

Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation

Bishop-Elect Kevin Jones is ready to lead

by Marcia Hahn

In 28 years of ordained ministry, Kevin Jones has always served in team ministry as an associate pastor. That will change Sept. 1 when Jones takes the lead to begin serving a six-year term as Bishop for the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

Jones, who serves as pastor to Youth, Families and Education for Trinity Lutheran in Mason City, was elected Bishop at the June 12 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly with 168 votes on the fifth ballot.

FAMILY ROOTS IN MINISTRY

Jones says he felt a sense of call to ministry while growing up in Michigan where his family was active in a mission church, and later as a high school student in Dubuque. He became involved in youth group at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, served on a Lutheran district committee, and at age 14 began his first job in the church as a custodian.

Jones also couldn't help but be influenced by his father, Pastor Tom Jones, who left his career as an electrical engineer for Oldsmobile in Michigan to move to Dubuque with his wife and four sons so he could attend Wartburg Theological Seminary.

"It was inspirational to see my dad and my mom take that leap of faith to move us away from our extended

family in Michigan and take the risk of going back to school," Jones says.

"Mom went to work instead of staying at home while my dad was in school. I realized that faith sometimes calls us into taking those kinds of steps."

Tom, who went on to serve seven congregations in this synod and 10 years as secretary for the Synod Council, recalls Kevin being somewhat upset that his dad became a pastor before he did. "Kevin didn't know I was thinking about it," Tom says.

Growing up in the church was always an important part of Jones' life. Tom points to a blog that his son wrote shortly after he was ordained in 1993, describing what the church means to him: "For me, the neighborhood was where I lived, and school was where I went, but the church was where I felt I belonged"

After high school, Jones returned to Michigan to earn his bachelor's degree in English at Central Michigan University where he met his wife, Amy. They married soon after Jones graduated in 1986, and



Kevin Jones

he began working as assistant manager for a sporting goods store while Amy attended graduate school to become a registered dietitian. After three years, Jones enrolled at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul. He graduated in 1993 with his Master of Divinity degree and was called to Blair Lutheran Churches in Blair, Wis., where he served with another pastor in a team ministry for three congregations.

"I had a great pastor to work with when I started there, and the community really welcomed us," Jones says.

Jones served as a volunteer firefighter for the Blair community and volunteered for the school. His son

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Nathan was two when they moved to Blair, and daughter Sarah was born five months later.

“The La Crosse Area Synod is small, so I got to know a lot of pastors and congregations there through the text study group. Some of my best friends are still from there.”

In 2001, Jones relocated to Marion, Iowa, to serve at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection. An old friend told him about the opening for an associate pastor.

“When friends call and say they want you to be their pastor, it’s flattering but not always a good idea,” Jones says. “As a favor to her, I talked to the senior pastor, and we had a good conversation.”



Kevin and Amy Jones at his ordination at St. Peter, Garnavillo, in 1993.

Jones helped with the congregation’s capital campaign and plans for a new church building. Four years later, the congregation said good-bye to their old building and moved the church into a new location designed to better meet their growing needs.

“The idea was for the church to be in a building shaped around their ministry, instead of shaping their ministry to the building,” Jones says.

In 2008, Jones joined a group trip



Bishop-Elect Kevin Jones with his wife, Amy, (center) and their family (left to right): Maggie (daughter-in-law), Nate (son) and Sara (daughter).

to Tanzania to learn about setting up a companion congregation relationship. “It was a fabulous trip that helped me see the importance of companion synods,” Jones says. “Companion synods are a wonderful opportunity to broaden the idea of what church is and keep us connected with church around the world.”

After 13 years in Marion, Jones took a personal retreat at Camp Ewalu to think and pray about his sense of call and whether to continue in ministry. Jones says that while sitting on the bank of the Maquoketa River, he heard God’s voice tell him it was time to come back. That experience led him to submit paperwork with the Northeastern Iowa Synod where he met with Bishop Steven Ullestad and Pastor Darrel Gerrietts, who suggested that Jones “go have some fun” at Trinity Lutheran in Mason City.

“I thought that was a strange way to talk, but Pastor Gerrietts was correct,” Jones says. “It has been fun, and Trinity has been a healing place for me.”

Jones joined the ministry team at Trinity in 2014. “I knew Dan

Gerrietts was a young lead pastor and I hoped to help him get established, but I don’t know that he needed my help,” Jones says. “I learned so much from him and from Pastor Kathy Graves. I am fortunate to have a good collegial relationship among pastors there. That doesn’t happen nearly often enough.”

Jones has focused much of his ministry helping the Trinity congregation grow in their identity as a servant church. After some hard times in the 80s and 90s, Jones says Trinity has built a foundation of caring to remind people they are a servant church to serve each other in the community and in the world.

“We’re always trying to look at where the places are we serve,” Jones says. “For our 150th anniversary this year we set a goal to raise \$15,000, with half of it going to Habitat to Humanity and half to an ELCA World Hunger project in Chile. We are partners and servants locally, regionally and around the world. This has been a real source of joy and fun for the congregation.”

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Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Interim Bishop

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

—*Philippians 1:3-6 (NRSV)*

As I look ahead to concluding my service with the Northeastern Iowa Synod at the end of August, I am very grateful for this opportunity to serve as your Interim Bishop. It was an unexpected experience for both you as a synod, having anticipated electing your new Bishop at an assembly in 2020, and also for me as a retired Bishop living in South Dakota through the time of quarantine and pandemic.

The unexpected things in our lives, individually and as Church, help us rely on God's leadership more than our own plans, and also help us rely on one another to get through the unexpected. Thus, the verses above from Philippians come to my mind as I say THANK YOU for your partnership and your reliability in this unexpected time we have had together.

God has certainly been at work among you over many years as congregations and as a synod. Now God will be working among you through new leadership, new visions, and a new chapter as you move forward in your relationship with Bishop-Elect Kevin Jones and the team he puts together for the future.

I am grateful to God for Kevin's openness to this new call to serve as your Bishop, and am confident that his gifts and the Holy Spirit's inspiration will work together with you in serving God's mission here in Northeastern Iowa, and around the world. It is a good time to be the Church here, and God has both hard work and great joy in store for you going forward.

I want to also lift up our first ever virtual synod assembly on June 12. Our voting members were incredible in their ability to stay with the technology and the extra time we ended up needing to do our best work throughout the day, particularly in choosing a new Bishop. I've read through many evaluations from the voting members and can say without a doubt there were not a lot of requests for having a virtual assembly ever again!

Understandable, I think, given how much we all appreciate getting together and the immeasurable benefits of growing our relationships across the synod.

I hope your 2022 synod assembly can be an in-person experience. Our own behaviors can help us achieve that hope by getting vaccinated, being careful about our own potential exposure to COVID or its continuing variants, and just generally being careful and using common sense. Please do be careful with each other as we continue to come out of the pandemic time. When we do that, we stand a better chance of being able to plan for in-person events that are safe for all.

I look forward to hearing news from the Northeastern Iowa Synod that celebrates your new chapter of life and ministry. I am grateful for your support and many expressions of appreciation over this year we have travelled through together. I anticipate getting reacquainted with my home in Sioux Falls and rejoining my retired life. What a gift it has been to be with you this year.

God's blessings to you going forward,

— *Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl*



Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl

NEW SYNOD WEBSITE

A new website for the Northeastern Iowa Synod is about ready to be launched. The website will be more mobile friendly with a new look featuring the synod's new logo (see right).

Watch for more information about the new website from Pastor Joelle Coville-Hanson in the synod e-newsletter and "God's Work. Our Blog."



Apply by Aug. 15 for Congregations Lead Initiative



Thriving Congregations, Thriving Church

All ELCA congregations are invited to apply for the "Congregations Lead Initiative," a new two-year program that will gather a cohort of 50 congregations from across the ELCA to explore and learn together to develop new and useful ministry innovations.

ELCA congregations interested in applying should:

- Be willing to experiment with new ministry ideas.

Tri-Synodical Fall Conference

Sept. 20-21, 2021

Pastors, deacons and ministry professionals from the three Iowa ELCA synods are invited to register online for the two-day Tri-Synodical Fall Conference set for Sept. 20-21. The event will be offered both in person at the Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines, and online.

The conference will focus on leadership in difficult times, with three keynote speakers: the Rev. Eric Barreto, the Rev. Jack Shitama and the Rev. Phil Hirsch, executive director of the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit.

Registration is \$65 per person regardless of in-person or online attendance. A block of rooms has been reserved for a reduced rate at the Sheraton Hotel in West Des Moines. Those who want to change their registration from in-person to online must do so by Sept. 1, due to meal and facilities planning.

If the planning committee determines it is not safe to gather in person due to COVID-19 trends, the event will be held online only.

To learn more and to register, visit <https://seiasynod.org/fall-theological-conference>.

- Commit to shared learning over the next two years (2021-2023).
- Demonstrate an interest in building new and stronger connections with people and groups in the local community.

Congregations selected to participate can expect to:

- Learn how to innovate for the future through semi-annual learning events (most expenses covered).
- Conduct multiple ministry experiments.
- Train with innovation ministry leaders.
- Receive personalized group coaching.
- Network with other congregations doing similar innovation work.
- Be eligible to receive a spark grant for the purpose of conducting a ministry experiment.

Applications are open through Aug. 15, 2021. Cohort participants will be selected in early September, with the first learning event taking place in November. The ELCA has received a grant from the Lilly Endowment for this project and is one of 92 organizations taking part in Lilly's Thriving Congregations Initiative.

To learn more and to apply, visit www.elca.org/congregationslead.

NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD

Interim Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl – degroot-nesdahla@neiasynod.org

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www.neiasynod.org

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During his time at Trinity, Jones says he has also enjoyed getting to know his colleagues from the nearby congregations of the Living Waters Conference.

“It’s been a great bunch of pastors who are very supportive of one another, and I value that a lot,” Jones says. “I have always wanted to let neighboring pastors know that my first call was in a small congregation and that we’re on the same team and not competing.”

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Beyond congregational work, Jones has remained connected to Ewalu where he attended camp in high school and served as a counselor for three summers during his college years. He currently serves as vice president of the Ewalu Camp and Retreat Center Board of Directors and he co-wrote the Bible study counselors are using this summer.

“Ewalu was a good leadership experience for me,” Jones says. “It was a good place for discernment and to practice and lead campfire worship and think about the message, music and songs.”

Jones serves on the North Central Iowa Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors and teaches BASIC classes for the University of Northern Iowa Lutheran Campus Ministry. He has been a member of the synod’s Candidacy Committee since 2016 and currently serves as chair.

“I love to work on candidacy,” Jones says. “It’s so hope-filled because of the candidates coming out of Northeastern Iowa in a variety of programs. The committee itself is made up of people with a real heart for the church who want to help candidates grow into really good pastors. That has been a joy, even in the weeks when I have to read 20 essays getting ready for a meeting.”

One of Jones’ main interests apart from ministry has been his love of music, especially marching bands. He volunteered for seven years as a marching band instructor for Linn-Mar High School, and he plays tuba for the “Over the Hill” brass band in Mason City. He also enjoys wood-working, and three years ago added chain saw carving to his list of talents. Some of his carved tree spirits can be found at Ewalu.



One of two tree spirits carved by Bishop-elect Kevin Jones at Ewalu Camp & Retreat Center.

SERVANT LEADERS TOGETHER

Jones begins serving as bishop in September, with his installation set for 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 25, at Trinity and live on Facebook. Initially, Jones plans to commute to the synod office in Waverly and work remotely from his home in Mason City, in part so that his wife can continue to serve 13 area counties

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Bishop Installation

Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021

The installation of the Rev. Kevin Jones as Bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod is set for 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 25, at Trinity Lutheran, Mason City. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will preside and preach, with a reception immediately following the service. Clergy attending are encouraged to vest and arrive by 1:30 p.m. The color of the day will be red.

The service will be livestreamed on the synod’s Facebook page and on Trinity’s Facebook and YouTube pages. The planning committee encourages those watching online to consider forming watch-parties in their congregations. Those gathering with a pastor will be invited to celebrate communion in their context as part of the installation celebration.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The planning committee is seeking volunteers from across the synod to

serve as ushers for the installation service, servers for the reception, or mass choir members who will join the Wartburg Choir for a piece during the service. A rehearsal will take place prior to the service, and music will be provided beforehand.

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact the synod office by Sept. 1 — call 319-352-1414 or email liddlek@neiasynod.org. Additional details and official invitations will come out in August.

Voting members elect a Bishop in online Synod Assembly

The election of a new Bishop highlighted the Northeastern Iowa Synod's first virtual Synod Assembly on June 12. Kevin Jones, pastor for Youth, Families and Education for Trinity Lutheran, Mason City, was elected to a six-year term as Bishop on the fifth ballot with 168 votes. Pastor Stacey Nalean-Carlson of Glenwood and Canoe Ridge Lutheran Churches, Decorah, received 118 votes.



Kevin Jones

"I want to thank everybody who was in the process," Jones told the Assembly. "When I saw the slate of nominees early this morning, I realized the synod was going to be in good hands no matter who the spirit lifted up. We've got some healing to do, we've got some work to do, but I am confident that the Holy Spirit is going to walk us through this, lead us through this and carry us into the future in some really wonderful ways."

Some 324 voting members and 30 registered visitors participated in the one-day Assembly online. Other visitors watched the event live on the synod's Facebook page. The Assembly was broadcast live from Redeemer Lutheran in Waverly.

Voting members adopted eight resolutions, including a resolution that encourages advocacy support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon

Dividend and a rededication to care for creation through the synod's Care for Creation Network. Two other resolutions call for action on child protection and a memorial for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to develop and adopt a social statement on Child Abuse and Child Protection. (See the resolutions and elections results inserts to learn more.)

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

The Assembly opened with the keynote presentation by the Rev. Dr. Martin Lohrmann, associate professor of Lutheran Confessions and Heritage for Wartburg Theological Seminary, who shared about Johannes Bugenhagen, an early church reformer who was the focus of the Assembly's "Celebrating Renewal" theme. Lohrmann highlighted Bugenhagen's leadership and organizational skills and how he was actually a third choice when he was elected as a head pastor.



Martin Lohrmann

"Bugenhagen's election shows that things were just as up-in-the-air back then as they are now," Lohrmann said. "Things worked out well, as Bugenhagen served as an effective head pastor for over 30 years. It's good to see that the Holy Spirit can work through complicated election processes."

CHURCHWIDE GREETINGS



Lori Fedyk

Lori Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, presided over the Bishop election and brought greetings from the churchwide organization. Fedyk shared that 14 congregations from this synod applied for the ELCA Open Doors Grants, an initiative to help congregations implement ministry ideas to engage with new people as they gather again in person.

Fedyk reported that ELCA synods and congregations gave more than \$40 million in Mission Support for ministries shared through the churchwide organization, with \$349,768 from the Northeastern Iowa Synod. "That represents 39.4 percent of all mission support that your congregations shared with this synod through weekly giving," Fedyk said.

More than \$1,560,000 was distributed to synods that applied for grants through the ELCA COVID-19 Response Fund. The fund provided a \$7,500 grant to help stock 19 Little Free Pantries hosted by 18 congregations in the Northeastern Iowa Synod to fight hunger.

ELCA World Hunger received \$24.4 million for a variety of projects around the world, with \$248,738 given by the Northeastern Iowa



The 2021 virtual Synod Assembly was broadcast live from the sanctuary of Redeemer Lutheran, Waverly.

Synod. The synod also supported Lutheran Disaster Response with gifts totaling \$53,498. St. John's, Dubuque, received one of the 116 Domestic Hunger Grants that were awarded across 64 synods.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, the ELCA Fund for Leaders provided support for 297 candidates for ministry, including seven recipients from the Northeastern Iowa Synod who attended Wartburg Theological Seminary.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl shared about her experience serving as Interim Bishop for the Northeastern Iowa Synod during the past year. She explained that her role has been to make space between what was and what will be. She oversaw a review of synod practices, activities, responsibilities and necessary tasks, with some being modified or discontinued.

"Transition doesn't happen overnight," DeGroot-Nesdahl said. "My work with staff and synod leaders

has been a work in progress."

DeGroot-Nesdahl said her focus has been on three main areas in the synod:



Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl

1. Finance — which included a new Finance Task Force made up of people experienced in finance and business to help create mission goals and assist with oversight of the synod's financial picture.
2. Bishop election — to prepare a smooth transition and lift up the qualities to consider for serving in the role of bishop.
3. Communication — which used hybrid ways to connect through

Zoom meetings with various groups and congregational leaders and video worship services, along with some opportunities to connect in person for ordinations, a first call retreat, Candidacy Committee, and other gatherings.

"This synod has wonderful, dedicated servants of Christ," she told the Assembly. "Please extend your thanks to a rostered leader who is near you. They are going to treasure your expression of appreciation."

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

The Assembly made time for special recognitions, including the ELCA's 50/40/10 Anniversaries: 50 years since the ordination of women, 40 years since the first African American woman was ordained, and 10 years since the ELCA's decision to ordain people in same gender committed relationships.

Syd Brinkman, synod vice presi-

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as a nutrition and wellness specialist for the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

“I really want to focus on getting to know the synod and the role of the bishop without having to worry about selling a house and moving.”

Jones’s background in team ministry and interest in building relationships with others will likely influence how he approaches his new role as Bishop. “I know the dynamics of working with other pastors, and the blessings and strengths and weaknesses and frustrations that come with it,” Jones says. “Team ministry is not about one person but is always about the whole community. That has been important throughout my ministry.”

When asked about his leadership style, Jones responded that he tends to be a creative leader, looking for a combination of traditional and new ways to welcome and inspire people to grow in faith and love. He likes to trust the people he works with and believes that the best work is done collaboratively.

“I look for insights and feedback from the people around me to create a thoughtful plan together.”

Jones says that one of his first goals as Bishop will be to get to know the rostered ministers throughout the synod, and for them to get to know him.

“We need to pay attention to the healing and grieving, and to listen to the spirit for where God is calling us and how God is shaping us together as individuals, as a synod and as the ELCA.”

Friedrich elected synod secretary

Pastor Susan Friedrich was elected at the 2021 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly to serve a four-year term as secretary of the synod. She succeeds Pastor Tom Jones, who completed a two-year appointed term.

Friedrich serves as pastor for Bethany, Elkader, and Emanuel, Strawberry Point. Prior to that she served as co-pastor for St. John, Sumner, for three years. She received her bachelor’s degree from Iowa State University in public service and administration in agriculture and agriculture education extension. Friedrich worked as a 4-H program assistant in Bremer and Chickasaw counties in Northeastern Iowa and in Union County in South Central Iowa.

In 1991, Friedrich was commissioned as an ELCA associate in ministry and served various congregations in that role. She also coordinated the Northeastern Iowa Synod’s LifeLong Learning Program for six years.

Friedrich received her Master of Divinity degree in 2012 from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque and was ordained in 2013. This August she celebrates 30 years

of rostered ministry, with all but her first year of it in the Northeastern Iowa Synod.



Susan Friedrich

For the Northeastern Iowa Synod, Friedrich serves as a member of the Compensation Committee and in the past has served on the Youth and Family Committee and Synod Assembly Planning Committee. She has represented the synod as a voting member for the Churchwide Assembly and served as an internship supervisor and mentor in the TEEM program. She has also served two terms on the board at Ewalu Bible Camp near Strawberry Point.

Friedrich volunteers as a 4-H leader and at local food shelf and distribution facilities. She also serves as a board member for an affordable housing community in Elkader.

“I’m looking forward to serving as our synod secretary and working together with other synod leaders as partners in the mission we share,” Friedrich said.

ASSEMBLY OFFERING THANK YOU

Thank you to the individuals and congregations that contributed to the 2021 Synod Assembly offering. As of June 30, 2021, the offering received \$6,814 to support the Fund for Leaders, Companion Synod Travel Fund, and Bishop Crisis Fund.

Gifts to the Assembly offering are still being accepted. Online gifts can be made at www.neiasynod.org. Checks payable to the Northeastern Iowa Synod can be mailed to 201 20th St. SW, P.O. Box 804 Waverly, IA 50677-0804.

JULY EVENTS

- 1 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 1 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 5 Synod Office Closed, Independence Day
- 6 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 20 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 23-25 WIYLDE (Wholly Iowa Leadership Discipling Event), Ewalu, Strawberry Point
- 27 Church Council Presidents, Zoom Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

AUGUST EVENTS

- 3 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 5 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 5 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 5 Rostered Clergy Lunch and Learn, Zoom, 12 Noon
- 6 Candidacy Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 17 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 19 Rostered Clergy Lunch and Learn, Zoom, 12 Noon

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

- 2 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 2 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 6 Office Closed, Labor Day
- 12 "God's Work. Our Hands." ELCA Day of Service
- 18 Synod Council Meeting
- 20-21 Tri-Synodical Conference, West Des Moines
- 25 Installation of Northeastern Iowa Synod Bishop, Trinity Lutheran, Mason City, 2-4 p.m.

OCTOBER EVENTS

- 7 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 7 Youth Ministry Network, Immanuel, Independence, 10 a.m.
- 5 Colleague Leaders Group, Synod Office, 12-2:30 p.m.
- 22-23 Middle School Lock-In, UNI Wellness Center, Cedar Falls

NOVEMBER EVENTS

- 4 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 4 Youth Ministry Network, First, Northwood, 10 a.m.
- 5-7 "One Year to Live" Men's Retreat, Ewalu, Strawberry Point
- 25-26 Office Closed, Thanksgiving

THANK YOU FOR GOING PAPERLESS

To receive an electronic version of the *Star* newsletter instead of a paper version, send an email to hahnmm@neiasynod.org with the subject: Online Only.

ORDAINING

Tyler Hoey, American, Jesup, July 24

INSTALLING

Rev. Calvin P. Konop, St. Peter, Dubuque, July 11
 Rev. Todd Burcher, St. John, Nashua, July 11
 Rev. Tyler Hoey, Grace, Tripoli, Aug. 1
 Rev. Timothy Malek, St. Petri, Story City, Aug. 22

INTERVIEWING

Decorah, First, Rev. Dennis Niezwaag, contract interim
 Decorah, Luther College, college pastor
 Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
 Grundy Center, American
 Iowa Falls, Bethany, Rev. Darby Lawrence, interim
 Mitchell, Faith; Nora Springs, St. Luke; Osage, Rock Creek and St. John (Cross Roads Lutheran Parish), (staff)
 Ridgeway, Peace, Orleans and Madison (Ridgeway Parish), Rev. Jim Scaife, contract interim
 Ryan, Peace and Dundee, St. John (Unity of the Cross Lutheran Parish), Rev. Rhea Evanson, contract interim
 Waterloo, Our Savior's*

SELF-STUDY

Allison, St. James
 Charles City, Messiah*
 Chester, United*
 Decorah, Big Canoe & Highland, Rev. Waldemar Gies, contract interim
 Denver, St. Peter
 Dysart, Zion
 Frederika, St. John
 Hawkeye, Trinity*
 Janesville, Messiah, Rev. Dave Powers, contract interim*
 Jewell, Bethesda, Rev. Adam Starrett, interim
 Mason City, St. Paul, Rev. Matthew Muters, contract*
 Shell Rock, Faith
 Sumner, St. Peter (Richfield) and Waucoma, St. John (Stapleton)*
 Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd*
 Waterloo, St. Ansgar, Rev. Erika Breddin, contract interim*
 Waterloo, St. John (Bennington)*
 Waterloo, Trinity*
 Waterloo, Zion
 West Union, Zion, Rev. Duane Miller, interim

ROSTER CHANGES

Rev. Kim Smith, retired
 Rev. James Martin-Schramm, retired

*Part-time Call

AUGUST 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Rev. Clark J. Baldwin, Strawberry Point Rev. John W. Gannett, Mason City Rev. Darby Lawrence, Iowa Falls 1	Rev. Bradley C. Hanson, Decorah Rev. Rebecca M. Sogge, Northwood 2	Bethany, Iowa Falls 3	Messiah, Janesville 4	Rev. Dr. Martin J. Lohrmann, Dubuque 5	Rev. Daniel R. Christensen, Lime Springs 6	American, Jesup 7
Rev. Charles R. Underwood, Clarksville 8	Zion (Jubilee), La Porte City 9	Bethesda, Jewell 10	Rev. Brian T. Julin- McCleary, Cedar Falls Rev. Randy S. Nielsen, Mason City Rev. Nancy Solomonson, Decorah 11	Bethany, Joice 12	Bethany, Kensett 13	Elk Creek, Kensett 14
Rev. James F. Harbaugh, Roseville, Minn. 15	American, La Porte City 16	Middle East Peace Salem, Lake Mills 17	Winnebago, Lake Mills 18	Rev. Thomas C. Jones, Independence 19	Our Savior's, Lansing 20	Our Savior, Leland 21
St. Paul, Lime Springs 22	Rev. A. Dean Williams, West Des Moines 23	St. John, Luana 24	Bethlehem, Manly 25	St. Paul, Marble Rock 26	Our Saviour's, Mason City 27	St. James, Mason City 28
Rev. Sidney W. Bohls, Mason City 29	St. Paul, Mason City 30	Trinity, Mason City 31				

Voting members elect a Bishop in online Synod Assembly
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dent, led a recognition of former Bishop Steven Ullestad and his wife, Ruth. Ullestad retired in 2020 after 28 years as Bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

In a video message to the Assembly, Ullestad expressed his gratitude for the work that was done over the last 28 years to make this a safer synod, for the creativity and energy of the local congregations to accomplish mission, and for the relationships with the colleges, seminary and other institutions in this synod.

Brinkman responded, “The people and the church are grateful to you and your family, Bishop Ullestad, as we say well done, good and faithful committed servant.”

Read more about the synod assembly, watch videos and download resources on the synod website, www.neiasynod.org, and on Facebook, www.facebook.com/neiasynod.

One Year to Live Men's Retreat

Nov. 5-7, 2021

The “One Year to Live” men’s retreat returns in person Nov. 5 – 7 at Camp Ewalu near Strawberry Point. This 45-hour spiritual boot camp gives men of all ages an opportunity to reexamine their life and priorities, make decisions for their future, and discover together how God has equipped them to live.

Registration information will be coming soon on the synod website, www.neiasynod.org, or contact Jim Rathe, jlrtrat@gmail.com.

“God's work. Our hands.” Sunday



Sept. 12
2021

Find resources, promotional items and ideas for service projects at www.elca.org/dayofservice.



Good News

July/Aug 2021
Volume 34
Number 7-8

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

From the President

We did it!!!! Thank you to St. Paul's Lutheran in Waverly for allowing us to use their beautiful church for our Gathering on June 19. Thank you to Pastor Kyle Barton from LSI for leading us in worship. Thank you to Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl for leading us in Bible Study. Thank you to Devin, Steve, and Becky for the technical support, music, and on-hand local support. Thank you most of all for attending in person and virtually, without you there would not be a Women of the ELCA Synodical Women's Organization in Northeastern Iowa. I also want to acknowledge our church wide representative for joining us via zoom, all the way from Oregon.

I want to encourage you to start gathering and planning your events again with your local groups. They may not look, like we have always done them, but choose one thing and do what works for your group. Some groups may have been gathering via Zoom, which is great!!! I love the convenience of Zoom, however, I have yet to figure out how to hug via zoom. 😊 Not that we are all huggers, but there are little things I miss when we are not present in each other's company.

I know at least one cluster has a fall event on the calendar for September. I would like to encourage each cluster to consider doing an event this fall, please feel free to use the technology that we have been learning how to use together, to include those who for a variety of reasons are not ready to be gathering in person. But most of all, keep being Women of the ELCA!

Blessings, Anna Jetson

Stewardship Committee

2 Corinthians 9:7 "...for God loves a cheerful giver". Are you cheerful in your giving? I asked myself that question, and I found that sometimes I give out of habit. So, my personal journey is to be more of that thoughtful, cheerful giver. Hopefully, you find joy in sharing your gifts with others. I certainly felt the love and joy at the NEIA SWO Gathering in June, especially in hearing the gratefulness in Pastor Kyle's

voice as he thanked the women and their churches for the generous gifts for LSI.

The Gathering in June had many cheerful givers. The In-Kind gifts were 48 body wash, 63 deodorant, 57 shampoo, 18 conditioner, 2 hair products, 100 toothbrushes, 57 toothpaste, 16 decks of cards, 3 crafts, 9 ear buds, 19 towel bundles, \$176 in cash donations, and \$350 in gift cards. The Gathering offering totaled \$1310, to be split between churchwide and LSI Spiritual Life Challenge.

Challenge yourself to be a cheerful giver in your life. It doesn't have to be money or gifts; it could just be giving your time to someone who needs you.

Submitted by JoAnn Brunsvold

Discipleship Committee

Discipleship is walking our life in the footsteps of God. Learning to carry His faith in our hearts and sharing His love and teachings with people we associate with. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, God is present to enable us to grow in faith and understanding of God's grace.

Our Christian faith begins with baptism. As young children, dad and mom took us to church and Sunday school to learn the habits and what it is like to live as a Christian. Our Sunday school teachers and pastor taught us God's word through the Bible. Hopefully, we find friends to discuss and exchange Christian thoughts and ideas as we mature in life. Our goal is to bring new people into our Christian life by asking them to attend our church. Asking a friend to join our Bible study group or sewing group.

Discipleship is meant to be shared.

Submitted by LuAnn Brunnes

LSI Challenge

As many of you already know, we are partnering with LSI to raise \$5000 for their Spiritual Life Challenge. To participate in the LSI Spiritual Life Challenge, please send donations directly to Lutheran Services in Iowa PO Box 848, 106 16th St SW, Waverly, IA 50677. Mark the memo line "Spiritual Life Challenge."

Justice Committee

We are Called! Recently someone mentioned to me that they do not want to get involved in the justice initiatives that the Women of the ELCA have focused on. It makes her uncomfortable to talk about the topics and she was taught that her faith was to be a "personal thing". She went on to tell me that when she sees the church make social statements then it becomes political and not something she is wanting to get involved with.

It would not be hard to imagine that others might feel this way as well. When there is a person or a family that needs some extra special care, they are the ones there with the casserole or an offer to help out but when we see people marching with signs at rallies or sending letters to their senators and members of congress, that is a completely different level of involvement.

The ELCA's statement on economic life, *Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, reaffirms Luther's conviction that our calling as Christians is lived out in whatever situations or arenas in which we find ourselves, and that it is through our active involvement in those arenas that we serve as God's hands and feet in the world, seeking justice and wholeness for all.

Luther believed that we Christians have the responsibility to be part of this struggle, not to withdraw from it. In all that we do, we are God's partners in the world, promoting love, justice, and the well-being of all God's creation. God's reign, according to Luther, governs society through both law and gospel. The gospel proclaims God's unconditional love expressed to us through Jesus. When we accept this love, we spontaneously respond by reaching out and showing love to others. Luther says that we are partners with God. What are some ways in which we can be God's partners in promoting love, justice, and the well-being of creation? We can actively do this in ways we are comfortable with. If holding a sign is not your way, bring the casserole, but do not disengage. (Based on a resources from Women of the ELCA, "Called to be Political").

Submitted by Jen Larson

LWR Clusters BDI In-Gathering

At 7:30 am sharp, our spring In-gathering began at Olson's Explosives in Decorah. The weather was warm and sunny and along with donations from the women of Clusters B (Little Flock), D (Upper Iowa River) and I (Shechem) we also received donations from St Peter and St Paul in Elma Iowa. We had a great crew of helpers

from Hesper and Big Canoe Lutheran. In 3 hours they had loaded 620 boxes! Many thanks to this strong group and to Olson's for their continued support. And to each of you who collected and quilted these precious gifts for LWR. Totals for the day were:

Quilts	1595	Baby Care Kits	380
Fabric Kits	63	Personal Care Kits	236
Blankets	6	School Kits	125

Submitted by Dee Wyatt & Sandy Gavle

CALENDAR

Aug 3-5	Triennial Convention SWO Board Transition Meeting
Sep 18	Cluster G, St James, Mason City, 8:30
Oct 16	Ingathering, CEH, New Hampton, 8-11
Oct 18	Ingathering, Mason City, 8:30-10:30
Nov 6	Ingathering, BDI, Decorah, 7:30-10:30
Jun 18	2022 NE IA SWO Gathering

NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

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Articles are due the 1st of the month for the next month's newsletter (e.g. April 1 for May issue)

Contact Women of the ELCA:

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/>

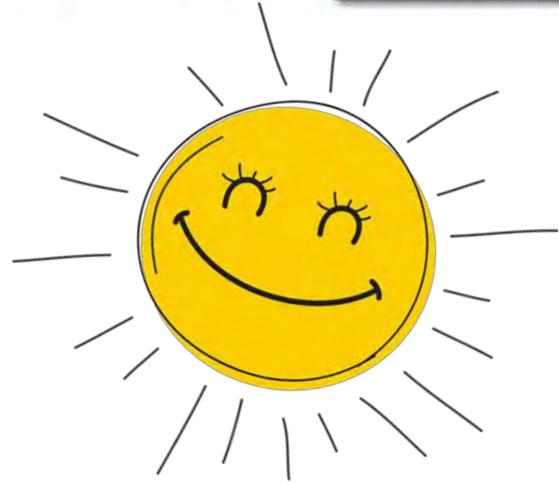
773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA

Save a tree and get your Star by email! Email webadmin@neiasynod.org, to request the change!

Living Faith @



The lazy, hazy days of summer are truly upon us! I hope you and your family are able spend a little extra time just enjoying the slower pace that summer can bring. Last year, due to the pandemic, there were a lot of summer events cancelled, and many of our usual summer destinations were shut down. One thing that 2020 taught us is that we can still provide a lot of fun for our families without going to a whole lot of trouble and planning. Good old-fashioned walks in the park, Bicycling trails, backyard picnics & camping were once again quite popular!

Even though places like amusement parks, zoos, museums, and municipal swimming pools are now opening up again to the public, I hope that we can still take some time to enjoy God's creation and the beauty of nature in the simple ways like we did last year.

It will not be long, and our fall calendars will start filling up again and before we know it, we'll be heading to the store with our back-to-school list in hand.

May you enjoy and savor the precious days of this summer while they last!

25 Responses to "I'm Bored!"

- Play Hopscotch
- Look at Old Pictures
- Write a Story
- Do a Puzzle
- Have a Fashion Show
- Blow Bubbles
- Create a Super Hero
- Give the Dog a Bath
- Read a Book
- Play Tag
- Wash the Car
- Dance to Music
- Have a Tea Party
- Look for 4-Leaf Clovers
- Write a Letter (and Mail it!)
- Pick Flowers for the Table
- Practice a Sport
- Take a Bubble Bath
- Learn a Magic Trick
- Pick Some of Your Toys to Donate
- Make a Nature Bracelet
- Paint a Picture for a Neighbor
- Play Charades
- Take Pictures of Nature (A-Z)
- Make Sock Puppets

Planning for Fall and Faith Formation

I'm always a little bit "caught off guard" when August rolls around and I realize that school is starting soon – especially in Iowa, where many schools start classes the third week in August. And that means also being prepared for going back to Sunday School, Confirmation, and other youth activities. Here are some things to think about *now* so that you are ready! If you are a pastor or a faith formation leader or volunteer, start now in preparing your congregations for what they can look forward to this fall. Here is a list of some things to start thinking about:

- Blessing of the Backpacks – a fun way to send the kids off to school knowing that God is watching over them. Start letting everyone know now so they will bring their backpacks on the Sunday you designate. Our Synod has resources on their website for a backpack blessing: <https://www.neiasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Milestone-Ministry-Blessing-of-the-Backpacks-worship-sheet.pdf>
- Plan a Rally Day for the First Day of Sunday School – What I've learned is that it doesn't have to be complex – create a simple theme and focus your activities on that. One year we created the theme "It's SWEET to Love Jesus!" – we had lots of simple, fun games with pieces of candy: Contests for throwing Tootsie Rolls in a bucket; Guessing how many pieces of candy were in a big jar; Jenga type contests with Candy Bars; and the favorite: Making homemade ice cream in a bag: <https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/ice-cream-in-a-bag/> Involve the adults as well – they'll have a blast!
- Plan a Mission Project for the school year – Start out the year with a planned mission or outreach project. It can be supporting a local cause such as a food bank or some other charitable organization, or a world-wide cause such as Lutheran World Relief. Maybe incorporate it into a "God's Work our Hands Sunday" or "Rally Day Sunday." You can visit our Synod website for mission ideas: <https://www.neiasynod.org/ministries/>
- Decorate Church Bulletin Boards for Fall – a couple of weeks before the beginning of Sunday school, invite some families to come and decorate church bulletin boards – make them welcoming and inviting! Make it a party and have snacks or a light lunch available.
- Plan for ways that children, youth and families can assist during worship services. Children love to participate! Find simple ways for them to help with ushering, reading scripture, praying, acolyting, and helping with communion and worship offerings. Put out a signup sheet now and start encouraging families and children to sign up.
- Prepare (or update) Worship Activity Bags for children to use during the worship service. Make sure they are clean and that broken crayons, marked up activity/coloring books, etc. are replaced.
- Make sure to pray special prayers for the beginning of the school year – for our children and families, for teachers, for all those who are involved in the care and education of our youth.

This information is prepared for you by the Northeastern Iowa Synod – Home Life Network for use by families and local congregations. Like our page on Facebook and our posted resources will appear in your newsfeed. Our page is [Home Life « NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD \(neiasynod.org\)](https://www.facebook.com/neiasynod)



**2021 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
RESOLUTIONS**

2021 MINIMUM SALARY GUIDELINES

Resolution No. 2-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt the Proposed Minimum Salary Guidelines for 2021.

2022 MINIMUM SALARY GUIDELINES

Resolution No. 3-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt the Proposed Minimum Salary Guidelines for 2022.

2021 NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD MISSION GOALS

Resolution No. 4-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt the Proposed 2021 Mission Goals (synod budget).

2022 NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD MISSION GOALS

Resolution No. 5-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt the Proposed 2022 Mission Goals (synod budget).

**AMENDMENTS TO THE
NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD CONSTITUTION**

Resolution No. 6-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, That the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly adopt the following amendments to the synod constitution.

Additions are underlined. Deletions are struck through in the text.

**S18.21. ...This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of the voting members of the assembly present and voting. ...*

To amend Bylaw S10.07.02 to be consistent with *S10.01.b.:

S10.07.02. Each conference may submit to the nominating committee the name of one young adult to serve on the Synod Council for a two-year three-year term...

*(*S10.01.b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be three years.)*

*(*S6.04.02. ... The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.)*

* * * * *

**S18.31. ...continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly...*

To amend Continuing Resolution S14.16.01.A2000, Section 9. to be consistent with S14.17.:

S14.16.01.A2000, Section 9. The pastor may consider a Letter of Call for as long as 15 30 days..."

(S14.17. ...A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer to acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. ...)

ELCA ADVOCACY SUPPORT FOR THE ENERGY INNOVATION AND CARBON DIVIDEND ACT

Resolution No. 7-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod encourages congregations in our synod to utilize the ELCA's primer on "Carbon Pricing Basics" in adult education offerings that explore various approaches to carbon pricing including the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod rededicates itself to care for creation through our Care for Creation Network and to advocate for social and environmental justice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod affirms and commends resources related to care for creation produced by the ELCA, Lutherans Restoring Creation (lutheransrestoringcreation.org), and other environmental and ecumenical partners.

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ACTION ON CHILD PROTECTION

Resolution No. 8-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America encourages its members to read and study the “Rationale for a Social Statement on Child Abuse and Child Protection” available for reference at: <http://currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/306/335> ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod acknowledges sins against children and will continue to engage churchwide, synodical, and congregational processes to demonstrate repentance by developing effective child protection and child maltreatment policies at every level; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod encourage and equip congregations to engage issues of child maltreatment through preaching, Bible study, and awareness of ministries that address the needs of children suffering abuse or neglect; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod encourages its congregations to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective formation of children including Bible studies on the Christian obligation to raise and care for children without the use of corporal punishment; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod will encourage ELCA seminaries to provide education on recognizing and responding to child abuse, including appropriate spiritual care, and to provide continuing education on child maltreatment for pastors, deacons and other faith leaders in the field.

MEMORIAL ON DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD PROTECTION SOCIAL STATEMENT

Resolution No. 9-21, Adopted

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod memorializes the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to develop and adopt a social statement on Child Abuse and Child Protection.

2021 Northeastern Iowa Synod Election Results

SYNOD COUNCIL

- Synod Secretary:
Rev. Susan Friedrich*
- Lay Woman, 2-Year Term:
Carla Janssen*
- Lay Woman, 3-Year Term:
Linda Groe*
- Lay Man, 2-Year Term:
Ryan Robison*
- Lay Man, 3-Year Term:
Jeff Dralle*
- Minister of Word & Sacrament, 2-Yr Term:
Rev. Randy Baldwin*
- Minister of Word & Sacrament, 3-Yr Term:
Rev. Kristen Rod
- Person of Color or Whose Primary Language is not English:
OPEN NOMINATION

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Lay Woman:
Susan (Sue) Cira*
Sue Green*
Diane Weldin*
- Lay Man:
Jeremy Wolfe*
Nathan Mork*
Jonathon Struve*
- Minister of Word and Sacrament:
Rev. Matthew Agee*
OPEN NOMINATION
OPEN NOMINATION
- Person of Color or Whose Primary Language is not English:
OPEN NOMINATION

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE

- Lay Man:
Dan Avenarius*
Mike Erickson*
- Male Minister of Word and Sacrament:
Rev. Charlie Underwood*
- Female Minister of Word and Sacrament:
OPEN NOMINATION

2022 CHURCHWIDE VOTING MEMBERS

- Lay Woman:
Joyce Schoulte*
Jessica Hanson*
- Lay Man:
Charlie Rod*
Gary Wipperman*
- Lay Man At Large:
Randy Brinkman*
- Ordained Minister:
Rev. Kristen Briner Wipperman
Rev. Amy Zalk Larson
Rev. Katie Rodriguez
Rev. Daniel Flucke
Rev. Mike Ashman
- Youth & Young Person:
Nicole Kiefer
Nathan Larson
- Person of Color or Whose Primary Language is not English:
OPEN NOMINATION
OPEN NOMINATION
- Alternate Voting Member:
Albie Nicol*
Rev. Paul Amlin*

* Elected by unanimous ballot