



Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe

Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe is the Executive for Synod Relations and the Natural Systems Coordinator for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. From 2005 to 2014 she served as an assistant to the bishop in the Northeastern Ohio Synod and continues to coordinate that synod's Congregational Systems Team as it promotes well-being in its leaders and congregations through the means of family systems theory.

Prior to her calls to the synod and churchwide staff, she served congregations as a deacon with a focus in church music, religious education, and family ministry. Mary Ann has a Bachelor of Music degree from Houghton College and a Master of Arts in Religion from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. She has studied and applied Bowen family systems theory since 1994, in her own family of origin work and in parish leadership and consultation.

In her call to the Northeastern Ohio Synod staff, she developed a working group committed to congregational systems endeavors in three primary areas: congregational struggle, the call process, and family systems seminars for clergy and church leaders. The development of a systems team and its ongoing task and training has become a vital ministry of the synod. Mary Ann's primary areas of interest are in addressing congregational anxiety and facilitating a view of parish leadership through family process and a natural systems lens.

Mary Ann is a member of the coordinating team of Voyagers, a national colloquy on Bowen theory, is a family systems coach for rostered ministers, and a synod/congregational consultant. In addition to her position as the ELCA Executive for Synod Relations, she is the coordinator of the ELCA Systems Academy and facilitates the formation and training of synod teams which promote a wholistic approach to congregational work with a family systems lens.

Mary Ann and her husband Rick have five adult children, corresponding spouses, and nine grandchildren – an excellent laboratory for family systems work!

Education

Bachelor of Music

Houghton College
Houghton, New York

M.A Religion

Lutheran Theological Seminary
Gettysburg, PA

Previous Seminars with the Gulf Coast Synod

[Anxiety in an Anxious Climate](#)

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