CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

As the body of Christ, we the church participate in God’s mission of continually making all things new. The Candidacy Committee helps identify and guide prospective leaders through the discernment process, from application to ordination, in order to become rostered leaders. Those leaders then in turn help equip others to work in this world doing God’s work to serve their neighbors.

The Candidacy Committee meets almost monthly both at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill and at United Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg campus. Interviews are conducted at both sites while the campus visits allow us to conduct interviews and to have some time to interact with the students over lunch after attending chapel with them. In our process and interviews, we follow the ELCA Candidacy Manual, as do all the other synods. The manual, all necessary candidacy forms and other candidacy resources are available on the ELCA website for view or download.

Each year the committee conducts a day long retreat in order to give the candidates and future applicants some information that is outside the normal course work and to give an opportunity for candidates, future applicants and committee members to interact. This year the retreat was held at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill. Bishop Dunlop led a presentation on the Future of the Christian Faith, Pastor Brian Biery led a presentation on Prayer and Spiritual Disciplines, Vice President Lucinda Bringman, Bishop Dunlop, and Pastor Sean Titus led a conversation on the Churchwide Assembly, and Bishop Dunlop led a question and answer time, always a favorite at the retreats.

Many thanks for all the dedicated pastors, deacons and other members of the baptized priesthood who make up this committee. As of March 1, 2020, the members of the Candidacy Committee continue to care for the following individuals. Please note that while candidates are identified by roster, those roster classifications are subject to change as individuals struggle with their sense of call and discern where God is leading them.

Minister of Word and Sacrament
DeAnn Books
Scott Brubaker
Thomas Busteed
Rebekah Cochrane
Jessica Davis
Michael Faust
Melissa Hoffman
Michael Johnsen
Jessica Lee
Jennifer Morris

Minister of Word and Service
Stephen Boyhont
Kurt Nielsen
Elizabeth Peter
Pal Puszta
Emily Schreiber
Susan Scott
Troy Spencer
Vanessa Storlie
Rodney Warfield
Carla Christopher Wilson

Minister of Word and Service - Deaconess
Mary Louise Aims
Holly Gainor
Robert Kivlan
Emily Orner
Timothy Swartz
Margaret Folkemer
Megan McClinton
Mindy Shively

The following individuals have been given approval for assignment to the Roster of the ELCA:

Minister of Word and Sacrament: Thomas Busteed, Angela Hammer, Elizabeth Peter, Carla Christopher Wilson
Minister of Word and Service: Megan McClinton

Candidates removed or who withdrew from the candidacy process: Michael Borrell, Richard Cassem II, Anna Hatcher, Sharon Kaya, Geoffrey McCarthy, Gregory Neuhauser, Benjamin Olewiler, and Michael Zimmerman

Statistical Summary of Action Taken by LSS Candidacy Committee March 2019 – February 2020

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Positive Entrance</th>
<th>Entrance Postponed</th>
<th>Entrance Denied</th>
<th>Positive Endorsement</th>
<th>Endorsement Postponed</th>
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Jeffrey P. Weaver, chair
COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS COMMITTEE

One of this synod’s stated priorities is Equipping Leaders. The Compensation and Benefits Committee supports this priority by ensuring that rostered ministers have adequate compensation and benefits packages. Since the 2019 Synod Assembly the committee implemented new online tools to assist with calculating compensation and proposed a parental leave policy which was approved by the Synod Council.

The committee also reviewed data to inform minimum salary recommendations for 2021. Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index, the cost of living increased by 2.3% in 2019. The Mercer Broad Salary Survey showed an average merit increase of 2.9% in 2019 and projects a 3% increase for 2020. Following this review, the committee submitted the following recommendations to the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly:

**Recommendation:** That the 2020 Synod Assembly set the 2021 minimum base salary and housing allowance for Ministers of Word and Sacrament with no years of experience and no parsonage provided at $53,875 and set the 2021 minimum salary for Ministers of Word and Sacrament with no years of experience and with a parsonage provided at $37,480, representing a 3% increase over the 2020 minimum salaries; and

**Recommendation:** That the 2020 Synod Assembly set the 2021 minimum base salary for Ministers of Word and Service with no years of experience at $48,530, a 5.5% increase over the 2020 minimum salary; and

**Recommendation:** That the Synod Council approve a $5.00 increase to the supply rate for one service in 2021, making the 2021 supply rate for one service $180; approve an additional $50 for each additional Sunday morning service and an additional $70 for each additional service other than Sunday morning.

**Note:** Following the decision by the 2019 Synod Assembly to narrow the gap between starting minimum salaries for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service, the Compensation and Benefits Committee intends to gradually equalize the starting salaries for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service within the next six years.

During the coming year the committee will explore models for providing a sabbatical leave and present one or more models to the Synod Council for inclusion in the Compensation and Benefits Manual.

Committee membership includes laity and rostered ministers who are gifted in the areas of human resources, economics and finances. Current members are: the Rev. Deborah Mahady, the Rev. Barbara Barry, the Rev. Thomas Bruner, Jr., Sister Davia Evans, the Rev. Stanley Reep, Bruce Senft, Kay Hinkle (Synod Council liaison), the Rev. Robert Blezard (staff liaison), Bishop James Dunlop, Debbie Clark (Executive Assistant for the Bishop’s Office) and the Rev. Doug Johnson.

The Rev. Doug Johnson, chair
COMMITTEE OF DEANS

Each of the 14 conferences of the Lower Susquehanna Synod is served by a dean and a secretary. These two positions are elected in alternate years at the Conference Spring Assembly. Each term is for two years, and each dean and secretary may serve three terms. Deans are elected in years ending in odd numbers and secretaries in the even years.

“First and last, the office of conference dean is an office of daily prayer…” (from the Dean’s Manual). Each conference dean is asked to pray for the congregations, rostered leaders, and seminarians, as well as for the bishop and the staff of the Lower Susquehanna Synod.

The conference deans serve as an extension of the bishop’s office on the territory of the synod. Within the conference, the dean:

- Leads conference meetings and assemblies;
- Cares for the development of the church;
- Provides leadership to congregations in the call process, including arrangement of interim pastors to congregations in transition and installing newly-called pastors in their congregation; and
- Serves as a liaison between the synod office and the congregations of the conference.

The deans gather every other month or so throughout the year at the United Church Center, with one of the meetings traditionally expanded to a retreat setting with worship and time for deeper conversation and learning. These meetings are a time for reports from the bishop and staff on issues important to our congregations and shared ministry as synod, a time for sharing among the deans, and for receiving occasional presentations from groups/entities related to the church. We also have a chance to give feedback to the Bishop and Staff, who seek to serve our congregations well.

This past year these conversations have continued to focus on Bishop Dunlop’s concern for pro-actively addressing the general decline in participation, membership and congregational life throughout the churches, including many of our own congregations, lifting up resources, discussing strategies and sharing best practices. We heard presentations from Barb Debski of Portico, the Rev. Dr. Martin Zimmamn from ULS, and Lucinda Bringman from Synod Council. We debriefed the process of preparing for a bishop’s election that was undertaken in 2018-2019, and most recently we considered the implications of the impending epidemic of COVID-19 for congregational and synodical life.

At last November’s meeting, the following officers were belatedly elected for a year’s term:

Chair – the Rev. Dr. Stephen Verkouw
Vice-Chair – the Rev. David Sensenig
Member-at-large – the Rev. Lisa Leber
Secretary – the Rev. Jeffrey Compton, (retired) who has continued in this service to the Committee of Deans for many years.

His enthusiasm for this task continues to be greatly appreciated!

I’m sure I speak also for the bishop and synod staff in thanking the deans for their collegial service and participation in these conversations and for their service in support of our conferences and congregations:

- Chambersburg Conference - the Rev. William Nienstedt
- Gettysburg Conference - the Rev. Michael Allwein
- Hanover Conference - the Rev. Bradley Dayett
- Harrisburg Conference - the Rev. Martha Boyd
- Lancaster Conference - the Rev. Stephen Verkouw
- North Lancaster Conference - the Rev. Karen Larson
- North York Conference - the Rev. Jason Northridge
- Perry Conference - the Rev. David Sensenig
- South York Conference - the Rev. Douglas DeStephano
- Upper Dauphin Conference - the Rev. Jonathan Jenkins
- West Cumberland Conference - the Rev. Lisa Leber
- West Shore Conference - the Rev. Alexander Martini
- York Conference - the Rev. Stanley Reep

We also thank those conference secretaries who occasionally attend these meetings in place of their absent dean and who join us for the annual Dean’s (and Secretaries) Retreat.

The deans are grateful for our bishop, the Rev. Jim Dunlop; all of the assistants to the bishop, especially the Rev. Rob Blezard who is always at our meetings; and synod vice president, Lucinda Bringman. Their reports and experiences bring breadth and depth to our conversations. We also offer thanks to Cathy Deitrich, who prepares meeting agenda and provides other administrative support, including coffee and tea for each of our meetings.

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Verkouw, chairperson
MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Mutual Ministry Committee is appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council and exists to provide support and counsel to the bishop. The committee meets with the bishop approximately three times a year and is available to meet additionally at the bishop’s request or by request of the committee. Committee members were identified in consultation with the bishop and represent a cross section of members of congregations of the Lower Susquehanna Synod including Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service, and ELCA related agencies and institutions.

Members of the committee for 2019-2020 were: Lucinda L. Bringman, synod vice president, Synod Council; the Rev. Shawn Berkebile; Tracey DePasquale; the Rev. Aaron M. Erdley; Deacon Michelle Huth; the Rev. Michael Martine; Andrea Oslikova; Joseph A. Ricci; the Rev. LaDonna E. Thomas.

Lucinda L. Bringman, *synod vice president*