

GROUNDING IN CHRIST JESUS  
 GROWING IN OUR WITNESS  
 GIVING OF OUR BOUNTY  
 GRACED FOR THE WORLD

## Annual Report to Congregations 2017

### New Vision for The Upstate New York Synod

“Tell me about Jesus.” It sounds like an easy question, doesn’t it? Yet it is sometimes easier asked than answered. It seems to me to be the central question of our life and faith; Who is Jesus? If we can’t answer that then we are in big trouble.

This is the place to start as we seek to discern where the Spirit is leading us as a synod. It begins with Jesus and that suggests a strong grounding in the resurrected Lord and Savior.

It is from that understanding that the Four G’s came about. One leads into the other and creates a progression of steps to take as we grow into not only our faith, but also the ability to proclaim, share and witness it to others and the world.



Deacon Patsy Glista

Patsy Glista began her work among us in this synod in January of 2010. She brought with her many talents and gifts but mostly a love for the Church and its ministry here and elsewhere. Her title of Assistant to the Bishop for Operations carried a lot of responsibility in the area of administration of this synod. During her time with us she worked with the Finance, Investment and Audit Committees, Constitution Committee, Office Staff and Lutheran Disaster Relief and until recently, the Synod Assembly which she oversaw.

Patsy’s love for the Church was evident in everything she did, helping those who interacted with her to focus clearly on what ministry is all about. Her focus on fairness, her attention to detail and her sense of humor were partners on the way. She helped to shape how we think about financial mission proposals, work with constitutions and fairly compensate rostered leaders.

Through a time of great changes in this synod and church Patsy remained a constant and calming presence, learning along the way how to adapt and accept change as well as work with it. Her organizational skills around the office and beyond helped to implement a new personnel manual as well as keep staff current on national and state changes in the laws of both. When she didn’t know about something she took it upon herself to do research and find the answers.

Patsy’s work as an Associate in Ministry was a model for others to emulate and she carried that title with humility and joy, even after it was changed by the Churchwide Assembly in 2016 to Deacon. There was little she could not do or accomplish, often going above and beyond the necessities in order to discover the realities. Her presence in the office was always welcomed and the joy she brought to the position, which was sometimes challenging, were present.

We give thanks for her eight years of ministry in our midst and pray that her retirement will be blessed with time apart from the busyness of life to spend with family and friends, traveling and enjoying those things on her bucket list yet needing attention. She has been a faithful servant of our God. May God continue to bless and keep her.

### It’s not too late to support Bishop’s Appeal

Eighty percent of the Master Divinity graduates in the ELCA carried some form of educational debt. Nearly half of them brought undergraduate debt with them into seminary and 77% of graduates incurred theological education debt while in seminary. Some of these debt amount exceed \$100,000. Please prayerfully consider a contribution to the 2017 [Bishop’s Appeal](#) which supports the synod’s newly created Seminary Debt Reduction Fund before the end of 2017.



## First Call Leadership Guild to Continue in the Northeast Region of the ELCA

As part of the call process as it relates to candidates entering their first call, you should be aware of the Continuing Education provisions that have been established for ELCA pastors during their first three years in pastoral ministry.

The seven synods of the Northeast Region have established the First Call Leadership Guild as the instrument to provide a major part of this continuing education during the three-year period indicated.

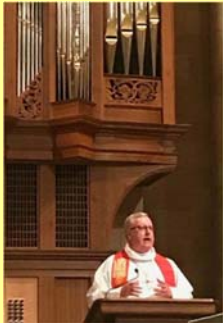
Bishops of the region have all agreed that participation in this program is an expectation for all newly ordained pastors. We believe this is a very positive program and that you and the called pastors will see this as an excellent way to enhance and strengthen your ministry.

We are convinced of the overall benefits that come from this program, and it is our hope that it will establish the practice for all pastors to engage regularly – throughout their ministerial careers – in quality continuing education.

A first call event will take place at Notre Dame Retreat House January 21-23, 2018 with attention focused on wellness and care for self as new pastors. Rev. Cathy Schibler, our Portico Representative, who has led similar workshops for a number of years, will be with us to share in the leadership.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [Kathy Neugent](#).

### Catholics and Lutherans Unite



Across our synod there were opportunities this fall to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. On October 29, 2017 Catholics and Lutherans in the Genesee Fingerlakes Conference came together for a special worship service. The gathering marked the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation while also highlighting ongoing efforts to build cooperation, understanding and mutual respect between Catholics and Lutherans.

Bishop John Macholz co-presided with Bishop Salvatore Matano, while Rev. Dan Hoffman (Trinity, E. Amherst) and Father Scott Caton (St. Lawrence Church, Greece) served as assistant ministers.

Father Caton noted that Catholics and Lutherans should always start from a point of unity, rather than division; be open to being transformed by each other; commit themselves toward visible unity; jointly rediscover the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and witness together to the mercy of God in word and service.

Rev. Frank Hanrahan (Genesee Finger Lakes Conference Dean, stated “I think there’s a sense of mission and ministry that calls all of us. Our hope is that the people will decide our next step going forward, and we will provide leadership for that to happen.”



**Rev. Hanrahan**

### NYS Paid Family Leave

Don't forget this new state law becomes effective on January 1, 2018.

Visit [Paid Family Leave Law](#) for more information. Additional information is available on the [NY State Website](#). If you have any additional questions, please feel free to call the Synod office at [\(315\) 299-4955](#) or contact me by email at [keadon@upstatenysynod.org](mailto:keadon@upstatenysynod.org).



### The Northeast Regional Archives of the ELCA.

Congregations, as well as the synod, may not think about the Archives Center except at times when they wish to reduce the items stored at their church or when closing. There are important things to know about archiving church records. Learn about what needs to be preserved, who is responsible for the transfers and what costs are involved at [Philadelphia Archives](#).

Before a congregation sends any material to the center they should contact the synod's archivist, Ms. Karen Kolb, [kkolb@roadrunner.com](mailto:kkolb@roadrunner.com) or the Archives Center by e-mail at [mtairyarchives@ltsps.edu](mailto:mtairyarchives@ltsps.edu) or by phone at 215.248.6383.

## Synodical Biennial Convention Held in Utica

Women from across the synod gathered in September at the DoubleTree by Hilton Utica to celebrate both the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's right to vote in New York State. Pastor Marie Jerge served as the worship leader and was also awarded the Bold Woman award on Friday evening. The convention featured a presentation by Patti Austin, President of the Churchwide Women of the ELCA, and entertainment by Peggy Lynn, Adirondack folksinger and songwriter. Lynn inspired us and brought smiles and laughter with her "Singing for Suffrage" on Friday evening. On Saturday evening, Katie and Martin Luther visited and shared life stories and their views of the Reformation. Service projects including school kits and tying of blankets for Lutheran World Relief were another part of the weekend. Sue Fox, re-elected as president of the Upstate New York Synod Women of the ELCA, presided over elections and a business meeting.



## WELCA Tenth Triennial

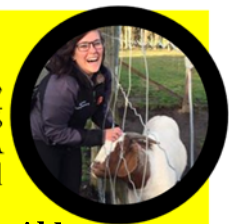
On July 13-16, 2017 eighteen women from the Upstate NY Synod attended the Tenth Triennial Gathering of Women of the ELCA in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



There were nearly 3,400 participants and more than 1,300 first timers. \$49,094.60 was given in the Thankoffering service. A new set of officers and Board members were elected. The new president of the Churchwide organization is Lisa Florin. The officers and Board will lead WELCA for the next three years.

## Abby in Africa

Abby Mandris is from our synod, worked at LCLC, and is a Young Adult in Global Mission, an ELCA year-long journey in international service. Each year ELCA young adults are shaped by the witness of our global neighbors. They share in the journeys of companion churches and organizations around the world. Abby is currently serving in South Africa.



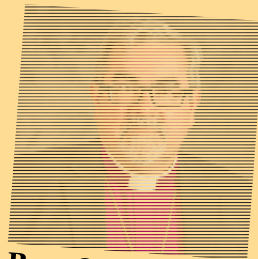
Abby Mandris

Since its inception, this program has grown from just 10 volunteers serving in one country to more than 85 serving in eleven country programs (Argentina/Uruguay, Australia, Central Europe, Cambodia, Jerusalem and the West Bank, Madagascar, Mexico, Rwanda, Senegal, Southern Africa, and the United Kingdom). Your gifts help support and expand this program so that more young adults can take part. There are over 800 Young Adults in Global Mission alumni, many of whom have taken on significant leadership roles in church and society.

Please [donate now](#) and support Young Adults in Global Mission.

## Synod Ministerium 2017

The Upstate New York Synod welcomed the Rev. Dr. Guy Erwin, Bishop of the Southern California Synod, at the Annual Synod Ministerium to share with us "Reformation Then & Now: Luther's Reforms in Context and Perspective." Attendees explored how our history shapes our identity and equips us for the future and had the opportunity to discuss the principal ways Luther's reforms reflected and changed his context and how the Reformation applies today. Held at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua September 11 – 13, Ministerium also provided time for workshops, fellowship and some free time to enjoy area sites for nearly 100 attendees.



Rev. Guy Erwin

## Bishop's 2017 Golf Tournament

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bishop John Macholz Golf Outing was held on Monday, July 24 at Shadow Lake Golf and Racquet Club in Penfield, NY. With 64 golfers, more than 30 lawn sign sponsors and businesses and 81 diners, we raised just over \$10,000 for the Bishop's Appeal to support the Synod's Seminary Debt Assistance Fund for new pastors rostered in our synod dealing with large student loans. This is more than twice last year's event.



Karen Eadon

Prizes were awarded to the lowest scoring teams, longest drive, closest to the pin - for men and women!

Next year's outing will be held on Monday, August 20, 2018. Mark your calendars now to join us, sponsor a sign or just send in a donation. Thanks to all of this year's participants and volunteers!



## CONGREGATIONS RAISE UP CANDIDATES FOR ROSTERED MINISTRY



**Rev. Mary Johnson**

This year six of our seven conferences have at least one congregation being served by a seminarian or intern, or have a student preparing for rostered ministry. As more pathways are available for theological education and formation for rostered ministry, congregations have more opportunities to know these candidates and learn about their formation.

The local congregation is an essential partner in this process, and not only as a site for “contextual education.” In the home congregation, as well as in outdoor and campus ministries and other places, our candidates are formed in faith and discipleship. Persons of all ages and stages of life, as they demonstrate gifts for public leadership in the church, are entering into conversation with their pastors and congregational leaders, to explore the gifts that are needed for mission and ministry in today’s world, and whether others in the Church perceive them to have the gifts and call for this service. This critical stage of discernment is the first step of the process, prior to applying for Candidacy. The pastor and congregation council are asked to describe the gifts and readiness they see in an applicant, before she or he is considered by the Candidacy Committee. The application process for Candidacy takes several months, but discernment in the home congregation comes first.

If you know someone who may have the gifts for rostered ministry - as a Minister of Word and Sacrament or Minister of Word and Service – encourage them to speak to their pastor, to explore how God may be calling them. What gifts are these? There are many, but we begin with these: a bold witness to Jesus Christ and passion for sharing God’s love for the world, an ability and desire to make disciples and lead others in God’s mission in the Church and the world, and an openness to listen, learn and respond as God calls us into new ways and places, to make the grace of Jesus Christ known in the world.

### Synod Staff Changes:



**Rev. David Preisinger**

2017 has brought several staff transitions in the Upstate New York Synod – both farewells and welcoming of new staff. In the spring of 2017 Rev. David Preisinger retired, having served on the synod staff for more than 20 years. He was wished a fond farewell by staff at a gathering in April. Pastor Dave continues to serve Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Albany part-time.

As the synod fiscal year closes out the end of January 2018, we will say farewell to Deacon Patsy Glista as she retires to spend more time with her husband and family. Patsy has served as the Assistant to the Bishop for Operations since January 2010.

At the end of November the synod welcomed Rev. Lori Kochanski as the new Faith Formation Director. In this new position Pastor Lori will be focused on supporting individuals and congregations in deepening their relationship with God and God's story and their connections to our daily lives. These efforts will be designed to assist us in growing as disciples of Christ who not only express our faith through our actions but give voice to it with our words as well. Our hope is that as a synod we all learn to speak the name of Jesus with clarity and conviction as we live into the 4Gs - Grounded in Christ, Growing in our Witness, Giving of our Bounty, and Graced for the sake of the World.



**Rev. Lori Kochanski**

In mid January 2018 the synod will welcome Ms. Michelle Josephson as our new Assistant to the Bishop for Operations. Michelle comes to us from the Genesee FingerLakes Conference and has been working with the Synod Assembly Planning Team and coordination for the 2018 Synod Assembly since September. Watch for more about Michelle in the January 10 Upstate Update.



**Michelle Josephson**