

# Report of Committees and Subcommittees

## Congregational Life Committee

The Congregational Life Committee is one of the five standing committees of our synod. Its mission and purpose are to support and equip congregations to carry out their ministries at the local level. Much of the committee's work is carried out through four vital subcommittees: Safe Church, Stewardship, Worship, and Youth. Each year, the committee plans and implements the annual Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE), helps support the synod's stewardship efforts, and offers grants to be used as seed money for local congregational projects.

Our committee consists of 60% laity and 40% clergy. Current members of the committee include Pr. Scott Benolkin, Mr. Larry Cording, Mr. Walt Farley, Pr. Nathan Feig, Ms. Georgiana Grossman, Ms. Kim Halper, Pr. Jana Howson, Ms. Kay Johnson, Ms. Mary Beth Martin-Bellavia, Pr. Elizabeth Mascal, and Mr. Mike Parmele. Synod staff liaisons for our committee include Nancy Corey, Assistant to the Bishop Deacon Cheryl Erdmann, and Assistant to the Bishop for Communication Deacon Karin Graddy. In addition, Mr. Jeff Schneider serves as a non-voting member of the committee.

Since the 2018 Synod Assembly, the committee's primary focus has been the planning of the 2019 CRE. We also offered grants to congregations for 2019; supported offering several "Safeguarding God's Children" (Safe Church) workshops and worked on budgets for 2018 and 2019. Although we are not directly involved with the work of the Worship, Stewardship, and Youth Subcommittees, we affirm their good work!

Nearly 400 individuals came to this year's CRE which took place on Saturday, March 9. The event featured the Rev. Dr. Dave Daubert of Day 8 Strategies as keynote presenter. The theme of his keynote was "Being Disciples Comes First." In addition to his keynote speech, forty-six workshops were offered and focused on congregational administration, education, evangelism, global issues, leadership, social justice, spirituality, stewardship, worship, and youth. On behalf of the Congregational Life Committee, thank you for your participation as workshop presenters and as participants!

We as a committee also encourage congregations to offer to host a "Safeguarding God's Children" workshop. A trained presenter will be glad to lead the workshop at no charge to the congregation. Please contact Deacon Cheryl Erdmann at the Rockford Northern Illinois Synod office to arrange for such workshop.

In closing, I thank all the members of the committee for their hard work and dedication. I thank the congregations of our synod for making this committee possible through your mission support (benevolence) giving!

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Mike Parmele  
Chairperson, Congregational Life Committee

## Youth Subcommittee

On November 21, 2017 a group of youth ministers interested in shaping youth ministry on the synod level gathered with Bishop Clements at Faith Lutheran in Rochelle to discuss the needs, struggles, and successes of youth ministry today. The group reconvened on January 10 and April 10, 2018 and established a model for doing ministry together. The team would consist of 2 youth ministers from each conference who were responsible for the building up of youth ministry in the Northern Illinois Synod. People who have participated in this process include Audrey Adams, Pastor Paul Cannon, Pastor Neal Cannon (committee chair), Deacon Karin Graddy (synod staff), Haley Gustafson, Michelle Heinrich, Nicole Judkins, Pastor Karyn Kost, Ryan Mackey, Peg Miller, Christina Montgomery, Melissa Nicolson, Pastor Joanna Patterson, Russ Senti, Deacon Shari Trotter, and Judy Wilkinson. Through these series of meetings, the NIS Youth Ministry Team created the following purpose statement:

The purpose of the Youth Ministry Committee is to facilitate faith formation of young people through:

- The building up of relationships
- Resourcing of leaders
- Organization of youth ministry events that congregations can't do on their own.

Meeting again May 9, July 10, October 9, November 13 of 2018, and January 15 and February 12 of 2019, the group's first project was to create a youth leadership team for the synod. Applications were created and sent out synod-wide, with the goal of finding two youth representatives from all eight conferences in the synod, plus two 'at large' bids.

In all, 12 youth - Brynn Conway, Victoria Entwistle, Jacob Fiandalo, Heide Gallagher, Jennifer Heinrich, Grace Hoening, Izzie Jackson, Nathaniel Knutson, Alison Lawrence, Coltin Rau, Mina Tolu-Honary, Samantha Whyte - from 6 of the 8 conferences were chosen to represent the NIS. A retreat, called "Think Bigger," was held March 8-9 beginning at LOMC and ending at the CRE. Eleven of 12 youth were able to attend the retreat. At the retreat the team chose their name, "Light," worshipped, presented at a CRE workshop, and brainstormed collaborative ministry ideas. Their vision is to have a mini Youth Gathering in the summer of 2020. Details TBD.

Respectfully Submitted,  
NIS Youth Ministry Team

## **Stewardship Subcommittee**

See the report of the Director of Evangelical Mission on page 45.

## **Global Mission Committee**

Not available at time of printing.

## **Ministry Support Committee**

Ministry Support Committee Mission Statement: Enabling Christians of the Northern Illinois Synod to realize their call to ministry as both lay and professional workers. To accomplish the mission, we provide resources, support, and continuing education within our synod, in cooperation with other synods, agencies, and institutions within the ELCA and the Church.

The members of the Ministry Support Committee include Cheryl Reimer, Ken Reinhardt, Doug Murray, Bill Nelson, Carol Swenson, Pastor Jen Beamsley, Pastor Andy Tyrrell, Pastor Ben Ingelson, Pastor Jeff Schlesinger, and Pastor Vince Marolla. We thank them for their service this past year!

The Ministry Support Committee strives to support those who are invested in ministry, both lay and rostered. There is an interdependent role between the Ministry Support Committee and all the subcommittees that fall within the Ministry Support Committee. The subcommittees include the Candidacy Committee, Professional Leadership Conference, Salary Guidelines, First Call Theological Education, and Mutual Ministry, and Personnel.

Much of the work of the Ministry Support Committee happens via the work and leadership of all these subcommittees. The Ministry Support Committee meets quarterly to check in, to report on subcommittee progress, and to discuss upcoming projects we can do to support the development of leaders within the church.

During the 2018-2019 year, we specifically focused on 1) developing best-practices to help congregations care for all staff and personnel, 2) developing guidelines for congregations being served by interim pastors, such as best-practices, expectations, and salary guidelines for retired interim pastors, 3) submitting 2020 Salary Guidelines for Rostered Ministers, and 4) centralizing efforts and resources for encouraging new leaders for Rostered Ministry.

The Ministry Support Committee greatly appreciates the faithful work of the Synod staff, Synod Council, and Bishop's Office who provide guidance, leadership, and assistance, and we're glad to play a role in supporting the vocational calling of the members of the Northern Illinois Synod and its congregations!

The Ministry Support Committee also thanks Pastor Jen Beamsley who will become the Chair beginning in 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Ben Ingelson - Chair

## Candidacy Subcommittee

This past year, the Candidacy Subcommittee has continued its work of assisting candidates for rostered ministry as they work through the discernment process. Candidacy materials continue to be updated by the ELCA to guide those seeking to become part of one of the two rosters of the ELCA—Word and Sacrament ministers and Word and Service ministers.

“It is a tremendously important and revitalizing work that is done by those serving to enable the Candidacy processes of the ELCA in the churchwide expression of this Church. The work that is done there then flows out to the Regions, Synods and Seminaries of the ELCA. “As a Church, we are very fortunate to have a history of forging healthy co-operative relationships between the above listed partners that enables creative ways to work with policy changes that are developing and likewise to work with candidates for rostered ministry in the Church. This is being accomplished with a focus on the ministry and life of the Church in the 21st century reality of the United States of America and that of the world's many nations. More and more the gifts of mutual ministry will be critical if the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be a formative factor in the lives of God's human creatures for the love of whom he sacrificed all.” The foregoing quote from last year's report to the Assembly is a continuing reality. That is especially true as the seminaries and the ELCA work to expand the pathways by which Candidacy processes are developed to meet the needs of the Church and of those discerning a Call to Rostered Ministry. The following are the various ways in which ELCA Candidacy partners are exploring alternative pathways to serve on our ministry rosters:

### **Alternative path Collaborative Learning:**

In the past year, the Northern Illinois Synod, in partnership with Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) and two of our congregations, placed two students in Collaborative Learning teaching sites. Both of these students were “mature” students, that is, had significant work and congregation experience, and were deemed able to begin serving as half-time pastoral leaders in these congregations, under license from Bishop Clements, while attending seminary remotely as full-time students. We are in the process of working with two more congregations with the potential for serving as collaborative learning sites for two more students.

Other alternative paths, although not as radically new as the collaborative learning path, allow students/candidates to adjust the path to rostered ministry to better meet the needs of the student, their family and the wider Church. These paths include a final year internship, an extended internship, arranging an internship site with the help of the synod, and distance learning options with several of our ELCA seminaries.

Since, as referenced above, the Church has challenges to meet in everyday life, the Candidacy process will continue to involve all of the ELCA. Therefore, I ask that the members of NIS congregations offer prayers for the Spirit's continuing power and direction in raising up laborers for the harvest which comes as God's children are called into discipleship with Jesus. With the power of the Spirit, the welcoming love of the Lord continues to penetrate and replace the tendency toward exclusiveness in the culture of our nation and of other nations as well.

Currently, the NIS has the following candidates at some stage of the process. The three stages are Entrance, Endorsement and Approval.

- Entranced, beginning Fall 2019 as seminarians: Roger Haefner (WTS), Suzanne Hoff (WTS), Michael Reibel (WTS)
- Entranced, completing first year of seminary: Ethan Doan (ULS), Phil Potaczek (LSTC), Amanda Monroe (Luther - distance learning)
- Entranced, collaborative learning students: Michelle Knight (WTS), Ryan Mackey (WTS)
- Entranced, completing second year: Catherine Nelson (LTSS)
- Endorsed, beginning internship Fall 2019: Mike Markwell (LSTC)
- Endorsed, on internship: Maria Bonine ((WTS - third year internship); Tom Redig (WTS - final year internship), Denise Rode (LSTC - final year internship)
- Endorsed, on an extended internship: Katrina Steingraeber (LSTC)
- Endorsed, on leave: Stephanie Engel (Trinity)
- Endorsed, TEEM student: Bob Stark (WTS)
- Approved, assigned to Region 3: Anders Nelson (Luther)

Seminary codes: Luther Seminary (Luther); Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC); Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS); Trinity Lutheran Seminary (Trinity); Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS); United Lutheran Seminary (ULS).

At the Candidacy Subcommittee's February 2019 meeting, a process for determining terms for Subcommittee members service was presented and adopted for implementation. As presented, the plan would be phased in so that committee members will be eligible for appointment to serve a 4-year term on the Subcommittee with the possibility of one additional 4-year term appointment. During the phase-in period, there will be the opportunity to evaluate this plan in terms of training members to meet the complexities of Candidacy service and then being able to use the skills for serving. It is both a great responsibility and tremendous joy to be a partner in the discernment of qualified leadership for Rostered Ministry. Following is a list of the current members of the Candidacy Subcommittee: Deacon Myrna Anderson, Pastor Tammy Anderson, Mr. Richard Brynteson, Ms. Judy Engebretson, Pastor Ken Gibson, Pastor Rob Kinnear, Pastor Doug Liston, Mr. Craig Peterson, Pastor Jay Quinn Mr. Ken Reinhardt, Pastor Terrie Wilder, Bishop Jeff Clements. In addition, Deacon Cheryl Erdmann is the synod staff liaison to the Subcommittee, and the ELCA Region 5 Manager for Candidacy and Missional Leadership Pastor Ramie Bakken is the ELCA representative to the Subcommittee. To these servants, the seminaries, mentors, intern supervisors and the Candidacy staff of the ELCA, I express my gratitude for the blessing of our shared ministry.

Finally, let me invite Assembly Voting Members and Visitors to visit the Candidacy display in the display area this year. I anticipate that you will be able to see the places where NIS candidates are located, whether in seminary, on internship or on a Collaborative Learning or TEEM site.

Respectfully,  
Pr. Rob Kinnear, Candidacy Subcommittee Chair

## Outreach Committee

For the last 6 years I have worked with the Outreach Committee of the Northern Illinois Synod. It has been my honor to serve as the Committee Chair for this year. I have worked with amazing and committed people, both Clergy and Lay. The members of the Committee come from all parts of the Synod, some travel great distances to attend meetings. Sometimes the new committee members are unsure of what the responsibility of the committee is. The heart and soul of the committee has been Pastor Gary Erickson. With his direction, we have been able to work together fulfill our duties; those duties being to support new and existing congregations with support for ministry.

The Outreach Committee has supported new congregations with financial support and struggling congregations as well. In past years the committee has worked on ways to help congregations to find lay leadership within their own membership. We have asked congregations to share information about their

special ministries so that we could distribute them throughout the Synod. The Outreach Committee has presented these ideas at both the CRE and Synod Assembly Workshops.

This year we will be asking congregations who have been assisted by the Outreach Committee to share their experiences of those collaborations at the Synod Assembly workshops. We will see that working together we can find ways to reach out into the community and share the life of the Northern Illinois Synod and the ELCA, which is the Word of God.

Yours in Christ,  
George Sanchez, Outreach Committee Chair

## Social Ministry Committee

### \$3,325 in grants awarded:

- Children's coats for kids. Priscilla Circle, Emmanuel, Oregon. (\$600)
- Youth: Breakfast, homework help and snacks, Bible study and music, fellowship, Trunk-or-Treat, and summer lunch program (through United Way). First, Prophetstown. (\$500)
- Necessary toiletries not covered by government assistance, in partnership with Lutheran Social Services Hope Chest. Immanuel, Rock Falls. (\$300)
- Forklift for Northern IL Food Bank, Joliet warehouse. Northern IL Food Bank. (\$400)
- Packs-for-Pals ecumenical backpack food program. Our Savior's, Seneca. (\$500)
- 4,000 meals packaged and nutrition education given in partnership with Northern IL Food Bank, 22 Lutheran congregations, local schools, and community leaders. Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries. (\$775)
- Vegetable garden constructed/planted for Community Supported Agriculture from which income supports local food pantry and ELCA World Hunger. Trinity, Durand. (\$250)

Grant Application: [nisynod.org/committees/social-ministry/grants](https://nisynod.org/committees/social-ministry/grants)

### Committee Highlights:

- Assembly In-Kind Offering:
  - Bags full of socks, hats, handwarmers, lip balm, snacks, and a prayer card were collected from congregations, prayed over, and returned to members of the assembly who gave them to homeless people in their towns as a sign of love and kindness.
- Began a visioning process during which we:
  - affirmed our purpose as caring for others, raising awareness of social ministry issues, and interpreting social statements through social action, advocacy, agency and congregation support;
  - celebrated our gifts of benevolence, resources, people, education, and experiences;
  - discussed obstacles of disconnection across the synod, lack of diversity, increased secularization, political polarization over issues;
  - discerned that social ministry begins at local communities where deep listening happens and intentional relationships are formed.
- ELCA Women and Justice Draft Social Statement:
  - Encouraged congregations to review statement and forward comments to the ELCA.
  - Final document will be voted on for adoption at August 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

### Subcommittee Highlights:

**Creation Care** (Formerly Climate Change Task Force): Evolved from a task force to a subcommittee, adopting a new name. Hosted CRE workshops and an Earth Day gathering at a Nature Conservancy prairie in Mount Morris; introduced Season of Creation and Stewardship of Creation resolutions at assembly; celebrated Portico Benefit Services' announcement to invest in alignment with 1993 ELCA social statement on caring for creation, divesting in companies holding destructive oil shale and tar sands reserves.

**Advocacy:** Lutheran Day in Springfield was May 8.

**World Hunger:** Members lobbied for the Farm Bill in Washington D.C., hosted CRE workshops, and then the first annual Cycle to Synod to raise money for and awareness of World Hunger; introduced resolution for congregations to budget for World Hunger. Members formed a task force to review synod applications for ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant. Congratulations and blessings to grant winner, Christian Care Homeless Shelter and Resource Center (Rock Island).

**Racial Justice:** Continuing education for clergy and CRE workshop attracted people to discern new direction. Contact the synod with interest in determining the future of this team.

**Green Team:** Energy auditors available to evaluate your church property for energy savings!

**Committee Members:** Thanks to committee members and their servant hearts: Pastor Denver Bitner (staff liaison), Pastor David Elliott, Amy Hoening, Denise Hoover, Dr. Peter Kivisto, Pastor Greg Olson, Pastor Jacob Gawlik, Andy Koresko, Linda Storm, Pastor Katie Gallagher, Margaret Haugen, Ron Simmons.

Find us on the web: [nisynod.org/committees/social-ministry](http://nisynod.org/committees/social-ministry) and on Facebook: *Northern Illinois Synod Social Ministry Committee*.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Robin Caldwell, Chair, NIS Social Ministry Committee

## World Hunger Subcommittee

The World Hunger subcommittee encourages congregations to contribute to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and educates congregations about world hunger issues. In 2018 about \$332,000 was contributed directly through the NIL synod in support of the World Hunger Appeal. Thanks to all contributing congregations.

World Hunger Subcommittee activities this past year included:

- 2018 NI Synod Assembly: Initiated the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Cycle to Synod event. Presented and passed two resolutions: “Budgeting for World Hunger” and “Bread for the World.” Ran a World Hunger resource/information table. Handed out Certificates of Recognition for ELCA World Hunger giving to all congregations.
- Participated in review process for ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant process for 3 applicants. Christian Care, a nonprofit organization in Rock Island, was one of 77 ministries across the church that was awarded a grant. They will receive \$5,000 for each of the next three years to support their on-site meal programs for families and increase their on-site vegetable garden production.
- Presented two workshops at CRE, “Cycle to Synod” and “How to Write a Domestic Hunger Grant.”

**Committee Members:** Carol Erickson, chair; Cheryl Nabors, secretary; Norm Moline, treasurer; Pr. Randy Swanson; Pr. Jeff Schlesinger; Pr. Scott Schmidt; Pr. Gary Erickson; Pr. Richard Meier; Pr. Wayne Derber; Pr. James Gallagher, Nate Gallagher, Amy Hoening; Kent Terry; Bob Stark; Becky Wright

## Rostered Ministers Continuing Education Team

The Rostered Ministers Continuing Education (RMCE) Team strives to offer relevant, affordable, quality continuing education for rostered ministers in the Northern Illinois Synod. Although the planned events are under the name “Rostered Ministers Continuing Education Event,” the events are open to others with an interest in the topic of the event.

On Tuesday, October 16, 2018, the Rev. Dr. Rolf Jacobson (Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary) led “Effective Preaching for Today” at Christ Lutheran Church, Belvidere.

“Working Toward Racial Justice” led by Ms. Judith Roberts (ELCA Program Developer for Racial Justice Ministries) was offered on Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at First Lutheran Church, DeKalb.

On April 9, 2019 over eighty-five rostered ministers gathered for a day of “Spiritual Renewal with Affirmation of Vocation” at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Dixon. The Rev. Elaine Olson was our keynote

speaker and a workshop leader. The Rev. Dr. Bob Hansen and the Rev. Beth Hamilton also led workshops. Bishop Clements and the Synod's worship planning team led the Affirmation of Vocation Worship Service.

Special thanks to all who hosted, participated in, and supported the first year of these events!

Looking ahead, the RMCE will be offering the following events:

"Exploring Atonement Theories" with the Rev. Dr. David Lose (Senior Pastor of Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis), on October 24, 2019 at Christ Lutheran Church (425 Riverside Rd, Belvidere, IL) from 9-3:30 p.m. Fee: \$75 if registered by October 11, 2019, \$90 October 12-24, scholarships available.

[nisynod.org/exploring-atonement-theories-with-dr-david-lose](http://nisynod.org/exploring-atonement-theories-with-dr-david-lose)

"Crucial Conversations" led by the Rev. Scott Stephan (Senior Pastor of Second Reformed Church, in Fulton) will be offered on Thursday, February 20, 2020, with the place to be announced.

And, on Saturday, August 1, 2020 the RMCE will offer something different - "NIS Rostered Ministers Fun, Faith and Fellowship Day" at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) in Oregon from 10:30-3:30 p.m. Cost: \$10/person. Activities: Swimming, canoeing, archery, arts and crafts, worship, and the zip line is also available for \$10 a person. A lunch of hot-dogs, hamburgers, chips, raw veggies, and a beverage will be provided, and attendees are encouraged to bring a snack/dessert/salad to share to keep food costs down.

Please mark your calendars and make plans to join us in growing in faith, leadership and service!

Respectfully submitted by the RMCE Team--Pastor Jenna Couch, Pastor Robert Franek, Pastor Jana Howson, Pastor Brandon Nelson, Pastor Laura Kamprath, Pastor Josh Ehrler, and Pastor Bree Truax.

## **The Nursing Project - Tanzania Task Force**

The Task Force for The Nursing Project - Tanzania is comprised of the Rev. Gary Erickson, Ms. Minnette Willard Scott, Mr. Ron Gustafson, Ms. Cindy Graves, Mr. Art Milton, and Mrs. Linda Milton.

The Northern Illinois Synod has accompanied the North Central Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania for more than two decades. We have partnered for congregational development, education, support of the women's organization, parish to parish relationships, and building the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center. Accompanying the North Central Diocese has fostered great interest in local and international mission among our people. Thank you for being the cornerstone of these efforts.

Tanzania has a shortage of 50% or more in the number of nurses needed. To address this urgency, the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center opened a nursing school in 2014. The school has the amazing record of 100% passing of all the students since the opening! Currently the nursing school rents classroom and dormitory space. The Tanzanian government does not consider a rented facility to justify full certification as a School of Nursing. The ALMC, looking for full accreditation, is in need of building their own campus.

In 2016 the Northern Illinois Synod Council created a task force to join an association working with the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center to make the vision of a fully accredited nursing school a reality.

The Nursing Project - Tanzania task force asked the congregations and people of our synod to join us in a project that will educate nurses, lift individuals and families out of poverty, create better health care in northern Tanzania, and strengthen our existing partnership with the North Central Diocese.

At the inception of the Task Force the goal was to build a brand-new school. Since then an opportunity has arisen for the ALMC to share land and buildings with an existing school in Ilboru called Ekenywa. Work is underway to prepare the existing classrooms for use, build dormitory space, and get the partially built dining hall finished and useable by start of academic year in October.

In many ways this turned out to be a better solution than building a new school. It is similarly close to both hospitals that the students will train in. It is a larger facility which will allow development a training center including other health training together with nursing. There are many more buildings, class rooms, and dormitories. The cost to renovate the existing buildings is much less than it would be to build the school from scratch.

The Task Force had set a goal of raising \$100,000 for the school. The members of the Task Force have done presentations on the project to congregations, women's groups, and civic groups throughout the synod as well as maintaining a presence on Facebook. We are happy to report that we have exceeded this total by more than \$10,000!

There are other organizations who are joining in the effort to raise support for this ministry. Operation Bootstrap Africa, C6 in Denver, individuals, and St. Peter Lutheran Church in Denver have all made wonderful contributions.

The Nursing Project- Tanzania Task Force would like to thank those individuals and congregations that have generously donated to the project. We would also ask for continued support and prayers for the success of the project.

Peace.

Respectfully submitted,  
Minnette Willard Scott, Chairperson