



Upstate New York Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Conference Assembly - Spring 2018

Grounded, Growing, Giving and Graced



The Upstate New York Synod welcomes **Michelle Josephson** as Assistant to the Bishop for Operations effective 1/12/18.

I'd like to take a quick moment to introduce myself and share a little bit about who I am, where I come from and

how I hope to move forward with all of you. My name is Michelle Josephson and I currently reside in Rochester, NY with my family.

My husband and I have three amazing children that keep us young and alert, to say the least. After being blessed to take a pause in my career to stay at home with my children, I was brought to St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church where I work as their Administrative Assistant, fully immersed in all that is involved with supporting a congregation through transition as we continue to work to build our faith and follow the path that God has laid out in front of us. While it may not always be clear, it is our faith that reminds us that God always knows best and it is our job to follow His lead.

In following God's lead, personally, I am honored and excited to begin my new role as the Assistant to the Bishop for Operations. With my work at St. Paul's over the last year, I have been intrigued with how the staff, committee and members flow together in worship and the role that the Synod plays in supporting the mission of the ELCA, the individual congregations within its region and the wider world. Coming from a family of seven, it never ceases to amaze me the strength that can be found when members work as a unit in support of a common goal. In this case, our common goal is "to walk together in ministry and share the gospel so that others know we are Grounded in Christ Jesus, Growing in our Witness, Giving of our Bounty and Graced for the World" and I cannot wait to begin my part in helping to support this grace-filled and loving mission of the Upstate NY Synod.



The Upstate New York Synod welcomes **Rev. Lori Kochanski** as Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation effective 11/29/17

Last week I was visiting with my eight year old God-daughter. As we ate breakfast I told her I have a new job in our new home of Upstate NY. I told her my official title: "Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation" She was clearly not impressed. "But what do you do when you get up and get dressed every day?" she wondered. Searching for words she might understand I landed on: "I get to help people talk about Jesus' stories and I get to hear stories of how Jesus is part of our days wherever we are." As she was chewing on her bagel she, fixed her gaze on me, and said, "That sounds like an awful lot of work. Let me know how that works out for you."

It is indeed a big task and a long title. So far, it has meant getting to know the vision already cast before the believers here through lively conversations with staff colleagues and deep listening with both lay and rostered people. A highlight of my first few months on the job was sharing in learning and growing with the leaders in their first call when we met at Canandaigua in January. I was also blessed to lead a conversation about the role of wonder in the church as the keynote speaker for the bishops convocation in March. I celebrate the generous spirit of hospitality extended as I learn new things and new roads (literally!)

I am looking forward to playing a key role in implementing a synod wide strategic plan with the guidance and direction of the Synod Council. Most importantly I am looking forward to getting to know members of the synod as I travel the highways and byways of this beautiful state. My prayer is that new direction for collaborative endeavors of faith formation will emerge as we work together for the mission of God in the world today.

Be sure that your congregation's voting members for Synod Assembly are signed up for the synod's Upstate Update where they will be able to find all the information about our 2018 Assembly. Sign up on the [synod website](#) (bottom home page)



**Coaching Network is Here!
By Rev. Norma Malfatti**

The challenges facing leaders in the church today are significant. Communities are changing, congregations are doing more with less, and in many places leaders are pressed to come up with creative solutions for the future or even figure out what the future of their congregation might be. This work is hard. To quote Bishop Rinehardt of the Texas-Louisiana-Gulf Coast Synod, "Where in all of Scripture did God ever ask someone to do an easy thing?" What we also know from Scripture is that God never asked someone to do that hard work alone. Abraham had Sarah, Moses partnered with Aaron, Mary had Joseph for support and even Paul out on the frontier of the church had Timothy, Silas and others to accompany him.

You too are not alone in your leadership and work of the hard thing God has called you to. Leaders in congregations have one another and in many places there are people from neighboring congregations you can call on for support too. We are now excited to share another possible partner for you -- a coach.

Coaches are leaders that are trained to accompany people by listening intently to what is going on in life and ministry and asking curious and probing questions to help their client uncover a path for accomplishing their goals. As of April 30th Upstate New York will have 13 trained coaches spread out across the synod that can be available for face-to-face or virtual coaching sessions for individuals or leadership teams.

Elected as the president of a council for the first time? A coach is a great way to help you assume that role with confidence. Going through a pastoral transition? A coach can work with a leadership team as they think through what comes next. Stumped on what to do about faith formation for children? A coach can help you broaden your horizons and create a workable plan. The sky's the limit on how you can use your coach to help you reach your ministry dreams.

Want to take coaching for a test run? At Synod Assembly several of the Synod's coaches will be offering 20-30 minute sessions on Sunday afternoon and during Mission Expo on Monday afternoon. Not going to be at synod assembly? Connect with Rev. Norma Malfatti, Director for Evangelical Mission, and she can connect you with a coach to see what it's like.



Patsy Glista has served the synod faithfully as Assistant to the Bishop for Operations since 2010 and retired effective February 1, 2018. She also served as Disaster Response Coordinator at Lutheran Care Ministries Network in Clinton, NY.

Patsy is a leader who brought many talents and skills to the Church. Her accomplishments while serving on synod staff are so numerous it would take too much space list them all here. Suffice it to say she was an integral and valuable part of the synod staff.

Synod staff bids her fond farewell and wishes her God Speed as she enters her richly deserved

These are exciting times for this synod as we move forward! In the past months we have welcomed two new members to our staff. While it's been a long journey to fill the positions I am delighted to have both on staff, sharing their gifts and talents with us as we move forward.



It is especially exciting as we move forward with a new strategic plan that will be presented at the assembly in June focusing on the four G's and living out the faith in new ways. Lori will be an intricate part of this journey along with Norma Malfatti, DEM, and the Synod Council as we give direction to the next five years of our ministry together.

The assembly, under the capable direction of Michelle (for the first time) will direct our attention to Sharing Our Light. Workshops will be offered on a myriad of topics, Ruben Duran will be with us from Churchwide to lead us in our work around Outreach and Evangelism.

Worship will center us on the cross and its implications in our lives. Also, for the first time, we will be making use of electronic voting to facilitate the process as there are so many elections to take care of this time around.

As you can see, much is happening. We continue to work to understand the changing nature of the church and how to most effectively work with it. Conversations are taking place across the synod among congregations asking challenging questions regarding how to move forward. In the midst of it all our God continues the journey with us, sending forth the Spirit to guide and direct and bring hope.

I invited you into a new future, one filled with great challenges and deep hope as God continues to call us out to Share Our Light and



**Synod
Assembly
Registration Opens
April 1, 2018**

Share your Light
Upstate NY Synod Assembly 2018