

Background info on Churchwide Voting Member specifications and balloting:

For Churchwide Voting Members, synods are allowed a specific number of voting members. Included in this, is the synod bishop and synod council vice-president. Additionally, Churchwide asks that synods prepare a slate of nominees that meets a male/female ratio; rostered minister/lay member ratio; and includes a designated youth/YA member and minority/non-english primary language member.

Lay nominees will appear on the ballot based on conference. Rostered Ministers are at-large nominees and will appear on the ballot in alphabetical order by last name.

If a Voting Member is unable to attend, an alternate will be selected in consultation with the Churchwide Secretary's office.

Churchwide Voting Members

Youth/ Young Adult

Rostered Minister, female (3)

Lay Male – Toledo Conference

Lay Female – North Central Conference

Lay Female – Southwest Conference

Rostered Minister, male (2)

Lay Male – Maumee Valley Conference

Lay Female – Eastern Conference

Minority/ Non-English Primary Language

Lay Male – Southeast Conference

Lay Male – Central Conference

Synod Bishop

Synod Council Vice-President

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member

Youth/ Young Adult

Nominees: Victoria Cox and Nate Stenke

Victoria Cox, First Findlay

Qualifications and Gifts:

I am currently a member of First Lutheran Church Findlay. I was very involved with the youth program, while attending high school. I was able to attend 2 ELCA Mission Trips (New Orleans and Detroit). It was amazing to see so many kids come together to worship in one place! I made friendships that will last a lifetime. After graduating high school, I attended Capital University majoring in Public Relations and Business Communications. I was very involved on campus. I was president of AMP, a student run event and planning committee. I cheered for football and basketball, and was involved in ASA. I was a competitive gymnast for 15 years, and continue to coach here in Findlay today. When I was 2 years old, I was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis. This was something that I, along with my parents, have become very strong advocates for. I believe that if you want to accomplish anything, you must work hard and make your voice be heard. No matter what I do, I want to do it correctly. I believe I can make a difference. I have seen what 300,000 high school students can do when they work together.

Nate Stenke, Trinity Findlay

Qualifications and Gifts:

I believe I am fit for this position because when I lived in Florida a couple of years ago, I was a youth advocate for the synod council, and attending synod assemblies and meetings. Additionally, I am a part of the ELCA youth core leadership team and am one of the 12 youths that plan the Youth Leadership summer for hundreds of students across the country every November. I am also a part of our synod's youth leadership team. I believe that I can bring a youth's perspective to this position, and help to share opinions about the topics that are presented, and I believe that after all of my youth leadership training I am well suited for this position, and can help to spread information to youth and young adults when needed.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member

Female Rostered Minister

Nominees: Pastor Mary Beth Smith-Gunn, Pastor Doris Mars, Pastor Kathy Shuck, Pastor Beth Westphal

Pastor Mary Beth Smith-Gunn, Trinity Bryan

Qualifications and gifts:

My current call is to a three-congregation parish in rural/small town contexts. Ordained in 1993 – four calls in two synods.

Active in conference activities – previous conference dean. Synod committee member – consultation committee, committee on ministry, resolutions committee and nominating committee

Churchwide Assembly voting member 2011

My interest in how the church will respond to social issues and continuing decline is part of why I think involvement in decision making is important. Churchwide is where many decisions are made which may impact local congregations for good or for ill, and I believe sometimes previously small town, rural voices have not been heard.

Pastor Doris Mars, St. John's Findlay

Qualifications and gifts:

Ordained 18 years in the ELCA; 29 years in the preaching ministry. Served as supply pastor, Intentional Interim Pastor, and now called Pastor with St. John's Lutheran, Findlay. My previous calls include Mission Developer of the Good News Lutheran Mission, Northwestern Ohio; Redevelopment Pastor at Revelation Lutheran, Detroit MI; Intentional Interim Pastor at Transfiguration Lutheran, Taylor MI; Stated Supply Pastor at St. John Lutheran, New Baltimore MI and Cross of Glory Lutheran, Detroit MI; and Seminary Board of Directors and 12 years as a clergy member of the SEMI/NWL synods candidacy committee. I have consulted on candidacy committees for Northeast and Southern Ohio synods, and for contextual education program development at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. I have mentored and supervised ministry candidates. I have served twice as a voting member for SEMI synod at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. My gifts and passions are preaching, teaching, leadership development, and efficient/effective congregational governance with a special interest in church constitution and ELCA guidelines and social statement.

Pastor Kathy Shuck, First Upper Sandusky

Qualifications and Gifts:

It has been my privilege to serve as a Minister of Word and Sacrament since 1995. In that time I have served in a variety of settings, both large and small membership congregations, small town/rural and urban. In each of my calls I have been active with the Conference and in the local ecumenical ministerial association. At the synod level I have served on the Worship Committee, a called, temporary committee, and, in a previous synod, the Small Town/Rural committee.

This past year has given us new challenges on how to be Church together and highlighted challenges we were already facing. As we move forward together, I am thankful for this opportunity to serve the synod and church in a new way.

Pastor Beth Westphal, St Paul Lakeside Marblehead and St John Marblehead

Qualifications and Gifts:

I currently serve as Pastor of St. Paul and St. John Lutheran Churches in Lakeside/Marblehead. During my 18 years of ordained ministry, I have remained active in the life of the wider Church in many ways. One of my favorite ways to stay connected with the ELCA has been by attending Churchwide Assemblies as an observer in 2005, 2009, and 2013. I also attended the convening convention of the NALC as an observer representing the Bishop of the WV-WMD Synod. I have served on the boards of directors for The Gabriel Project (Wheeling, WV), Community Lutheran Partners (WV-WMD Synod), and Sisters in Shelter (Tiffin, OH). I served as a WV-WMD representative to ELCMA (former Appalachian Ministry arm of the ELCA), and am currently active in Faith in Public Life, the Marblehead Area Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, Lakeside/Danbury Ministerial Assoc., Port Clinton Ministerial Assoc., and our conference text study group. I'm also enjoying my new role as Site Supervisor for one of our TEAM Ministers. My husband, Rev. David Westphal, and I live in Tiffin, where we enjoy visiting with friends, taking long walks together, and traveling as often as we can. Singing with the Heidelberg Univ. Community Chorus provides me with a delightful musical and social outlet on Thursday evenings as well.

Churchwide Assembly

Lay Male – from Toledo Conference

Nominees: Louis Travell Johnson and Bob Mens

Louis Travell Johnson, Salem Toledo

Qualifications and gifts:

Louis has grown-up attending worship at Salem since the age of 8, when he chose to start coming over to Salem by himself. He has served in our council, and he has been both served by our ministries and a part of serving in our ministries. He has some prior experience with attending larger church function, and he found those experiences to be valuable. It gives Louis an opportunity to serve the church, meet new people, and see more of the world, activities which some of us can take for granted but which aren't often afforded to people with Louis's experiences of life. It is also hoped that, through regular participation in events like this as sense of life-long belonging can be fostered between Louis and the larger church.

Bob Mens, Olivet Sylvania

Qualifications and gifts:

NWOS Diakoina graduate; two term, 27 years each, congregational president; served on just about every committee; choir member; team member of four Christ renews His Parish teams; assisting minister; volunteer in feeding ministries at St. Paul's Lutheran, Toledo, St. Martin's de Porres Catholic Church, Toledo, and St. Paul's Methodist Church, Toledo; attended numerous retreats and various Bible studies. I am Jesus focused and serving focused.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Lay Female – from North Central Conference

Nominees: Mary Satterfield

Mary Satterfield, Solomon Woodville

Qualifications and gifts:

I am excited about the future of the church and the discipleship and leadership initiatives that the Northwestern Ohio synod is pursuing. I am currently participating in the synod's Innovator Learning Academy discipleship program. As a member of Solomon Lutheran in Woodville, I've served as president of the congregation, a council member, served on various committees including Christian Education, Stewardship, and Audit. I've taught Sunday school and am currently teaching Catechism. I've helped in VBS planning and led our Youth Mentoring program for many years. I've served on two Solomon call committees and in the past have been very active in Solomon's women of the church. I currently serve as the synod Call Facilitator for the North Central Conference as well as various other positions with the WELCA Synodical Organization. I have been a Solomon delegate to the NWOS assembly in the past and a delegate to several WELCA churchwide gatherings. I have been in leadership in the children's program of Bible study fellowship for 18 years. For many years I sat on the parent board of what is now called Genacross Lutheran Services and am currently serving on the Genacross Family & Youth board and have been for over 12 years.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Lay Female – from Southwest Conference

Nominees: Ingrid Grace Miller

Ingrid Grace Miller, St. John Celina

Qualifications and gifts:

I am qualified for this position because I am a young person working with the youth and young adults in our congregation and in our synod. A further qualification is my context: I serve in a small, rural community in which I have lived my whole life. I hear the concerns of my parishioners who want the legislation of the Northwestern Ohio Synod and the ELCA to reflect their experiences, their opinions, and their theological beliefs. I believe my qualification lies in mediation, I am called to serve the young people who long for a progressive accepting church just as I am called to serve the lifelong church members who respect tradition and justice. I hope to speak for both.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member

Male Rostered Minister – At Large

Nominees: Pastor Pete Bowmer, Pastor Mike Hanck,
Pastor Dan Gutman, and Pastor Adam Sornchai

Pastor Peter Scott Bowmer, St. Paul Toledo

Qualifications and gifts:

Served on Synod Council 2015-2019; Current Life Flight Chaplin – Mercy; Current Pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Toledo; Current host of "Cooking Church Toledo;" Developer and board chair of "Community Heart of Toledo Inc." a 501c3 for downtown Toledo; Husband and father to four daughters (ages 19-25) all living at home with various dogs and cats; Member of Bishop Beaudoin's Innovators Academy

The gifts I possess are a deep faith in the resurrected Jesus, the life that springs from that, and a heart for justice and creation,

Pastor Mike Hanck, Salem Toledo

Qualifications and gifts:

In nominating Louis Johnson for events that occur outside of Toledo, I endeavor to accompany him on those trips, either in an official capacity or as an ordinary attendee. I care deeply about the direction of our denomination, and I want it to incorporate and serve all people, not only with its words but in its deeds and in its very being. I also think it important that we be a denomination that strives to purposefully include and welcome people with real hospitality; accompanying Louis is an example of how I believe hospitality can be enacted. I look forward to the future of our denomination, and I love meeting and learning about the people who all together comprise it.

Pastor Dan Gutman, Zion Lima

Qualifications and gifts:

Our congregation has always been a strong and faithful supporter of the Northwestern Ohio Synod and Churchwide. We have had lay and rostered leaders represented at both the synodical and churchwide levels and have been involved in creating and maintaining partnerships with other nearby Lutheran congregations (St Luke's and St Mark's). Though I am still new to the congregation and to ordained ministry (2019), I think I bring a fresh perspective and renewed energy for the mission of the church. I also bring 10 years of ministry experience in the Lutheran church prior to ordination. It would be my privilege to serve as a Voting Member for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. Thank you for your consideration.

Pastor Adam Sornchai

Qualifications and Gifts:

I love Jesus Christ and God's holy people. I am committed to the work of the ELCA in sharing the Good News! I would love the opportunity to serve our church body in prayerfully making decisions as a churchwide voting member.

Pastor at St John Windfall Cardington 2011-present, Chair of the NWOS Worship Committee 2014-2020, Board member Cardington Community Food Pantry 2013-present, Ecumenical Representative NWOS 2016-present, Diakonia program (teacher and committee member) 2015-present, Ohio Council of Churches 2011-present.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member

Lay Male – from Maumee Valley Conference

Nominees: Neal Deniston and Steve Graf

Neal Deniston – Zion's Defiance

Qualifications and gifts:

I am the choir/bell director and church musician. I have been at Zion's for nearly 50 years and have worked with a dozen or more associate, interim and full time pastors. I am a piano technician by trade.

Steve Graf – Zion's Defiance

Qualifications and gifts:

Graduate of Capital University, major in Public Administration. I've served multiple terms as a church council member, as church council president, two terms as council treasurer, chair of call committee one time and two terms on NWOS Council. I also served sixteen years on the Filling Memorial Home Board and over two terms on the Lutheran Ministries of Mercy Board which is a merged governing board including the Filling Memorial Home board, Lutheran Homes of Mercy and Lutheran Social Services; of which two years were served as the 2nd Vice Chairman.

I attended SAM training offered by the NWOS after being encouraged to attend by Pastor Kieth Hunsinger. I served as worship leader twice in his absence at St Paul Lutheran in Defiance and have been a liturgist and as communion assistant at Zion for a number of years while also singing in the choir.

Churchwide Voting Member Lay Female – from Eastern Conference

Nominees: Heather Hawn

Heather Hawn, Grace Fremont

Qualifications and Gifts:

It would be my honor to serve as a voting member at the Churchwide Assembly. For the past five years I have served on staff at Grace and working alongside other leaders from the LIFT churches. Prior to that I was a volunteer for 13 years with the Sunday School and VBS. Youth & Children's Ministry is a passion of mine. Currently I am a part of the Synod's Youth Discipleship Network, serve on the Fall Into Lakeside Committee, a co-ordinator for the Synod Day at the Gathering, and I am a part of the Fresh Expressions Innovator Learning Academy training group. Within our church, our family serves as communion assistants and have been a part of Love Your Neighbor Day in our community.

Churchwide Voting Member
Minority / Non-English Primary Language

Nominees: Wellington Kamala

Wellington Kamala, St Mark's Bowling Green

Qualifications and Gifts:

(Wellington is currently out of the country attending to a death in his family and is unable to complete and return a bio. He has been active in the Northwestern Ohio Synod's Global Mission Board. English is his second language.)

Churchwide Voting Member

Lay Male – from Southeast Conference

Nominees: Shawn Schneider

Shawn Schneider, First Galion

Qualifications and Gifts:

These are not normal times for the ELCA or for our small, Ohio churches, but I am excited to serve in the church – right here and right now. The church is God's Church, and I feel the Spirit moving in our midst. God is up to something, and we are called to move with the Spirit. It would be a privilege to serve with other members of our synod and leaders across the ELCA to discern the call of the Holy Spirit at the Churchwide Assembly.

I am enrolled in the MDivX program at Luther Seminary with an expected graduation date of May 2023. As part of this program, I am serving as Vicar and SAM alongside the people of First Lutheran in Galion. Before entering seminary, I served on council at St Paul in Upper Sandusky for five years. We were without a full-time pastor for part of this time, during which I taught catechism for two years, led a mission-focused council retreat, served as a worship assistant, and started a Facebook video ministry. It was during this period when I felt the Spirit moving and discerned a call to rostered ministry. Prior to seminary, I spent fifteen years in engineering and operations management and currently serve as the Cubmaster of Cub Scout Pack 125 in Upper Sandusky.

Churchwide Voting Member

Lay Male – from Central Conference

Nominees: Brian Hurt

Brian Hurt,

Qualifications and Gifts:

I have been a member at Good Hope Lutheran Church for over 15 years. I have served on the church council for 6 years. I have served as Church Council President for 4 years. I have led Sunday morning adult bible study for over 10 years. I've been married to my wonderful wife for 19 years. My wife has attended Good Hope Lutheran Church for over 30 years. I'm a father to two wonderful boys 12 and 14. I have coached their sports teams for approximately 10 years. I believe the work of the church is extremely important at this time, especially in the middle of a pandemic, where members may have fallen out of the habit of attending church. At the local level, our churches must reaffirm potential members what we stand for; the love, grace, and mercy of Christ, so they are comfortable to return. That message, defined by the word of God, should be clear not only at the local level, but throughout the ELCA.