



Northern Illinois Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



## Report of Nominating Committee Present Membership and 2024 Nominations

### Synod Council

#### Current Membership

**Bishop:** The Rev. Stacie Fidler (*Bethesda, Morrison – Central Conference*) Term expires 2028

**Vice President:** Ms. Minnette Willard (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2027

**Secretary:** Rev. Lu Cantrell (*Peace, Morris – East Conference*) Term expires 2027

**Treasurer:** Ms. Nancy Lillevold (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024\*

The Rev. Joy Alsop (*Faith, Rochelle – Central Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Rhonda Copeland (*Calvary, New Windsor – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Janice Forrest (*Zion, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

Mr. Brandon Graves (*Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

The Rev. Brad Haugen (*Followers of Christ, Plainfield – East Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Ms. Leann Heimerdinger (*St. John's, Pearl City – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024\*

Ms. Christina King (*First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

The Rev. Shellie Knight (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2025

Mr. Dave Kromphardt (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024\*

The Rev. Frank Langholf (*Emmanuel, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Kathryn Mehlretter (*Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound – Northwest*) Term expires 2026

Mr. George Sanchez (*New Life, Bolingbrook – East Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Andy Tyrrell (*Grace, Richmond – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Youth Representative: Mr. Alex Chenoweth (*Peace, New Lenox – East Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

**Synod Council Officer Nominations List**

**Elect 1**

Treasurer (Lay or Rostered, Male or Female, 4-year term) • Vote for 1

Ms. Nancy Lillevold (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*)

**Synod Council Nominations List**

**Elect 5**

Youth, Confirmed-18 years old (Lay, Male or Female, 1-year term) • Vote for 1

Mr. Trace Gallagher. (*First, Monmouth – Southwest Conference*)

Lay Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Ms. Leann Heimerdinger (*St. John's, Pearl City – Northwest Conference*)

Ms. Pat Reynolds (*Trinity, Harvard – Northeast Conference*)

Ms. Kim Halper (*Nativity, Wonder Lake – Northeast Conference*)

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Mr. Dave Kromphardt (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*)

Mr. Terrill Johnson, Sr. (*St. James, Rock Island – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Chris Lee (*First, Rock Island – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. John Rothfusz (*Salem, Sandwich – East Conference*)

Rev. Brandon Nelson (*GPS, Machesney Park – North Conference*)

## Nominee Biographies

### Synod Council Officer Nominations

Treasurer (Lay or Rostered, Male or Female, 4-year term) • Vote for 1

**Ms. Nancy Lillevold (Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference)**

*+Appointed to fill an incomplete term and eligible for election*

**Occupation:** Retired

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her/hers

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently serving on Church Council and employed as Treasurer of my congregation; serving as usher, communion assistant, altar guild, and deliverer of communion to those who aren't able to attend church.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Quota Club member, past Treasurer of Quota; Graduate of NI Synod Diakonia, currently serving as Treasurer of Diakonia.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Since I enjoy working with numbers and spreadsheets, I believe this is the best area where I can utilize my skills.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Help provide accurate accounting of the Synod's finances as well as reporting of same.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe in Jesus Christ and truly believe I am saved by grace through faith which is a gift from God.

### Synod Council Nominations



**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Since I served on the Trinity Council, I wish to carry on with the Synod. My wish is not only serve the Synod, but to bring Synod information to the communities they serve. I truly believe we are trusted servants.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Since I have not served the Synod before, I'm not sure of my priorities. Only to serve and be part of a changing world and a changing Synod to the best of my abilities, with God's help.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I did not grow up a Lutheran. We were raised in the United Church of Christ. During my early adult life, I pulled away from God and the Church. Then in my Thirties, I came back to God and sought to have a relationship with a "Power Greater than myself". That has led me back to Church. Faith, I have learned is an "action" word. A gift from God, through my Savior Jesus Christ, that I must give away.

**Ms. Kim Halper (Nativity, Wonder Lake – Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Homemaker

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I have held 2 terms of being our church council president. I also served two terms of being a non-executive member of our church council. I have been the director of our food pantry for over 15 years. I have led various bible studies. I also have spoken in the community at various events about our congregation and it's ministries.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I have been the director of the Wonder Lake Neighbors Food Pantry for over 15 years. I have worked with the other churches in our community at organizing events to fundraise food and monetary donations for the food pantry. I am a member of our community Lions Club. I also am an alumni of our local 4-H club.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I enjoy the council positions that I have served in my congregation and would like to serve on the synod council. I enjoy discussing various topics about our synod and help brainstorm how to deal with various situations. I also like meeting a people from all across our synod and working together to make our synod be the best it can!

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I shall prioritize attending all meeting whether they be in person or via zoom. I will attend all extra events as needed such as CRE. If I am needed to be a part of a sub-committee I have no problem serving that as well. I am just wanting to serve in whatever way is needed.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** My faith is the utmost important to me! From a very young age, my grandfather instilled in me that no matter what your challenge is, the first thing

you need to do is go to Jesus in prayer for discernment. My faith has helped me through so many rough times in my life that I don't honestly know if I would still be here if it not for my faith and seeking of the Holy Spirit.

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Dave Kromphardt (St. John's, Peru – South Conference)**

*+Appointed to fill an incomplete term and eligible for election*

**Occupation:** Retired Banker

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently serving as Church Council President. Have served in the past as Confirmation instructor, Men's Ministry leader, Living Last Supper Chancel Drama leader, Finance Committee member, via de cristo leader and sponsor

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Northern Illinois University Campus Ministry Board, local Commerce Organization President, co-founded community food pantry in 1998, Assistant Director of Spring Valley Walleye Fishing Tournament, Member of St. Margaret's Hospital Foundation Board

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I was appointed to the Synod Council in September 2023 to fill a vacancy. It has been a blessing in my life. My aptitude and experience in congregation governance has helped the congregations I have been a member at, and I have worked with Synod leadership while serving at NIU Campus Ministry. I believe I can provide insights and questions to the Council that will benefit the decision-making of it. I also believe that active Boards best serve every organization and want to serve at the congregational level, and am already on the Synod Pulpit Supply list and lead worship at several congregations.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Smaller congregations are challenged to have ministers or help in determining what is the best way to serve their communities. I believe the Synod staff and council should focus on ways to help congregations self-determine their direction. Developing a pool of lay people to work under the direction of rostered ministers is also needed to help fill this apparently permanent shortage. I also believe we should help congregations reenergize after the pandemic to bring members back into an active role in face-to-face ministries when possible.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** We are saved by Grace alone. Because of God's Grace, we try to lead a Christlike life. However, this is a daily challenge because we are both saints due to Grace and sinners due to our human nature. Our daily task is to preach the Gospel to the world through our actions and then through our words.

**Mr. Terrill Johnson, Sr. (St. James, Rock Island – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Chair of Finance and Stewardship, Founder chair of endowment, chair of evangelism, Special Interest “church unification/consolidation”

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Youth support: years of coaching youth baseball and basketball, youth for Christ golf board, Cub Scout Master, taught Junior Achievement. Augustana Planned giving board, President Quad Cities Estate Planning Council, Heart Association Run for Life director.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Advocate for unification among congregations. Why to pursue. But especially to advance my service to Gods ministry.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Synod to adopt advocacy for closer affiliation and eventual unification of marginal churches and a “play book” on how to progress and achieve.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I celebrate life, faith, forgiveness and salvation daily. God’s gift to us must be accepted and embraced. Faith invites me to be calm and to be kind. Giving back to Gods work is a privilege.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Chris Lee (First, Rock Island – West Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. John Rothfusz (Salem, Sandwich – East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I am new this year to this synod and congregation, after serving 26 years in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod. I served two terms as conference dean and on the synod council there. I also served on the Evangelism and Candidacy committees, and on the ISU Campus Ministry Board. I have gifts and interest in administration and finance. I value ways that we can work better together as congregations, conferences and synod to strengthen our common mission in Jesus' name.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I served for 18 years at Faith Lutheran, Washington, IL. I served a term on the Washington District Library Board, and was actively involved in the school system as my kids grew up. When a large tornado hit Washington in 2013, I worked with the community and the ministerial

association to organize recovery and rebuilding. I also worked with the Faith Lutheran Child Care, both with children and shaping the leadership of the Board.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I enjoy working with others to advance the mission that we share. I believe that we can often do more walking together as a synod than would be possible in isolated congregations. The support and resources of the synod can draw people and congregations together, and provide resources to help ministry thrive across the synod and for the sake of the world. It is exciting and rewarding to be a part of that work on the Synod Council, supporting the leadership of our Bishop.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I want the Northern Illinois Synod to be focused and effective in carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ for the sake of the world. I want to encourage disciples at every level to see themselves as members of the one body of Christ, working together to bear the living presence of Jesus to the world. I want to be constructive, moving forward to solve problems, and constructively address conflict when it arises. The synod council is able to shape the priorities and effective functioning of the synod, so that we can carry out our mission together.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** God has called me to bear the saving presence of Jesus into broken lives and to preach the life-changing Word. God's grace is our foundation and our source of new life and hope. It is a privilege to lead the church in this ministry of reconciliation for Jesus' sake.

**Rev. Brandon Nelson (GPS, Machesney Park – North Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**



## **Congregational Life Committee**

### **Current Membership**

Mr. Gregory Bruner (*Light of Christ, Algonquin – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026  
Mr. Paul Dallgas-Frey (*Immanuel, Dixon – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+  
Ms. Meghan Doyle (*St. John, Joliet – East Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+  
Deacon Laura Gorton (*Christ, Belvidere – North Conference*) Term expires 2025  
Ms. Carol Johnson (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*  
Mr. Kent Kindelsperger (*Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*  
Rev. Ryan Mackey (*Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026  
The Rev. Tom Redig (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*) Term expires 2025  
Ms. Melissa Rojas (*Trinity, Mount Morris – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025  
The Rev. Chrissy Salser (*Christ, Stockton – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025  
The Rev. Scott Stolberg (*Our Savior's, Rockford – North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026  
Ms. Kelly Van Fleet (*Peace, Morris – East Conference*) Term expires 2026

### **Congregational Life Committee Nominations**

**Elect 2**

Lay Female (3-year term) Vote for 1

Ms. Carol Johnson (*Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference*)\*  
Ms. Cortney Breeden (*Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference*)  
Ms. Carol Schulte (*First, Ohio – South Conference*)

Lay Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Kent Kindelsperger (*Zion, North Henderson – Southwest Conference*)\*  
Mr. David Crippen (*St. John's, Rock Island – West Conference*)

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

### **Nominee Biographies**

Congregational Life Committee Nominations Bios

**Elect 2**

Lay Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Ms. Carol Johnson (Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

**Occupation:** Retired

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her/hers

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I have served as an organist/pianist at our church for over 35 years and have been on our Worship Team for several years. I also served on Church Council, including one year as president and on the Executive Team during “the Covid Years.” I am currently co-chair of our WELCA group and served as chairperson of our preschool board during its eventual closing.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I am a long-time member of the Quota Club of Freeport, including several years as President. I also volunteer weekly at the Amity’s Attic, a resale store that supports a local day care center. Prior to retiring nine years ago, I was an administrator for Special Education programs for 30 years.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have served one term on this committee and I really enjoy working with the other team members. While I am a “Snowbird” and frequently out of state during CRE, I feel that this is an important ministry for the churches in the NIS and I try to contribute as much as I can to the committee. I currently serve as the secretary of Congregational Life.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I feel that the CRE event and the online extensions of that event are our most important contribution to the synod’s members. The provision of scholarships has also supported projects that have touched many lives in a positive way.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that God loves me in ways that are beyond my comprehension and has showered me with grace through Jesus. My response is to let that love and grace shine through my every action so that others may know God’s love and see God at work in their own lives.

**Ms. Cortney Breeden (Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference)**

**Occupation:** Visual Merchandiser

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Sunday School Superintendent, Church Council Member, Church Council Secretary, Church Council Vice President, Church Council President. Member of Ice Cream Social, Evangelism, Worship and Music, and Christian Education Committees. Live Stream Coordinator.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:**  
Sherrard Music Booster Secretary

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I feel called to pursue ways to support my church by working with and learning from others in the Synod. I've always been interested in developing a deeper understanding of how the Synod supports our churches.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To be a strong representative for my church, Christian women, and develop my skills as a lay leader.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** My faith was instilled at a very young age, but like many people I strayed away from the church after confirmation. I started going back when I was in my late 20s, originally because I felt like I owed it to my mother to give it another try, and because I knew she needed more help with the Sunday School program. Through working with the students, my heart was opened to God again. There is nothing like working with children to make you see the miracles in our everyday lives. I am so grateful that my mother didn't give up on me, and of course, neither did God.

**Ms. Carol Schulte (First, Ohio – South Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Kent Kindelsperger (Zion, North Henderson – Southwest Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

No biography was submitted.

**Mr. David Crippen (Bethany, Woodhull – Southwest Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Council Chairman at Augustana Lutheran Church Andover IL. 6 years Call Committee for Augustana Lutheran Church Diakonia Graduate 7/12/2014

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Mayor of Andover, IL. 6 years Orion Fall Committee Orion Fall Festival Orion, IL. 3 years . (Raised money for people in need) American Legion Member.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** To help the Synod see issues from a lay person's point of view and to help them in any way I can. Also to help me understand issues from the Synods point of View. Congregation need to see and understand Synods reasoning on items and issues.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To help bring Christianity back into society. We are losing ground with people. Maybe there is a way to Minister people so they feel and want to discover their faith in God and come to worship. I wish I had the magic answer to reconnect and connect them with God, but I don't but I am willing to try.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** That's easy! I believe in the power of prayer! It has brought me through many of life's tribulations.

## Global Mission Committee

### Current Membership

The Rev. Tammy Anderson (*Bethesda, Morrison – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025  
Mr. Cole Bathje (*Our Savior's, Rockford – North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025  
The Rev. Jose Cortes (*Messiah, Aledo – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2025  
The Rev. Makayla Dahleen (*St. Paul, Sterling – Central Conference*) Term expires 2024\*  
Dr. Alan Esker (*Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*  
Ms. Johanna Hager (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026  
The Rev. Janet Hunt (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026  
Ms. Janet Larson (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Term expires 2026  
The Rev. Michael Neel (*Immanuel, Yorkville – East Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*  
Ms. Deb Quinn (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025  
Mr. Chuck Steinbach (*Immanuel, Yorkville – East Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+  
Mr. Mike Wadle (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

### Global Mission Committee Nominations List

**Elect 3**

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Dr. Alan Esker (*Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference*)\*  
Mr. Don Gillingham (*Capron, Capron – North Conference*)

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Makayla Dahleen (*St. Paul, Sterling – Central Conference*)\*  
Rev. Sue Hoff (*Salem, Moline – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

Rev. Jonathan Black (*First, Plano – East Conference*)

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### Nominee Biographies

Global Mission Committee Nominations Bios

**Elect 3**

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Dr. Alan Esker (Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

No biography was submitted.

**Mr. Don Gillingham (Capron, Capron – North Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Makayla Dahleen (St. Paul, Sterling – Central Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** As a pastor, I feel passionate that we live as Christ's disciples through local and global endeavors and partnerships. Our congregation has participated in many global projects such as LWR quilts, special offerings, hosting international guests from partnering synods, and ELCA World Hunger. We are seeking to renew our companion relationship with our partners in Tanzania. I often share about my trips abroad in teaching and preaching.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I serve on the leadership board of ecumenical partnerships for community VBS and teen service camps as well as the local FEMA board. I also participate and promote Mom's groups and parent education programs.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have served on the Global Mission Committee for my first 3-year term and am passionate to continue. Our accompaniment model of mutual ministry is inspiring to my faith and way of doing all aspects of ministry. I want to help create more relationships and connections across the synod and globe.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Connecting more congregations to our companionship synods.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I trust in a God of love that connects and forgives. Our response to this gift of grace is to love our neighbor and all creation.

**Rev. Sue Hoff (Salem, Moline – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Social justice study; congregational discernment for mission; food insecurity

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Food insecurity; childhood trauma; foster care

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** Primarily as a personal and congregational learning and growth opportunity; secondly because I have worked with and enjoy connecting with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To support the goals of the NIS for this ministry by actively participating in efforts to increase the number of parish relationships in the NI Synod.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I trust deeply that through the life, death and resurrection and of Jesus, and by the power of God's Holy Spirit, God has provided all that I need; and that that God has prepared me for pastoral ministry throughout my life, so that I am able to empathetically encounter others with an open heart and an understanding that this journey of faith is both unique to each of us and significantly better when shared.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Jonathan Black (First, Plano – East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Age at Time of Election:** 46-60

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** caring ministry, food pantry, video ministry are primary for my current setting.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Same as above but also adding, mission endowments, mission partnerships, creative ministries, others.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** It is an area where my experience in global missions matches a need.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Connecting congregations to understand and appreciate the global church.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** The accompaniment model for walking with others in faith is an essential understanding for a healthy relationship with others.





## Ministry Support Committee

### Current Membership

Ms. Marianne Barstow (*St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Julie Eshleman (*St. Mark, Rockford - North Conference*) Term expires 2024\*

Ms. Kay Johnson (*All Saints, Byron – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

The Rev. Andrew Kayes (*Emmanuel, Oregon – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

The Rev. Vince Marolla (*First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Dr. Randall Mullin (*Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Mr. Bill Nelson (*First, Geneseo - West Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Mr. Chris Patterson (*Faith, South Beloit – North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026

The Rev. Dr. Sharon Rogers (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. David Russell (*Scenic Hills Parish, Elizabeth – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Barb Stark (*First, Mt Carroll – Northwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

The Rev. Karen Tews (*Good Shepherd, Lena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

## Ministry Support Committee Nominations List

**Elect 3**

Lay Female (3-year term) Vote for 1

Mrs. Julie Eshleman (*St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference*)\*

Lay Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

Mr. Jason Gustafson (*Cambridge, Cambridge – West Conference*)

Mr. Don Anderson (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

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\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

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## Nominee Biographies

Ministry Support Committee Nomination Bios

**Elect 3**

Lay Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mrs. Julie Eshleman (St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

**Occupation:** Director of Christian Education

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Children’s Ministry/Christian Education (previously as a volunteer teacher, now hold Director position on staff), music (choir, handbells, oboe), chairperson of committee to call an Associate Pastor (2015)

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Education Committee for my children’s school, IREAD and other tutoring work with elementary students, volunteer docent at Anderson Japanese Gardens, Data Specialist for Rockford Area Moms Demand Action group (gun violence prevention)

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I would like to continue my service on this committee because I know how crucial it is to support people in leadership. Leaders who have a strong support system and ready access to the information and resources that they need are better able to lead with flexibility and creativity. I think our experiences over the last few years have brought to the forefront the need for broad mutual support across congregations and hope to continue to help the NIS lead in this effort.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Entering a second term with this committee, I am especially focused on the work of discernment in the ways we can support our ministers and lay professionals. The world is in a period of rapid, dramatic change, and the Church is called to respond to that change in generous and creative ways, while steadfastly remaining focused on God’s vision for humanity. This is a very difficult task, and the way forward is not always clear! By supporting and equipping the rostered ministers and other ministry professionals within our congregations, we also support and equip the larger Church to do God’s work in the world. I believe we can reevaluate and improve upon our methods of support to better meeting the changing needs of our ministry professionals.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I strive to express my faith through the pursuit of justice and mercy. I believe that, throughout Scripture, God calls us to respond to God’s love and salvation by bringing mercy and grace to each other in every way possible. Our work at the individual and community level must be driven by mercy and generosity, and our work at the systemic and governmental levels must be driven by justice and equity. Keeping our focus on the twin goals of justice and mercy ensures that our actions remain faithful to God’s call and Jesus’s example.

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Jason Gustafson (Cambridge, Cambridge – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Manager - John Deere

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently the Congregation Council Vice President, Sunday School Superintendent, as well as Parish Accountant at Cambridge Lutheran.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Previously served on the board for the Village of Cambridge, both as a Village Trustee (2015-2019) and as Village President (2019-2021).

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have a passion for leading and helping others. I have gained knowledge, skills, and experience from my years of experience in business, community, and congregational leadership that I feel would be quite valuable in this space.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Use my knowledge and experience, as well as leverage the different and diverse talents of others, to assist in reaching positive, value-added outcomes to committee objectives and goals.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe in God, who created Heaven and Earth, and Jesus Christ, his only Son, who died for my sins. I trust that by believing, proclaiming my faith, sharing the gospel, and also with God's merciful love, there will be salvation.

**Mr. Don Anderson (St. John's, Peru – South Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired Plant Manager

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Sunday School Teacher, Organizer of The Living Last Supper, Building and Grounds Committee, Finance Committee, Church Council Secretary

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Ramp Builder for physically challenged, Serve on team for Living Water Via De Cristo retreats, Work at local food pantry

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I view this as a growth opportunity to learn more about the Synod and experience supporting the Synod.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To support the Synod and work constructively with other Christians.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that God is in us. We are to serve Him through helping others to learn about Him and helping others to live a better life.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

## Outreach Committee

### Current Membership

Ms. Sharon Beksel (*United, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Lisa Gerloff-Banker (*Grace, Woodstock – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Debra Keaschall (*Immanuel, Rock Falls - Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2026

Mr. Don Kinney (*Christ, Belvidere – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Robin Luckey (*Lord of Love, Galena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2026

Mr. Dave Musser (*Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Brandon Nelson (*GPS, Machesney Park – North Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

Mr. Andrew Rex (*Salem, Sycamore - Northeast Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

The Rev. Bob Stark (*First, Mt Carroll – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Randall Swanson (*Zion, Kewanee – Southwest Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

The Rev. Sarah Wilson (*St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2024

### Outreach Committee Nominations List

### Elect 2

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Rev. Sarah Wilson (*St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference*)\*

Rev. Hope Johnson (*Bethany, Leland – South Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Nominee Biographies

### Outreach Committee Nomination Bios

### Elect 2

Rostered Female (3-year term) • Vote for 1

**Rev. Sarah Wilson (St. Barnabas, Cary – Northeast Conference)\***

*\*Eligible for re-election*

**No biography was submitted.**

**Rev. Hope Johnson (Bethany, Leland – South Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

## Social Ministry Committee

### Current Membership

Mr. Larry Cording (*Lord of Love, Galena – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2024\*\*

The Rev. Katie Gallagher (*Faith, Wataga and Messiah, Galva – Southwest Conference*)

Appointed term expires 2026

The Rev. Jacob Gawlik (*St. John, Sterling – Central Conference*) Terms expires 2024\*\*

Ms. Donna Kelly (*Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

Mr. Paul Lockwood (*Grace, Woodstock – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2026

Ms. Marian Myers (*St. Paul's, Dixon – Central Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

The Rev. Dr. Chuck Olson (*Calvary, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. JoAnna Patterson (*Faith, South Beloit – North Conference*) Term expires 2026

The Rev. Scott Ralston (*Faith, Forreston and St. Mark's, Polo – Central Conference*)

Term expires 2026

Mr. Ron Simmons (*Zion, Rockford - North Conference*) Appointed term expires 2025

Ms. Joan Soltwisch (*Resurrection, Channahon - East Conference*) Appointed term expires 2024+

Ms. Carol Wahlstrom (*Trinity, Ottawa – South Conference*) Term expires 2025

## Social Ministry Committee Nominations List

**Elect 2**

Lay Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

Mx. David Luecht (*St. John, Joliet – East Conference*)

Mr. Jon Gustafson (*Salem, Moline – West Conference*)

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Nominee Biographies

Social Ministry Committee Nomination Bios

**Elect 2**

Lay Male (3-year term) Vote for 1

**Mx. David Luecht (St. John, Joliet – East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired. Entering seminary.  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Current Council President, confirmation instructor, choir member, ministry leadership in Prayer Group, Grief Group, RIC

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Member of Plainfield Community Alliance, Becoming Oswego.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I've attended previous Northern Illinois Synod Assemblies, representation of diverse population is necessary (LGBTQIA), seeking candidacy for Word and Service.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** As an assembly member it's important to represent the synod, hear the issues, vote on behalf of the ELCA

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and was resurrected, showing that love and forgiveness through Christ is a gift from God. We are called to be servants of Christ.

**Mr. Jon Gustafson (Salem, Moline – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Free to Retire  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Current Salem Church Council President and Assistant Minister, Personnel Committee chair, past Endowment Committee Secretary, past Call Committee member, past voice & bell choir member, past Sunday School teacher, Property Committee chair & Council member.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Interests in cross-racial adoption, community theater and all arts, Augustana College, and all things Rock Island.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I was asked to serve, and I am willing to answer the call of the Holy Spirit.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To promote an active and healthy relationship between our God and our church family and with our entire community.



**Please share a brief statement of faith.** Baptized as an infant and raised in the ELCA, I hope to live a life with purpose that embraces, reflects, and grows the love of our Christ Jesus.

Rostered Male (3-year term) • Vote for 1

## **Churchwide Assembly**

### **Churchwide Assembly Nominations List**

**Elect 6**

Lay Female (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

Ms. Clara Solak (*Bethany, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference*)

Ms. Christina King (*First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference*)

Lay Male (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

Mr. Kurtis Arndt (*Alleluia! Naperville– East Conference*)

Mr. Luke Snyder (*St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference*)

Lay Female (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

Ms. Paula Ebener (*Trinity, Moline – West Conference*)

Lay Male (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

Mr. Lavern Allen (*Becoming, Oswego – East Conference*)

Mr. George Sanchez (*New Life, Bolingbrook - East Conference*)

Lay Male • Vote for 1

Mr. Paul Lockwood (*Grace, Woodstock - Northeast Conference*)

Mr. Brandon Graves (*Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference*)

Mr. Don Gillingham (*Capron, Capron – North Conference*)

Rostered Male • Vote for 1

Rev. Jacob Gawlik (*St. John, Sterling - Central Conference*)

Rev. Chad McKenna (*St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference*)

### **Churchwide Assembly – Affirm Conference Assembly Elections**

Bishop (Rostered)

Bishop Stacie Fidler (*Bethesda, Morrison - Central Conference*)

Vice President (Lay)

Ms. Minnette Willard (*First, DeKalb – Northeast Conference*)

Northwest Conference (Lay Male)

Voting Member: Mr. Mel Ehrler (*Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound*)

Alternate: Mr. Calvin Klopf (*St. John, Massbach*)

West Conference (Lay Female)

Voting Member: Mrs. Rita Gustafson (*Salem, Moline*)

Alternate: Ms. Pam Gross (*Calvary, Moline*)

Southwest Conference (Rostered Male)

Voting Member: Rev. Jamie Gallagher (*First, Monmouth*)

Alternate: Rev. Vince Marolla (*First, Galesburg*)

North Conference (Rostered Female)

Voting Member: Rev. Julane Nease (*United, Rockford*)  
Alternate: Dn. Laura Gorton (*Christ, Belvidere*)

Central Conference(Lay Male)

Voting Member: Mr. Bill Wescott (*Immanuel, Rock Falls*)  
Alternate: Mr. Larry Kradle (*St. John, Sterling*)

South Conference (Lay Female)

Voting Member: Ms. Merianne Morris (*St. Paul, Streator*)  
Alternate: Ms. Lori Whalen (*First, Ohio*)

Northeast Conference (Rostered Male)

Voting Member: Rev. Preston Fields (*Salem, Sycamore*)  
Alternate: *None*

East Conference (Rostered Female)

Voting Member: Dn. Shari Simon (*Peace, New Lenox*)  
Alternate: Rev. Lu Cantrell (*Peace, Morris*)

## Nominee Biographies

Churchwide Assembly Nomination Bios

Elect 6

Lay Female (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

**Ms. Clara Solak (Bethany, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Store Associate

**Age at Time of Election:** 18-29

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** I work with the youth ministry by helping with Sunday school and VBS. I also am part of the AV team and help with sound during services and events. I also serve in the music ministry by playing in the bell canto ensemble.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I am a member of the Sons of Norway lodge and serve as hostess and meeting documentation. I am also a son's of Norway district convention delegate. I am also a member of the McHenry County College speech and debate team.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** It is important for the youth to be involved in the Northern Illinois Synod.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I do not know at this time.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I go to Church every week and enjoy being a part of the church community both young and old. This bible verse always stuck with me, 1 John 4:12. "No

one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”

**Ms. Christina King (First, Galesburg – Southwest Conference)**

**No biography was submitted.**

Lay Male (Youth/Young Adult) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Kurtis Arndt (Alleluia! Naperville– East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Youth Ministries Director

**Age at Time of Election:** 18-29

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Middle School/Confirmation, High School Youth Group, College Ministry (LuMin), Youth Gathering, Service Trips, Music Ministry, Traditional Worship, Contemporary Worship, Camp Ministry

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Camp Councilor LOMC, Ministry Coordinator LOMC, Peer Minister Valparaiso University, Peer Minister Lead Valparaiso University, Hospitality Manager Chapel of the Resurrection Valparaiso University, Valparaiso University Representative at 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering, Youth Minister Shepherd of the Prairie Lutheran Church, Outreach Program Manager Lutherdale, 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voter, Youth Ministry Director Alleluia! Lutheran Church, Service Trips (Kentucky, Wyoming, Tennessee, Colorado, Kentucky, Indiana)

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** As a 25-year-old man in ministry, I wish to continue to connect myself, my home church, and my job church to the ELCA. My faith, my education, call to service, and call to action has always been thanks to the time I have spent in the NIS. Having experienced the Churchwide Assembly in 2022, I found myself desiring to get even more involved in the next gathering. I feel that from my last experience, I now have a better idea of what to expect, how to better prepare, and how to take greater advantage of my time. It would be an honor to have another opportunity to serve again.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** My priority has always been inclusion and being welcoming. I strive for a ministry where not only people like me, the straight, white, cisgender, Christian, male can exist in ministry, but also the gay black transgender female. This inclusion is created through actively being welcoming, encouraging, and educated on social systems in and outside the church.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** Church was always a part of my life. From a young age, I LOVED singing along to the music at Shepherd of the Prairie, questioning to see if Pastor Mark Boster actually knew my name, and absolutely LOVED every aspect of High School Ministry with my Youth Minister Greg Dowell. I graduated from Valparaiso University with a B.A. in Theology and Ministry with a minor in communications. Thanks to Pastor Charlene Rachuy Cox, I became involved and founded the ELCA Ministry LuMin & Peer Ministry at Valparaiso University, where I then got reconnected with my childhood retreat center, Lutheran Outdoor

Ministry Center. From there, I fell in love camp ministry. Being invited to write curriculum for both LOMC and Lutherdale was a treat! Through my education, time at two camps, and now involvement in 5 different churches (4 ELCA, 1 Non-Denominational), I feel that God has called me to be witness, learn, and grow with community in an inclusive way.

**Mr. Luke Snyder (St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference)**

**Occupation:** Student

**Age at Time of Election:** Under 18

**Gender and Pronouns:** Prefer not to answer,  
he/they

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** In my congregation, I am currently one of those who runs the av tech room managing the cameras and slides for the livestream. I am an active participant in my congregation's adult forum session and youth group. Formerly, I served as youth delegate for the Northern Illinois Synod council and attended the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I volunteer with my schools NHS chapter. I am an active participant in my school's model United Nations including helping to organize a conference hosting multiple schools. I've written opinion pieces in my local paper, I've written a number of letters to leaders in all levels of government advocating for various policies, and I've served as an election judge.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I believe that it's important for younger voices to be heard in the decision making of the church and that I am well suited to help represent those voices.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To contribute the perspective of the youth of the church and to carefully study all materials involved in the ministry to faithfully execute the former.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that the most important and comforting aspect of our God is love. The love that led to the descent of Christ to live among us. I believe in the message of radical love taught by Christ, to love thy neighbor and bless those who curse you, however hard it may be. And I believe that it is the role of the church to live out that teaching of radical love by being an incessant voice for justice, compassion, and kindness in society.

Lay Female (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

**Ms. Paula Ebener (Trinity, Moline – West Conference)**

**Occupation:** Interpreter

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Gender and Pronouns:** Female, she/her

**Primary Language:** Portuguese

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** Hispanic/Latinx

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Taught English classes for Hispanic Adults in our previous church.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Feeding the homeless, food program

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** It would be a new experience for me to see all the different synods coming together to do the work of the greater church.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To learn more about the Church as one body.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe we are supposed to be and live like Christ did and follow his footsteps and my personal motto is, "I want to leave the planet a little better than I found it!"

Lay Male (Person of Color or First Language Other than English) • Vote for 1

**Mr. Lavern Allen (Becoming, Oswego – East Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

**Mr. George Sanchez (New Life, Bolingbrook - East Conference)**

**Occupation:** Retired

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** Hispanic/Latinx

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Worship Assistant, Eucharist Minister, Church Council, Ministry Support, Nominating Committee, Sunday School Teacher, Youth Advisor, Synod Council Member, Synod Anti-Racism Team, Synod Outreach Committee.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** American Legion Chaplain and Adjutant, Youth Baseball, Cub Scouts.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I believe that the ELCA is working toward becoming an all-inclusive church and I would like to be part of the process.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** I have worked for many years in the Synod's Anti-Racism Team and will continue.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that the church that Jesus brought to us must be open to everyone.

Lay Male • Vote for 1

**Mr. Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock - Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Proposal/technical writer/editor  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Age at Time of Election:** 61 or over  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Past member of Church Council, frequent scripture/prayer reader, singer (choir, solos), co-leader of book study, frequent voting member for Synod Assembly, congregation representative to Lunches for Learning one year.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Member of Northern Illinois Synod Social Ministry Committee (2023-Present); writer of an award-winning monthly column in our city's weekly newspaper; past member/VP of library board; past president, VP, and secretary of local theater group; theatre reviewer for local daily newspaper; past Village Clerk (Bloomington, IL); contest-winning member of Toastmasters; election judge; frequent actor in community theatre.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I have attended many Synod Assembly gatherings, all of which have been meaningful, but the one and only time I was a voting member at Churchwide Assembly - August 2013 in Pittsburgh - was an amazing, never-to-be-forgotten six-day experience. I had the chance to vote on a Bishop and Secretary for the denomination, carefully consider other statements/resolutions/etc., meet and share worship and choir/singing experiences with fellow ELCA members from all over, get to know our synod's leadership better, successfully propose a rule change at my first plenary session, and step forward to speak when I thought my opinions might be worth sharing in smaller discussions or in plenaries. I listen closely, consider every topic or vote prayerfully, and actively participate at Synod Assembly; I would sincerely ask for the chance to do so again - 12 years later - at Churchwide.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** Be the most prepared voting member I can be, but be open to the thoughts of others as I seriously consider each subject up for discussion/vote. I will listen; I will speak; I will pray; I will rejoice in the work of the ELCA.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe that my oral and written communication skills, singing and acting skills, intelligence, wit, and more are all gifts I received from God. Whenever and wherever I can praise Him and use these gifts, I want to do so.

**Mr. Brandon Graves (Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference)**

**Occupation:** Hospital Worker  
**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him/his

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45  
**Primary Language:** English  
**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Currently: I serve on the Salem council just starting my second three-year term. I am the property committee chair of Salem. I serve as Usher and assisting minister. I am also on the Ad-Hoc Governance Committee of Salem to draft our new Constitution document by 2025. I also serve on the Finance Committee.

Past: I served on the Salem Call Committee in 2017 to 2018 with the calling of Pastor Preston Fields. I have served on the Nominating Committee at Salem in the past and have been a voting member to Synod Assembly from Salem several times. I have also served as parliamentarian at Congregational meetings.

Synod: Currently, I am a member of the Synod Council, elected in 2023.

Past Synod committees include serving on the Outreach committee from 2013 to 2019. I served on the Congregational Life Committee from 2020 to 2023 serving as chairperson the last year.

I've served on the Synod Nominating Committee twice. I've served on the Assembly Resolutions committee twice. In 2023, I served on the Assembly Minutes Committee.

I love the work and innerworkings of the Church and Synod.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** As you could see from the previous question much of my leadership experience has been at the congregation and Synod level. However, I have volunteered at the local Nursing home for 8 years. I am also a Registered Parliamentarian (RP) A member of the National Association of Parliamentarians.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I wish to serve as a voting member to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly because this churchwide Assembly could be the turning point in the life and history of the ELCA. It's no surprise to many church goers that change is happening, not just at the Congregation level but Synods and the whole Church (ELCA) as well.

I am especially intrigued and a bit fascinated by the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church that was approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. This Commission could be the turning point for a Renewed Church, and I would LOVE to be a part of that discussion and ultimately a decision maker in that historic work.

I also am interested in the discussion and ultimate vote on the Proposed Social Statement Civic Life and Faith, this Task Force which has been working for 6 years now on how the ELCA responds to Government and how that relates to the ELCA or the whole church.



Having served in numerous positions across the Synod, I feel that I have the much-needed knowledge of the church at large. I feel I could bring a younger perspective but also knowing that I have been an ELCA and Northern Illinois Synod member my whole life. I love the innerworkings of the church.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** My priorities for serving as a Churchwide Assembly voting member are to listen, study the work ahead of us, and put the entire ELCA at mind when making these decisions. I also would bring back what I learned to my local congregation and to the Northern Illinois Synod and discuss with other members about the priorities and commitments that will be made at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. I would ask how the decisions we make effect what we do at the congregation level or the Synod level.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I love this church; I love the Northern Illinois Synod; I love the ELCA. I love to support a mission that I love. There is something for everyone to support or partake. We are all saved by Grace through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let's share that statement together.

**Mr. Don Gillingham (Capron, Capron – North Conference)**

No biography was submitted.

Rostered Male • Vote for 1

**Rev. Jacob Gawlik (St. John, Sterling - Central Conference)**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin:** White

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** Over the past decade in ministry, I've served various congregations and their respective synods in several capacities, including: Dean of the Shawano Area Conference of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin (2014 – 2015); Dean of the Oshkosh Area Conference of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin (2016 – 2017); Partnership in various Ecumenical Text Study Groups while in East Central Synod of Wisconsin and Northern Illinois Synod;

Member of the Northern Illinois Synod Social Ministry Committee (for two terms beginning 2018); Serving as a member of the Northern Illinois Synod Racial Justice Subcommittee (since 2018); Serving as a member of the Northern Illinois Synod Discipline Committee (since 2019)

In partnership with the TriChurch ministry of St. John's – Sterling, St. Paul – Sterling, and Immanuel – Rock Falls; Through shared Confirmation Class and Middle School Youth Ministry with St. John's – Sterling, St. Paul – Sterling, and Immanuel – Rock Falls

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** Within the local Sterling – Rock Falls community I have: Partnered with the COMMUNITY VBS program; Participated in the COMMUNITY Clergy Book Study Group and Pastors United; Involved in the Sterling Public Schools Student Mentoring Program

Worked with local pastors and leaders around social justice issues including matters of housing insecurity, racism, and LGBTQIA inclusion.

Worked closely with a homeschool cooperative that provides alternative learning environments and opportunities for children with ADHD and dietary restriction needs that would prevent regular attendance in traditional classroom settings.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** As a person of faith, and a pastor of the ELCA, I deeply understand that the church is far more than any one congregation. Each person, congregation, ministry site, and organization are each part of the larger body of Christ. As such, however I can offer my gifts and abilities for the service of the whole church I offer what I can.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** To be diligent in the tasks to which I'm called. To speak faithfully toward issues of justice and equality for all persons. To promote peaceful dialogue and discernment around difficult issues.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** In the Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and also within the Constitution for Synods and then again in the Model Constitution for Congregations a very important responsibility arises. The responsibility is that every ordained minister shall “speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.” This is risky business and terra incognita all rolled into one. As ordained ministers, persons who have been set apart for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, we have been charged to act as the voice of God’s love for the world. Not just some parts, not just for some people, but the whole world. For me this charge is intimately rooted in the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37 – 40, “He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’” (NRSV)

**Rev. Chad McKenna (St. Mark, Rockford – North Conference)**

**Occupation:** Clergy

**Gender and Pronouns:** Male, he/him

**Age at Time of Election:** 30-45

**Primary Language:** English

**Race and Ethnic Origin: White**

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation(s), both past and present:** As the head of staff, I see myself as an advocate for the congregation's employees. In committees, I work to empower others to take ownership and pride in our ministries. Through worship, I strive to share the love of God and equip our parishioners to go and do likewise.

I enjoy moments of faith formation, from Confirmation classes to Theology Pub. I love creating meaningful worship, whether in the sanctuary or on our lawn. And, I find fulfillment in walking alongside parishioners during times of joy and sorrow.

**Please list areas of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:** I have served as the president of the board for Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries. I regularly give the invocation at Rockford City Council meetings and attend the mayor's monthly Faith Leader meeting. I have been a weekly classroom volunteer at my child's school and a participant in occasional volunteer workdays for Winnebago County Forest Preserves and YMCA Camp Winnebago. I am also a member of the synod's Creation Care committee and a Climate Ambassador through Blessed Tomorrow.

**Why do you wish to serve in this area of ministry in the Synod?** I hope to represent our synod at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly with bold faith. Our synod has a lot to offer the wider church, thanks to our history of collaboration in mission, ministry, and worship.

**What are your priorities for this ministry?** The 2025 Churchwide Assembly is poised to hear from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church and consider any actions that the commission may propose. My priority in this important work would be to ensure that we listen first to the voices of women, people of color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrants, and all who have been historically ostracized, so that our future can be guided by the gifts of the whole Body of Christ and strengthened by our diversity.

**Please share a brief statement of faith.** I believe the Christian Church is strongest when we rely wholly on the promise of Resurrection through Jesus Christ. Resurrection is more than a hope in the distance, but rather a freedom that can guide us with each new day. This promise frees us from the fear of failure and death, so that we can embrace the life God has given us now. Instead of working to preserve the past, faith in the Resurrection calls us to follow Christ, who leads us into a future full of life, where all are united and fed through the love of our Creator.

## Consultation Committee

### Current Membership

The Rev. Zach Baer (*Living Waters, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2029

The Rev. Lu Cantrell (*Peace, Morris – East Conference*) Term expires 2027

Mr. Melvin Ehrler. (*Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2029

Dr. Trenton Ferro (*St. John, Joliet – East Conference*) Term expires 2027

The Rev. Preston Fields (*Salem, Sycamore – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Hope Johnson (*Bethany, Leland – South Conference*) Term expires 2029

Ms. Donna Kelly (*Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2027

Ms. Kearsti-Ray Knowles (*Trinity, Mt Morris – Central Conference*) Term expires 2029

The Rev. Eric Lemonholm (*Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd - North Conference*)

Term expires 2027

The Rev. Elizabeth Martin (*Trinity, Harvard – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2025

Dr. Randy Mullin (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Lyn Tubbesing (*Gloria Dei, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

*Consultation Committee members are elected in odd-numbered years only and only eligible for one term.*

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\*Term expires in 2024 and standing for re-election

\*\*Term expires in 2024 and not eligible or chooses not to stand for re-election

+Appointed Term expires in 2024 and will be filled by Synod Council.

Election of a candidate for each position along with post-Assembly appointments by the Synod Council, will fulfill the constitution requirement for membership of each committee of a minimum of 45% female/45% male members.

## Discipline Committee

### Current Membership

Mr. Mic Brooks (*Faith, Rochelle – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Karen Dolan (*Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2025

The Rev. Jill Flynn (*Gloria Dei, Rockford – North Conference*) Term expires 2027

Ms. Susan Gavle (*Bethany, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference*) Term expires 2027

The Rev. Jacob Gawlik (*St. John, Sterling – Central Conference*) Term expires 2025

Ms. Grace Heimerdinger-Bakke (*St. John, Pearl City – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2029

Mr. Dave Kromphardt (*St. John's, Peru – South Conference*) Term expires 2029

Mr. Maurice Nelson (*First, Geneseo – West Conference*) Term expires 2027

Rev. Dr. Jon Pedersen (*Shepherd of the Hill, Lockport – East Conference*) Term expires 2029

Rev. Gwen Sefrhans-Murphy (*Messiah, Port Byron – West Conference*) Term expires 2029

The Rev. Nord Swanstrom (*First, Pecatonica – Northwest Conference*) Term expires 2027

*Discipline Committee members are elected in odd-numbered years only and only eligible for one term.*

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