

Transition Ministry Leadership Team Bios

Connie Schmucker, ELCA Deacon, serves as Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership throughout the Florida-Bahamas Synod, which includes responsibilities for congregations in transition, call process, and candidacy. Connie joined the Bishop's staff in May of 2015. Prior to this, she served under call at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Deerfield Beach, St. John Lutheran Church in Winter Park, Peace Lutheran Church in Fort Myers, congregations and under contract at Faith Lutheran Church in Lehigh Acres and Redeemer Lutheran Church in Winter Park in positions related to Christian Education and Pastoral Assistance. Connie has served on the Synod Candidacy Committee for 17 years. She did Distant Learning for Associates in Ministry through Trinity Seminary, Columbus, Oh, and holds a BS in Science and an AS in Teaching.

Thomas L. Weitzel has 30 years experience working with congregations in transition. A graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago after a 15-year career in publications, Tom has worked as a church consultant in reorganizational efforts, situations of conflict, and assisting parishes and leaders in discerning God's leading for new direction. He has consulted with parishes and synods for mission renewal in Florida, the Bahamas, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota and in churches as large as 1,300 and as small as 30. Since 2011, he has been a part of the Leadership Team for Transition Ministry for the Florida-Bahamas Synod, and he trains and mentors pastors in this ministry.

Richard W. Dow has been an interim pastor since 2010, now serving his fourth congregation, having guided the transition process in a variety of settings. He is a native of Iowa and was graduated from Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, and Northwestern Seminary (Luther), St. Paul, Minnesota. Ordained in 1979, he has served in suburban and rural parishes in Illinois, Texas, and Florida and an inner city setting in Louisiana. With his seven years of interim ministry and an "unintentional interim" of 6 ½ years in one of his former calls, Richard has a real appreciation for what it means for congregations to be in transition.

William E. Bogholtz is currently pastor of Christ, Cape Coral, recently called after a 3-year term interim. A graduate of Gettysburg Seminary and the Graduate Theological Foundation, Bill has served congregations in Pennsylvania, New York City, New England, and Florida. He has served three intentional interims and two unintentional interims. As a conference dean in the Metro New York Synod, he assisted several congregations through their transitions. Bill also has experience in institutional leadership transition, having led an agency board through a CEO transition.