MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT
CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES OF ORDINATION

The Reverend Leslie E. Niemi – 65 Years
Pastor Leslie E. Niemi was born in Munising, Michigan on February 25, 1931 and grew to adulthood in the South Chatham area known as Cold Springs, near his grandfather’s dairy farm. His parents were Edward Niemi and Pearl (nee Sipila) Niemi, his father being a premier county carpenter and builder.

Les was baptized in downtown Eben on Farm Luoma by the Rev. Dr. Antti Kononen and confirmed at what is today called Calvary Lutheran Church in Eben, with Pastor Hugo Hillila in a class of 21. At Superior Central, Les was a 49-er. He enrolled at Suomi College (Now Finlandia) and Theological Seminary. He was ordained at St. Mark’s Church in Waukegan, IL on June 20, 1954. He married twice, to Betty Sjostrand, RN who died in 1981, and to Marcia Belmas-Ericson.

For 29 years, he was pastor of three parishes: Ewen-Trout Creek, Republic-Champion-Michigamme, and Munising, all in the Upper Peninsula. He served as the Director of Special and Planned Giving for 12 years at Finlandia University, from which post he retired in 1994. It was a bi-lingual ministry which included a prison chaplaincy and experimenting with community development under The Partnership Conference, which spread to three counties and emphasized parish dynamics encompassing inner faith and outer service. Pastor Niemi also served Eden, Munising and together they carried out a rather successful vacationer ministry. For the past twenty years, Les has assisted in stewardship at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Lake Havasu and served on the (retirement) caring committee of the Grand Canyon Synod. He once served on the Commission on Youth Activities of the Lutheran Church in America, and the Suomi Conference.

The Reverend Ingmar L. Levin – 65 Years
Pastor Ingmar L. Levin was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1926 to Lorits and Hulda Levin. He immigrated to the United States in November 1926, settling in Worcester, MA. He graduated from North High School in 1944 and was drafted into the US Army in November of 1944. He served 21 months Germany, being discharged in September of 1946. He graduated from Upsala College in East Orange, NJ with a BA degree in philosophy. He continued his education at Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, IL. He interned at First Lutheran Church in Kansas City, MO and graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1954. He was ordained in June of 1954. Pastor Levin’s first call was to St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Ansonia, CT.

He married Betty Nelson of Ingalls, MI on August 27, 1955. She was a graduate of Augustana Hospital’s School of Nursing with a R.N. degree and graduated from Augustana College in Rock Island, IL with a Bachelor of Science degree. Betty died in 2003. They have two children, Linda, a retired special education teacher living in Manistique, MI and Karl (wife, Angela), a social worker at DaVita Kidney Dialysis Center in Frankfort, IL. He has two grandchildren, Kirsten Levin Billings of Bettendorf, IA and Kyle Levin of Manistique, MI. He also has a great granddaughter, Audrey Levin, of Manistique, MI.

Pastor Levin served St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Ansonia, CT, Zion Lutheran Church of Manistique, MI and Bethany Lutheran Church of Isabella, MI. He retired in 1991. During retirement, he served ten interims in the eastern Upper Peninsula. He taught church history and preaching in the Lay School for Missions program, he served as district dean and served on the Fortune Lake Board for 13 years.

In the community of Manistique, he served as president of the Manistique Area Schools Board of Education for 17 years and chair of the Schoolcraft County Mental Health Board for 11 years. He was vice-chair of the Menominee-Delta-Schoolcraft Community Action Agency and chair of the Manistique Charter Revision Board. He served as a reader for the first and fifth graders at Fairview Elementary School. He has been named Citizen of the Year three times and also as Manistique’s Folk Hero. He has been a Boy Scout leader for 50 years. In Boy Scouting, he earned the Silver Beaver and Woodbadge Award. He is a member of the Order of the Arrow and Order of the Axe of the Bay-Lakes Boy Scout Council.
The Reverend Rell D. Spickerman – 55 Years

Pastor Rell Spickerman was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Fred and Violet Spickerman. He was baptized and confirmed at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI. Pastor Spickerman graduated from Capital University, Columbus, Ohio with a B.A.; graduated from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN with an M.Div.; then graduated from the State University of New York at Stonybrook, MSW. He did his post-graduate work at The Westchester Institute of Counseling and Psychotherapy.

Pastor Rell is married to Louise Marie Spickerman and they have four children: Soren, Jennifer, Dietrich, and Siri; and 6 grandchildren: Ben, Lars, Arnold, Drake, Aubrey, and Bryan.

Congregations and special ministries:

- The Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, MN
- Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Miami and Miami Dade Jr. College
- Peace Lutheran Church, Bohemia, Long Island, NY
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Rocky Point, Long Island, NY
- Lutheran Social Services, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (Area Director)
- Big Bay Community Presbyterian Church, Big Bay, MI
- Mission Developer and 1st Pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Satsuma, FL
- Salem Lutheran Church, Ironwood, MI
- Prince of Peace, Marquette, MI (Interim Ministry)
- St. John’s Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls, IA (Senior Interim)
- Holden and Dale Parish, Kenyon, MN (Interim)
- St. Mark’s Lutheran, Marquette, MI (Interim)
- Bethany Lutheran, Negaunee MI (Interim)
- Grace Lutheran, Gwinn, MI (Interim)
- Faith Lutheran, Rock, MI (Interim)
- First Lutheran, Trenary, MI (Interim)

Pastor Rell was one of the first pastors in the former American Lutheran Church to develop a “tent-making” ministry by serving Trinity Lutheran Church and working full time in the department of clinical psychology at Suffolk Psychiatric Center, Central Islip, New York where he was designated head of the department of psychology.

When he was the Area Director of Lutheran Social Services of Upper Michigan for 17 years he was instrumental in establishing 3 Housing and Urban Development Living Facilities: two for low income elderly and one for low income developmentally disabled; saw that the Upper Michigan office became licensed to do Foster Care, Open Adoptions and International Adoptions; started Voices For Youth, a crisis intervention program for Homeless Youth via a grant from the Kellogg Foundation; was co-creator of the Options (Career Development) Program; and established four counseling sites throughout Upper Michigan. While employed full time at LSS Rell also served as pulpit supply minister for 17 years at the Community Presbyterian Church in Big Bay, Michigan.


Prior to retirement, he was a volunteer chaplain member on the Superior Home Nursing and Hospice team. He has been called upon by Catholic Social Services to assist with some counseling casework and to co-lead an anger management group; and by the Ironwood Crisis Intervention Team to assist families who are having a catastrophic reaction to the sudden death of a family member. He has also taught the course in Pastoral Care at several Northern Great Lakes Synod Lay Institute locations. He was a Board member of “Honoring Health Care Choices.”
The Reverend Paul J. Raappana – 50 Years
Pastor Paul J. Raappana was born at home in Baltic, Michigan to Clara and Einar Raappana, and was baptized in the parish of Grace Lutheran Church in South Range, Michigan. His father died a year later. His mother later married Leo Okkonen who was the only father he ever knew. He was confirmed at Siloa Church in Ontonagon.

Pastor Raappana attended Suomi College, now Finlandia University, received a Bachelor’s degree from Northern Michigan University and an MDiv from Lutheran School of theology at Chicago. He was ordained on June 29, 1969, the day of Saints Peter and Paul, by the Rev. Dr. Theodore Matson at Grace in South Range, where Dale Skogman was pastor. Pastor Martin Halinen was his sponsor. He has served in the following parishes: the Palmer Lutheran Parish, a three-point of Concordia/Palmer, Our Saviours/Suomi Location, and Faith/National Mine; Faith/Sault Ste. Marie; Salem/Shell Lake, Wisconsin; and St. James/Rudyard. He is married to Sandee Koski Raappana and they have a daughter, Saara Raappana, who is married to Eric Doise.

In his retirement, he enjoys providing pulpit supply, teaching tai chi and painting icons.

The Reverend Maxine D. Gray – 25 Years
Pastor Maxine D. Gray was born in another era of hard-working parents who were shy and private. To have her pursue such public careers was a wonderment to them. Since they were on the road, she was born in Sioux Falls, SD. Then, on the way to Milwaukee, where they spent a few years, she was baptized at St. Ansgar’s Lutheran Church in Cannon Falls, MN. Her mother’s family had farmed in the area and that was her home congregation. Her family landed in Hopkins, MN so she could stay in one school system. Pastor Gray was confirmed at Fairview Luth Church and graduated from Hopkins High School in 1970. She married Lloyd Gray and they attended Concordia College in St Paul, MN. She anticipated teaching school but was enticed into their DCE program and interned at Maplewood, MN with Kermit Lauterbach who also later became an ELCA pastor. She served 15 years in Lutheran Church Missouri Synod congregations as a Christian Education Director and Youth worker: first, north of Detroit, MI for 5 ½ years; in Omaha, NE for 6 ½ years; and an interim for a congregation in Council Bluffs, IA. While in Omaha, their daughter, Adrien, was born, in 1982. The Grays returned to MN where Maxine worked part-time at St. Ansgar’s (yes, that same place she was baptized) and attended Luther Seminary. Her internship churches were a consortium of 2-point parishes. So she preached nearly every week, taught confirmation at one parish, youth work at another, visitation wherever, had a mobile office out of her car, and had a great time. This was in the very Norwegian communities around Kenyon, MN.

In 1994, she graduated in May and started her first call in June. Pastor Gray’s predecessor and his family became missionaries in Africa. This two-point in Camp Douglas, WI had no break in pastoral service, for he left one week and she started the next. The congregations would host celebrations for them whenever they returned on furloughs. After 12 years, Pastor Gray took her present call to Calvary in Minocqua. Her granddaughter, Carmen, was born there seven years ago. It has been a busy life. She has worked with a variety of local programs to serve the disadvantaged and taught lots of lay school classes.
MINISTER OF WORD AND SERVICE CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARY OF CONSECRATION

Lenora I. Tahtinen – 25 Years
Lenora (Nora) I. Tahtinen was born in January of 1941 in Fowler, Colorado to Norwegian, immigrant farmer, Jacob Hansen and Elizabeth Hansen. She was baptized and confirmed at Trinity Lutheran in Fowler; graduated from Fowler Public Schools and Pacific Lutheran University. After college, Nora married Pastor Roy Tahtinen and became a parent to Sarah (Administrator, Bethel Univ. St Paul, MN) and Timothy (Pastor in Milwaukee, WI); and a grandmother to Hannah, Grace, Jonathon, & Isabella.

Nora taught in public school in Illinois, Nebraska, and Minnesota. For years, she volunteered in churches with youth and in 1979 began working as a Youth & Family Ministry Director at Grace in South Range and in 1988 to All Saints in Wakefield.

In 1990, Nora became the NGLS Youth Ministry coordinator. She visited NGLS churches to help establish or revitalize youth ministries, coordinated camp retreats, provided training for Youth Ministry leaders (YM), created a YARP team (Young Adult Resource Persons) and wrote a monthly newsletter for YM leaders. She was in the first graduating class of the NGLS Lay School for Mission in 1993 and then became a teacher at Lay School. On May 19, 1994, she was commissioned as an Associate in Ministry (AIM) which now is known as a Minister of Word and Service.

Nora served on the following boards: Lutheran Youth Encounter, Fortune Lake Camp, Youth Services Bureau, Northern Michigan University Campus Ministry, and Wartburg Seminary Youth Ministry.

In 1999, she became a member of Faith Inkubators’ staff, assisting Rich Melheim, traveling, training and writing.

She retired in 2005, after Roy’s death, and lives in Bay Town Township, MN. She is still working as a volunteer with youth at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Bay Port, MN.
MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT
RETIRING SINCE LAST SYNOD ASSEMBLY

The Reverend Micheal V. Laakko – Retirement
Pastor Micheal Victor Laakko was the long-answered prayer of his mother Vera and father Emil Laakko. He was born in Hancock, Michigan on November 13, 1948. As a child, his first faith experiences were on the lap of a mother who truly understood the love of a living God through Jesus Christ. He was baptized, confirmed and ordained at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Mass City, Michigan.

Pastor Laakko graduated from Mass City High School in 1966. After a year of employment in Detroit, he enlisted into the United States Air Force. He served from 1967 to 1971, which included a year in Vietnam. While in Vietnam, an earlier calling into the ministry once again surfaced. Micheal started on that path at Suomi College, Hancock, Michigan in 1972. He married Denise Harry on October 55, 1974 and finished his last two years at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1976. He earned his Master of Divinity Degree from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, graduating in May of 1980 and was ordained from his home congregation of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church on June 15, 1980. Pastor Laakko was called to serve four congregations in the Northern Great Lakes Synod. He was an associate pastor at Bethel Lutheran Church in Ishpeming, Michigan from 1980 to 1986, and pastor at Mission United Lutheran Church in Pelkie, Michigan from 1986 to 2004. From 2004 to 2018, Pastor Laakko served as pastor at United Lutheran Church in Crystal Falls, Michigan; and at Bethany Lutheran Church in Amasa, Michigan, in a joint parish setting from 2014 to 2018.

Pastor Mike and Denise were blessed with three children: Adam (Stacey), Anna Abdo (Andrew), Allison (Josh Malerman), and four grandchildren: Andres Abdo, Alessandra Abdo, Chase Laakko and London Laakko.

Pastor Laakko is an avid sportsman, enjoying hunting, fishing, biking, hiking and mushrooming. He is looking forward to spending time with his family and celebrating life by finding new adventures. He and Denise have been truly blessed and enriched by being part of the Community of Believers and are thankful for the journey to continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in retirement.
DECEASED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT
SINCE LAST SYNOD ASSEMBLY

The Reverend Norman E. Lund

"None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.
If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord;
So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s." - Romans 14:7-8

We give thanks to God and celebrate the life and ministry of Norman Lund who died Tuesday, June 26, 2018, at the Omega House in Houghton following a lengthy illness.

Pastor Norman E. Lund was born on March 22, 1925 in Houghton, Michigan. He wrote in his 65th ordination anniversary biography in 2016, “March 22, 1925 was the first day that radio was broadcast in Japan. This was quite fitting as my life in Japan had many associations with radio broadcasting.”

He was discharged from the Navy and enrolled in Suomi Theological Seminary where he earned a Bachelor of Divinity Degree in 1951. He was ordained and commissioned that same year.

In 1956, Pastor Norman married Wenona Strandlie and together they raised four boys and served many years as missionaries in Japan. He was asked to co-host a daily “call-in” show in 1975 with a talented and gifted Yoko Okuaki. Pastor Lund wrote, “My role as a pastor was clear and my opinions of Japan and my home country were skillfully explored by my co-host. The notoriety and interest led to cultural and student exchange programs and my contributions (to the prefecture) were recognized with the ‘Beneficial Person Award’. I am only the third foreigner to receive this honor.”

Pastor Lund retired in 1990 and he and his family moved back to the United States and settled in Gladstone for 20 years. From there, he and Wenona moved to Bluff Senior Living community in Houghton, Michigan.

A memorial celebration of Pastor Lund’s life took place at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Hancock, Michigan on Sunday, July 8, 2018. Peace be to his memory!
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Larry Pagel .................. Treasurer

Rev. Bill Jacobson .................. Member, Synod Council
Rev. David Tielbar ........ Member, Synod Council

The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
(S10.03.)
· Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of the Synod.
· Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.
· Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.
· Provide for an annual review of the roster of ordained ministers and the roster of associates in ministry and make appropriate recommendations to the Synod regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.
· Issue letters of call to ordained ministers and letters of appointment to associates in ministry, consecrated deacons and deaconesses, commissioned teachers, and certified or commissioned lay professionals as authorized by Chapter 10 of the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.
· Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of the Synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of the Synod.
· Reports its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
· Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of the Synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.
NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD
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REPORT OF THE CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

This past year, the Northern Great Lakes Synod Candidacy Committee held three meetings. All of them were Bi-Synodical meetings held with the Candidacy Committee of The East Central Synod of Wisconsin. Our first meeting of the year took place on April 19 through 21 and was part of a candidacy retreat held at St. Anthony’s Retreat Center in Marathon City, WI. The second meeting took place on August 15th at Grace Lutheran Church in Tomahawk, WI. The final meeting of 2018 was held on Friday, December 7th, at First English Lutheran Church on Ballard Rd. in Appleton, WI. Joan Johanson, from the East Central Synod of Wisconsin, is the chair of the Bi-Synodical Candidacy Committee. The main job of the Committee at these meetings is panel interviews with candidates from either synod who are at various points in the candidacy process. These panels are either Entrance panels for candidates who are becoming candidates for rostered leadership, or Approval panels for those who are completing the process. Occasionally there are special panels for candidates who may need them. We also receive reports of Endorsement panels that are usually held at the seminary the candidate is attending. If travel to the seminary is prohibitive, a video conference call is used.

In 2018, there were no candidates from the NGLS who entered into the candidacy process. Kelly Ylitalo, a member of Gloria Dei in Hancock, was given Endorsement to continue the candidacy process as was Carolyn Lawrence, a member of United in Crystal Falls. Kate Drefke, a member of Good Shepherd in Peshtigo, was approved for ordination at our August meeting. We have four other candidates from our Synod who are advancing in the candidacy process. They are: Katelin Bingner, a member of Messiah in Marquette; Micah Cavalieri, a member of Good Shepherd in Houghton; Sarah Sleeter, a member of Calvary in Quinnesec; and Pat Kempf, a member of Christ the King in Escanaba.

We have at least two candidates that are actively preparing for Entrance into Candidacy and a few others who are in discernment, but obviously, with no candidates entering this year we need more. I strongly invite parish pastors and lay leaders to be a voice of encouragement to individuals in your congregation that you believe have the gifts for rostered ministry. We all need to be regularly reminded that each of us has a critical role in the call that people experience to rostered ministry and we play a vital first step in the candidacy process. Who is it within your congregation that you think has the gifts for ordained/rostered ministry? Please talk with her/him about it. Your encouragement is very important.

The following are the NGLS members of the Candidacy Committee: Rev. David Murphy, Rev. Scott Ehle, Andy Hill, Vicki Lempinen, Dirk Manson, and Bishop Rev. Katherine Finegan. It is indeed a privilege to serve with these talented and insightful individuals, along with the members of the Candidacy Committee of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin. I have just completed my seventh year as chair of the NGLS Candidacy Committee. I work closely with Bishop Finegan and I’m grateful for all that she does as a contact person and advocate for the candidates in our Synod.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Keith A. Kolstad
Candidacy Committee Chair
REPORT OF THE COMPANION SYNOD COMMITTEE

God calls us into the world---together. In our relationship with the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, God helps us see God’s mighty hand at work and calls us to deepen our own commitment to being members of the body of Christ in the world. Since 1963, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) has grown from 500,000 members to 6.1 million. Wow! About 13% of the population is ELCT. That means the ELCT is twice the size of our ELCA. Thank you, Jesus, for your mighty acts!

CONGREGATION TO CONGREGATION COMPANIONS: Presently 12 congregations in our synod have a companion congregation in Tanzania. Interactions include prayer, internet and skype communications, and members going to Africa or hosting folks from their partner parish. Gloria Dei and Finlandia hosted members from the Tembeke congregation in the fall. Immanuel, Negaunee hosted visitors from their Yombo congregation in September and Trinity, Ishpeming had a personal visit from their Tabata congregation.

One congregation is desiring a companion from our synod. Is Christ calling you to be the answer to their request? Thanks to Jean Hannemann for being our coordinator for 14 years and thanks to Judy Quirk for taking over this responsibility. Contact Judy!

ALWAYS BEING MADE NEW FUNDS: As a result of this 2017 appeal, a total of $5,960 was awarded to our Companionship Committee and spent as follows: $1,000 to Bethany, Escanaba to being a new relationship; $1,000 to Immanuel, Negaunee for the Yombo visit; $1,000 to Zion, Manistique for van transportation and crosses; $500 to the Synod Women’s Organization for projects at the Mkuza Girls’ School; and $2,403 remains available to help establish future efforts.

FINLANDIA SERVICE AND LEARNING VISIT: Seven students (U3 nursing, 4 non-nursing), along with the assistant athletic director, Mark Miron and leader Rene Johnson, experienced Tanzania from May 1 to May 21, 2018. This was Finlandia’s thirteenth year of exposing youth to the culture and medical environment of Tanzania.

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT IN TANZANIA: Bishop Katherine attended the conference which was held in Moshi to address relationships between the United States synods and the various diocese in Tanzania. She was the only female bishop there. The request is that when folks from the United States visit Tanzania, that we make an appointment with our American Embassy to urge the Tanzania government to allow travel to our churches as it is increasingly difficult for Tanzania members to receive visas.

LOOKING AHEAD: Finlandia is taking students for the fourteenth time in May 2019. Also happening in 2019, a dental/medical group will be going and Messiah, Marquette will send a delegation. Assistant to the Bishop Jim Duehring will make an official visit in 2020. It is our goal to have another youth group journey to the Eastern and Coastal Diocese. If you have interest in participating or have an idea to share, please contact us.

In Christ,
Rev. Bob Langseth, Chair
ELCA Fund for Leaders
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God’s work. Our hands.

REPORT TO THE 2019 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
OF THE NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

Thank you to the people of Northern Great Lakes Synod for making an investment in the future of the church through the ELCA Fund for Leaders. We are grateful for your partnership!

In the 2018-2019 academic year, ELCA Fund for Leaders provided more than $2.6 million in support to more than 250 future deacons and pastors. Thank you for your role in ensuring these future leaders can be freed from debt so they can go and serve as the church needs and the Holy Spirit leads.

Students supported in 2018-2019
We are grateful that the Northern Great Lakes Synod Fund for Leaders in Mission has provided a total of $258,815.02 in scholarship awards since its inception. During the 2018-2019 academic year, you provided a total of $34,400.00 in scholarship support to:

*Katelin Bingner - $5,733.33 - Wartburg Theological Seminary
*Micah Cavaleri - $5,733.33 - Luther Seminary
*Patrick Kempf - $5,733.33 - Luther Seminary
*Carolyn Lawrence - $5,733.33 - Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
*Sarah Sleeter - $5,733.33 - Wartburg Theological Seminary
*Kelly Ylitalo - $5,733.33 - Wartburg Theological Seminary

Additional information about your fund:

Northern Great Lakes Synod Fund for Leaders in Mission
Current market value: $296,489.77
New gifts given to your fund in 2018: $33,265.62

NGLS-First Ev Lutheran Church, Iron Mountain-FLIM
Current market value: $26,534.51
New gifts given to your fund in 2018: $0.00

Northern Great Lakes Synod Skogman Family - FLIM
Current market value: $132,569.91
New gifts given to your fund in 2018: $1,620.55
Northern Great Lakes Synod Kemppainen Family-FLIM
Current market value: $69,358.57
New gifts given to your fund in 2018: $150.02

Northern Great Lakes Synod-United Lutheran Church of Crystal Falls
Current market value: $5,300.96
New gifts given to your fund in 2018: $0.00

NGLS-Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Menominee, MI - FLIM
Current market value: $52,993.77
New gifts given to your fund in 2018: $0.00

Northern Great Lakes Synod-Bethel Lutheran Church-FLIM
Current market value: $73,169.84
New gifts given to your fund in 2018: $0.00

Total Award Amount available for 2019-2020
For the 2019-2020 academic year, you can award $31,200.00. We have calculated this number conservatively to ensure that all promised scholarships can be paid during both semesters, even if the market fluctuates.

For more information please visit ELCA Fund for Leaders or call our office at 800-638-3522, ext. 2936. Again, thank you to the people of Northern Great Lakes Synod for your generous support – we thank God for you!

In Christ,

Jessica Nipp Hacker
Director, ELCA Stewardship Strategy and Operations
REPORT OF THE ENDOWMENT FUND

There was some good news and some bad news for the work of the Endowment Fund (EF) in 2018 – mostly good news. Getting the bad news out of the way first, we are sorry to report that Tim Knutson, our ELCA Regional Gift Planner, left that position to accept a new role as Director of Panned Giving at Carthage College. While that is good news for Carthage College and for Tim, it is bad for us. He will be difficult to replace and sorely missed. Congratulations to Tim and a huge thanks for all he has done on our behalf.

On the good news side, a total of $94,705 was distributed from the Endowment Fund to twelve (12) recipients in 2018. That is up $2,845 from the $91,860 distributed in 2017. $25,000 was from restricted funds (6.4% of the assets) and $69,705 from restricted funds. This distribution increase was a blessing in spite of a decrease in the value of the Fund at the end of the fiscal year. The 2018 Endowment Fund year-end total was $1,985,591 compared to the 2017 balance of $2,149,436. The list of 2018 recipients and the amounts received are appended, as a separate sheet, and included as part of this report.

Perhaps the best news for the EF last year was a shift from what the Endowment Funds IS to what it DOES. The creation of a new EF brochure and with Bishop Finegan’s urging, provided the impetus to rename the NGLSynod Endowment Fund (EF) to the NGLSynod Endowment Ministry (EM). This shift allows the Fund to “come alive” as an action rather than a static repository of money. What the money is able to do has become the lens through which we can see, more clearly, our stewardship mission.

The new Endowment Ministry flyer seeks to provide enhanced information about the ministry, highlights various giving options, testimonials from fund recipients and various vehicles for giving, including direct deposit.

The board continues to look for ways to promote planned giving with a particular focus going into 2019 o asking people to contribute to the UNRESTRICTED fund account. 2018 also saw a renewed commitment to helping local congregations establish their own endowment funds.

The synod as been so blessed and thankful to those who have preceded us who had the vision to establish and perpetuate, what has now become, the Endowment Ministry. Thanks to Bishop Finegan and the current board members for their ongoing e4wardship of these important resources.

Respectfully submitted and In Christ,
Dirk Manson
Endowment Ministry Board Chair
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Endowment Fund Distribution – Unrestricted
2018

Unrestricted Assets to determine distribution:
Average Market Value 2014-2018 is $393,806.42

$10,000  Pastor’s Debt Retirement
Now in its 16th year, grants are made to rostered persons who have debt incurred while they were in
seminary seeking their first theological degree. In 2018, 16 persons benefitted from payments made
directly to the holder of the student debt. Due to the generosity of anonymous donor, an additional
$600 was distributed to each applicant in 2017 and again in 2018. A grant of $600 per applicants
anticipated in 2019.

$3,000  Bay College Campus Ministry
Bay College has an innovative ecumenical ministry which all our Delta Conference congregations
support. A part-time campus pastor serves and receives very modest funding. This disbursement helps
make a Christian presence on campus possible.

$3,000  Lake Superior State University/Faith Lutheran Church, Sault Ste. Marie
In 2017, this disbursement began a campus ministry through Faith Lutheran Church in Sault Ste. Marie,
Michigan for students at Lake Superior State University. We have committed to three years of support
for this ministry. The congregation is taking the lead in this effort.

$4,000  Bishop’s Participation in Leadership Summit – August 2018
On August 6-10, 2018, the ELCA and ELCT gathered synod bishops and leaders from Tanzania and the
United States to review what has been learned in our companion relationships, what are best practices,
and determine future goals. No congregational mission support (regular offerings) funded this ministry.
This grant made Bishop Finegan’s attendance at the Summit possible. Her husband, Dave joined her at
his own expense.

$2,500  Mission Interpreter Initiative
In an effort to communicate the blessings and ministry work of our partnership together as a Synod, and
our contributions to the mission of Christ through the ELCA, a new initiative has train leaders to share
this important story with congregations throughout the NGLS.

$2,000  Lay School for Mission
Now in five possible locations (St. Ignace, Minocqua, Hancock, Escanaba, and Marquette), our Lay
School trains over 40 adults per year in the work of the church. Students study scripture, church
theology and history, pastoral care, and Christian education. This grant supports expenses for this
ministry.

$500  Leadership Support
Every two years our Synod has been pleased to sponsor a retreat on Mackinac Island for our Rostered
Leaders, Pastors, and Licensed lay Ministers. This disbursement will made a down payment possible for
a fall 2019 retreat, sponsored jointly with the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and the Southeast
Michigan Synod.

Total 2018 Distribution: $25,000 (6.4% of unrestricted assets)
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Endowment Fund Distribution – Restricted
2018

Restricted Assets: $1,724,658.68 (January 31, 2018 balance)
ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust & InFaith Community Foundation

$37,925  Seminarian Scholarships
Preparing the next generation of pastoral leaders is an important part of the Synod’s work. Students from synod congregations benefit from our various endowments. For the 2018-19 academic year, each full-time student will receive $10,000. Our synod stands as the most generous synod in the ELCA in the support of seminarians.

$6,430  Tanzania Scholarships
Restricted giving by a donor has made it possible to support members of the Church in Tanzania pursue their learning at the Kisarawe Lutheran Junior Seminary and higher education at Tumaini University in Tanzania.

$12,250  Rural Ministry
Restricted giving by donors makes it possible to support our synod work. Programs throughout our synod benefit from this gift including seminary candidacy, outreach and leadership support.

$11,500  St. Mark’s, Marquette Legacy Endowment Fund
Distributions from this fund which was created following the closure of the congregation will support the ministries of Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp, Finlandia University, ELCA Seminaries/Seminarians, Synod Mission Support, and Room at the Inn/Warming Center.

$1,600  Bishop Thomas and Luanne Skrenes Fund for Ministry
Annual distributions from this newest Endowment fund will support the clergy of our synod through debt retirement, as well as ministries with our Companion Synod: the Eastern & Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Anticipated 2018 Total Distribution from Restricted Funds - $69,705

2018 Total Distribution: $94,705
REPORT OF THE LAY SCHOOL FOR MISSION BOARD

The pattern that existed for the NGLS Lay School last year has persisted as several sites continue to experience lower numbers of students and difficulty in finding teachers. While disappointing, such ups and downs have been a feature of Lay School from the beginning. In the past, eventually new students have emerged and we pray that will again be the case. An unusually high number of pastoral transitions resulting in many pastors serving as interims for other congregations has made finding teachers more challenging. Hopefully that situation too will settle down and more pastors will be available to teach.

That’s the bad news, but there is good news too! In Marquette, all the fall and winter/spring classes have been offered and all have been well attended although the weather has created problems. I’m appreciative of everyone who has taught but special thanks to Allan Johnson, Doug Norquist and Steve Solberg who have done more than their share over the past couple of years while the conference has experienced a high number of pastoral vacancies. Thanks as well to coordinators Pastor Devon Barrix (Minocqua), Steve Gauger (Escanaba), Soren Schmidt (Hancock), and David Tielbar (St. Ignace) who continue to keep the Lay School torch burning at their sites.

Being realistic about the struggles of the past couple of years, we may be at a point where a new vision for Lay School needs to be explored. The current format has worked very well since Lay School started back in 1992. The curriculum has evolved but the basic structure has remained the same with multiple sites and pastors providing the majority of the instruction. With the evolution of technology and distance learning opportunities, our ELCA seminaries are considering ways to provide quality theological education for lay people. As a synod, we hope to be part of that conversation to discern if such a partnership would be viable in our setting. As I write this, a discussion of these possibilities is in its infancy so immediate changes are not likely, but stay tuned.

Across the church, the importance of theological education for all of the baptized is recognized. To be effective in mission we have to know who we are as ELCA Lutheran Christians. In our synod, Lay School has been a big part of that education and many have benefitted and continue to benefit from what is offered. Despite the challenges of the past couple of years, I am confident that in one form or another, this will continue to be the case.

Pastor Warren Geier, Lay School Dean and Marquette Site Coordinator
REPORT OF THE LEADERSHIP SUPPORT COMMITTEE

The Synod Leadership Support Committee is responsible for supporting Rostered Leaders and Licensed Lay Ministers as they engage in their ministry. We plan and provide opportunities and resources for wholeness of life and continuing education. We hope to encourage and enhance spiritual, emotional, and mental health among our Synod’s ministry leaders.

We have joyfully welcomed several new pastors to our Synod since our last Assembly. We have said good-bye to a few others and wish them God’s continued blessings. Interim Pastors have been diligent in working with congregations in transition between called rostered leaders.

Our Committee has continued to encourage mentoring relationships among rostered leaders, especially those in the first three years of rostered ministry. Pastor Jay Welshonse serves as our liaison to the First Call Theological Education planning team. We support Bishop Katherine Finegan as she works with mobility and matching ministry leaders with congregations in need, as well as supporting the efforts to aid in debt relief for Rostered Leaders within our Synod. Pastor Bill Jacobson prepared a draft of the 2020 Compensation Guidelines, which our committee reviewed before passing it along to our Synod Council. We are very grateful to Pastor Bill who has faithfully prepared such drafts over the past several years.

Events for continuing education and spiritual growth since our last assembly included:
- Several “Dry Bones” events at various congregations throughout our Synod
- Walking Together events in each Conference, in connection with Conference meetings
- A Gathering for Retired Rostered Leaders
- First Call Theological Education Event in November 2018
- Clergy Spouse Retreat in February 2019
- Professional Leaders’ Event in February 2019
- Fall Theological Conference/Retreat for all Clergy, LLM’s, and Spouses in October 2019

As we look ahead to the next year, our Synod Staff continue to work with congregations for renewal and spiritual growth. We are excited to be coordinating with two other synods in planning the bi-annual retreat at Mackinac Island for Fall 2019. Other upcoming opportunities include: Walking Together Events in conjunction with each fall Conference Assembly, Faithful Innovations training for laity and rostered leaders, a First Call Theological Education Event in November 2019, the annual Rostered Leaders Retreat in February 2020, a Gathering for Retired Rostered Leaders, the annual Clergy Spouses’ Retreat, and Boundaries Workshops which are offered within our Synod on a two-year rotation.

Many thanks to current committee members for their work: Pastor John Ansell, Bishop Katherine Finegan, Pastor Bill Jacobson (Secretary), Kaaren Ness, Pastor Kay Richter (Chair), and Pastor Jay Welshonse (liaison to FCTE).

Special Thanks to Pastor Mike Laakko who served as chair of our Committee and has moved on to the new adventure of being retired, and to Pastor Jim Duehring who has stepped up to help when Bishop Finegan was away at church-wide and world-wide events representing our Synod and the ELCA.

Respectfully Submitted by
Pastor Kay Richter, Chair
The Prayfaithfully website was designed to enhance the devotional life of its readers and lift up the importance of prayer for ourselves, our congregations and our Synod. Along with a daily devotion, the website offers a monthly prayer calendar, the opportunity to make prayer requests, a weekly breath prayer, and congregational resources. We offer our deepest thanks to Paul Mencinger at JrWebWorks, who does a wonderful job of maintaining this site.

The daily devotions continue to be the most accessed page on our Synod website. We are truly grateful to the many people who wrote devotions in 2018. Members of the Synod Women’s Organization, one Lay School class, Fortune Lake Camp staff, and 42 individuals blessed us with thoughtful, challenging and inspiring words. Our daily devotions would not exist without volunteer writers. Thank you for sharing your gifts in this way!

Volunteers to write future devotions are needed and appreciated! Individuals, couples, confirmation classes, men’s or women’s groups – clergy or lay – please contact me at the Synod office if you would be willing to write one week (seven devotions).

We are grateful for the work of Pastor Kay Richter who coordinates the monthly Prayer Calendar that appears on the website and is in Notes & Quotes. She does an excellent job of coordinating Synod activities and world concerns with suggestions for prayer. The Prayer Calendars are an excellent resource for deepening your prayer life.

We invite you to share prayer requests via the website. All prayer requests remain anonymous. We also welcome you to be a synod “pray-er”, the people who receive these requests and lift them up in prayer. Simply contact me with your e-mail address and I will add you to the list or answer any questions you may have.

"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference."

- Max Lucado

Be a part of the Prayfaithfully ministry of the Synod and make a difference.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Koski
bkoski@nglsynod.org
REPORT OF THE SYNOD CAMPUS MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Synod Campus Ministry Committee meets regularly to discuss the ongoing work of the individual campus ministry sites, to share programming ideas, and to address the vital work of Lutheran Campus Ministry throughout the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

The Northern Great Lakes Synod has active campus ministry programs at Michigan Technological University (Rev. Bucky Beach, Campus Ministry Advisor) and Northern Michigan University (Rev. Andrew Plocher, Campus Ministry Interim Advisor). In addition, the Synod Endowment Fund Board helps support the work of campus ministry at Bay College in Escanaba, Michigan, (Rev. Tony Morrison, Campus Ministry Advisor) and Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (Ken Randall, Campus Ministry Advisor). Lake Superior State University is a relatively new site for Lutheran Campus Ministry, and we greatly appreciate the work of Faith Lutheran, Sault Ste. Marie, in making this happen.

The Synod Campus Ministry Committee encourages congregations to identify students from their congregations who attend any of our universities with active Lutheran Campus Ministry programs and contact the campus ministry advisor at that school to provide the names and contact information of those students. We are always looking for ways to involve our students in campus ministry programs.

Lutheran Campus Ministry changes our students’ lives as they proclaim the Gospel on our campuses and encourages our students to be faithful in their ministry to others. We give thanks to God for the support of individuals and congregations within our Synod for the work of Lutheran Campus Ministry!

Larry G. Pagel, Chair
Synod Campus Ministry Committee
REPORT OF THE SYNOD STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

“I am the vine, you are the branches” John 15:5

“Synod” means “Walking Together”. All the congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod are intertwined in this mission work of Christ. We are grateful for the financial and people resources offered up for the sake of Christ’s mission. We are truly in this work together. The Church is the people of God created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this Church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include:

- Developing new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries
- Leading and encouraging congregations in evangelism efforts
- Assisting congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world
- Encouraging congregations to respond to human need
- Encouraging financial support for the work of local and global church by individuals and congregations

We celebrate the fact that all 80 congregations of our synod gave some mission support during 2018! A total of about $11.6 Million was disbursed by the 80 congregations of our synod for ministry. For 2018, the synod received $802,210.14 in mission support dollars from a pledged amount of $813,739. For 2019, our synod congregations have pledged $807,474. We thank you for your support of God’s work through our synod and the ELCA!

Our committee realizes that stewardship is very personal and is centered in relationships. We are sending out “Mission Interpreters” with the goal of visiting every congregation in 2019. Our Mission Interpreters will be there to tell the story of our work together. Our Mission Interpreters will develop relationships with our pastors and congregational members. We have this great treasure of God’s grace, and we are working together to equip the saints for ministry.

A percentage (48% in 2018) of your congregation’s unrestricted mission support dollars sent to the Northern Great Lakes Synod was passed on to the ELCA churchwide to:

- Grow and support congregations throughout the United States—357 new plants last year
- Grow the Lutheran church around the world—230 missionaries sent out
- Support and develop current leaders and future leaders—9,900 rostered leaders
- Provide governance and leadership through the 65 synods and oversight for ELCA ministries
- Investment in technology and communication for the whole church
- Provide research and strategic planning resources
- Provide resources to address social issues and advocate for justice
- Sustain ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and relationships

The synod has many stewardship resources. Go to www.nglsynod.org/stewardship or www.elca.org/stewardship. It’s important that every congregation does some intentional work around stewardship. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Jim Duehring, Assistant to the Bishop.

Respectfully submitted by Pastor Jim Duehring, Assistant to the Bishop/DEM
REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON AN INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING CHURCH

This task force was formed to help people of our synod have respectful and productive discussions about being an inclusive and welcoming church, especially to LGBTQA+ folks.

Therefore, the charge to this task force was to help people of our synod further their understanding and welcome of LGBTQA+ children of God, and their families, as well as to encourage our members to welcome all people, as they live out this church’s understanding of human sexuality.

In 2018, this Task Force did receive some inquiries from congregations, but to date no congregations have chosen to use the Task Force resources for further conversations around this topic.

As stated and planned at the time of its formation, this Task Force was dissolved this past summer.

Along with Bishop Katherine Finegan, Bishop Emeritus Tom Skrenes (prior to his retirement), and me, the members of this task force included:

Rev. Ann Gonyea  Eden, Munising  Rev. Tom Otis  First, Gladstone
Deric Garnell  Good Shepherd, Houghton  Rick Pink  Zion, Manistique
Dave Dagenais  Messiah, Marquette  Barb Rice  Bethany, Norway

Many thanks to all of you!

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Matt Lamb
Task Force Chair
Pastor, St. James Lutheran Church, Rudyard, MI
Email: matthewlamb77@yahoo.com
Cell: 717-805-4210
Office: 906-478-3045
REPORT OF THE WORLD HUNGER COMMITTEE

This past year, the Northern Great Lakes Synod Committee for World Hunger raised a significant amount of money to go to toward the ELCA World Hunger Program and advocated for alleviation of hunger by supporting a robust Farm Bill in our US Congress through a synod resolution at the Synod Assembly.

A member of the committee was present at every “Walking Together” conference to provide information about our work in the synod.

All of our congregations participated in the quilt project by completing a square to make up a beautiful quilt that represents our members and contributed $41,748.52 for hunger at synod assembly under the theme of “All in for World Hunger.” Our congregations combined supported world hunger in the amount of $107,975.48 in this past year of 2018.

Our committee meets quarterly and as needed to prepare for synod assembly. We look to have a member from each of our conferences as well as having a contact person in our individual congregations.

The current members are:
Mary Lou Blomquist – Marquette
Ann Christiansen – Gladstone
Jackie Lehto – Florence
Sarge Rudell – Marinette
Pr. Ellie and Jim Russey – Manistique
Don and Jo Schutt – Marinette
Carole and Ken Simula – Hancock
Kris Carlson – Ironwood
Bishop Katherine Finegan – Synod Staff

The committee also recognizes efforts in our synod that support programs to work in the area of hunger and poverty. This past year, the Big Bear award to raise hunger awareness and funds went to the confirmation class at Zion, Manistique and the Bread Basket Award for an individual was given to Pastor Soren Schmidt.

Respectfully submitted,
Pr. Ellie Russey, Chair
REPORT OF THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The worship committee meets quarterly to assist in planning worship for synod assembly and other synod events as well as providing opportunities such as workshops and events that equip, educate and deepen worship and worship leaders in the synod.

The 2018 Synod Assembly worship was planned and executed as well as a Holden Evening Prayer service during assembly. Our 2018 closing Assembly worship included installation of Pastor Jim Duehring as our assistant to the Bishop. Our Pastor’s band again led the music at our closing worship. We thank all of the volunteers who served as musicians, ushers, lectors, communion assistants and anyone else who assisted in our worship.

In October, we held a gathering of musicians from around the synod. Calvary Lutheran and Rev. Steve Gauger hosted us. Nine musicians from Crystal Falls to Marquette to Escanaba gathered and had great discussions and shared resources and experiences. We hope to continue these gatherings at various opportunities in the future.

We are currently planning for upcoming 2019 synod assembly worship experiences in brand new settings! Look for youth musicians assisting the pastor’s band as well as a synod bell choir at opening worship.

Thank you to all of the worship committee members for their hard work. They are: Bishop Katherine Finegan, Rev. George Kaiser, Rev. Melinda Shriner, Shirley Norquist, Lucas Wickstrom, Dave Dagenais, and SuAnn Ambuehl.

Respectfully submitted,
Lucas C. Wickstrom, Committee Chair
REPORT OF THE YOUTH COMMITTEE

It has been a busy time in work of the Youth Committee the past year. We have some new faces on the team. We are, especially, excited to be working on adding a board of youth leaders that will partner with the adults in our synod to see what God is calling us to do with and for our youth.

MARKED! EVENTS
We were excited to present 4 Marked! Events for our confirmation age students throughout the synod, including: Calumet, Newberry, Marinette and Minocqua. We welcomed 96 youth along, with their adult leaders, who remembered their baptisms and were reminded they have been marked with the cross of Christ. They participated as small groups in: a prayer labyrinth, low ropes activities, a reflection and expression in a mural of a leaping antelope. The mural will be displayed at the synod assembly. They also participated in a time of fellowship and our service activity of packing personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief, which will be mailed this fall with the quilt shipment. The youth packed over 389 kits. Thank you to all our youth and adults for their amazing work in gathering these items and packing them. Youth took the packed kits back to their congregations for disbursement this fall. Please congratulate your youth in their work in God’s name and reaching out to those they do not know to offer God’s hand!

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
We continue to look forward to adding voices and members to this team as this is a synod wide effort to bring our youth together, and to let our youth and youth directors/pastors know they are not alone in the work we do in God’s name. Our team has held meetings via Zoom, online technology, which breaks down the barrier of distance for us in doing the work for and with our youth. We also came together in February 2018 for an overnight retreat to think about and reflect on what was done in the last year and what God is calling us into in the next year, especially as we look to recruit more youth to be part of the Youth Synod team!

Thank you to committee members Molly Smith, Nathan Jarvis, Dave Nelson, Ryan Marjonen, Pr. Stacy Pethke, Naomi Kauppi and Sean Korpela and a special thank you to Bishop Katherine Finegan and Assistant to the Bishop, Jim Duehring for their support, guidance and leadership for our team and synod youth. We would also like to recognize Pr. Steve Solberg for his work as chairperson in faithfully guiding and leading our team.

You can reach out to our team at nglsyouth@gmail.com. Also... be watching for our Instagram page to come.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pastor Stacy Pethke, Chair
REPORT OF IGO CONFERENCE (1)

The IGO Conference (Conference 1) has continued to experience transitions in 2018. St. John has removed itself from the Christ Lutheran Parish in Ironwood and the remaining congregations (St. Paul, Zion, and Salem) are working together to make decisions about their future as a parish.

Conference 1 is made up of three parishes and one independent congregation: the Christ Lutheran Parish includes three congregations in Ironwood, the PSALM Shared Ministry includes one congregation in Bessemer and one in Wakefield, and the New Evangelical Lutheran Parish includes congregations in Ewen, Paynesville, and Trout Creek. St. John in Ironwood is independent. We are served by three ordained clergy – Pastor Lisa Ubbelohde (full-time interim pastor at Christ Parish), Pastor Bill Jacobson (full-time called pastor at PSALM Shared), and Pastor Kay Richter (3/4-time called pastor at NELP). St. John is contracting for worship leadership with a retired pastor from Wisconsin.

Our outreach to Lutheran World Relief is a thriving ministry that combines the efforts of most of our congregations. Quilters share materials – passing along supplies when one has an overabundance and another has a need. Kits and Quilts are collected across the Conference and sent in a single truck to Minneapolis for further distribution.

Bringing our congregations together for joint ministry efforts can be challenging, since we are already involved in joint ministries within our parishes. Our congregations may be tightly connected to the US-2/M-28 corridor, but our membership stretches roughly 100 miles east to west, and we are split between the Central and Eastern Time Zones. This combination adds to the challenge of trying to do joint ministry ventures.

The IGO Conference Officers are:

Pastor Kay Richter - President (2019)
PO Box 137
Ewen, MI 49925
pastorksrichter@gmail.com
906-988-2318 (home)
906-988-2594 (office)

Mary Nurmi - Vice President (2018)
602 Ashlund Ave.
Wakefield, MI 49968
carmar123@charter.net
906-229-3028

Mary Balduc - Secretary (2019)
1612 Woolsey Street
Bessemer, MI 49911
browneyedgirl41@live.com
906-364-0538

Kristine Carlson - Treasurer (2018)
304 Lake Street
Ironwood, MI 49938
906-932-0476
kriskarin@sbcglobal.net
Salem, Ironwood

Submitted by
Pastor Kay Richter, President
REPORT OF COPPER COUNTRY CONFERENCE (2)

Something is stirring in the Copper Country Conference.

On November 4, 2018, during typical UP weather (typical for November anyway) the conference gathered for its annual meeting. This was not a few dozen brave souls who came together to conduct the business of the conference, but well over 100 intrepid travelers came together at Mission United Lutheran Church in Pelkie for the opportunity to walk together with other congregations and with the Bishop and staff of our Synod.

And walk together we did! Everyone was amazed and inspired at the turnout. Not only did we overflow the sanctuary for opening worship, we packed everyone into the fellowship hall to learn what’s going on in the Synod and the church at the national level and beyond. We enjoyed good conversation and some exercises that helped us to learn more about what it means to walk together not only as congregations, but in the larger context of the Northern Great Lakes Synod and the ELCA.

It might be said that we saved the best for last, and once the business portion of the conference meeting was completed, all attendees were treated to an amazing pot-luck dinner where the toughest choice was not just what to eat, but whether or not to go back for seconds, thirds, etc.

Other events since the last Synod Assembly include welcoming Pastor Jared Howard and his family to Faith Lutheran Church in Calumet as well as Pastor Kellan Weyer and his wife to Mission United Lutheran Church in Pelkie. It was also during this time that we said farewell and godspeed to Pastor DJ Rasner and his family as they concluded their ministry to the people of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Hancock. We also offer our congratulations to Pastor Peter Vorhes who even in retirement continues to serve God as Chaplain for the Calumet post of the Michigan State Police.

As you can see, something is stirring in the Copper Country Conference. We may be separated by distance, weather and road conditions for a good portion of the year, but when we come together—the Spirit stirs.

That Spirit also stirs in the hearts of those who meet on a weekly basis for text study. And what’s even better—they’re not all Lutheran! This robust group of both active and retired pastors and lay leaders come together to talk about not just the upcoming text, but ministry itself. They come together to support the church in all its forms and locations. They support one another in all the challenges that come in ministry and are quick to provide some good humor, a shoulder to lean on and even some tongue in cheek advise on how to handle tough situations.

When it comes to the future, we look forward to continued ministry to each other and the larger church. We look forward to walking together this year at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chassell and we look forward to being there for one another, wherever and whenever God calls us in the stirring of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Jay Welshonse, Conference 2 President
REPORT OF HEADWATERS CONFERENCE (3)

The clergy (active and retired) and licensed lay-minister (Sayner) meet regularly to support one another, sharing moments of joy and challenge in our ministry settings. In addition to those monthly gatherings here are some other ways that we are working together:

- Bi-monthly text study held at Calvary, Minocqua
- Combining of youth ministry programs among some conference congregations
- We occasionally (1-2 times/year) study a book together and gather for conversation
- Walk-for-Water fundraiser in Eagle River – conference congregations were invited to participate
- Lay-school held Thursdays at Calvary, Minocqua. Most conference pastors rotate in/out to teach these courses.
- Many congregations in our conference are engaged in various ecumenical relationships as well (e.g. shared VBS, shared Easter Vigil, etc.)
- Some congregations have connected for occasional “pulpit swap” with neighboring congregations.
- We share an annual picnic in August.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Richard Likeness
Headwaters Conference President
REPORT OF MENOMINEE VALLEY CONFERENCE (5)

The Menominee Valley Conference, consisting of congregations in both Michigan and Wisconsin, strives daily to serve God and our varied communities. Our rostered leaders serve in parish ministry and well as chaplain ministry in care facilities. This last year saw a couple of changes as Pastor Linda Forray was called part-time to serve St. James in Marinette and we welcomed Karen Anne Hanson as Chaplain at Northland Lutheran Retirement Community.

MVC rostered leaders gather for lunch as often as possible in various restaurants throughout the conference for a more relaxed time of fellowship, sharing, and checking in. Several congregations of our conference sent groups to Houston for the National Youth Gathering, representing NGLS well. The MVC also continues to be active in ministries of hunger, including a weekly dinner called ‘The Lord’s Diner’, hosted at Our Savior’s in Marinette, the 6th Annual Chicken Booyah Community Meal, hosted at Good Shepherd in Peshtigo, support and leadership in each congregation with their local food pantry, and other food drive ministries. Many MVC congregations have strong LWR Quilt, Health, and School Kit ministries each October and participate in ‘Loading the Boxcar’ full of these lovingly prepared gifts. Again this past year, a number of congregations participated in “God’s work. Our hands.” projects throughout our communities, offered support for a local homeless shelter, and support for the American Cancer Society. The conference “Walking Together” event in October was hosted by Good Shepherd in Peshtigo and was very well received with a large crowd from all of the MVC congregations.

In 2019, the MVC looks to continue and strengthen the ministries already present in the conference, including active partnerships with Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp and Northland Lutheran Retirement Community.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor David Murphy,
Conference President
REPORT OF DELTA CONFERENCE (6)

The Delta Conference has had an interesting year of surprise, change and endurance. Even with the best planning and communication, in the end, the weather calls the shots and has the last word. The spring Delta Conference meeting, scheduled for April 15th at Calvary in Rapid River, was canceled due to a horrific snow storm. The work of the conference continued, nonetheless. The clergy of the conference continued to meet on Tuesday mornings at First Lutheran in Gladstone for text study, support and conference ministry planning. We welcomed Zion, Manistique to our conference. We said goodbye to Pastor Judy Kincaid as she accepted a call to Little Elk Creek and new Hope Lutheran church in Menomonie, Wisconsin. We welcomed Pastor Dennis Meyette as interim pastor at Immanuel, Escanaba. We said good-bye to Pastor Chris Johnson, as he accepted a call to Zion Lutheran Church in Wausau, Wisconsin. Pastor Tom Otis serves as the interim pastor at Christ the King, Escanaba. We will soon say good-bye to Pastor Erik Haskin at Bethany, Escanaba, as he seeks another call. We keep in our prayers Pastor Terry Frankenstein as she has resigned her call at Zion, Manistique, in order to care for a family member with health concerns. May God give her the strength she needs for the challenges ahead. Pastor Steve Gauger will serve as interim pastor at Zion. We, as a conference, pray for God to guide and prepare the people of these congregations as they work toward welcoming their next pastors.

An ecumenical tubing party took place at the Gladstone Ski Hill in February. Fun was had by all. The conference once again had a presence at the U.P. State Fair. All congregations had volunteers participate. Most congregations have weekly quilting, health and school kit ministries. Faith in Rock has a food pantry that provides for the needy in the community. Several congregations participate in back-pack programs to provide weekend food for students in participation with the school system. Calvary, Rapid River, First, Gladstone and Trinity, Stonington women gather together monthly for bible study. Trinity Lutheran Church of Stonington hosted a “Shipwrecked on a Desert Island” VBS for over 60 children from six congregations that were bussed to our little white church in the wildwoods on the Stonington Peninsula. This exciting opportunity for both church and un-church children of God was supported by the conference and many volunteers from all the congregations. Hope at the Inn, the ecumenical homeless shelter is supported by many of the conference congregations. There are currently 13 churches participating in this needed ministry in the community.

In October, the conference held its first synod “Walking Together” event with 8-10 members from each congregation in attendance. It was a wonderful evening of worship, education, communication and fellowship with Bishop Katherine, Assistant to the Bishop Jim and the synod staff, Louise and Betsy. We thank Immanuel, Escanaba, for hosting this event. Elected by unanimous vote, Pastor Terry Frankenstein as Vice President; Sherri Ide from First, Gladstone as Treasurer; ominating Committee: Don Cuter – Calvary, Rapid River; Amber Hess-Soderman – First, Gladstone; and Pastor Steve Gauger – Calvary, Rapid River. Recommended for Synod Council, lay male: Chuck Thomas – First, Gladstone.

Our spring conference meeting will be held at Calvary, Rapid River on Sunday, April 7th, from 4-6 p.m. (EST) weather permitting. Synod Assembly will be held in our conference May 16-18th. Our fall “Walking Together” event is tentatively set for Thursday, October 24th. The location and time will be determined at the spring conference meeting. We will also discuss future conference opportunities, such as the U.P. State Fair and Mission of Hope. We will continue to work together as God’s hands in God’s mission with the promise that “With God, all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26)

Respectfully submitted by:
Pastor Diane Cloutier Srutowski, President
REPORT OF THREE LAKES CONFERENCE (7)

The Three Lakes Conference of the Northern Great Lakes Synod is comprised of the following congregations:

Zion Lutheran Church in Allenville – Pastor Joe Daiker
Trinity Lutheran Church in Brevort – Pastor David Tielbar
Bethel Lutheran Church in Cedarville – Pastor Joe Daiker
First Lutheran Church in Grand Marais – Jon and Sharon Babbitt, LLM
Zion Lutheran Church in Manistique – Pastor Terry Frankenstein
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Newberry – Pastor Melinda VanderSys
St. James Lutheran Church in Rudyard – Pastor Matthew Lamb, Sr.
Zion Lutheran Church in St. Ignace – Pastor David Tielbar
Faith Lutheran Church in Sault Ste. Marie – Pastor Bre Kinnunen (resigned her call - Oct. 2018; Pastor Matt Lamb was assigned as Interim Pastor)

The officers of the Conference are:
President – Pastor Melinda VanderSys
Secretary – Pastor Matt Lamb

The Synod Council Representative is Pastor David Tielbar.

The driving distance between the farthest congregations is 125 miles east-to-west and 110 miles north-to-south.

At the Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly in May 2018, Zion – Manistique officially left the Three Lakes Conference and joined the Delta Conference (6).

The Conference Annual Convention was held at St. James Lutheran Church in Rudyard on September 23rd. Participants were invited to share updates and events from their respective congregations. There were no elections necessary at the convention.

The Conference pastors share in an ecumenical text study, along with two Presbyterian pastors, a United Methodist pastor, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada pastor, and a retired ELCA pastor. They meet weekly from September through May/June at the various ministry sites to share in text study, collegiality and fellowship.

A Marked! Event is scheduled to occur at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church on Sunday, March 17, 2019.

The next Three Lakes Conference Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 5, 2019, at Zion Lutheran Church in St. Ignace.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Melinda VanderSys
Conference 7 President
REPORT OF SUPERIOR CENTRAL CONFERENCE (8)

The Superior Central Conference continues to see the departure of many pastors and pray for the many congregations that are seeing changes in their pastors and how they are doing church with other congregations. We continue to pray for the Synod which continues to see God driving us in a new way of being and doing church in our communities and across the synod.

Our conference continues to lead Lay School with the help and direction of Pr. Warren Geier and those pastors that have stepped in to teach those classes. We also thank Pr. Geier for his willingness to schedule “on-call” clergy for Chaplaincy at Bell Hospital. We continue to welcome an ecumenical group of lay and rostered leaders in our conference to weekly Bible (Pericope) study.

Like all conferences, we continue to pray for partners in ministry and the lifting up of lay leaders and rostered leaders to continue the business of our conferences, our Synod, and our ELCA churchwide.

We thank the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop and Synod Staff for bringing us together for their “Walking Together” presentations.

Our regular business meeting included worship, fellowship and standard duties required of the Synod Constitution. Our newly elected, and re-elected officers include:

President: Pr. Stacy Pethke of Trinity and Faith Lutheran Churches, Ishpeming
Vice President: Michelle Johnson of Prince of Peace, Harvey
Secretary: Pr. Andrew Plocher of Messiah Lutheran Church, Marquette
Treasurer: Daniel Kill of Immanuel, Negaunee

We are thankful for all those who were nominated and elected to other positions for the business of Conference 8 and NGLS.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pr. Stacy Pethke
Conference 8 President.