

Due to the delayed 2020 Assembly and the expiration of several terms in 2020, Synod Council appointed individuals to fill terms that ended in 2020. Those individuals were appointed to serve until the next Assembly, at which point they are put forward for election to the remainder of the term. Those positions have been noted on bottom of the bios.

Synod Council Positions Open for Election:

Rostered Minister – Southeast Conference
Rostered Minister – North Central Conference
Rostered Minister Southwest Conference
Lay – Southeast Conference
Lay – Central Conference
Lay – At-Large
Lay – Toledo Conference
Rostered Minister – Maumee Valley Conference
Secretary
Minority/ Non-English Primary Language
Rostered Minister – Eastern Conference
Lay – North Central Conference

Synod Council, Rostered Minister from Southeast Conference (3-year term 2020/23)

Nominee: Pastor Jarrod Schaaf

Pastor Jarrod Schaaf, St. Paul North Robinson

Qualifications and gifts:

I have been serving on Synod Council the past three years. I am invested in our council in several ways including serving on the Congregational Resource Team and I am a member of the Innovative Leadership Academy put on by our Synod. For the past several years I have worked cooperatively with other local pastors in both ministry and study.

***filing a partial term due to delayed 2020 Assembly*

Synod Council – Rostered Minister from North Central Conference (3yr term 2021/24)

Nominees: Pastor Denise Brown and Pastor Melanie Haack

Pastor Denise Brown, Hosanna Grand Rapids and Filing Home

Qualifications and Gifts:

One of the functions of the Synod Council is to provide leadership and strategic planning for our Synod. As you can see, I can't sit still and am involved in multiple conferences serving people in both specialized and congregational ministries. One of my gifts is to discover ways all people are included in all aspects of our life in Christ. For example: in serving people at Filing Home, I discovered there were no ELCA confirmation curriculums for persons with intellectual disabilities- so for my Dr. of Ministry project, I wrote a Confirmation curriculum for persons with intellectual disabilities and have used it at Filing Home and several pastors in our synod have used it for individuals in their congregations. I enjoy meeting people- I do this as coach- I coach High School swimming and diving, as well as Special Olympics- and as an athlete – swimming and cycling- I travel to National and International events- meeting people and sharing sport and faith together.

Pastor Melanie Haack, St James Bradner

Qualifications and Gifts:

I have been privileged to serve as Pastor to NWOS churches both large and small for over 25 years-in cities, rural areas and small towns. During the past 13 years, I've served in shared ministries. Congregations are now facing challenges to a greater degree than any other time in my experience, regardless of their size or context. Great challenges are no longer happening over the course of years, but of months. I would bring to Synod Council a longer view of history in the NWOS and a curiosity and creativity for what CAN be in this new age, as God works through us. By uniting as a strong collective of congregations in NWOS, I believe and pray that we will be inspired by the Holy Spirit to go into truly new territory as the Church, even when it means making uncomfortable decisions-focused on reaching beyond our church doors together.

Prior service related to NWOS ministries include: Trinity Seminary Board of Directors and Executive Committee, NWOS Board for Ministry; Synod task force to design policies related to clergy sexual misconduct, Camp Mowana Board of Directors

Synod Council – Rostered Minister from Southwest Conference (3-year term 2021/24)

Nominee: Pastor Robin Owen

Pastor Robin Owen, Wabash Valley Coop

Qualifications and Gifts:

I have been an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament for 22 years, serving congregations in Minnesota, Indiana and now the four congregations of the Wabash Valley Cooperative Ministry in the southwest corner of the synod. Prior to seminary, I was an active lay leader, serving on church council and leading youth ministry. As a pastor, I have been involved in the life of the church beyond my congregations through conference pastor's meetings, conference-level youth activities, teaching lay leaders through the Diakonia program and a predecessor training program in the IK synod, and active involvement in local ministerial associations. At the synod level, I have served on nominating committees, Bishop's advisory committee, synod assembly worship planning, and grant writing and administration of a Lilly Endowment clergy financial grant to reduce student loan debt and encourage financial education in the IK synod. I am currently the president of the Fort Recovery Ministerial Association, which provides emergency assistance, scholarships and ecumenical worship service. I am also an advocate for local, national and global hunger and disaster relief. I bring my years of involvement in small congregations and multi-point parishes and the perspective of rural communities to my work in the larger church, as well as gifts for planning, analytical skills, creativity and grant writing and administration.

Synod Council – Lay Member from Southeast Conference (3-year term 2020/23)

Nominee: Deb Noll

Deb Noll, St. John Cardington

Qualifications and gifts:

Thank you for considering me for the Southeast Conference Lay Representative to Synod Council. I am currently serving in this position and am eager to continue to serve. God has given me the spiritual gifts of faith and discernment which are good gifts to have when serving on Synod Council. Recently I was honored to serve as Synodically Authorized Minister for St. John's, New Washington, and Nazareth, Chatfield, until they filled their pastoral vacancy. In my home congregation I willingly serve as worship assistant and on various committees. I have served on the Synod's Prayer and Worship teams. I have served on the NOW Women of the ELCA and am a voting member to the Churchwide Women of the ELCA convention. I am Vice President of Chester Arbor of the Gleaner Fraternal Society for Morrow and Marion Counties; arbor members faithfully give back to and serve in local communities. Thank you for trusting me to serve God, His people, and our Synod in this capacity.

***filling a partial term due to delayed 2020 Assembly*

Synod Council – Lay Member from Central Conference (3yr term 2020/23)

Nominee: Casey Cox

Casey Cox, First Findlay

Qualifications and Gifts:

I am currently active with the Property Committee and the Finance Committee at my church, First Lutheran, Findlay. I served on Council for several years, serving as President during my term. I was active with our Youth Program and look forward to getting involved again as I have children who will be attending the ELCA Youth Convention. In 2015 I was fortunate enough to be chose as a chaperone for the ELCA Youth Convention in Detroit, where I worshiped with my 3 daughters at the assembly. I Have been serving on Synod Council, as a Central Lay member for the last several years. I have enjoyed being part of this council to help create new ideas and focus on the needs of our area churches. I believe in the future of our churches and I believe it starts with our children. My wife and I currently foster and adopt. We have 14 children! Yes, 14! 2 bio, 9 adopted, and 3 foster. We attend church regularly as a family and sit in the first pew! Everyone gets to enjoy our children!

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Synod Council – Lay Member At Large (3-year term 2020/23)

Nominee: Brent Gardner

Brent Gardner, Zion Sandusky

Qualifications and gifts:

It is truly an honor to have an opportunity to help build the Kingdom. This will be the main task that we all need to focus on a daily basis. I have served multiple terms as a member of the church council, council president, vice president, call committees including chairperson, committee chairs of evangelism, properties, personnel, and youth. As a life-long Lutheran, I have been blessed to have been able to receive a bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University, with a major in Finance and Insurance and Risk Management. I have also been blessed to start an insurance agency with offices in Sandusky, Bellevue, Norwalk, and Willard, and currently serve as president. I have been honored to serve on many local service organizations including Rotary, Erie County Historical Society, The Ohio State Alumni Association, United Way, Erie County Humane Society, and Chambers of Commerce. I have enjoyed serving on the NWOS council for the last several years and look forward to continuing the work of building God's Kingdom.

***filing a partial term due to delayed 2020 Assembly*

Synod Council – Lay Member from Toledo Conference (3-year term 2020/23)

Nominee: Tom Ritter

Tom Ritter, St. Mark Toledo

Qualifications and gifts:

I have been a member of Synod Council as a Lay member since 2015 when I became a member in the Central Conference. Since then, we've moved back to Toledo and I was blessed to be appointed to council in the Toledo conference and have served as such since then. I also serve as council president for St. Mark, Toledo, and am a member of the synod executive committee. I served on the resolutions committee for synod council, attended 2016 Churchwide assembly in New Orleans as a voting member. I have participated in Habitat for Humanity builds and have participated in Findlay's "Backyard Mission Trip." I serve St. Mark, Toledo, as a member of our worship team. Currently serving as a member of the "Adaptive Change Co-Hort" at St. Mark, where we are examining along with other churches across the country how to be church in the 21st century. I bring the love of this church to Synod Council. I do believe that the work done by pastors, deacons, lay leaders, and church members of this synod have the ability to change the world by taking the Good News to the people of this world.

***filing a partial term due to delayed 2020 Assembly*

Synod Council – Rostered Minister from Maumee Valley (3-year term 2020/23)

Nominee: Pastor Mindy Elliot

Pastor Mindy Elliott, St Peter Ridgeville Corners

Qualifications and Gifts:

When asked to complete a vacant Synod Council term, I hesitated before answering. I don't know that I'm qualified. But I will pray about it and ask the Holy Spirit to guide my answer. I accepted the position which has been a learning experience for me.

As far as gifts I possess and bring to the table, I have a passion for: youth ministry, making a difference in the community, serving others through mission trips and outreach, raising up leaders, and following the wind of the Holy Spirit to serve where I am needed.

Congregational, synodical, churchwide and/or community service experience, this is what I have to offer:

I've been a parish pastor for 18 years – serving 2 congregations – 1 larger urban and 1 smaller rural.

- I was a voting member of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.
- I offer pastoral leadership to the Henry County Relay for Life Ridgeville Relayers Team.
- I've led numerous mission trips for junior and senior high youth.
- I've gone on an adult Hurricane relief mission trip to Puerto Rico and organized an adult group to go to Mobile, Alabama through LSS Camp Noah after Hurricane Katrina.
- I served on the Metro-Chicago Youth Ministry Network Leadership Team.
- I served on a Community Organizing Team [AARON] in Aurora, IL dealing with affordable house, gang activity, and educational opportunities for all young people.

The congregation I served was involved with World Relief providing necessary items for refugee and immigrant families resettled in our area. We also staffed an after school program for elementary age students and an ESL program in the evening for adults.

Synod Council – Secretary

(4yr term 2021/25)

Nominee: Tracey Wright

Tracey Wright, Trinity Moulton

Qualifications and Gifts:

I am a 5th generation Lutheran and humbled to be saved by Grace.

I have a long background in listening. I've served as a member and president of our School Board which brings gymnasiums full of people on contentious issues. It also brought individual parents with concerns about their children. I'm not afraid to speak my mind, but I try to keep an open mind and listen to get through the best way we can. You have to communicate why decisions are made and what went into making them.

Whether it is a crowd of people or just one, listening to not only what they say, but the underlying perceptions is crucial to understanding the issues to resolve.

As president of our congregation, we were without a permanent Pastor for the first several years. Once again, listening was vital to discern the true wishes, worries, needs, and concerns of our congregation. It was humbling to realize the faith they had that I could do the right thing in getting a call committee and finally a Pastor to lead us. During this time, I had an opportunity to get to know some of the Synod staff throughout the Call process. They are wonderful people and so patient with my many questions!

I am a responsible person. For example, I've managed people in in our family business, and worked with choir students and parents as the "choir mom" for nearly 20 years at Wapak. If you don't keep your word and do what you say, you lose everything you've tried to do. I work hard to uphold what I say I'll do.

My Grandma always told me to love everyone, but some may be better loved at a distance. To care for those who may not be easy to care for. I've tried to live up to that and know that it's a big, diverse world we live in, and challenges to meet people's needs. Though I like to travel and go out into that world, I love where I live and understand small towns like we have in NW Ohio.

In any organization that I've been involved with, I've tried to take what we are given, and do the best for the most people. Christ leads us to serve others. I would like the chance to serve the people of the Northwest Ohio Synod and work collaboratively with Bishop Daniel and the staff.

**Synod Council – Minority/Non-English Language Member
(3yr term 2021/24)**

Nominee:

**Synod Council – Rostered Minister from Eastern Conference
(3yr term 2021/24)**

Nominee:

Synod Council – Lay Member from North Central Conference (3yr term 2021/24)

Nominee: Clark Price

Clark Price, St Johns Oak Harbor

Qualifications and Gifts:

I graduated from Bowling Green State University College of Business in 1976. Following that I had a 36 year career in the nuclear power industry at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station where I retired from in 2012 as one of the Plant Directors. I currently have the privilege of serving as the President of the congregation for St John's. I have also previously served as Treasurer of the church. Through my years at Davis-Besse, I had the opportunity to rise through the levels of management. Through that I further developed my administrative and management skills, but more importantly, developed leadership skills that allowed me to rise to the level of a plant director. I have had the opportunity to use these skills and my learned experiences with my congregation to help guide, improve and grow the ministries of St John's. I would like the opportunity to share my gifts from God with others in the Synod to help further the mission and ministries of the NOW Synod and it's congregations. I am a charter member and past president of the Oak Harbor Lions Club which provides me another opportunity and way to serve the Oak Harbor community, state, county and international needs. I appreciate your consideration for allowing me to serve on the Synod Council.

Consultation Committee Clergy, At Large (6yr term, 2021/27)

Nominee: Pastor Janine Shearer

Pastor Janine Shearer, Emanuel Napoleon

Qualifications and Gifts:

The greatest joy and challenge of being a pastor is presence on the best and worst days of peoples lives. I believe that the Consultation Committee does just that on a larger scale. I've completed Intentional Interim Training so I have a basic understanding of systems and conflict styles. I am a participant in the Innovator Learning Academy for NW Ohio Synod and have previously served on Synod Council and as a Voting Member for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. I want people to know that they are loved, that they are enough, and that they matter to God and their community and bringing that message to the Consultation Committee would be my primary goal.

Discipline Committee Lay, At Large
(6yr term, 2021/27)

Nominee: Kevin McNeal

Kevin McNeal, First Galion

Qualifications and Gifts:

Past multi term member of the Synod Council, Multi term member and Past President of Church Council, a graduate of the first class of Diakonia students in the Southeastern Conference.

As a lay leader I have learned to look at all decisions from multiple views, and through thoughtful prayer and consideration worked with both my executive team and members of council to make the best decision for the church in today's ever changing climate.