

Associate to the Bishop's Report

August 2026 Executive Committee

CANDIDACY

- We recently had a Candidacy Committee meeting on August 7-8th, held at St. James Lutheran in Kansas City. At that meeting, we met with all of our current candidates, hearing updates, doing Bible study, and make some approval decisions.
- Two people were approved for the ministry of Word & Sacrament:
 - Sarah Freyermuth – She will be staying in Chicago and working as a chaplain for the next year while her partner finishes grad school. She will enter the normal first call process next summer.
 - Sheri Ellwood – Sheri was previously ordained in 2001. She left the roster in 2009 to raise her family and because there were no nearby calls (her husband is a farmer). It was not for any disciplinary reasons. She has since done regular pulpit supply and currently works for KIFA. The Candidacy Committee approved her for Reinstatement to the Roster, which will become official if/when she receives a Synod Council call to ecumenical/inter-religious ministry.
- Currently in Candidacy, we now have:
 - 1 candidate who is needing to do a second internship because the first one didn't go well.
 - 2 candidates who are starting their internships this fall. One in Wisconsin (Ryan Bose), and one (Jennelle Hinck) at First Lutheran in Topeka. Jennelle's will be a two-year part-time internship, which Pr. Jenny Jackson serving as her supervisor.
 - 2 candidates who are on extended, non-traditional timelines.
 - 1 candidate who is starting her 2nd year of seminary classes.
- We will likely have several new candidates to work with at our next meeting, which is December 4.

TRANSITIONS

- Rostered Leaders:
 - As of August 18, we have 5 leaders who have active Rostered Minister Profiles and are searching or open for new calls.
 - Throughout the country, there are 18 pastors who have indicated an openness to explore calls in the Central States Synod. I have spoken to or had contact with each of them.
- Congregations/Parishes:
 - We updated our website and now have a public listing of possible openings, where the congregations are in the transition process, and what they might be looking for. (It is under the “About” tab, then “Transitions”, if you want to check it out.)
 - We currently have 14 congregations that have active Ministry Site Profiles and are searching for new leaders. Because many of those congregations are part of a parish, we are currently searching for:
 - 6 part-time calls
 - 3 full-time calls
 - We have an additional 9 congregations/parishes that are in transition and looking for leadership, partners, or something else, but they haven’t yet completed a Ministry Site Profile.
 - On that webpage, I have also listed some full-time “Circuit Rider Calls”. These are definitely a work in progress and more to stir imagination. If we happen to find a candidate interested in that kind of ministry, my plan would be to work with the congregations in that possible circuit and develop something new just for them.

LAY MINISTRY

- We have rolled out the changes to our PMA program and they seem to have been well-received.
 - I have hosted Zoom sessions with all of our PMAs & Supervisors to bring everyone up to speed.
 - Rich has redesigned our database to now include all of our PMAs and their education information.
 - Tim has redesigned our PMA application process and made it entirely web-based.
 - Supervisors:

- Kristen has identified and set us up with a coaching class through the ELCA that we can use as our supervisor training sessions. I am also taking this class so that I know what it is like and what is being shared. We had 10 pastors originally sign up for the class. Unfortunately, several of them missed classes or couldn't complete them all, and so we will end the class with 4 trained supervisors. We will continue to connect and offer sessions as the ELCA offers them, hopefully eventually getting all of our supervisors trained.
- I think I've identified which of our PMAs don't currently have supervisors, and I will be working over the coming months to connect each PMA with a supervisor. Originally each PMA works with a supervisor, but over time the pastors retire or move on and sometimes the PMA hasn't gotten connected to a new supervisor, which is why a lot of our PMAs don't have supervisors.

OTHER DUTIES/PROJECTS

- **Discernment Events** – This summer we hosted 5 discernment events throughout the synod. I have attached a more detailed report, but overall they went really well.

○ Date	Location	# of participants
June 12-13	St. Louis (LuMin)	10
June 19-20	Ozarks (Our Saviors, Camdenton)	13
June 26-27	Western KS (Trinity, Hays)	6
July 17-18	Central KS (Redeemer, Salina)	15
July 24-25	Kansas City (Gloria Dei)	15
Total		59
- 35 different congregations were represented, including at least 3 non-Lutherans.
- At the end, each person filled out a feedback card. On the feedback card:
 - 15 requested a one-on-one conversation with synod staff for further discernment
 - 17 indicated they would like to apply for the PMA program
 - 5 indicated discernment to rostered ministry
 - I am currently in the process of having all those one-on-one conversations and helping people apply for the PMA program. Our next PMA student cohort will begin in October, so I'm hoping to have a lot of new PMA students.

- Finances:
 - Budget \$5,000 (via a grant from the Mission Endowment Fund)
 - Cost \$4,567.06
 - Participants were not charged anything.
 - In most cases, host churches provided snacks & hospitality items.
 - Most of the cost was spent on breakfast, lunch, and 23 hotel rooms for participants.
- **Synod Confirmation** – We have been working on creating a Synod Confirmation program. It will be open to anyone, but it is particularly designed for those congregations who don't have consistent pastoral leadership and/or very small numbers of students.
 - It will be held via Zoom on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays, from 6:30 – 7:45pm, and primarily taught by Bishop Donna, Kristen and myself. We also hope to recruit some other pastors to be guest teachers.
 - It is a 2-year program, and this year we will begin by teaching the Small Catechism. Next year we will cover the Bible.
 - Each student will receive a kit in the mail with all necessary books & materials. We are charging \$100/student to cover these costs. Either the church or the family will be responsible for paying for their student to participate.
 - We also hope to offer a couple retreats, camps, or in-person options for the kids throughout the year, but the details of those are still being worked out.
 - Class will begin September 3rd.
- **Central Kansas Interfaith Justice Organization (CKIJO)** – I have been serving as the Co-President of the CKIJO for this past year. We are working to build a coalition of congregations who can use their people & organizing power to effect justice for communities in central Kansas (Newton, Hutchinson, Salina, Junction City, Manhattan, Wamego, and places in between). This organization is nationally affiliated with DART (Direct Action & Research Training Center).
 - We currently have 25 congregations set to officially join the organization at our Covenant Assembly in October (two of which are ELCA). At that point, my term as co-president will end as they elect local leadership.
- **Great Rivers Collaborative** – As I reported last time, I've been working with Rob Corrothers as a consultant to the various congregations within the northern parts of St. Louis, which is a group called the Great Rivers Collaborative. There are 5-7 churches in this group. They all have various, but significant challenges right now, and most of them are currently without a full-time called pastor. My hope was that, as a consultant, Rob & his group could spend time with each of these congregations and offer some creative solutions. This did not go well or as planned. After a couple

initial presentations, the congregations were reluctant to work with Rob. He did work with one of the congregations and wrote up a report, but that report was not well-received. We have decided to discontinue this consulting effort.

- Two of the congregations in the GRC have opted for holy closure.
- Since the last Synod Executive Council meeting, I have preached/led worship in the following congregations:
 - May 17 St. Mark, Great Bend, KS
 - May 24 Reformation, Wichita, KS
 - June 14 Atonement, Florissant, MO
 - June 21 St. Mark, Atchison, KS
 - June 27-28 St. John, Salina, KS
 - July 5 Our Savior's, Jefferson City, MO
 - July 12 St. James, Kansas City, MO (taught Sunday school)
 - July 19 Peace Parish (Courtland, Scandia & Belleville, KS)

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Chad Langdon,
Associate to the Bishop*