

# Unimaginable

Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod  
May 21-22, 2021

## VOTING MEMBER MATERIALS

*2021 Synod Assembly*

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# AGENDA

*\*Agenda is subject to change*

MONDAY, MAY 17	
10:00 AM	Voting Member Orientation
2:30 PM	Voting Member Orientation
TUESDAY, MAY 18	
Various	Pre-Assembly Activities
5:00 PM	Voting Member Orientation
WEDNESDAY, MAY 19	
Various	Pre-Assembly Activities
THURSDAY, MAY 20	
Various	Pre-Assembly Activities
7:00 PM	Synod Council Meeting
FRIDAY, MAY 21	
8:00 AM	Registration Opens
9:00 AM	Assembly Begins
9:00 AM	Opening Worship
9:45 AM	Opening of the Assembly & Business Session 1
11:00 AM	Offline/Break
11:15 AM	Keynote Speaker: Deacon Peggy Hahn
12:15 PM	Offline/Break
1:30 PM	Business Session 2
5:00 PM	Family Feud Trivia Night
SATURDAY, MAY 22	
8:00 AM	Registration Opens
9:00 AM	Opening Devotions
9:30 AM	Business Session 3 (Lutherhill Board)
11:00 AM	Offline/Break
11:30 AM	Business Session 4
12:30 PM	Offline/Break
1:30 PM	Keynote Speaker: Rev. Kim Wagner
2:45 PM	Business Session 5/Closing



# STANDING RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY

- All business will be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order, 12th edition.
- Any new or additional business of this Assembly may be added to the agenda by a motion of any voting member prior to the adoption of the agenda at the beginning of the Assembly. The motion must be adopted by a 2/3 vote of the assembly. The agenda shall not be changed during the Assembly, once adopted.
- Resolutions/memorials that were submitted to the bishop's office no later than April 16, 2021 were included in these materials. All resolutions/memorials shall be referred to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The committee shall report to the Assembly, giving their recommendations for disposal of the matter at hand.
- All motions for the assembly's consideration shall be submitted on the "Records of Motions" form available from the Secretary.
- With the consent of the assembly, the Chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order seems most expedient for the conduct of the Assembly's business.
- The Nominating Committee will nominate at least one person, and strive to nominate at least two persons, for each elective position for which the Assembly is responsible. Nominations may be made from the floor for each elective position. All floor nominations should be made with the consent of the nominee and must be accompanied by the Candidate Form (300 copies) ready for distribution to the voting members at the time of the nomination. The Nominating Committee will endeavor to give guidance concerning the maintenance or fulfillment of the "inclusiveness" guidelines.
- Election to any position requires a majority of votes of those voting. In cases where more than two nominees are on the first ballot and there is no election, the second ballot shall contain the candidates securing the two highest numbers of votes on the first ballot.
- A majority of voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- No proxy or absentee voting shall be permitted.
- Synod constitution §10.04. states "Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption."

*continued*

# STANDING RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY -cont.

- In a debate, all speakers shall attempt to be concise and to the point. Speakers shall limit their speeches to two minutes. No one is entitled to the floor a second time to debate the same motion as long as any other person who has not spoken on the motion desires the floor. A person who has spoken twice on a particular question shall normally have exhausted the right to debate further on that question for that day.
- The Chair shall determine when voting shall be by voice and when it shall be done by use of electronic voting cards or other methods.
- The bounds of the Assembly for voting purposes shall be established at the beginning of the Assembly.
- Only those with proper credentials shall be given voice and vote at the Assembly.
- Upon recommendation of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, the Assembly may seat advisory members who shall have voice but no vote.
- Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers (hereafter SALM) in attendance shall be voting members, and will be counted as lay persons for the purposes of satisfying the requirements of S7.21. SALMs will not be counted as lay voting members from their congregation for the purposes of determining the number of lay voting members of their congregation. Registration fees, travel, housing, meal and other expenses incurred in attending the Synod Assembly are the responsibility of the congregation served by the SALM.
- One churchwide representative shall be a voting member of the assembly.
- Minutes of the business session will not be reproduced for each voting member at the time of the Assembly. A complete copy of the Assembly minutes will be available on the synod website, [www.gulfcoastsynod.org](http://www.gulfcoastsynod.org), shortly following the close of the Assembly.

# ASSEMBLY VOCABULARY

It is very important to note and remember that no delegates will be present for the assembly. Voting members are not delegates, as that term is understood or used in some political contexts.

- The terminology related to the legislative process of this church is no accident.
- The words, “Synod Assembly” and “Churchwide Assembly” rather than convention, and “voting members” rather than delegates, were deliberately chosen for our governing documents.

These words not only fulfill certain legal requirements but also reflect an ecclesial (that is, “churchy”) understanding—an understanding grounded in Scripture, reflected in the Lutheran Confessional writings, and established as part of this church’s polity upon formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Within the ELCA, we find three primary expressions of this church - congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. They exist and serve within this one church.

1. A congregation of the ELCA does not meet in convention; the members gather in worship, carry out service, and assemble occasionally and properly for governance decisions and elections. When a congregation meets to do its business, it is the Church.
2. A synod meets as an assembly. The voting members are not sent as agents of a particular caucus; they are not gathered to act as politicized delegates to a regional party convention. Rather, they assemble as duty-selected members of this church with voting responsibilities for governance and elections on behalf of the synod. The Synod Assembly is just that, an assembly of the people of this church, some of whom have been chosen for the responsibility of being voting members of the Synod Assembly. They assemble together in worship and are nurtured in the faith through Word and Sacrament. Then, in their deliberations, they seek the wisdom and guidance of God’s Spirit in the decisions and elections of the assembly. When a synod meets to do business, it is the Church.
3. The ELCA also meets as an assembly. The people of this church, when gathered as voting members of the Synod Assembly, have the responsibility of electing the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly. Persons so chosen are given the responsibility of doing the work of the Churchwide Assembly on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They are not sent to participate as politicized delegates from a regional or agenda-specific caucus at some national party convention. Rather, they assemble as members of this church. When the ELCA meets in assembly, it is the Church.

# ASSEMBLY VOCABULARY -cont.

In the ELCA's predecessor church bodies, the word "delegate" was used and meant people chosen to fulfill responsibilities in what then were known as synod or district "conventions." Like those "delegates" in our predecessor churches, ELCA voting members in ELCA synodical assemblies are chosen to represent all of the members of all the congregations in the synod.

In the case of the Churchwide Assembly, voting members carry out their duties on behalf of all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Nourished by Word and Sacrament, they are called in assembly to seek the well-being of this whole Church.

Voting members carry a heavy responsibility. They must study carefully the issues on the agenda of the assembly, listen thoughtfully to the debate throughout plenary sessions, examine wisely possible amendments to proposals, consider with insight resolutions or new business submitted by voting members, elect with care apt persons to serve on the synod council, boards, and committees, seek prayerfully the guidance of God's Spirit in all matters, and act conscientiously for the sake of the unity and well-being of this church and the whole Church.

# TIPS ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

To do this:	You say this:	May you interrupt?	Is your motion debatable?	Is your motion amendable?	Vote required to pass:
Make a motion (called a main motion)	"I move that..." (not "I would like to move that...")	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend by..." (adding, inserting, striking)	No	Yes	Yes	Majority, unless otherwise indicated
Postpone further debate, consideration, or vote	"I move that this matter be tabled."	No	No	No	Majority
End debate and bring to a vote	"I move the previous question."	No	No	No	2/3
Refer a matter to another person or group	"I move that this matter be referred to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Reconsider a previous action at this assembly	"I move to reconsider the vote on..." (only if you voted on the winning side)	No	Yes, if original motion was debateable	No	Majority
Object to Procedures	"Point of Order"	Yes	No	No	Chair decides
Challenge ruling of the chair	"I appeal the chair's decision."	No	Yes	No	Majority
Find out when a motion you wish to make can be made	"When would it be in order for me to move that..."	No	--	--	--
Request information	"I wish to request information, clarification, etc."	No	--	--	--
Get an exact count after a close voice vote	"I call for a division."	Yes	No	No	--



# GUIDELINES FOR AVOIDING GENDER BIAS

	Exclusive	Inclusive
Use inclusive language	The average American citizen is proud of his heritage.	For the most part, American citizens are proud of their heritage.
Use individuals' names.	Robert Smith and his wife	Robert and Alice Smith
Use no titles when they refer exclusively to the marital status of one of the persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim Clark and Mrs. Brown</li> <li>• The Rev. Joan Johnson and husband</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim Clark and Sara Brown</li> <li>• The Rev. Joan Johnson and Mr. Paul (or Joan and Paul Johnson)</li> </ul>
Use inclusive terminology for all generic groupings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clergyman</li> <li>• Laymen</li> <li>• Clergy and wives</li> <li>• Chairman</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clergy or Ministers</li> <li>• Lay persons or Laity</li> <li>• Clergy and spouses</li> <li>• Chairperson or Chair</li> </ul>
Avoid sexual personal pronouns when talking about a person's activities.	When a voting member votes yes, he votes for...	A voting member's yes vote means...
Find functional substitutes for problem words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forefathers</li> <li>• Brotherhood</li> <li>• Fraternity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancestors, Forbears, Companionship, Kinship, Unity, Comradeship</li> </ul>

# Financial Report

## 2022-23 Operating Budget Narrative

Budget Year February 1, 2022 – January 31, 2023

The 2022-23 Budget calls for expenditures of \$1,368,000, an increase of \$15,800 over the 2021-22 budget. The 2022-23 budget is significantly higher when compared to 2020-21 actual expenditures of \$1,233,042. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-21 actual expenses were greatly reduced, therefore should not be used for a comparison. The budgeted 2022-23 expenses are slightly higher when comparing them to actual expenses for 2019-20 (\$1,352,914), which represents a more standard year. The budget plan is balanced with revenues equal to planned expenditures. Since Synod Assembly was cancelled last year, the Synod Council approved the 2021-22 budget at its May 2020 meeting.

### Benevolence

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$440,600	
2021-22	\$441,000	
2020-21	\$447,046	\$402,894
2019-20	\$486,946	\$445,311
2018-19	\$473,325	\$436,560

The largest area of the budget is Benevolence - local, national, and global. This includes support for the work of the ELCA churchwide organization, which is funded by 28% of all congregational mission share contributions (budgeted at \$364,000 for 2021-22). Our Synod also supports Lutherhill, the Lutheran Seminary Program of the Southwest, Wartburg Seminary, the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Texas Impact (Texas Interfaith Center), Interfaith Ministries of Houston, The Metropolitan Table, Louisiana Interchurch Conference, Campus Ministries, and the Seafarers' Ministry.

### Mission Share

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$286,000	
2021-22	\$286,000	
2020-21	\$295,304	\$251,309
2019-20	\$299,200	\$285,029
2018-19	\$299,200	\$283,522

As part of the pilot program (a 3-year program that began January 1, 2016, and has been extended), 22% of congregational mission share contributions go directly to engage in the work of developing and supporting new starts, redevelopments, and restarts. The 22% allocation includes 9% for Bishop's Associate for Mission (DEM) and 13% for Mission Share. With the Mission Table, the Bishop's Associate for Mission (DEM) is responsible for all new starts, redevelopments, and restarts in the Synod, as well as helping the Synod and congregations grow in the areas of hospitality, generosity, and vitality. Mission also includes campus ministry reaching out to college students by providing support for Houston-area campus ministries and ELCA Campus Ministry of the Brazos Valley, as well as development of campus ministry in Baton Rouge and greater New Orleans. (Financial support for campus ministry is included in Benevolence.)

### Word and Sacrament

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$202,460	
2021-22	\$199,808	
2020-21	\$195,519	\$149,455
2019-20	\$190,835	\$189,550
2018-19	\$191,180	\$191,942

Word and Sacrament includes the Bishop's salary and benefits, and a budget for continuing education, travel, and meetings related to the work of the Synod. The budget also includes expenses for the conferences. Each conference has a dean, who receives a stipend and plays a key role in implementing the Strategic Plan at the local level. Word and Sacrament also includes support of global missions, our companion synods, youth and family ministry, the Hunger Appeal, and ecumenical work. Through the Bishop's role in the Synod, a portion of this budget item also supports leadership, mission starts, and redevelopment, as well as stewardship.

## Leadership

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$146,231	
2021-22	\$144,169	
2020-21	\$128,400	\$105,552
2019-20	\$140,770	\$142,842
2018-19	\$143,950	\$133,801

This section of the budget includes the salary and benefits of the Bishop's Associate for Leadership and a budget for continuing education, travel and meeting expenses, and candidacy expenses. Leadership development on the Synod level includes the following activities, which are also supported by periodic meetings and retreats:

- Call process, to help congregations choose the most effective leader for their ministry
- Candidacy Committee, to select and guide qualified candidates for rostered leadership in the ELCA
- Supervision of students in Distributed Learning and Theological Education for Emergent Ministry (TEEM)
- Conflict management and clergy discipline
- First Call Theological Education, a three-year program of practical guidance to congregational leadership

## Administration and Communications

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$257,042	
2021-22	\$242,562	
2020-21	\$237,931	\$312,716
2019-20	\$245,951	\$245,087
2018-19	\$241,545	\$224,301

Administration includes communications, one of the most critical tools in connecting a geographically diverse church, and one of the ways that we accomplish leadership development. The office lease, office equipment, annual audit fees, banking fees, and insurance are in this budget area. Administration also encompasses record keeping, bookkeeping, office management, event planning, and compensation for the people who carry out these important tasks.

The Synod received the Paycheck Protection Plan loan (PPP) from the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the 2020-21 fiscal year. All PPP covered payroll expenses for the staff were recorded under administrative expenses, thus increasing this budget area. This is an anomaly that should only occur in 2020-21.

## Revenues to Support the Budget

### Mission Share

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$1,300,000	
2021-22	\$1,300,000	
2020-21	\$1,300,000	\$1,142,315
2019-20	\$1,360,000	\$1,295,587
2018-19	\$1,360,000	\$1,263,067

Mission share from all congregations of the Synod funds 95% of the planned budget for 2022-23. In light of the financial environment, the budget assumes no change from the 2021-22 plan.

# Financial Report

## Donations from Individuals

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$4,000	
2021-22	\$4,200	
2020-21	\$1,200	\$3,870
2019-20	\$1,200	\$7,280
2018-19	\$1,200	\$4,030

The budget does not make assumptions of significant gifts from individuals. However, such contributions are welcome. Note that gifts restricted for specific purposes are separately budgeted in restricted accounts for that purpose and not used for the general support of the Synod.

## Interest and Other Income

	Budget	Actual
2022-23	\$64,000	
2021-22	\$48,000	
2020-21	\$48,000	\$50,066
2019-20	\$48,000	\$49,289
2018-19	\$48,000	\$50,809

Interest income (budgeted at \$44,000) is received from the Synod's endowment account, which is invested with the ELCA Foundation. Other income for general mission share (budgeted at \$20,000) is received from the Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest and from Thrivent.



# NOMINATIONS SECTION

## *Positions Open for Election*

Position	Term Length	Specifics of Position	Nominated Candidates
<b>SYNOD COUNCIL</b>			
Synod Council	4 years	Vice President	Robert Rivera, incumbent
Synod Council	4 years	Secretary	Paul Antolik, interim appointment
Synod Council	3 years	Member-at-Large Laity, Female (2 positions)	Shelli Williamson, incumbent Taylor Rivera
Synod Council	3 years	Member-at-Large Laity, Male (2 positions)	Adan Plata, interim appointment William Walker
Synod Council	3 years	Member-at-Large Clergy, Female (2 Positions)	The Rev. Chon Pugh The Rev. Ariel Otterstad
Synod Council	1 year	Youth Member, Female or Male	Calea Wirtley
<b>CONSULTATION COMMITTEE</b>			
Consultation Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Laity, Female	Kelly Zajicek
Consultation Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Laity, Male	Caleb Parks
Consultation Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Clergy, Female (2 positions)	Stephanie Stark The Rev. E. Lemae Higgs
Consultation Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Clergy, Male (3 positions)	The Rev. Mark England Deacon Ben Remmert The Rev. Will Starkweather

# NOMINATIONS SECTION -cont.

## Positions Open for Election

Position	Term Length	Specifics of Position	Nominated Candidates
<b>DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE</b>			
Discipline Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Laity, Female (2 positions)	Melinda Zajicek Katilyn Reid
Discipline Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Laity, Male (2 positions)	Curtis Bradbury Kyle Hartmann
Discipline Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Clergy, Female	Deacon Katherine Cameron
Discipline Committee	6 years	Member-at-Large Clergy, Male (2 positions)	The Rev. Ryan Dockery The Rev. Brad Otto

<b>CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY</b>			
2022 CWA Voting Member		Laity Male or Female	Kristen Krueger
2022 CWA Voting Member		Youth or Young Adult, Male or Female	Hannah Norem
2022 CWA Voting Member		Clergy Female	The Rev. Ashley Dellagiacoma
2022 CWA Voting Member		Clergy Male	The Rev. Gabriel Marciano
2022 CWA Voting Member		Laity, Person of Color or Primary Language other than English, Male or Female	Diane White

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Vice President - 4 year term

**Name:** Robert Rivera  
**Congregation:** St. James/Santiago Apostol  
**Occupation:** Retired

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Vice-President:**

- Passionate about the role of church in the community
- Hard working, determine, and lead by example
- Thoughtful reflection

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

I believe that the church plays a vital role in the community and that we are called to live out our values to be on the side of those that are most vulnerable. I have a deep sense of hope for the future. This is manifested through our work with our children and young adults.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

Yes

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Secretary - 4 year term

**Name:** Paul Antolik  
**Congregation:** Salem, Houston  
**Occupation:** Retired

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Secretary:**

- I have served in most of the positions on my congregation's Council, and currently am Treasurer.
- I was on the Council when we voted unanimously to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation.
- I participate in a weekly class centered on gaining insight into the Sunday lections, and how the passages apply to our everyday activities.

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

No. I follow synod communications and am in agreement with the positions that have been taken by the synod on those issues I am aware of. Further, I am open to changing my position on any given issue in the light of new ideas or information. My history at work and in my personal life show that I have talents in facilitation and thinking differently in order to help others reach a consensus (which may not have been my initial position) on any issue being faced.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

I follow synod communications and am in agreement with the positions that have been taken by the synod on those issues I am aware of. Further, I am open to changing my position on any given issue in the light of new ideas or information. My history at work and in my personal life show that I have talents in facilitation and thinking differently in order to help others reach a consensus (which may not have been my initial position) on any issue being faced.



# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large Laity, Female

**Name:** Shelli Williamson  
**Congregation:** Celebration Lutheran Church, Cypress  
**Occupation:** Disaster Response Coordinator w/Lutheran Social Svcs Disaster Response, TX

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Council Member**

- Key Communicator during Disaster Events and Preparedness Updates/Training to large groups
- Collaborator of local volunteer opportunities in the community
- Builder of Healthy Relationships within & outside the Church and Social Ministry Organizations

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

My committed view regarding issues facing the synod include being open to listening to concerns and questions, gracefully seeing the best in each person and creating a synod culture of trust and health while living out the ELCA Social Statements in the biggest and boldest ways.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

Without hesitation, I always hold space for the Holy Spirit to guide me forward in all personal and professional views.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large Laity, Female

**Name:** Taylor Rivera  
**Congregation:** Covenant Lutheran Church, Houston  
**Occupation:** Office Manager

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Council Member:**

- Ability to hear and see others' views and opinions
- Trust in God's vision and plan
- Bring energy and excitement to the work that we do in the name of God.

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

No. I follow synod communications and am in agreement with the positions that have been taken by the synod on those issues I am aware of. Further, I am open to changing my position on any given issue in the light of new ideas or information. My history at work and in my personal life show that I have talents in facilitation and thinking differently in order to help others reach a consensus (which may not have been my initial position) on any issue being faced.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

I follow synod communications and am in agreement with the positions that have been taken by the synod on those issues I am aware of. Further, I am open to changing my position on any given issue in the light of new ideas or information. My history at work and in my personal life show that I have talents in facilitation and thinking differently in order to help others reach a consensus (which may not have been my initial position) on any issue being faced.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large Laity, Male

**Name:** Adan Plata  
**Congregation:** Kinsmen Lutheran Church, Houston  
**Occupation:** Electrical Engineer

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Council Member:**

- Analytical
- Relationships
- Bilingual

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

The need to be open to immigrants and newcomers to America.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

Yes

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large Laity, Male

**Name:** William Walker  
**Congregation:** Faith Lutheran Church, Bellaire  
**Occupation:** Student

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Council Member:**

- Leadership
- Service

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**



# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large Clergy, Female

**Name:** The Rev. Chon Pugh  
**Congregation:** Memorial Lutheran and First Presbyterian, Texas City  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Council Member:**

- Gift of big picture vision
- Creative
- Team Player

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

I am passionate about loving all of God's children regardless of where they are born. All people are to be treated with honor and respect that comes with being a child of God.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

Yes, I trust the Holy Spirit to provide me with new information I didn't even know I needed. I also pray for the Holy Spirit to send me discernment in my decision making.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large Clergy, Female

**Name:** The Rev. Ariel Otterstad  
**Congregation:** Living Word, Katy  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Council Member:**

- Creative & Missional thinker - ability to come up with new ideas and ways to be/do church.
- Relational - relationship development is huge in all aspects of my life.
- Organization, management, & finance education & experience - my undergraduate degree is in Business Administration.

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

I try keep an open mind in many regards to my life. I absolutely believe in doing justice, loving mercy, walking humbly, and loving my neighbor. I'm flexible in regards to how we do those things. I suppose I am inflexible or have a committed view on topics of oppression and hatred because they are contrary to my theology of our call as disciples.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

Of course. The Holy Spirit has led me to change my viewpoints many times throughout my life.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: SYNOD COUNCIL

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Youth Member, Female or Male

**Name:** Calea Wirtley  
**Congregation:** Peace Lutheran, College Station  
**Occupation:** High School Student

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of Synod Council Member:**

- Observant and conscious of given situations
- Faithful and open to the moving of the Holy Spirit
- Servant willing to step in and up to do what needs to be done

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues facing the synod? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

Having just moved to the synod I am not sure of the synod on issues that are facing us a body of Christ.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues facing the synod?**

I also am open to what is happening and to the information being given. Knowing that all opinions need to be flexible to the moving of the Spirit.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Laity Female

**Name:** Kelly Zajicek  
**Congregation:** St. Paul, Columbus  
**Occupation:** Teacher's Aide

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- Working at school, I deal with situations almost every day.
- I am a fair person and am able to hear both sides of a story.
- I feel I am a rational decision maker.



# NOMINEE INFORMATION: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Laity Male

**Name:** Caleb Parks  
**Congregation:** St. Paul, La Grange  
**Occupation:** Faith Life Leader

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- I have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- Good social skills
- A desire to serve the church at large

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Female

**Name:** The Rev. Stephanie Stark  
**Congregation:** St. John, Cat Spring  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- The ability to listen deeply to others.
- The gift of being empathetic in stressful situations.
- The ability to see the bigger picture or beyond the complaint.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Female

**Name:** The Rev. E. Lemae Higgs  
**Congregation:** United Evangelical Lutheran Church - Swiss Alp, Schulenburg  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Male

**Name:** The Rev. Mark England  
**Congregation:** Kinsmen Lutheran Church, Houston  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- I have led Boundaries Training for clergy and church leaders
- I have received Mediation Skills Training by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center
- I have been trained as a Healthy Congregations Facilitator

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Male

**Name:** Deacon Ben Remmert  
**Congregation:** Christ the King Lutheran Church, Houston  
**Occupation:** Deacon for Youth and Family Ministry

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- Ability to listen with an open mind and discern different point of views. with guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Experience in maintaining appropriate confidentiality when considering sensitive information through congregational ministry.
- Gifts of comfort and compassion in discerning sensitive materials.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Male

**Name:** The Rev. William Starkweather  
**Congregation:** St. Martin's, Sugar Land  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- I actively remember our synod, our leaders, and our sister congregations in prayer.
- I have experience with pastoral care, often regarding sensitive situations.
- I value gathering input from as many sources as possible when making recommendations and decisions.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Laity Female

**Name:** Melinda Zajicek  
**Congregation:** St. Paul, La Grange  
**Occupation:** Office Manager

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- I am a fair minded person
- I have a good personality and can get along with others
- I served on City Council for a number of years and dealt with a variety of issues.



# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Laity Female

**Name:** Katilyn Ashleigh Reid  
**Congregation:** St. Paul, La Grange  
**Occupation:** Sales Technician

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- I have a strong sense of justice
- A desire to help with the ministries of the greater church
- Good communication skills

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Laity Male

**Name:** Donald 'Curtis' Bradbury Jr  
**Congregation:** House of Prayer Lutheran Church, Clear Lake  
**Occupation:** Program Director

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- Have been apart of the TLGCS for 9 years in a variety of roles.
- Work at an Outdoor Ministry that focuses on relationships for All People.
- Have worked closely with multiple HR departments to develop policies.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Laity Male

**Name:** Kyle Hartmann  
**Congregation:** St. John, La Grange  
**Occupation:** Justice of the Peace

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- Willingness to listen and work with others
- Critical thinking
- Legal experience

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Female

**Name:** Deacon Katharine Cameron  
**Congregation:** St. Paul's Evangelical, Brenham  
**Occupation:** Deacon

Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:

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# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Female

**Name:** The Rev. Jill Vivroux  
**Congregation:** Interim Pastor  
**Occupation:** Interim Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

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# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Male

**Name:** The Rev. Ryan Dockery  
**Congregation:** Celebration, Cypress  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- Detail Oriented
- Hypervigilant
- Team-Player

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Member-at-Large, Clergy Male

**Name:** The Rev. Brad Otto  
**Congregation:** Messiah, Cypress  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list three examples of the skills, abilities, and/or gifts you possess that would enable you to perform the ministry of this position:**

- I care deeply for the ministries of this synod and my fellow pastors, deacons and other staff members.
- I feel I am open to the spirit's guidance
- I also feel I am able to see all sides.



# NOMINEE INFORMATION: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Laity, Male or Female

**Name:** Kristen Contos Krueger  
**Congregation:** Faith, Bellaire  
**Occupation:** Professor

**Please list the spiritual gifts you possess that would make you an effective delegate to the Churchwide Assembly, and state why you feel called to serve in this position.**

I am a life-long learner who believe I must be ready to listen and grow personally even as I serve in leadership roles like this one. Additionally, I am a strong communicator, critical thinker, and teacher. This influences my work at the ELCA Youth Gathering, LEAD, our synod, and my home congregation. Together these gifts equip me to make thoughtful decisions about the future of our faith community.

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues to be considered at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

I am a historian who has dedicated my professional life to seeing the connections between past and present in ways that help build a healthier world. I use this lens in my work for our church as I look for the ways our church can grow, heal, and welcome those who have been at the margins of society in the same ways that Jesus did during his ministry. I look forward to being part of a church that continues to answer the call of the Holy Spirit to extend grace, teach love, and welcome all in whatever issues are discussed at the assembly.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly?**

I am always open to new ideas and information that can influence my thinking. I think the best leaders are those who are able to grow and change as needed. I certainly welcome the Spirit in guiding my decision making. However, my belief that all people are precious in the eyes of God is unwavering.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Youth or Young Adult, Male or Female

**Name:** Hannah Norem  
**Congregation:** Messiah Lutheran, Cypress  
**Occupation:** Student

**Please list the spiritual gifts you possess that would make you an effective delegate to the Churchwide Assembly, and state why you feel called to serve in this position.**

I am deeply committed to the vibrant, abundant future of this church. My commitment and love have been shown in serving my home church as a youth, attending an ELCA college in South Dakota, and interning at the ELCA Churchwide Offices upon my graduation from college. Threaded commonly in all of these experiences is an ability to listen and build coalitions around issues and values we all hold dear. As I become older, my conviction has solidified that listening generously to others and empathizing with their excitements and challenges is the way forward for the church. I am enrolled in a joint JD/MDiv degree program, and through these two very different fields, I am learning the ways in which we are all called to accompany one another, offering a generous spirit and a willingness to change and grow with the changing nature of our world.

I am not afraid to use my voice to speak on behalf of others. I have seen the power of other young people like me speaking up to advocate for others, and I know the power that voices can have to create change. Consequently, I am committed to listening to others and discerning prayerfully where the Spirit is working in this church and in the larger world. Through my experiences as a chaplain intern in a hospital and meeting other ELCA Young Adults at a discernment retreat in February 2020, I am inspired and fortunate to support and be supported by other young people who want the best for the ELCA.

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues to be considered at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

At this time, I do not have any committed views on the considered issues at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. However, if elected, I am committed to meeting every individual with empathy and listening to people of all ages from across this synod and the ELCA so I can be a true representative of the great diversity throughout this denomination.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly?**

I do not have any committed, formed opinions on any issue to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly. Accordingly, I am open to how the Spirit moves, influences, and shakes up God's people as the Spirit is known to do. I am a testament to the Spirit's work in a person's life, because I would not be in my law/seminary joint program if I were not open to the Spirit's work in my life, so I am always listening and open to the Spirit's continued work in this church.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Clergy, Female

**Name:** The Rev. Ashley Dellagiacoma  
**Congregation:** Kindred, Houston  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list the spiritual gifts you possess that would make you an effective delegate to the Churchwide Assembly, and state why you feel called to serve in this position.**

I strive for faithfulness to the heart of the liberating Gospel expressed in scripture and in God's people. I am thoughtful to consider and amplify voices that would add depth and breadth to our decision making. I also humbly acknowledge that my experience and understanding is not universal or superior.

I have a passion passion (in other words... as admittedly nerdy excitement) for the larger work of the church and its capacity for witness through practice and justice.

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues to be considered at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

My only committed stance is toward the full embrace, celebration, and integration of all people in the church according to God's promise, especially those who have been historically and persistently marginalized.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly?**

While I've never attended the Churchwide Assembly, I have always learned something new while watching online. I know that the Holy Spirit has in the past and continues to allow me to hear new things and change on a number of perspectives and decisions as I grow in faith.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

## Clergy, Male

**Name:** The Rev. Gabriel Marcano  
**Congregation:** Kinsmen/Sagrada Familia, Houston  
**Occupation:** Pastor

**Please list the spiritual gifts you possess that would make you an effective delegate to the Churchwide Assembly, and state why you feel called to serve in this position.**

- Passion for mission, social justice and divinity
- Art and Evangelism
- Culture and education for the new evangelization

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues to be considered at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

No, I don't.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly?**

Yes, I am.

# NOMINEE INFORMATION: 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

*\*Responses to questions in the following pages appear as submitted on the nomination forms.*

***Laity, Person of Color or Primary Language other than English, Male or Female***

**Name:** Diane White  
**Congregation:** New Hope, Missouri City  
**Occupation:** Retired

**Please list the spiritual gifts you possess that would make you an effective delegate to the Churchwide Assembly, and state why you feel called to serve in this position.**

- Active in my home congregation (Choir member; former council member; served on the stewardship commission)
- Currently serving on the TLGCS Candidacy Committee
- Excellent communicator

**Do you have a committed view about any of the issues to be considered at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly? If so, please share your views in one paragraph below:**

No, I do not have any committed views about any of the issues being considered at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

**Are you open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead you to change your view, if it is already formed, on any of the issues to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly?**

When having to make major decisions, especially those which affect the lives and conditions of others, I search for the Holy Spirit to give me the guidance, understanding, and willingness to make the best decision possible.