

Position One – Synod Council

Three Year Term | Appleton Conference | Lay Person

Adam Clifford

St. Mark's, Neenah

Information Security Consultant - Protera

Vocation and Experience

Synod Council, Church Council Our Saviors Neenah IT Consulting and volunteer work for several churches in the synod, Live streaming support Christ the King Combined Locks. Taught classes through the Lancaster PA public library on basic computer and Microsoft office skills for u employed adults trying to re-enter the workforce.

As a consultant I work with organizations ranging from small/medium business to fortune 100 helping solve problems, manage projects, and facilitate healthy growth and transformation.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I believe that we are called to live out our faith actively and authentically by modeling the Jesus's teachings of compassion, and justice, in everyday life. Additionally, that the message of Christ's love is not only heard but seen through tangible acts of kindness, charity, and service to others.

Position One – Synod Council

Three Year Term | Appleton Conference | Lay Person

Patti Ruhle

Christus, Greenville

Part-time for Christus as an Office Coordinator

Owner of a personal training business.

Vocation and Experience

I am currently employed by my church; I fill in wherever is needed with Sunday worship needs. I create volunteer schedules, help people engage in activities of the church, recruit people to help in various needs of the congregation. I attend and participate in Church Council meetings (not a voting member). I welcome new members into the congregation and work to get them acclimated and involved.

Much of my position involves communicating with our congregation and marketing our church to the community. I was involved in calling our pastor a few years back. I worked on the document that described our church and its needs. This is the second time I've worked for Christus. Previously my title was Ministries Coordinator. Before then I was the Council President of Christus, headed the Fellowship Team and was a member of the stewardship team.

I head two teams that volunteer at the homeless shelter called Pillars. Each of the teams provides and serves a meal at Pillars once a month. I donate resources to various needs including MS, cancer, and Alzheimer's.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I have a passion for God, my church, and the ELCA synod. I graduated from Lay School approximately 15 years ago. I have led many adult Bible and book studies over the years. I am organized, have a positive attitude, and enjoy working with people. To me, this means to live out my faith in the way I communicate and what I do.

Position Two – Synod Council

Three Year Term | Shawano Conference | Lay Person

Seeking Nominations

Position Three – Synod Council

Three Year Term | Wisconsin River Valley Conference | Rostered Minister

Seeking Nominations

Position Four – Committee on Discipline

Six Year Term | Wisconsin River Valley Conference | Lay Person

Natasha Beestman

St. John, Mosinee

Executive Director at Meals on Wheels of Stevens Point

Vocation and Experience

I have been a member of the Personnel Committee since 2019. I am currently on the Nominating Committee and previously served on the Council (2017 to 2019) and the Endowment Committee (2017-2019).

I am currently the DIBS Coordinator (volunteer coordinator) for our youth girls community soft ball league. My family is also currently hosting an exchange student, so we have participated in singular activities with her.

I have worked in a leadership role (supervising staff) for over 10 years. During this time, I have reviewed employee's performance as well as provided disciplinary measures when needed. During my time on the Personnel Committee, I have addressed matters of harassment of staff by congregational members, worked with staff to address performance concerns, communicated, and educated members of Council and the congregation regarding ADA regulations. While I do not hold any certifications in HR, I believe I have a well-rounded understanding of employment regulations and professional best practices that would contribute to the Committee on Discipline.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

To me it means that our actions should reflect our beliefs. When reflecting upon the quote, the saying "Actions speak louder than words" comes to mind. It is one thing to say you are kind, it is another to act in kindness especially in difficult situations. In my life I always try to come at problems from a place of kindness, you never know what anyone is going through and cannot assume intent. I find that this approach results in people feeling heard, them being more receptive to what is being said and ultimately greater results.

Position Four – Committee on Discipline

Six Year Term | Wisconsin River Valley Conference | Lay Person

Shirley Ecker

Pilgrim, Wausau

Administrative Assistant at Aspirus Wausau Hospital

Vocation and Experience

I am currently serving as church council president and board member of the ECSW Lay School of Ministry. Have previously service as church council secretary and vice president, taught Sunday School, lead Women's book study, served on various committees at church, lay minister, and worship assistant.

Service projects for God's Work our Hands and serve at community dinners twice a year. I received my two-year completion certificate for core classes from the Lay School of Ministry in 2006. I continue to attend continuing education classes at the Lay school. My congregation is currently in the process of transition without a pastor, and we are working with other congregations in our area going through the same process. I listen and ask questions when needed, get to the problem of an issue and offer solutions.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

"To proclaim Christ through word and deed" means to me sharing God's love for us with others and our neighbors, proclaiming the good news, praying for all people, being a good friend to those who are lonely, inviting people to church to hear God's word proclaimed and reading the Bible.

Position Five – Consultation Committee

Six Year Term | Appleton | Lay Person

Rob Simms

First English, Appleton

Compliance Manager at Prime Therapeutics

Vocation and Experience

I currently serve on the Congregational Council at First English. I have also served on the church council in my previous church, worked at and volunteered at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp (Northern Great Lakes Synod), have provided special music, as well as taught Sunday School and Confirmation, participated in Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northern Michigan University

Various activities at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp including one of the project managers for an original musical that was written by staff alumni, taught to and performed by campers, staff and staff alumni in a week, work projects, lead middle and high school retreats, volunteer annually for the Fox Cities Marathon and with various animal rescue agencies throughout the Fox Valley.

As a compliance professional, my duties include collecting data and performing investigations of protected information of our members at Prime Therapeutics. This includes personal interviews both in person and via video conference, research issues, consult with others on next steps and how to address issues or concerns raised during the investigation. I am also certified in Health Care Compliance which shows I have the skills to successfully work and conduct myself in a compliant and respectful manner and complete my work with integrity.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Proclaiming Christ through word and deed means that everything I do for the world around me is done in the name of Christ and all things I do need to be for the goodness of those I serve.

Position Five – Consultation Committee

Six Year Term | Appleton | Lay Person

Mary Vandenberg

First English, Appleton

Retired, Thrivent Financial

Vocation and Experience

Handbell choir, Stephen Ministry, Synod Assembly delegate, Bible studies participant, Sunday School teacher, Bethel Bible Series teacher, Synod Council, Synod Secretary, Churchwide Assembly delegate, Appleton Conference Treasurer, Congregation Council

Volunteer with Ruby's Pantry, Feeding America, P.E.O., Fox Valley Lutheran Homes board, Feed My Starving Children

Experiences: Pastoral disciplinary team member while on Synod Council; worked in Human Resources at AAL/Thrivent Financial
Certifications: BA in English from UW-Madison; Lay School of Ministry graduate
Qualities: active listening, creative alternative problem solving, prayerful discernment

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

To proclaim Christ through word and deed feels like a very brave activity in today's society. Through daily devotions and prayer, and through regular association with others who love Christ, I constantly seek the courage to love and act as Christ teaches us and to acknowledge his grace and gifts through spoken and written word.

Position Six – Consultation Committee

Six Year Term | Shawano Conference | Lay Person

Seeking Nominations

Position Seven – Consultation Committee

Six Year Term | Tomorrow River Conference | Rostered Minister

Seeking Nominations

Position Eight – Consultation Committee

Six Year Term | Wisconsin River Valley Conference | Lay Person

Bob Wiederhoeft

Saint Andrew, Rib Mountain

Retired, Manager of Information Technology at Wisconsin Children's Hospital

Vocation and Experience

- + Currently a member of Saint Andrew's church council and the liaison to our finance and stewardship ministry.
- + Chairperson of the Saint Andrew Endowment Committee
- + Facilitate a men's early morning Bible study called "Son Risers" and serve as chef for a once-a-month breakfast gathering of the group.
- + Support our church office technology as a consultant +Member of our Communications Ministry assisting our ministries in developing and promoting their activities.
- + Assist in keeping our church website up-to-date and relevant +Manage the sale of organic fairtrade products to our members.
- + Participated as part of the "stream team" supporting our online worship graphics and weekly announcement videos.
- +Participated on our most recent Faith Formation task force which was charged with shaping and redefining our multi-generational Christian education programs and initiatives.
- + Board member of the Central Wisconsin Beekeepers Association. The organization promotes the education of beekeeping and honey production to members and the community.
- + Volunteer driver for the Meals on Wheels program run by the ARDC of Central Wisconsin.
- + Previously volunteered with our Good Shepherd warming center in Wausau.

I am a 2000 graduate of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin's Lay School of Ministry. This educational experience has enhanced my ability to freely express my beliefs and faith to others and greatly enhanced my own personal spirituality. As a former Director and Manager at two different health care systems, I bring the experience of having effectively managed staff of 30-55 analysts over 15 years. My skills included effective listening, conflict resolution, good communication and follow-up, individual engagement and motivation, and effective meeting planning and execution, to name a few.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Christ has called me to serve. Serve my family, Saint Andrew Lutheran Church, my community and the world. My service expresses my faith, my leadership allows me to express my commitment and call to Christ.

Position Nine – 2025 Churchwide Assembly

Youth or Young Adult | Slate – Julia Schwab, Natalie Wagner, Christine Loppnow

For the care of young people, position 9 will take place by slate. This position is for youth or young adults and will include a chaperone adult who will serve as an on-site alternate voting member. All other youth or young adults who expressed interest will be included in the list of alternates.

The Proposed Slate includes Julia Schwab and Natalie Wagner who serve on the Synod Youth Team and their youth director, co-chair of the Synod Youth Team, Christine Loppnow.

Julia Schwab

Christus, Greenville

Full Time Student, Junior at Hortonville High School

Vocation and Experience

I am a full time student at Hortonville High School, who is very involved in sports, clubs, community service projects, and various extracurricular activities.

I am very actively involved within my home church community, where I am a church council member, teach Pre-K and Kindergarten Sunday School, and serve domestic communities around the United States on yearly summer mission trips. Additionally, I am a very active member of my church's high school youth group, G2. In early February, G2 planned and led two worship services, that were highly praised by the entirety of the Christus congregation. I am currently working on organizing monthly volunteer opportunities at various local organizations for all confirmation and G2 youth at Christus to participate in as Christ's hands and feet. Furthermore, I am beyond blessed to have had the opportunity to plan, lead, and organize the second annual Journey with Jesus synod youth event, held at Imago Dei Village in February. The event was such an amazing opportunity to meet aspiring youth all throughout the East Central Synod of Wisconsin, who are devoted to sharing the good news of Christ, and participated in fun workshops, activities, and devotions. Finally, last November I was graciously thought of by Bishop Anne, to partake in The Youth Leadership Summit in Chicago, Illinois with youth from 65 ELCA synods from around the United States. It was an outstanding opportunity for deepening faith, building newfound friendships, proclaiming the good news of Christ, and so much fun! I hope to continue all of these amazing opportunities and experiences within my home church and synod.

I believe that giving back to my community is not only a responsibility but also an extreme privilege. I have always been passionate about serving my community by having a positive and memorable impact on the lives of others who are most vulnerable. I have been given several opportunities through church and school activities to support a wide range of different individuals. I frequently volunteer at various local organizations, including food banks, homeless shelters, and community clothing centers. Each month I join a group of faithful individuals from Christus, in serving a large

Julia Swab, continued...

dinner meal to one hundred plus individuals at Pillars Adult and Family Shelter. I additionally, volunteer a lot of my time at the local children's hospital and tutor high school underclassman in various subjects. I have also served other domestic communities through participation in inner city and rural community mission trips. My passion and dedication to helping and serving others in my community has not only helped me to grow as an individual but learn to love community service work.

As a youth representative, who is highly involved within her church and community I believe that I would provide a new and enthusiastic perspective as a Churchwide Assembly Voting Member. My recent invitation to be the first youth representative on the Christus church council, has gifted me the opportunity to experience communal discernment, advocate for youth ministry, and join a team of diverse individuals who aspire to make the best possible decisions for our church and community. Furthermore, I am passionate about ministry and really enjoy working as part of a team. I value building new relationships, learning and listening to others, and effective communication and teamwork. I take pride in leadership, accountability, and strong communication skills, all of which I believe to be essential qualities in this position. Finally, I truly believe that youth shed a new light on ministry and provides new and exciting perspectives on important topics that would benefit the entire ELCA. I would be beyond grateful for the opportunity to fulfill this position.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

In my eyes, proclaiming Christ through word and deed means expressing and sharing his teachings, values, and messages both verbally and through physical actions for all people to see. I believe that proclaiming Christ through word involves sharing the gospel readings, of Jesus, and the messages of salvation with others through spoken words. Through the written works in the bible, we are called to proclaim his story and good news of Jesus Christ. I work to proclaim Christ through word and deed by inviting individuals from outside the Christus community to join our high school youth group, confessing my faith through worship music and resonating with scriptures. I allow time each day to express thanks to God, for all he has given me, and take time to pray for all those in need around the world. Not only do I work to proclaim Christ through word and deed in my own community, but I share his word with others from all around the country on summer mission trips, and at summer church camp as an LIT. To me, proclaiming Christ through word and deed is a true honor and gift that not only builds faithful relationships, but draws us closer to love of Jesus Christ.

Natalie Wagner

Christus, Greenville

Full Time Student, Junior at New London High School

Vocation and Experience

I am a full time student at New London High School (junior). I also have a part time job and I am involved in clubs and track and field.

Sunday School Teacher-- The main class I teach is 3rd/4th graders, however there are times that I will fill in and teach 5th grade as well. Each Sunday, we do a scripture reading and explanation, then an interactive activity to go with the verse and message. Finally, we close with a prayer.

Church Council Member-- I am a youth representative on the church counsel and a voting member. I attend monthly meetings and give updates on the activities of high school youth in the church.

Synod Youth Team(2022-present)-- I am on the ECSW synod youth team, so for the past two years, I have had the privilege to organize and lead our annual youth gathering. Creating and leading Journey with Jesus has been an incredible experience and has helped me become more open about sharing my faith with others, especially youth who might need encouragement along their journey.

Mission Trip to South Dakota (July 2023): I went with my church to the Native American reservation in South Dakota, where I helped organize a thrift shop, lay flooring in a home, and rebuild a porch for a couple in need.

Sunday School Teacher (2022-2023): I primarily taught 2nd grade, while occasionally filling in for 1st grade. Each Sunday, we'd read from picture bibles, give an explanation of the story, and do a craft relating to the story. At the end, we'd close with a prayer.

National Honors Society & HOSA blood drives: I volunteered as a recruiter for the NHS and HOSA blood drives. I helped people sign up to give blood and informed them of how they could help.
Vacation Bible School Teacher: I was the music teacher at my church's VBS last summer, so I taught the theme songs to all ages of youth, then facilitated games, songs, and other activities. Teaching the same songs to all different age levels of children is difficult, because often the older kids do not want to participate, and the younger ones are too shy. However, over the course of the week, I learned that it's important to engage with the kids the right way, and adjust to their needs. This is similar to what we do in everyday life, with all ages, not just kids. Even adults have certain needs, and one of the most important things you can do to help others is adjust to what they need.

Leader in Training(LIT) at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp(FLLC): I volunteered for a full week and a half week of service at FLLC over the past summer. During both of these weeks, I was primarily with 7th and 8th graders (campers), but I also learned how to better communicate and collaborate with adults (other camp staff). Spending five days with a group of middle schoolers was definitely a challenge- at camp you are up late and you get up early, with almost no time alone. However, while it can be difficult, having the opportunity to learn and grow with others is one of the most incredible things I've experienced. To me, being a Christian is not only a relationship with God, but it is also a relationship with those around you. We are made to be in relationship with one another, and accepting people where they are in their journey invites and encourages others to continue following Christ. I believe that acceptance was one of the biggest things that my weeks at camp have taught me, and I continue to practice welcoming and accepting people for who they are and where they are at in their faith journey.

Mission Trip to South Dakota: Last summer, I went to the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. It was a very different experience, because living in Wisconsin, I have less exposure to

Natalie Wagner, continued...

cultures that are significantly different from my own. However, this was a very different experience than everyday Wisconsin culture. We learned more about how important family was to Native culture, even if supporting your family meant sacrificing something for yourself. I saw this first hand at our job site.

While I have quite a bit of experience with roles in service work, that experience isn't the most important thing I'd bring to this position. Instead, I believe that what I have learned from these experiences is more beneficial. Over the course of the last few years, I have become more open to new people, new ideas, and new experiences. I have applied this to my time on the youth leadership team, where we collaborate about ideas on being welcoming to all youth coming to Journey with Jesus. Leadership is also an important aspect to all of these roles, because it is important to set a good example for those around you. This is also important in areas outside of faith events. For example, I am a trainer at Olive Garden (host), and being in a role where you must encourage and lead others is difficult, but well worth it. Being a leader means adapting to other peoples' needs and finding compromises between yourself and others. While it is important to be a leader in settings with adults, peer leadership is also essential. It takes courage to stand out from your peers and stand up for what you believe in, but it is beyond important because it can help others feel more comfortable about sharing their faith.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Proclaiming Christ is more than your actions, but it is also your word. For me, this has not always been easy. It was simple to share the love of Christ through my actions- I could just be helpful and kind to those who need it. I thought it wasn't necessary for me to share the word of God. However, after being involved on the synod youth team, I had a significant perspective change. Sharing the love of Christ is more than just your actions and good deeds. It is to be accepting and forgiving like Jesus. It is embracing cultures, backgrounds, and ideas different from your own to grow the body of Christ. It is rejoicing in the word and love of God with believers, and sharing God's love and unconditional forgiveness with those who feel apart from Christ. Not only your affirmative words should welcome people into the body of Christ, but so should your actions. Service work is a big part of my faith, and is one of the ways I share the love of Christ. Service may be physical labor, but it could also be teaching Sunday school, interacting with youth, and helping others. Service doesn't have to be a big, completely organized event (although it is an incredible experience). It can be something small, but the most important thing is that you proclaim Christ through both your words and your actions.

Cristine Loppnow

Christus, Greenville

Director of Youth Ministry

Vocation and Experience

Co-Chair of the Synod Youth Team, Bishop Election Committee, Helping with different projects of the Hortonville/Dale Food Pantry, volunteering at 1000 Islands Nature Center, various church activities, Girl Scout leader. I have served as the Director of Youth Ministry at Christus for almost 20 years. I am passionate about youth ministry and helping youth grow in their faith journeys and to help them feel like they have a voice now. I am also passionate about the church as a whole and the continued good work that needs to be done to make this a place where all feel loved and celebrated. I have worked in youth ministry for almost 30 years. I believe that I can bring their voices and advocate for them to the assembly. The youth are the church of today.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I strive to embody this daily; to proclaim Christ through word and deed. I strive to be the hands and feet of Christ in this world in all that I do and say. This means to not only share the Good News of Christ through my words, but to share it through my actions also. The way I live my life shall be a witness to that proclamation.

Position Nine – 2025 Churchwide Assembly

Youth or Young Adult | Alternate

Sarah Bauer

First English, Appleton

M.Div. Student at Luther Seminary, ECSW Candidate for Ministry of Word and Sacrament

Vocation and Experience

I am a student at Luther Seminary pursuing the Master of Divinity track. I'll be starting my internship in the Fall of 2024. I am currently Student Body President at Luther Seminary—I've been working on communication with the board and Executive Leadership Team along with recently restructuring the way the greater council will be represented. The previous year I was the M. Div Middler representative and served as a voice for my constituents along having started the restructuring committee on council.

The summer of 2022 I worked at my home church (First English Lutheran Church) as an intern coordinator. I helped with the hiring process of our 5 summer interns and led a training retreat helping them brainstorm ideas that they wanted to instill in the summer. It was a great opportunity helping lead future leaders.

I helped with Luther Seminary's "Discernment Retreat" where they invited people from all walks of life together to talk through their discernment/call and figure out what their "next faithful step" would be. I helped lead worship music and essentially functioned as the TA during the retreat, helping the people leading it in whatever way they needed. I've also been a member of Luther Seminary's "Eco-Faith" group. We're trying to get composting to become more of a norm and accessible on campus along with working to de-buckthorn the woods near our campus.

I think my experience working as a leader on campus would serve well in this position. I speak honestly and respectfully when it comes to issues that are important. I've worked very hard as a leader to ensure that everyone's voices are heard and feel very good about the environment that's been fostered through a more equitable and less hierarchical approach to leadership. I also have experience living abroad in 2 different countries (Turkey and Myanmar) and feel I have a good approach at coming to situations from a multitude of angles.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

To me "Proclaiming Christ through word and deed" means focusing on the AND in that statement. I think so often we get so caught up in if we're saying the right thing or not that we forget our actions have just as much weight, if not more. We can't follow in Christ's footsteps just by talking about Jesus, we actually need to wash the feet of the needy and call out those who oppress as Jesus did. It's also important that while we focus on following Christ's footsteps in action, we don't forget or minimize the Word of God that brings holiness unto what we do.

Christina Johnson

Saint Andrew, Wausau

M.Div. Student at Wartburg Seminary, ECSW Candidate for Ministry of Word and Sacrament

Vocation and Experience

Wartburg Theological seminary student body co-president; Wartburg seminary preacher and worship leader; vicar Golden UCC Ryan, IA; intern pastor The Dalles First UMC; confirmation leader; intern The Next Door Inc OR; confirmation leader; community meals; M.Div; 12 month pastoral internship; pulpit supply preacher; minor in missional ministries

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I draw often on the phrase "preach the gospel. use words when necessary". I live this in my life as I seek to share the good news with how I interact with others and love my neighbors with my words and actions.

Lillian Smoot

St. John, Mosinee

Student

Vocation and Experience

I am a lector, acolyte, help teach Sunday School and help run the livestream at both of my parent's churches. I am involved in 4-H and Girl Scouts. I play viola in my school's chamber orchestra. I am a part of the school's swim team and the YMCA swim team.

Being a PK, pastor's kid to two pastors, I have been attending Synod Assemblies since I was a baby. I enjoy the fellowship, worship, and meeting new people when I attend these events. I am responsible and care about the church deeply.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Being confirmed in my faith this year, proclaiming Christ through word and deed means saying and acting to all of God's people in the caring and just ways Christ has already been towards the people of this world. We are all called to support each other to do this individually and together.

Position Ten – 2025 Churchwide Assembly

Persons of Color | First Language Other than English | Select Two

Seeking Nominations

Position Eleven – 2025 Churchwide Assembly

Lay Person | Select Four

Adam Clifford

St. Mark's, Neenah

Information Security Consultant - Protera

Vocation and Experience

Synod Council, Church Council Our Saviors Neenah IT Consulting and volunteer work for several churches in the synod, Live streaming support Christ the King Combined Locks. Taught classes through the Lancaster PA public library on basic computer and Microsoft office skills for unemployed adults trying to re-enter the workforce.

As a consultant I work with organizations ranging from small/medium business to fortune 100 helping solve problems, manage projects, and facilitate healthy growth and transformation.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I believe that we are called to live out our faith actively and authentically by modeling the Jesus's teachings of compassion, and justice, in everyday life. Additionally, that the message of Christ's love is not only heard but seen through tangible acts of kindness, charity, and service to others.

Breanna Drossart

St. John, Ashwaubenon

Social Studies Teacher, Franklin Middle School, Green Bay Area Public School District

Vocation and Experience

I am a social studies teacher at Franklin Middle School in the Green Bay Area Public School District. I am currently on the marketing, livestream and technology committees at St. John. I am also a member of the choir. I am part of the Wisconsin East Central Synod Council and serve on the executive committee. I recently served on the compensation guidelines committee. I was a lay voting member at the previous churchwide assembly. I have served as a youth member and adult member for the council at St. John. I have volunteered at local, state and National History Day competitions. Brown County Historical Society. I also volunteer at the middle school I work at in various ways throughout the school year.

I had been serving on council either through my home congregation or at the synod level in

Breanna Drossart, continued...

someway since high school. Many of these terms have come at times of transition such as pastoral transitions, bishop transitions, and the pandemic. I am a strong and empathic listener, but am not afraid to speak up about issues that are important to me. I am good at compromising and thinking of out of the box solutions. I was blessed to be able to go to the previous churchwide in 2022. To be part of the church wide assembly again in 2025 would be a great honor and privilege.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

To me this goes back to the motto I want to live my life by which is to love God and love people. This can be done in two ways. One way can be literally proclaiming verbally about Christ and doing actions that are traditional parts of worship. Another way is to live this in our daily lives. This involves how we speak to people and our actions that we take daily in our day to day interactions with our loved ones, friends and strangers that reflect our faith.

Kira James

Mount Calvary, Rothschild

Technical Project Manager at Salelytics

Vocation and Experience

Lay Leadership-leading worship services, serving on church council, WELCA events, serving on Synod Council.

Power of Women leader of Salelytics, Sons of Norway Rib Fjell Lodge 5 - 496 Cultural Director, Mosaic member and part of organizer team of their Community Connections Conference, participate in local non-profits 5K's to support their causes and to get out & be active

As a Technical Project Manager, I am responsible to listen with compassion & discernment, alleviate conflict and provide direction & vision to vendors, clients & various departments in order to have a successful project. I work with people around the globe, which requires me to understand their culture and business etiquette to ensure there are no misunderstandings and to have complete understanding of the scope of our projects.

Last year I worked on the Mosaic team to organize the first Connecting Communities Conference in Wausau, WI. That conference highlighted diversity in the workplace and how we can bridge cultural differences. I also co-lead a session on Interpersonal Skills and Assertive Communication for Women in the Workplace.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I have been on a journey throughout my life to proclaim Christ through word & deed. When I became an adult, I went through Lay school in 2003-2005 to strengthen my understanding of the Holy Spirit and slowly grew helping out with Sunday School, Confirmation, bible studies and being

Kira James, continued...

part of council. It came to full effect in 2022, when I started to assist in leading worship at church. I enjoy sharing my excitement, experiences and thoughts on the scriptures with others, especially when planning services. I was part of the Greater Wausau Summer worship service which brought 8 churches together to share in worship. It took that small seed and grew into an awesome experience with shared ministry.

Randy Johnson

St. John, Ashwaubenon

Retired, IT Department, Corporate Quality and Change, Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

Vocation and Experience

Retired from Wisconsin Public Service Corporation after 36 years - Managed IT Department, Corporate Quality and Corporate Change. For the past 19 years since retirement I have spent part of my time serving on nonprofit boards both locally and nationally. On each of the boards I focused on visioning, inclusion, and board leadership which have offered me many opportunities for learning.

ECSW Racial Equity task force, Bishop Anne Edison-Albright's Mutual Ministry Committee, Church Treasurer, Confirmation teacher, member Men On His Mission, adult bible study, finance committee, Church Council, chair Feed My Starving Children church committee, member Feed My Starving Partner board, served on St John 150th anniversary committee, delegate ECSW synod assembly, served 2022 Churchwide Assembly voting member, stewardship committee, decor committee, and home bound communion,

I have served on multiple boards since retiring from WPS 19 years ago. I recently finished 6 years on the Aging Disability Resource Center Board serving the past 3 years as chair. I currently serve as chair of the task force for building a kitchen and cafe for ADRC meals for seniors. In the mental health field I served 6 years on the Solihnten Institute based in Denver with the last 3 years as chair. Prior to that I served 7 years on the Foundations - Health and Wholeness board with 3 years as chair. I also served in the early education field serving on the Encompass board and their foundation board. As I was finishing my time at WPS I served on the United Way Board both as board chair and the chair of the annual campaign for Brown County. I have also served on village committees and 12 years on the Ashwaubenon School board. For about 25 years I was a member of the Ashwaubenon Optimists.

My work, church and community experiences have in most cases been in a leadership role (see above). I have a Certificate in Appreciative Inquiry and have used it with multiple organizations developing visions and missions, strategic plans and operational plans. Some of my work has been with local congregations. My training over the past 50 years at NWTC has provided me support in the the following: IT, accounting, marketing, financial credit, and supervisory leadership. As a manager at WPSC I have had the opportunity to lead different internal organizations and participate in multiple very helpful training sessions.

Randy Johnson, continued...

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I believe we are called to share the Gospel through our treatment of our brothers and sisters in Christ - especially using justice with all forms of the marginalized. I try to do this outside the walls of

the church building in my daily life. "Word" is the narrative created to talk about others - it so important how the poor people - people of color - people with alternate life styles - etc. are talked about. "Deed" are the actions - not just intentions. How do we treat "all" of our brothers and sisters in Christ. I struggle with the belief that the church is here just to tell us we will be saved. For me that misses "heaven on earth." I believe we are called to daily help "all" - spend time with "all" - speak well of "all" - share the good news that Jesus has come for "all" and support this with our actions.

Jamie Kiener

Good Shepherd, Plover

Regional Director for Northern Wisconsin for JusticePoint

Vocation and Experience

I am currently the Advocacy & Allyship rep for our Church in Society Team. Past activities include: Church Council (president, education rep), Praise Band musician, Sunday School teacher, preaching substitute, presenter for Faith Formation hour.

Current member BOD overseeing two sober houses in Stevens Point. Other volunteer activities include: support for Stevens Point Pride event, attending meetings of county board committees, preparing and serving at free community dinner, Scout leader. I also one of three founders/directors of a non-profit catering company that uses 100% of profits to support social justice causes, such as food insecurity and support for LGBTQ+ community.

I have been an active member of our congregation and communities for more than 20 years. I have a background in restorative justice and a passion for social justice issues. Professionally I have been the Executive Director of a small community justice non-profit organization, working every facet of the organization. In my current position I oversee three adult drug treatment courts, two substance abuse diversion programs, and pretrial supervision programs. In this capacity I perform a range of duties including grant writing and reporting, budgeting, participating in stakeholder meetings, staff oversight, and direct service to clients.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

To "proclaim Christ through word and deed" is foundational belief to Lutheran call to live faith through vocation. In all things, the works performed should reflect the love of God. It is not sufficient to say you love God if that is not celebrated by showing that love to those most in need of receiving that love.

Shirley Paulson

Ascension, Green Bay

Retired, Green Bay Area Public Schools Educator

Vocation and Experience

Synod Racial Equity Team Chair, Sunday School Teacher, Now is the Time Study Leader, Synod Women of the ELCA President, Synod Council, Joy Circle and Katie's Circle Member, Handbell Choir, Leader in advocacy to end human trafficking.

BA in English and Religion, MA in English Literature, MA in Gifted Education District Administrator for AVID (program to prepare first generation college students to gain admission to and be successful in college) District Administrator for Gifted and Talented Teacher Educator; Adjunct Instructor UWGB Elementary School Principal High School English Teacher I bring passion and skill in recognizing people's strengths and organizing and delivering high quality learning experiences. Because I have been freed by Christ, I can act boldly and help others act boldly as well.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I believe that I have been freed by Christ to help others, serving in ways God calls me to serve.

Laurie Sturzenegger

Good Shepherd, Wausau

Nutrition Services Tech, Retired RN

Vocation and Experience

Council Vice President, council member, lay leader, Reimagining Task Force Member, I worked for Crossways Camping Ministries for many years both paid and volunteer. As a lifelong member of the Lutheran Church, I feel I bring a solid understanding of the Lutheran church and its history as well as future. I was a registered nurse for 35 years working in my local community hospitals.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Proclaiming Christ is done by living my life as a example. I take any opportunity I am given to tell others about the Word of Christ and his guiding principles for my life. I am willing to share His word at anytime and offer Prayer for all who desire such.

Mike Sturzenegger

Good Shepherd, Wausau

Machinist, Lange Machine and Tool

Vocation and Experience

Council president, property president

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Try to live the way Christ taught- be accepting and treat everyone with kindness.

Bob Wiederhoeft

Saint Andrew, Rib Mountain

Retired, Manager of Information Technology at Wisconsin Children's Hospital

Vocation and Experience

- + Currently a member of Saint Andrew's church council and the liaison to our finance and stewardship ministry.
- + Chairperson of the Saint Andrew Endowment Committee
- + Facilitate a men's early morning Bible study called "Son Risers" and serve as chef for a once-a-month breakfast gathering of the group.
- + Support our church office technology as a consultant +Member of our Communications Ministry assisting our ministries in developing and promoting their activities.
- + Assist in keeping our church website up-to-date and relevant +Manage the sale of organic fairtrade products to our members.
- + Participated as part of the "stream team" supporting our online worship graphics and weekly announcement videos.
- +Participated on our most recent Faith Formation task force which was charged with shaping and redefining our multi-generational Christian education programs and initiatives.
- + Board member of the Central Wisconsin Beekeepers Association. The organization promotes the education of beekeeping and honey production to members and the community.
- + Volunteer driver for the Meals on Wheels program run by the ARDC of Central Wisconsin.
- + Previously volunteered with our Good Shepherd warming center in Wausau.

I am a 2000 graduate of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin's Lay School of Ministry. This educational experience has enhanced my ability to freely express my beliefs and faith to others and greatly enhanced my own personal spirituality.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Christ has called me to serve. Serve my family, Saint Andrew Lutheran Church, my community and my world. My service expresses my faith, my leadership allows me to express the commitment to Christ.

Position Twelve – 2025 Churchwide Assembly

Rostered Ministers | Select Three

The Rev. Sara Gorman

Redeemer, Plymouth

Pastor

Vocation and Experience

Synod Assembly Planning Committee Chair (2024) Oshkosh Conference Dean (2023-current) Synod Assembly Planning Team (2021)

I am a pastor, who is young, and has a passion for making church accessible for all. I also have a heart for young people, organizational structure, and creative ways to approach complex problems.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Proclaiming Christ is not just preaching from a pulpit on Sundays. It is acting in a way that causes others to wonder what is different about her. Proclaiming Christ happens at all times and not just when I'm wearing my pastor collar, or at church. Proclaiming Christ looks like loving others no matter the circumstances and understanding we all come from different backgrounds and ultimately want what's best for the church as a whole.

The Rev. Michelle Nickodemus

Grace, Wisconsin Rapids

Pastor

Vocation and Experience

Pastor serving ELCA congregations since 1998, with experience as head of staff, solo pastor, multi-point parish, and on staff in a larger congregation, in four different synods.

Local clergy groups (ELCA and ecumenical) that gather for bible study, support, conversation, and community projects. currently serving as Dean of Tomorrow River Conference, ECSW Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church and Rock Creek Lutheran Church, Durand, WI Evangelical Mission Commission, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Interim Pastor, Faith Lutheran Parish, Warren, OH Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Canal Fulton, OH Global Mission Committee, Northeastern Ohio Synod 2007 Churchwide Assembly voting member Assistant Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Butler, PA Youth Ministry Committee, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod

Treasurer, 3-0 Day Board, Wisconsin Rapids Volunteer, Pepin County Humane Society Chairperson, Canal Fulton YMCA Board (Ohio) Board of Directors, Meals on Wheels, Butler, PA

In addition to the many responsibilities and joys of serving as a pastor, I am also committed to serving in my local community and the larger church. If chosen to serve as a Churchwide Assembly voting member, I bring experience in careful listening, group decision-making, thoughtful, prayerful discernment, openness to new ways and ideas, and a commitment to the health of the ELCA in a rapidly changing world.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Above all else, to proclaim Christ through word and deed is to engage others with love. That love is shown in respect for all people as beloved children of God, attention to those who tend to be left out, ignored, or unwanted, curiosity about the people and world around me, and being comfortable talking with others about faith, God, church, and spirituality, without having all the answers.

The Rev. Matt Olson

Good Shepherd, Plover

Pastor

Vocation and Experience

Associate Pastor - Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Plover, WI (2023 - Present)

Student Pastor - Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, WI (2020 - 2022)

Confirmation Mentor - Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, Sussex, WI (2016 - 2019)

Steering Committee Member - The Healing Network of MKE (2021 - 2022)

Student Mentor & Judge - National Agri-Marketing Association (2018 - Present)

Executive Secretary - UW-Madison AGR Iota Corporation Board & Educational Foundation (2018 - Present)

Volunteer - Southern Door Fire Department (2012 - Present)

In my non-church vocation and through several of my volunteer experiences, I have worked to help clients, groups and organizations to listen, discern and articulate a vision and strategic plan. In my non-church vocation, I've worked with clients, organizations and corporations as they've worked to identify, build and launch both Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) platforms. Based on the desired qualifications description, I would hope to bring my gifts and skills as a bi-vocational pastor for the benefit of the Church.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

The "both and" nature of "word and deed" inspires me to lead a Christian life both in my conversations and my actions. Through Word represents my thoughts and my speech, and Through *Rev. Matt Olson, continued...*

Deeds represents my actions done and my actions left undone. Said another way, I believe in a realized faith that is interconnected between our witness to Good News as well as the actions that help share the Good News in real, tangible ways.

The Rev. Will Ostrem

Trinity, Stettin and St. Peter, Hamburg

Pastor

Vocation and Experience

Currently serving on Candidacy and SAM (Synodical Authorized Ministers) Committee. Elected in 2024 to serve as Co-Dean for the Wisconsin River Valley Conference. I am also involved in ECSW's Lay School of Ministry- Wausau site. In my past experiences, I have served on Synod Council, was a voting member at Church-Wide Assembly in 2009 and 2015, as well as been an active participant in numerous Synod Assemblies as Pastor, Vicar, and Laity. Prior to being Ordained, I have served as Congregation Council President, taught Confirmation, been involved in many committees around the topic on the future of the church, and provided Pulpit Supply in leading worship.

Through congregational efforts within the community, we have served Greater Wausau Christian Services, The Giving Tree, Aspirus Family House, numerous food Pantries in Wausau, Marathon City, and Athens.

In serving God and God's people, my life has been shaped both within the church ministries and the daily life of living out one's faith. My past experiences have been being a part of youth group at the local, synod, and national levels. Completing the year course of Youth and Family Certification, active in Lay School, and Crossways volunteer. In my former career, I was a part of planning many community events through a variety of different organizations and churches for close to 20 years. This work gave me the privilege and opportunity to be with and be a part of many different communities' lives. I bring with me both the church that was, is, and what it can be to a world that is changing and evolving.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

I have been exposed and shaped by the Lutheran faith all my life. I have grown up in a time to see the ELCA become a reality, have seen the church taking shape and being reshaped as we continue to stretch ourselves to live into our faith with God and neighbor. "To proclaim Christ through word and deed" means to remember Pentecost. We are a people of many voices, gifts, regions, communities', and experiences. We all gather at the one foot of the cross and share in the one meal at a table that is far and wide, but we are sent out with our voices, gifts, regions, communities, and experiences to proclaim the good news in a language and way that connects people to Christ. We are the one body of Christ. We are many voices of the good news.

The Rev. Kimberly Swenson

Bethel, Green Bay

Pastor

Vocation and Experience

I have always been active in the church. I went to my first synod assembly in high school. I worked at Waypost and Imago Dei Village while in college. After being a director of youth ministries for several years, I felt the call to ordained ministry. I have been a pastor for 13 years at calls in CA, IA, and now WI.

As a pastor, I encourage participation and join the congregation in many service and community volunteer activities. Currently we are active with Ecumenical Partnership for Housing, NEW Community Shelter, Feed My Starving Children, and Salvation Army.

As a lifelong, active Lutheran and as a pastor, I have seen the ebb and flow of ministry and the challenges that it brings. I have a passion for Jesus, the church, and the body of Christ and actively engage in looking for ways we as a congregation and as a churchwide body to respond to these currents demands. I want to help create a church that my generation and younger generations want to be a part of. One that focuses on service, the Bible, and caring for one another, especially in understanding racial, economic, and gender inequalities. My family is also multi-racial. I want to create a church where my son feels welcome, engaged, and making a difference. I want to be in the room when the Holy Spirit comes to enliven the church as we vote for our next Presiding Bishop.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

As a pastor, I have the unique privilege and platform to proclaim Christ through word. My congregation has 4 different Bible study groups that I often lead as well as the chance to share the Word each week in sermons. Proclaiming Christ through deed has become increasingly important. Unfortunately, our political climate has modeled and encouraged us to label those different from us as "other." I feel our response as Christians is to show Christ through our actions of kindness to all, learning about our differences, looking honestly at our national and personal history, and to speaking out when we hear neighbors, family, and friends tell inaccurate statements, discriminatory jokes, and untrue gossip.

The Rev. Ben Williams

Calvary, Green Bay

Pastor

Vocation and Experience

Lead Pastor - Green Bay, WI; Synod Mission Table - ECSW; Constitution Committee - ESCW; Pastor - Cicero, WI; Synod Assembly Planning Team - ECSW; Intern Pastor - Federal Way, WA; Camp Program Director - Amery, WI; Lutheran Campus Ministry Intern - Twin Cities, MN; Youth Director - Wheaton, IL; Camp Counselor - Amery, WI

Ecumenical Partnership for Housing, Annual Meeting; Annie Jackson Elementary School, Cereal Box Domino Challenge; Track Coach - Seymour, WI; High School Winter Musical - Seymour, WI

As a young pastor in this church, I am deeply committed to the reformative work that Christ is calling forth within the ELCA. I have both worked to review governance documents and to develop innovative processes to help the church be effective in living out Christ's mission within local contexts. Discerning who God is and what God is doing within communities remains central to my calling. In seminary, I honed the skills for communal discernment and visioning through classes and serving on the seminary's student council. Those skills are used in my current call to help the congregation discern where the Holy Spirit might be leading us. Serving on the Synod Mission Table, I have enjoyed imaging ways that God continues to show up in the church and new areas that the Holy Spirit could be nudging us. Ultimately, God is not done with this church, and I am excited to see what God has in store for us.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed."

Embodying Christ in all that we are is central to our baptismal callings. We do this as individuals when we participate with the Holy Spirit's movements in our lives. We do this communally when together we live into the preferred and promised future God is bringing about through the Holy Spirit. To proclaim Christ through word and deed is nothing more than allowing Christ to be our lens through which we encounter the world; interpreting the world through generous grace, and reflecting back that grace in loving faithfulness.

The Rev. Heather Yerion-Keck

St. Paul, Manitowoc and Calvary, Two Rivers

Pastor

Vocation and Experience

Word and Sacrament Ministry, 2024 Compensation Guidelines Committee, Voting Member for the Wisconsin Council of Churches, President of the Green Bay Conference, LGBTQIA Task Force (Nebraska Synod), Manitowoc Warming Shelter Wednesday night free meals, On-going ecumenical community forum on racism in the community.

I have been attending Church assemblies since I was my teenage years and being a part of the discussion and voting process that shapes the future of the church is an important undertaking. Now as a leader in the church it takes on a greater significance. As leaders we are challenged not only to preach and teach the gospel to our congregations but to relate how the greater church works with and beside them. This is at times the harder task. Having experienced a lot of synod assemblies from the lay side I feel this puts a rostered leader in a position to understand actions and discussion from both perspectives.

Share a brief reflection on what it means to you - "to proclaim Christ through word and deed"

To proclaim Christ through word and deed means not only to preach and teach the word of the gospel but also to live your life as much as possible in a Christ like manner. We are human and subject to failure and stumbles along the journey but that is also a way of proclaiming Christ to the world because through Christ we are forgiven unconditionally. We are showered with grace and mercy, and this means that we are to show the same to ourselves and those around us. Every aspect of our lives is a way to proclaim Christ through word and