCA missionaries who work with our Lutheran partners around the world. "Support" is the portion of members'

offerings that makes all ELCA ministries possible, here at home and abroad. As we give, the ELCA also sends us partnership support for our synod's mission via grants, services and resources, including yours truly!

Underscoring MNYS's commitment in 2017, we shared 51.5% of all Mission Support with our churchwide organization. For this, we say "Thank You". Your resources have helped to support many congregations in very impactful ways.

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

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

The third and most energizing area has been among the Congregational Vitality ministries. In partnership with our Outreach table, we're excited to build and foster communities that have culturally relevant worship and express our faith in the public realm.





- The former Transfiguration Lutheran Church in Harlem closed, and then birthed a new ministry with newly-ordained Pastor/ Mission Developer Kevin Vandiver and The Christ Center.
- Rev. Eric Mull and Ascension Table, Long Beach, has become an important resource to the homeless and transient community.
- Rev. Leticia Alanis was ordained and is pastor of the intergenerational Latino ministry at Todos Los Santos, Woodhaven, in association with All Saints Episcopal Church.
- Rev. Amy Kienzle strengthened the core of the music and arts ministry of the Park Church Co-op in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, while continuing outreach with a respite shelter, partnering with the local library and a farmer's market.
- Rev. Aaron Baughman and One River Wellness, Port Jervis, focused on their relational-based ministry and combine worship, yoga and the holistic connection to nature that God provides.
- Rev. Maritza Ortiz-Cruz shepherded Transfiguration/New Hope for All Saints, Bronx, to holy closure and is currently in the planning stages of a new Lutheran – Episcopal joint ministry to bring God's good news to the critical area of the South Bronx.
- Rev. Dr. Gary Mills and Advent Latino continue engaging ministry with an increasingly bi-lingual community on Manhattan's Upper West Side.
- Rev. Robert Wollenburg is guiding the growth of St. Lydia's in Brooklyn. The diverse young adults make St. Lydia's one of our most unique and modern ministry settings.
- Rev. Patty Avila and Ascension, Deer Park, lead a healthy ministry that continues to balance word, service, worship and sacrament amidst a bilingual community.
- Rev. Heidi Neumark and Iglesia Luterana de Trinidad lead a growing, racially and class-diverse, justice-seeking community of faith on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Fun fact – Trinity is part of a historical landmark tour.
- Lastly, the congregation known as Holy Redeemer, Brooklyn, closed; the faithful, alongside Pastor/Mission Developer Lenny Duncan, bring forth Jehu's Table in the heart of Brooklyn. Jehu's Table is an all-inclusive ministry rooted in African Descent Church Tradition, from a Lutheran perspective. Rev. Duncan will be ordained on the Friday night of our Synod Assembly.