Northeastern Ohio Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Lutheran Center • 1890 Bailey Road • Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221

PHONE 330-929-9022
FAX 330-929-9018

E-MAIL office@neos-elca.org
www.neos-elca.org

UNIFIED NEWSLETTER

January 22, 2021
Volume 34 — Issue 1

Next Unified Publication: Mar 19
Deadline for articles: Mar 14

In This Issue

Cover Page
Bishop's Newsletter
Calendar
Northeastern Ohio Synod Rostered News
Positions Available
Pulpit Supply List
Resource Center *Link*
Hymns for the Church Year (*Advent I – Transfiguration of Our Lord (B) 2020-2021)**
The Parish Paper: January and February issues
Inserts: 2021 Assembly Nomination Form

If a new **Hymns for the Church Year is issued between Unified mailings, we publish it in the weekly e-news and on the synod website: https://neos-elca.org/hymns-for-the-church-year/*

Please note: The Lutheran Center continues to operate under modified hours. Office Administrator **Sony Gilroy (330-929-9022, ext. 21)** is in the synod office on **Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.** and Resource Specialist Karen **Kaufman (330-929-9020)** is in the Resource Center on **Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.** Essential individual appointments may still be held at the participant's discretion, but ALL group meetings will be held electronically. The pastoral team and support team will be working remotely except for those days and times listed above and you will have electronic access to any pastor or support team member via email and voicemail. All pastoral staff visits to congregations are cancelled until further notice.

The Unified newsletter is being retired! The March 2021 issue will be the last issue of the Unified newsletter. All of the information typically shared here will be included in the weekly e-news and/or on the synod website. If you prefer to receive the Unified contents by mail, please contact Marilyn Matevia at the synod office: 330-929-9022, ext. 22. Subscribe to the weekly e-news and other electronic announcements here: https://tinyurl.com/s5yathk

Congregation/Parochial Report forms available. 2020 Congregation Report Forms have been mailed out from Chicago, but might still be in a postal bottleneck. Forms can be filled out directly on the ELCA website [https://webapps.elca.org/FormAAndC/Login.aspx] or download from the Northeastern Ohio Synod website and mail to the synod office: https://neos-elca.org/forms-and-documents/ (instructions included). If you download your forms from the synod website, you will need to contact Marilyn Matevia for your congregation's password: mmatevia@neos-elca.org

2020 Rostered Leaders "Report to the Bishop." Bishop Barbins is not using the standard form found on the ELCA website this year. Instead, please grab the much shorter and hopefully more fun "report" found here: https://tinyurl.com/y56rv9d9 Or use the quick link "Ministers Report" at the bottom of the E-news. Please turn this in as soon as you are able, but no later than January 31. You can email it directly to Bishop Barbins at lbarbins@neos-elca.org. https://tinyurl.com/y56rv9d9

Continued…

2021 Synod Assembly Ballot. Twenty-three (23) positions will be elected at the 2021 synod assembly on June 12. Fifteen of those positions will be filled by lay persons. Your nominations for synod council, consultation committee, 2022 churchwide voting member and synod vice president are needed and requested. To view a complete listing of positions visit the synod's website at neos-elca.org and click on Assembly. A nomination form is also available on that page. Questions may be directed to chair Pr. Don King, 216-229-7003, donkingcle@gmail.com or staff liaison, Karen Kaufman, 330-929-9020, kkaufman@neos-elca.org.

Puzzled over how to hold a remote congregational meeting? The synod hosted two informational sessions via webinar in January, providing support and guidance for hosting remote congregational meetings. A recording of one of those sessions, along with a downloadable FAQ and guidelines published by the ELCA, is available here: https://neos-elca.org/guidelines-for-remote-council-and-congregational-meetings/

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Lutheran-Catholic Covenant Commission invites Catholic and Lutheran churches to commemorate together the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021, January 18-25: Abide in My Love…You Shall Bear Much Fruit (John 15:1-17). For celebration resources, visit the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute website, www.geii.org. For Christian unity celebrations throughout the year, visit the Lutheran Catholic Covenant website, www.lccovenant.weebly.com. For more ecumenical information, visit the USCCB Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs website, www.usccb.org/seia. NEOS Lutheran Churches outside the geographical boundaries of the Diocese of Youngstown are welcome to use these resources.

Future Church Update from ELCA. On Tuesday, January 19, the ELCA hosted a webinar for rostered leaders, "Future Church Update." Technical difficulties kept the webinar from going live, so it was recorded and is available for viewing here: https://youtu.be/pPKsDy206MQ While the webinar was for rostered ministers, Bishop Eaton is welcoming everyone to watch.

Peace, Canton Marks 60th Anniversary of Live Nativity. This past Christmas marked the sixtieth anniversary of Peace Lutheran Church's (Canton, Ohio) Live Nativity. It is one of the oldest, continuous Live Nativities in the state of Ohio. It was started in 1960 by a church member who worked for the electrical company and cut up unused tarred utility poles to build the rustic stable. Ever since then, generations of church families have portrayed figures in the story of Christ's birth for the community to experience the miracle and promise of the Nativity. Unfortunately because of the pandemic, celebration of the sixtieth anniversary was muted this year, but the congregation does plan to celebrate next year. - *Submitted by Pastor Scott Bacon, Peace, Canton*

BISHOP'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

Greetings, Church!

In this last year we have all had to learn new ways of communicating as a public health crisis has gripped our neighborhoods. We, in the church, learned all too fast that we might have been further behind that proverbial 8-ball than other sectors in our world. We had to catch up and catch up fast.

Hopefully you have taken note that this is the second to last Unified to be published; the March-April edition will be the final Unified. It is the end of an age as we, your Synod Offices, give way to more agile and adaptable means of communicating with you.

I regret that some of you may feel the loss of this Unified quite acutely. You have found this publication to be a lifeline to the ministries within our territory as well as a communication from your Bishop. I would like to invite you – those of you who "don't do" Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube, websites, or email – to call me (330-929-9022) and let me know how I can stay in touch with you. Our intention in dropping the Unified is not then also to drop you! We will be happy to continue to send you printed materials, I just need to know who you are. Please reach out to me.

For those of you who DO email, I invite you to make sure you are subscribed to our weekly e-news; that subscription link is at the bottom of our webpage (www.neos-elca.org). This weekly communication has been revamped so that it has timely and relevant news that rotates with each edition. In addition, our website is going to be receiving a facelift so that the information there is more easily accessible. The congregational events that have traditionally been reported in the Unified will be on the calendar of events; messages from me go out every week in my Thursday THoughts, and other resources will be made available on the webpage.

There are so many good ministries happening within our territory and we are working hard to make those known to you in timely ways. Please continue to let us know what is happening in your congregation and conference and we will continue to get that news out to your siblings in our Synod. If you are doing something extra special, let me know and I might include it on my Monday Morning Discipling segment on my Bishop Barbins Facebook Page, or we may include it as a "Good News" Story that is distributed by Synod Council.

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

So, let your light shine! Let me – let us – know what God is doing in and through you that we might all see that light and give all the glory to God.

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ABBREVIATED SYNOD CALENDER

You can find updated synod events on the website calendar page, along with more details about the events below (where appropriate): http://neos-elca.org/events-calendar/

JANUARY

26-28 9:00 a.m., **Ohio Rostered Ministers Gathering**; see synod website, or contact the Northwestern Ohio Synod office at info@nwos-elca.org

Southern Conference meets every Tuesday, 11:00 a.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran in New Philadelphia; contact Pr. Steve Patrick

FEBRUARY

3 12:00 p.m., **Congregational Resource Team**, via Zoom
9 9:30 a.m., **Richland-Ashland Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Scott Henderson)
10 1:30 p.m., **Worship Committee**, via Zoom
11 9:00 a.m., **Cleveland West Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Sherman Bishop)
10:00 a.m., **Cleveland East Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Don King)
16 10:00 a.m., **Stewardship & Mission Support Committee,** via Zoom
18 10:00 a.m., **Akron-Wooster Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Doug Fidler)
23 11:00 a.m., **Canton-Massillon Conference Meeting,** via hybrid (contact Pr. Bruce Roth)
1:00 p.m., **Meeting of Conference Deans,** via Zoom
3:30 p.m., **Executive Committee Meeting,** via Zoom

Southern Conference *meets every Tuesday, 11:00 a.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran in New Philadelphia; contact Pr. Steve Patrick*

MARCH

3 12:00 p.m., **Congregational Resource Team**, via Zoom
9 9:30 a.m., **Richland-Ashland Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Scott Henderson)
11:00 a.m., **Canton-Massillon Conference Meeting,** via hybrid (contact Pr. Bruce Roth)
1:00 p.m., **Meeting of Conference Deans,** via Zoom
10 1:30 p.m., **Worship Committee**, via Zoom
11 9:00 a.m., **Cleveland West Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Sherman Bishop)
10:00 a.m., **Cleveland East Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Don King)
18 10:00 a.m., **Akron-Wooster Conference Meeting,** via Zoom (contact Pr. Doug Fidler)
20 9:00 a.m., **Synod Council Meeting,** via Zoom
30 10:00 a.m., **Renewal of Vows** (details to follow)

Southern Conference *meets every Tuesday, 11:00 a.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran in New Philadelphia; contact Pr. Steve Patrick*

Monthly Conference Meetings for Rostered Leaders:

Akron-Wooster: Third Thursday, at 10:00 a.m., via Zoom (contact Pr. Doug Fidler)
Canton-Massillon: Last Tuesday, at 11:00 a.m., hybrid Zoom/in-person (contact Pr. Bruce Roth)
Cleveland East: Third Thursday, at 10:00 a.m., via Zoom (contact Pr. Don King)
Cleveland West: First and Third Thursdays, at 9:00 a.m., via Zoom (contact Pr. Sherman Bishop)
Eastern: Mahoning Cluster meets first Monday, 7:00 p.m. (contact Pr. Erin Burns)
Richland-Ashland: Second Tuesday, at 9:30 a.m., via Zoom (contact Pr. Scott Henderson)
Southern: Every Tuesday, at 11:00 a.m., at Emmanuel, New Philadelphia (contact Pr. Steve Patrick)

Congregations in the Call Process (Mission Site Profile Online)

- Brook Park, Redeemer, supplies
- Chagrin Falls, Lord of Life: Associate Pastor
- Elyria, Emmanuel, Jeff Steeber, ongoing supply
- Hudson, Rejoice! (part-time/shared), Doug Fidler, interim
- Mansfield, St. Timothy (part-time/shared), Laura Kuntz, interim
- New Philadelphia, Emmanuel, Bob Linsz, interim
- New Pittsburg, St. Peter, Christopher Bartholomew, interim
- North Canton, St. Jacob's, Kyle Woodrow (UMC), interim
- Parma, Parma, Ann Paynter, interim
- Strasburg, First/Tuscarawas, St. James (part-time/shared), Jeff Goggins, interim
- Westlake, Prince of Peace, Tom Henderson, interim
- Wooster, Zion, Shari Ayers, interim

Transitions

- North Canton, St. Jacob's; called Angel Jackson, accepted; installation TBA.
- Vermilion, Trinity; called Sarah Taylor; accepted (first Sunday, Nov. 29); installation TBA.

Prayers for Healing

- Pastor Nathaniel Adams
- Pastor Sherman Bishop
- Pastor Erin Burns
- Pastor Lou Raymond
- Pastor Leah Schafer

Ongoing Prayer Concerns

- Pastor Joe Ertl
- Pastor Larry Mackey and his wife, Lida

Sympathy

- Penny Christensen on the death of her husband, Glen
- Pastor Carol Kilgore on the death of her mother
- Pastor Don Frantz on the death of his sister, Pam Herbert
- Pastor Scott Henderson on the death of his mother
- Pastor Hal Robarge on the death of his daughter-in-law
- Family and friends of Pastor David Craig
- Family and friends of Pastor Kert Lauterbach
- Family and friends of Pastor B. Jane Pierce
- Family and friends of Deacon Betty Lou Theiss

If you would like to add the name of a rostered minister – your own or someone else's – to the Unified's list of "on-going prayer concerns," please contact Marilyn Matevia at the Synod office: 330-929-9022, ext. 22; mmatevia@neos-elca.org Unless otherwise requested, individuals will be included on the list for two editions of the Unified.

Important reminder about background checks: Congregations are called to be safe places for all members, and every ELCA congregation is responsible to have established guidelines and policies protecting all members. When hiring church workers, please remember the importance of background checks. Your congregation should have official guidelines in place to safeguard members against abuse. For more information about background checks and guidelines: www.elca.org/backgroundchecks

****** Please remember to tell the Synod office if your posted position has been filled! ******
Contact Marilyn Matevia, mmatevia@neos-elca.org, or 330-929-9022, ext. 22

LOMO Guest Relations Manager. The LOMO (Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio) Guest Relations Manager is responsible for managing registrations, communications and office processes. The person who fills this position needs effective relationship and communication skills to promote and assist people to register for retreats, summer youth and family camps, summer congregation day camps, and environmental education. Responsibilities include data base management, communications, fiscal management, and administration. Character traits include being well organized, helpful, a team player, self-motivated, and flexible with great attention to detail. A college degree is preferred. The position is full time salaried with benefits. The employee will work from Lutheran Memorial Camp near Marengo. Contact Terry at info@lomocamps.org for an application packet.

LOMO Program Director. The LOMO (Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio) Program Director is directly responsible for programming family camps, retreats, special events, and environmental education. The employee's work is based at Lutheran Memorial Camp, Marengo during the fall, winter and spring; at Camp Luther during the summer. Required knowledge and skills include creatively developing, promoting, implementing and evaluating programs. Responsibilities include programing, hospitality and human resource management. Character traits needed include enthusiasm, welcoming "people-person", well organized with attention to detail, team player, self-starter, Christian and have a love for the outdoors. The position is full time salaried with benefits. Contact Terry at info@lomocamps.org for an application packet.

Pianist for Sunday worship. Good Soil Lutheran Ministries (Rocky River, goodsoillutheran.org) is seeking a pianist for Sunday worship services at 9:30am beginning weekly in January 2021 (or week to week as able). Worship services are about 45 minutes and are currently livestreamed only with a team of 4 people running the service. Experience with liturgical worship helpful, but not required. Email Pastor Marissa Harrison for more information: pastormarissa@goodsoillutheran.org.

Executive for Administration, Chicago, IL. The ELCA seeks its next Executive for Administration (EA), who will serve as the chief operating officer for the ELCA's churchwide headquarters located in Chicago. The EA will work closely with the presiding bishop and all ELCA staff leaders. Importantly, the EA position presents the unique opportunity to be deeply involved in the redesign of the churchwide leadership structure and to serve as a primary driver of the strategic planning process, including addressing challenges facing congregations such as an aging membership and diversity in membership. To apply, send a current resume and letter of introduction to Kittleman & Associates, LLC at https://bit.ly/3jHyQuu. For best consideration, interested parties should submit their resume and cover letter asap.

Part-time Chaplain. St. Paul's Senior Living Community, located in Greenville, PA has an opening for a part-time Chaplain. Resumes are being accepted by email at lchuey@sp1867.org or by mail to Lynn Chuey, 339 E. Jamestown Road, Greenville, PA 16125. You can also apply on-line at

www.sp1867.org. This opportunity is approximately 20 hours per week. For a full job description click here: https://tinyurl.com/y7qhfk38

High School Youth Leader. St. Paul, Berea is looking for an enthusiastic person with a heart for the Gospel who enjoys teaching and mentoring high school age students. During the school year, will lead a weekly Sunday School class (9:45-10:45AM). During the summer months, will assist with our Vacation Bible School and chaperoning a mission trip for one week. Throughout the year will be responsible for planning, promoting, and leading a few social activities per month for students from 8th-12th grade in age. Part-time, 8-12 hours per week (including prep time (on your own schedule) and class/activity time). Upper classman college students/graduates with a major in theology /seminary / secondary education preferred. Please email your resume to officestaff@stpaulberea.org.

Chaplain. Continuum Care Hospice is looking to hire a Full-Time Hospice Chaplain for their locations across the Northeast Ohio Region. The Chaplain will offer pastoral care and spiritual guidance to hospice patients, families and staff. Education/Experience: Master of Divinity (MDiv.) required, Clinical Pastoral Education Units (CPE) preferred, Hospice experience preferred. Must have experience with clinical documentation in electronic medical records and care planning in a hospice environment. To learn more about joining the Legacy Health Services family, please visit our website at www.LHShealth.com

Organist. St. Luke's, Cuyahoga Falls is seeking an Organist for their weekly Sunday services, choir practices, and additional and seasonal services. Please click on the following links for a full job description (https://tinyurl.com/y7t9alwk) and application (https://tinyurl.com/yd3amnj6).

Part-Time Director of Worship and Music. Christ the Redeemer, Brecksville is seeking a part-time director of worship and music. The qualified candidate for this position should be proficient in organ and piano. Additional desired qualities would be choir directing, familiarity with Lutheran liturgical worship, and basic computer knowledge. The individual would be involved in our worship planning and be responsible for playing at our Sunday worship services, as well as, seasonal and other planned services. Availability for funerals and weddings hosted by the church would also be desired – subject to scheduling. We are seeking a Christian candidate who feels a call to, and love of, music, is creative, personable, relational, and a team player. Resume and cover letter can be emailed to pastorrandy@crlcbrecksville.org.

Director of Music Ministries. Advent, Solon is seeking a part-time Director of Music Ministries to provide accompaniment for weekly worship service, direction of choirs, and continued development and coordination of the music program. Applicant should provide a resume with relevant experience and references. A complete job description is available at AdventSolon.org/Music. Applications should be sent to Advent Lutheran Church, 5525 Harper Road, Solon, OH 44139 or emailed to PastorJim@adventsolon.org.

Organist/Music Director. St. Jacob, Massillon (Jackson Township) is seeking an Organist/Music Director to play Sundays at 9:00 a.m. and to direct and rehearse the choir. Other responsibilities include planning repertoire for worship serves with input from the pastor and Worship Board along with possibly playing for weddings and funerals. Contact Becky Foltz (beckyfoltz1@gmail.com / 330-854-5155) for more in-depth details.

NORTHEASTERN OHIO SYNOD PULPIT SUPPLY LIST JAN/FEB 2021

The 2021 NEOS Compensation Guidelines state: Those asked to serve as pulpit supply should be contacted well in advance of the date needed and, upon acceptance, be provided with a copy of the worship bulletin and pertinent information about the service. A member familiar with congregational worship practices should be on hand to welcome the pastor prior to the service. The recommended honorarium for one worship service is $150 plus mileage at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate (beginning **January 1, 2021, 56 cents/mile**). For additional services, scheduled within three hours of the conclusion of the initial worship service, whether at the same congregation or at another, as in two-point parishes, an additional $50 per service should be paid plus any additional mileage. If additional services are scheduled during the week that are similar in nature e.g., Sunday evening, Wednesday, Saturday, etc., an additional honorarium of $85 for each additional service plus mileage at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate should be paid. For additional responsibilities, appropriate compensation should be provided. Expenses for lodging and meals, if necessary, are to be paid by the congregation. *The current Pulpit Supply list is also available on the NEOS website under the "Resources" tab.*

The following persons have indicated their availability for pulpit supply (additional supply pastors from denominations in full communion with the ELCA can be found on page 2):

The Rev Langley Collins
1310 Fifth Ave Apt 907
Youngtown, OH 44504
(C) 330-720-9872
lmcollins605@gmail.com

The Rev. David Connor
12700 Lake Ave., #100
Lakewood, OH 44107-4318
(C) 216-226-0346
Prdavec526@yahoo.com

The Rev Barbara Essex
(UCC) 11205 Euclid Ave
Cleveland, OH 44106
(O) 216-421-9614 ext. 301
(H) 216-772-2325
barbara.upcam@gmail.com

The Rev Don Frantz
114 Forest Hill Dr.
Avon Lake, OH 44012
(H) 440-961-0000
(C) 937-725-0319
dfrantz4@oh.rr.com

The Rev Rod Funk
8032 Munson Road
Mentor, OH 44060
440-946-5270
rphunque@yahoo.com

The Rev George Gaiser
944 Dussel Rd.
Kent, OH 44240-6524
330-678-9287
gjgaiser@att.net

The Rev Elizabeth Hazelton
9396 Brandywine Rd
Sagamore Hills, OH 44067-2480
330-468-0412
pastorbetti@sbcglobal.net

The Rev Tom Henderson
313 Janice Dr.
Berea, OH 44017
440-539-6294
tomhenderson10@hotmail.com

The Rev Jim Kulma
1496 Marlowe Dr.
Lakewood, OH 44107
(C) 216-221-7333
jkulma@cox.net

The Rev Dr Deborah Michaels
13193 Hampton Club Dr.
Apt. 102
North Royalton, OH 44133
440-281-5337
revdeb51@yahoo.com

The Rev Todd Mills
Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University
2199 E Main St Columbus, OH 43209
(O) 614-236-6301
(C) 614-965-2472
tmills@capital.edu

The Rev George Murphy
538 Cynthia Lane
Tallmadge, OH 44278-2884
330-524-4090
gmurphy10@neo.rr.com

The Rev Shelley Nelson-Bridger
26760 Chapel Hill Drive
North Olmsted, OH 44070
(C) 513-635-7594
pastorshelleynb@gmail.com

The Rev Gail Patton
5256 Spencer Rd.
Lyndhurst, OH 44124-1251
440-442-5256

The Rev Robert Pindell
925 Barkston Dr.
Highland Hts., OH 44143-3218
(H) 440-449-6301
(C) 440-679-1943
bobdell@ix.netcom.com

The Rev Haldon Robarge
12015 Lagoona Circle NW
Uniontown, OH 44685
330-760-3925
hrobarge@neo.rr.com

The Rev Robert Sander
4818 Leigh Ave NW
Canton, OH 44709-1943
(H) 330-497-7293
(C) 419-973-7773
rev1bobs@aol.com

The Rev Richard Seaks
10778 Liberty Street
Garrettsville, OH 44231-1210
330-527-8104
revseaks@gmail.com

The Rev H Dixon Slingerland
147 Barrington Place E
Aurora, OH 44202
330-995-6101
slingerlandh@gmail.com

The Rev Jonathan Steingass
3108 Lester Rd
Medina, OH 44256-7724
330-722-6139
jsteingass@zoominternet.net

The Rev Edward Wahl
(*NWOS)*
2856 St. Rt. 529
Cardington, OH 43315
419-864-0850
revedwahl@hotmail.com

The Rev Richard Weaver
255 Teal Circle
Akron, OH 44319
(C) 419-591-8594
Rweaver2484@yahoo.com

NORTHEASTERN OHIO SYNOD SUPPLY PREACHERS – LAY (NON-COMMUNION SERVICES)

Richard Brenneman
13256 Shipley Rd
Fredericktown, OH 43019
740-694-1755
dbbrenneman@gmail.com

David Rebeck
244 Fairpark Dr.
Berea, OH 44017-2405
440-891-9793
djrebeck@roadrunner.com

Ken Reinoehl
407 Ninth St. NW
North Canton, OH 44720
330-866-2452
reinoehlk@gmail.com

Linda Weidenbach (Non-Sunday services)
2984 Chaucer Drive NE
Canton, Ohio 44721
(C) 850-766-5640
lindakjw@gmail.com

ORDAINED MINISTERS FROM DENOMINATIONS IN FULL COMMUNION WITH THE ELCA

Episcopal Church, Diocese of Ohio: *Supply roster can be found at: www.dohio.org.*

Moravian Church:

The Rev William Surber
Uhrichsville,
330-401-7754
Revwes51@gmail.com

Reformed Church of America (RCA):

The Rev Don Poest
Brunswick, 330-273-7396
brcpoest@aol.com

United Church of Christ *(WR=Western Reserve Association; EO=Eastern Ohio Association)*:

The Rev Mendle E. Adams (EO, WR) Lyndhurst,
216-246-6369
mendle.adams@yahoo.com

The Rev Dick Beck (EO, WR)
Mogadore,
330-807-2800
rfbeck3@sbcglobal.net

The Rev Karen D. Binford (EO) Ravenna,
330-968-9622
revgrandma@att.net

UCC continued…

The Rev Henry W. Bruner (WR)
Elyria, 440-322-9749
billandmartybruner@gmail.com

The Rev Monte E. Canfield (EO) Newcomerstown,
330-204-7763
montecan@ roadrunner.com

The Rev James G. Deitz (WR)
Amherst, 440-988-2714
ejdeitz@centurytel.net

The Rev Jonathan M. Dodson (EO, WR) Hudson,
330-888-8755
dodson.jon@hotmail.com

The Rev Barbara J. Essex (WR)
South Euclid,
216-772-2325
bjessex@aol.com

The Rev Kenneth E. Hutchinson (EO) North Canton,
330-526-8520
hutchinson@sssnet.com

The Rev Veronica M. Jefferson (WR) Cleveland Heights,
216-291-5510
revvmjeff@gmail.com

UCC continued…

The Rev Doyle A. Luckenbaugh (EO)
Massillon, 330-309-5253
doymar58@sssnet.com

The Rev Carolyn J. Mann (EO)
Brinkhaven, 740-824-4632
haymann51@yahoo.com

The Rev James A. Nelson (EO)
Orrville, 330-683-2792
revjn0203@hotmail.com

The Rev Sharon G. Nichols (EO)
North Canton,
330-499-5707
uccrev@neo.rr.com

The Rev Steven Savides (EO, WR)
Akron, 617-894-4496
Steven@thesavides.com

The Rev Rev. Brian A. Shields
4005 Navahoe Rd.
Cleveland Heights, OH 44121
(C) 216-956-8475
bshields80.bs@gmail.com

The Rev Timothy Staveteig (EO, WR)
Cleveland,
216-401-5460
tstaveteig@gmail.com

UCC continued…

The Rev Glenn E. Swope (EO, WR)
Alliance,
330-823-5107
cgsarts@aol.com

The Rev Kate L. Walsh (EO, WR)
Chagrin Falls,
330-472-0228
katewalsh1216@gmail.com

United Methodist Church:

The Rev Bernie Dougherty
2742 Stockman Ct.
Stow, OH 44224
336-491-8840
revbdough@aol.com

Last updated 1/12/2021

Your LINK to Ministry Resources

NE Ohio Resource Center

January 2021
Volume 26, Issue 1

Karen Kaufman,
Resource Specialist

Staffed Hours
8-4 Mon, Tues & Thurs

Call or email ahead of visit for recommended resources to be immediately available for viewing.

Not able to visit? Most items can be mailed.

1890 Bailey Road
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
44221-5576

330-929-9020
rc@neos-elca.org
twitter.com/resources4U

We love because he first loved us. I John 4:19

Valentine's Day is on Sunday this year. In past years we may have presented decorated cookies or small bags of candy to people as they left Sunday worship on the 14th. Even if you have in-person worship there will be some people who will not be present. Be prepared to deliver a greeting to these individuals prior to worship, or later that same day. With prior planning and assistance you can encourage them to share their greeting or smile through a photo or video that can be shared in the streamed service. Share the love!

Lenten Shift?

Over the years congregations have emphasized the season of Lent with mid-week worship services. Sometimes monologues or brief dramas would take the place of the sermon. During the energy crisis some congregations transitioned to a brief meditation or conversational sermon following a light meal in the church fellowship hall. In 2021 you may want to consider a shift to a mid-week Bible study that includes both in-person and virtual participants. Some Bible study resources available are :
https://elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/5-Gifts
Five Gifts of Discipleship during Lent: Living our Baptism

https://elca.org/Resources/Bible-Studies#Discipleship
Bible studies on the Gospel or Second Lesson – Year B – Lent

If you wish to do a Bible study on the book of Mark, the resource center still has 15 copies of ***Mark for Everyone*** by N.T. Wright. Or if you wish to do a book study the resource center has 17 copies of ***The Centered Life*** by Jack Fortin. To request copies or for more information contact Karen, 330-929-9020/rc@neos-elca.org

\+ +

2021 may also be the year when congregations may want to stage a **CrossWalk** or activity similar to a live Nativity to tell the Passion Story. Other options may center on "Stations of the Cross" that could be placed throughout the church building for safe viewing. Or enlist individuals and families to create a station which is then shared virtually with other stations for the congregation and community to view. The resource center has several models that could be adapted for 2021.

Stewardship

Make use of the recent season of giving to encourage giving throughout the year. This article will provide some insights: How the gift of receiving enables us to give: tinyurl.com/yxspsb5n

Learn how to address inequality at faithlead.luthersem.edu/addressing-inequaltiy-in-stewardship-and-fundraising.

30th Anniversary

2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the Northeastern Ohio Synod Resource Center. Connie Garrett with allotted space, materials from the Ohio District – ALC and volunteers Barb Culler and Florence Wilch created the Northeastern Ohio Synod Resource Center following the 1990 NE Ohio Synod Assembly. Through the encouragement and support of resource center directors across the greater church as well as local leadership and congregations the NE Ohio Synod Resource Center was birthed into being. Through the years it has resourced synod congregations and leaders with:

- printed materials,
- videos,
- leader training and support gatherings,
- recommendations of resources(print, visual, digital, human)
- distribution of excess or original resources,
- unique equipment (projectors, percussion instruments, display items)

You can digitally subscribe to this newsletter by emailing rc@neos-elca.org

and a newsletter highlighting resources and ministry opportunities.
Rejoice with us and offer suggestions for additional or better ways we can support the leadership in your congregation!

Karen Kaufman, Resource Specialist

Fresh new resources

Barngeeseworship.com *includes text notes, group devotions and a Lenten kit.*

Bannerblue.org has family faith formation kits developed by three of our own pastors.

Helpful links:

hymnary.org is a lifesaver when planning worship or devotions and you are missing your hymnal. You can find everything from the full text of verses, copyright info to hymnal numbers.

Musicthatmakescommunity.org/resources is also a source for liturgical music, (recordings allow you to preview - personal favorite “Santos, Santos”)

Congregationalconsulting.org/planning-in-a-liminal-season is a helpful article when approaching planning in the coming year.

Hymns for the Church Year

by Thomas H. Boreman
boreman4@yahoo.com

ADVENT I – TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

Year B

Hymn suggestions are from four Augsburg Fortress publications. *E* refers to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, *L* refers to *Lutheran Book of Worship*, *W* refers to *With One Voice*, and *WP* refers to *Worship and Praise*. H is Hymn of the Day, G is Gathering Hymn, and S is Sending Hymn. I, Ps, II, and HG are hymns relating to the Revised Common Lectionary, and refer to the First Lesson, Psalm, Second Lesson, and Holy Gospel.

November 29, 2020		**FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT**
H	*E*245/*L*323	Creator of the Stars of Night
H	*E*244/*L*25	Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers
I	*E*436/*L*31	Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying
I	*WP*103	Now God Our Father
Ps	*E*789/*L*481	Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
II	*E*806/*L*504	O God, My Faithful God
HG	*E*264/*L*26	Prepare the Royal Highway
HG	*E*240/*W*630	Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah
HG	*E*438/*W*627	My Lord, What a Morning
	*E*263/*L*28	Savior of the Nations, Come
G	*E*259/*L*32	Fling Wide the Door
G	*E*242/*W*633	Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn
S	*E*632/*L*320	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
S	*E*247	Come Now, O Prince of Peace
G	*E*439/*W*744	Soon and Very Soon
December 6, 2020		**SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT**
H	*E*266/*W*629	All Earth Is Hopeful
H	*E*256/*L*29	Comfort, Comfort Now My People
I	*E*239/*L*35	Hark the Glad Sound!
I	*E*781/*L*474	Children of the Heavenly Father
I	*E*240/*W*630	Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah
II	*E*730/*L*244	Lord Our God, with Praise We Come
II	*E*255	There's a Voice in the Wilderness
HG	*E*421/*L*178	By All Your Saints (verse *E*14/*L*15)
HG	*E*249/*L*36	On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry
HG	*E*264/*L*26	Prepare the Royal Highway
	*W*631	Lift Up Your Heads, O Gates
S	*E*519/*W*715	Open Your Ears, O Faithful People
S	*E*314/*W*652	Arise, Your Light Has Come!
G	*E*254/*L*30	Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus
December 13, 2020		**THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT**
H	*E*252/*W*628	Each Winter As the Year Grows Older
H	*E*246/*L*37	Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding
I	*E*244/*L*25	Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers
I	*E*488-9/*L*224	Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness
II	*E*398/*L*257	Holy Spirit, Truth Divine
HG	*E*249/*L*36	On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry
HG	*E*673/*L*400	God, Whose Almighty Word
HG	*WP*79	Joyous Light of Glory
HG	*E*261	As the Dark Awaits the Dawn
HG	*E*507/*L*327	O God of Light
S	*E*309/*L*86	The Only Son from Heaven
G	*E*247	Come Now, O Prince of Peace
S	*E*815/*W*649	I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
	*E*553/*L*265	Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies
G	*E*311/*L*87	Hail to the Lord's Anointed
December 20, 2020		**FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT**
H	*E*258	Unexpected and Mysterious
H	*E*265/*W*632	The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came
I	*E*311/*L*87	Hail to the Lord's Anointed
H	*E*251/*W*730	My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness
Ps	*E*573/*L*180	My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord
HG	*E*254/*L*30	Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
HG	*E*672	Signs and Wonders
HG	*E*263/*L*28	Savior of the Nations, Come
S	*E*267/*L*39	Joy to the World
	*E*295/*L*42	Of the Father's Love Begotten
S	*E*545/*L*259	Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing
	*W*634	Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly
S	*E*861/*W*799	When Long Before Time
	*E*245	Creator of the Stars of Night
G	*E*257/*L*34	O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
December 24, 2020		**CHRISTMAS EVE**
H	*E*268/*L*51	From Heaven Above
H	*E*285/*W*641	Peace Came to Earth
I	*E*252/*W*628	Each Winter As The Year Grows Older
Ps	*WP*125	Sing a New Song
II	*E*309/*L*86	The Only Son from Heaven
HG	*E*272/*L*58	Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
HG	*E*279/*L*41	O Little Town of Bethlehem
HG	*E*270/*L*60	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
S	*E*267/*L*39	Joy to the World
S	*E*283/*L*45	Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful
	*E*287/*L*47	Let All Together Praise Our God
G	*E*269/*W*643	Once in Royal David's City
	*E*271/*L*69	I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve
G	*E*274	On Christmas Night
G	*E*289/*L*71	Angels We Have Heard on High
December 25, 2020		**CHRISTMAS DAY**
H	*E*295/*L*42	Of the Father's Love Begotten
H	*E*726	Light Dawns on A Weary World
Ps	*E*385/*L*527	All Creatures, Worship God Most High
II	*L*387	Spirit of God, Unleashed on Earth
HG	*E*296/*L*40	What Child Is This
HG	*E*283/*L*45	Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful
G	*L*43	Rejoice, Rejoice This Happy Morn
S	*E*288/*L*55	Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
S	*E*292	Love Has Come
S	*W*645	There's a Star in the East
G	*E*267/*L*39	Joy to the World
	*WP*57	Hear the Angels
	*E*298/*L*62	The Bells of Christmas
	*E*487/*W*701	What Feast of Love
G	E273/L46	All My Heart Again Rejoices
December 27, 2020		**FIRST SUNDAY of CHRISTMAS**
H	*E*290/*L*70	Go Tell It on the Mountain
H	*E*269/*W*643	Once in Royal David's City
Ps	*E*876/*L*242	Let the Whole Creation Cry
Ps	*E*823	Praise the Lord! O Heavens
II	*W*642	I Wonder As I Wander
II	*E*286/*L*52	Your Little Ones, Dear Lord
	*E*287/*L*47	Let All Together Praise Our God
G	*E*275/*L*50	Angels, from the Realms of Glory
G	*E*288/*L*55	Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
G	*E*292	Love Has Come
	*WP*4	All Is Ready Now
S	*E*299/*L*53	Cold December Flies Away

	*E*417	In His Temple Now Behold Him
S	*E*313	O Lord, Now Let Your Servant
S	*E*282/*L*54	It Came upon a Midnight Clear

January 3, 2021 SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

H	*E*510/*W*716	Word of God, Come Down on Earth
H	*E*295//*L*42	Of the Father's Love Begotten
HG	*E*291/*L*57	Let Our Gladness Have No End
HG	*E*283/*L*45	O Come, All Ye Faithful
HG	*E*270/*L*60	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
HG	*E*275/*L*50	Angels from the Realms of Glory
HG	*E*510	Word of God, Come Down on Earth
HG	*E*285	Peace Came to Earth
	*E*300/*L*56	The First Noel
	*E*298/*L*62	The Bells of Christmas
G	*E*715	Christ, Be Our Light
S	*E*726	Light Dawns on a Weary World
G	*E*287/*L*47	Let All Together Praise Our God
	*E*487/*W*701	What Feast of Love
	*E*280	Midnight Stars Make Bright the Skies

January 6, 2021 EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

H	*E*308/L76	O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!
H	*E*300/*L*56	The First Noel
I	*E*314/*W*652	Arise, Your Light Has Come!
I	*E*665/*L*393	Rise, Shine, You People
Ps	*E*311/*L*87	Hail to the Lord's Anointed
Ps	*E*689/*L*409	Praise and Thanksgiving
Ps	*E*434/*L*530	Jesus Shall Reign
II	*E*582/*L*523	Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling
II	*WP*114	Our Confidence Is in the Lord
HG	*E*303/*L*84	Brightest and Best of the Stars
G	*E*310/*L*90	Songs of Thankfulness and Praise
S	*E*671/*W*651/*WP*123	Shine, Jesus, Shine
	*E*815/*W*649	I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
	*E*301/*L*75	Bright and Glorious Is the Sky
G	*E*302/*L*82	As with Gladness, Men of Old

January 10, 2021 BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

H	*E*455	Crashing Waters at Creation
H	*E*305/*W*647	When Jesus Came to Jordan
I	*E*673/*L*400	God, Whose Almighty Word
I	*E*679/*L*563	For the Fruit of All Creation
I	*E*396/*W*684	Spirit of Gentleness
I	*WP*157	Wind of the Spirit
HG	*E*249/*L*36	On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry
HG	*E*322/*L*88	Oh, Love, How Deep
HG	*E*800/*L*486	Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart
HG	*E*453/*WP*14	Baptized and Set Free
S	*E*311/*L*87	Hail to the Lord's Anointed
G	*E*310/*L*90	Songs of Thankfulness and Praise
	*E*733/*W*771	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
S	*E*304	Christ, when for Us You Were Baptized

January 17, 2021 SECOND SUNDAY after EPIPHANY

H	*E*574/*W*752	Here I am, Lord
H	*E*798/*WP*137	Will You Come and Follow Me
I	*E*676/*L*403	Lord, Speak to Us, that We May Speak
I	*E*810/*L*503	O Jesus, I Have Promised
I	*E*520/*L*248	Dearest Jesus, at Your Word
I	*E*737*W*768	He Comes to Us As One Unknown
Ps	*E*767/*L*333	Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me
II	*E*645/*L*367	Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
HG	*E*420/*L*178	By All Your Saints (verse *E*11/*L*14)
HG	*E*584/*L*434	The Son of God, Our Christ
G	*E*513/*W*712	Listen, God Is Calling
G	*E*665/*L*393	Rise, Shine, You People!
	*W*614	Praise to You, O Christ, Our Savior
	*E*574/*W*752	I, the Lord of Sea and Sky
S	*E*802/*L*487	Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

January 24, 2021 THIRD SUNDAY after EPIPHANY

H	*E*696/*L*494	Jesus Calls Us; O'er the Tumult
H	*E*817/W784	You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore
HG	*E*815/*W*649	I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
HG	*E*720/*W*P147	We Are Called
HG	*E*661/*L*390	I Love to Tell the Story
S	*E*494/*L*200	For the Bread Which You Have Broken
	*E*507/*L*237	O God of Light
G	*E*673/*L*400	God, Whose Almighty Word
	*E*816/*L*513	Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life
S	*E*671/*W*651	Shine, Jesus, Shine
G	*E*704	When Pain of the World Surrounds Us
	*E*674/*W*754	Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ
G	*E*802/*L*487	Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus
	*E*306	Come, Beloved of the Maker
G	*E*668/*L*397	O Zion, Haste

January 31, 2021 FOURTH SUNDAY after EPIPHANY

H	*E*331/*L*87	Hail to the Lord's Anointed
H	*E*720/*WP*147	We Are Called
II	*E*806/*L*504	O God, My Faithful God
HG	*E*610/*L*360	O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come
HG	*E*612/*W*738	Healer of Our Every Ill
	*E*254/*L*30	Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
	*E*553/*L*265	Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies
	*E*669/*L*383	Rise Up, O Saints of God!
	*E*712/*L*423	Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service
G	*E*886/*L*559	Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing
S	*E*576/*W*755	We All Are One in Mission
G	*E*250,552/*W*725	Blessed Be the God of Israel
S	*E*773/*W*731	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
	*E*614/*W*737	There Is a Balm in Gilead
S	*E*310/*L*90	Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

February 7, 2021 FIFTH SUNDAY after EPIPHANY

H	*E*507/*L*237	O God of Light
H	*E*610/*L*360	O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come
I	*E*858-9/*L*543	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
I, Ps	*E*314/*W*652	Arise, Your Light Is Come
II	*E*666/*L*385	What Wondrous Love Is This
II	*E*661/*L*390	I Love to Tell the Story
II	*E*668/*L*397	O Zion, Haste
HG	*E*673/*L*400	God, Whose Almighty Word
HG	*E*640/*L*357	Our Father, By Whose Name
G	*E*553/*L*265	Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies
S	*E*536	God Be with You till We Meet Again
G	*E*358/*W*666	Great God, Your Love Has Called Us
	*WP*97	May You Run and Not Be Weary
	*E*332,611/*L*497	I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
S	*E*665/*L*393	Rise, Shine, You People

February 14, 2021 TRANSFIGURATION of OUR LORD

H	*E*315/*L*89	How Good, Lord, To Be Here!
H	*E*317	Jesus on the Mountain Peak
II	*E*511/*L*233	Thy Strong Word
II	*E*673/*L*400	God, Whose Almighty Word
II	*E*671/*W*651/*WP*123	Shine, Jesus, Shine
HG	*E*316/*L*80	Oh, Wondrous Image, Vision Fair
HG	*E*715	Christ, Be Our Light
G	*E*553/*L*265	Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies
	*E*604/*L*300	O Christ, Our Hope
S	*E*804/*L*508	Come Down, O Love Divine
S	*E*867/*L*552	In Thee Is Gladness
G	*E*815/*W*649	I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light
	*WP*32	Come to the Mountain
S	*E*318/*W*654	Alleluia, Song of Gladness
G	*E*866/*W*650/*WP*148	We Are Marching in the Light

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Build a Robust Network

Whatever else it did, the COVID-19 health crisis forced congregations to consider web-based platforms like Facebook and YouTube as a legitimate place for worship. It served as a wake-up call to church leaders accustomed to thinking in terms of their congregations as "stand alone" entities. Congregations began to understand that we live in a networked society. Worship leaders adapted to the restrictions on in-person gatherings by uploading video images of readings and songs to the internet. Beyond using the tools of the internet to create a community, congregations can learn from the organizational structure of the internet as well.

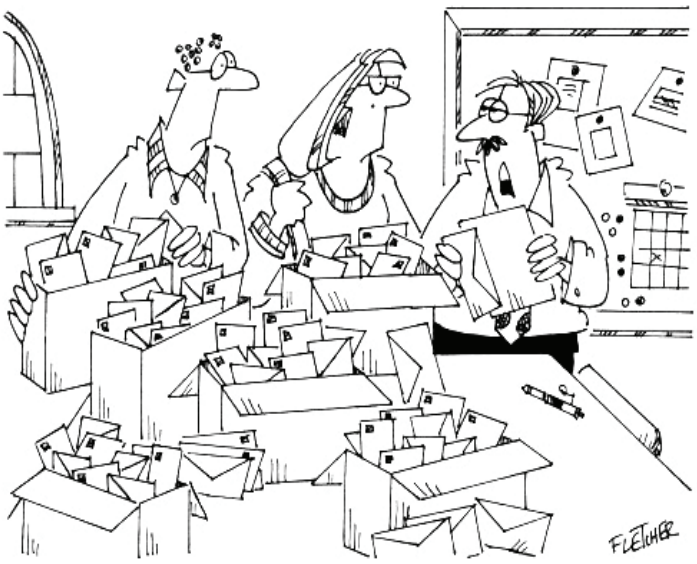
As we use the knowledge of today to review our organizations, we see that hierarchical structures predominated in the 20th century. Decision making took place at the top and was implemented by committees. Leaders held knowledge closely and honored "tradition" (the way we have always done things) above all else. Unfortunately, hierarchies have tended to favor procedures over relationships, discourage trial and error, resist diversity, and assume the world is controllable. Due to their rigidity, hierarchical organizations found themselves unable to adapt to the rapid technological changes underway in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.[1]

At the same time, emerging tech companies like Google and Amazon sought to imitate the internet with its open structure and intersection points (or nodes) that are loosely woven together. Organizational networks tend to be fluid, non-hierarchical, self-organizing, and lacking clear lines of authority as leaders cede authority to ordinary workers to foster creativity. While social media tools make it possible to create and share content and to collaborate with others no matter how distant, the very structure of digital networks have reshaped our life and can reshape organizations if they learn how to use them.

Mature organizations, such as older congregations, often behave more like hierarchies, while new church starts tend to adopt the looser structure of a network. People have come to expect churches and other organizations to be open and amorphous structures where every individual has equal access to plug in and where everyone may be heard. The good news is that any congregation can become more like a network by following three steps.

Analyze the Social Network

Congregations' boundaries are porous and include weak social connections. Social network analysis (SNA), a tool used by social science and health researchers, can identify those connections. Imagine a church whose building gets extensive traffic during the week. First, identify the network to be studied, which may be difficult in this case with people flowing in and out on a regular basis, some of them one-time visitors. Next, learn about people in the network through a simple survey with a clipboard as they enter the building. How



"WE'RE USING CROWDSOURCING TO DIRECT OUR DECISION MAKING...SO FAR, ALL THOSE RESPONDING TO OUR MASS MAILING THINK WE SHOULD HAVE DECIDED TO SAVE MONEY BY TEXTING."

often do they relate to others in the network in person, by phone, or email? Who has the most authority and power? Are any of them related by family? Finally, analyze the information visually by drawing a diagram with nodes connected by lines.

The lines (or ties) can be color coded, each color symbolizing a different bit of information, such as how often people communicate or work with each other. In other words, is the tie strong or weak? Note characteristics such as 1) betweenness, or the degree to which a person controls information or resources in the network; 2) centrality, or a person's power in the network; and 3) reachability, or the number of intermediary contacts between two people. Now larger patterns begin to become evident, such as Hubs (persons with an unusual number of connections to other people) and Clusters (groups with a denser pattern of connections between them). Analyzing such data might help church leaders to plan better ways to utilize and connect to this network of building users in the future.[2]

Seek Collective Intelligence

Too often church leaders seek to control information. Hayim Herring and Terry Martinson Elton ask in their book, *Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World,* "What if congregations . . . flipped their understanding of themselves from being dispensers of information to platforms of collective learning?" Wikipedia, an open-source encyclopedia, offers a model for seeking collective intelligence. This web-based platform brings together people seeking information with people who want to share and edit information, relying on participants to post, revise, and correct what's been offered. Free and available to anyone, it provides an example of "crowdsourcing," drawing information from a large group of people. To experiment with this for one month, identify one thing each week requiring a decision, then look for information outside the congregation and track these ideas by writing them down. For example, ask for ideas from a friend, watch the news for ideas, talk to a relative in the family, ask a group of lunch companions, or email friends for ideas. Ask a team of leaders to do this and report its impact on decision-making.[3]

Offer a Variety of Ways to Connect

Many churches are too tightly bound together, with long-term members enjoying strong ties and everyone else wondering where they fit. The goal must be to expand the number of weak ties.

Beth Estock and Paul Nixon envision a two-track system with "a more traditional Christian community existing alongside and in spiritual partnership with a more expansive community of folks." B3M, a new church in Manhattan, offers nine worship communities in four locations. One such community, Tutti (Italian for "all together"), was created by and for college students to overcome the disconnection of big city life. Members seek "community for the sake of community" by planning events such as socials, barbeques, sleepovers, fashion shows, hiking, skiing, game nights, bead days, yard sales, and doing community development together. Tutti Circles offer groups for likeminded people to learn cooking, film, writing, and singing together. The church offers a variety of ways for persons to connect and make it easy for them to enter and leave. Getting involved feels less like a burden than a choice.[4]

Networks Are Everywhere

On her way to a meeting of the ecumenical council, Pastor Ruth finishes brushing her teeth and turns off the faucet connected to a municipal water system; flips off the house lights connected to a state and regional electrical grid; checks Instagram, a platform supported by a global system of interconnected computer networks; and then drives past a supermarket connected to 357 other stores as part of a regional chain. The ecumenical council, though limited in budget and officers, has served a cluster of city neighborhoods for over thirty years.[5] Networks are everywhere.

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1. Hayim Herring and Terry Martinson Elton, *Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 24.

2. Adam C. Springer and J. E. de Steiguer, "Social Network Analysis: A Tool to Improve Understanding of Collaborative Management Groups," *Journal of Extension*, (Vol. 49, No. 6), December 2011, https://www.joe.org/joe/2011december/rb7.php

3. Herring and Elton, 91, 105.

4. Beth Ann Estock and Paul Nixon, *Weird Church: Welcome to the Twenty-First Century* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2016), 164.

5. "Network Literacy: Essential Concepts and Core Ideas," NetSciEd, twelve pages. Accessed at https://sites.google.com/a/binghamton.edu/netscied/teaching-learning/network-concepts.

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Connect with Spiritual Seekers through the Arts

Sandra Lommasson rediscovered the value of art in response to violent trauma. In its aftermath she found that Bible study, journal writing, dance, poetry, and drawing restored her faith in life's beauty. "The door to God had been cracked," she remembers. Twenty years ago, she founded Bread of Life, a program that uses the arts to help people recover from brokenness.[1]

The arts, including painting, sculpture, music of all kinds, dance, theater, and creative literature, can provide a bridge to spirituality. Connecting spiritual seekers with the arts can lead them to new life and it offers an important key to revitalizing the congregation as well.[2]

Interest in spirituality has surged in the last quarter century, and about one-third of these spiritual seekers (29%) are "spiritual and religious," that is, they attend church regularly. Another group, the 18% who identify as "spiritual but not religious," has received the most media attention in recent years, but most of them still identify with a religious tradition, and a majority of this group (50-75%) reports being moved or inspired by watching television or listening to music. The church can reach spiritual seekers of all kinds by supporting spirituality and revitalizing worship.[3]

Supporting Spirituality

Mental overload is a big problem in our time—too much to think about regarding work life, family issues, and daily news. Music and the arts can help to declutter the mind and set the mood for spirituality. Here, prayer moves beyond talking to God or reciting prayers from a book and becomes something felt by the whole body.

Churches can connect with spiritual seekers who make use of the arts in personal spirituality. Classes, prayer groups, sermons, and spiritual direction can acknowledge the value of art in personal growth. Convergence, a new church in Alexandria, Virginia, makes use of the visual arts, dance, music, poetry, and theater to enhance its ministry with spiritual seekers. Convergence began as the restart of a struggling Baptist Church about ten years ago. The church now has a core group of forty members.

The Reverend Lisa Cole Smith, the pastor and artistic director, leads congregants to explore biblical themes using a variety of artistic forms. Church members participate in role playing, write haikus, examine famous artworks, and create original art. After each activity, Smith draws connections with spirituality. At one worship gathering, everyone rifled through old magazines, using scissors, glue sticks, pastels, and colored pencils to make collages with images of joy. In 2011, the fifth birthday of Convergence, Fair Port Baptist Church bequeathed its building to the new church start, which now uses it to rent space to artists. A church member says, "Here's a place where you can

"THE PASTOR SAID WE COULD INCLUDE ART IN OUR SPIRITUAL PRACTICE BY LOOKING AT A SACRED OBJECT."

be your funky artist self and it's OK. We're unabashedly Christian. We just go about it in a different way."[4]

Churches can also provide housing for dance or theater groups requiring space. The result can be satisfying on several levels: churches subsidize a worthwhile organization by offering rent at below the market rate while also putting to use building space that often goes empty during the week. In Philadelphia, Partners for Sacred Spaces seeks to build partnerships between churches and art groups. Partners keeps track of congregations with unused space and art companies needing space, then helps draw up the lease agreement. Artists tend to be younger than congregants, more energetic, and they often love the old buildings. For the church, it's a way to reach out to the community.[5]

Revitalizing Worship

Multimedia, with its combination of text, audio, and visual imagery, has saturated every corner of contemporary culture. Given this, worship styles that only rely on the spoken word can seem emotionally flat. Some churches have responded with contemporary worship styles centered around a worship band while others prefer a classic worship style centered on word and sacrament. With either style, worship leaders can infuse art into the experience and make it more emotionally powerful.

Contemporary Worship takes its aesthetic cues from popular culture. Oasis in Los Angeles illustrates this tendency. An early innovator in the use of art, media, and technology, this multiethnic church has sought to provide an "artistic haven" for creative individuals, especially young adults (the average age is twenty-six). Due to its proximity to Hollywood, the church draws a significant portion of its membership (30%) from workers in the television and film industry. Worship leaders adopt a project orientation toward planning services in a way similar to practices in the entertainment sector, as when a sermon series serves as an artistic project using writers, actors, sound engineers, and tech workers.

Artists play a role both behind the scenes and in the service itself as actors performing short dramas, dancers offering interpretive pieces, musicians performing original music, or a video production team offering original film shorts. Painters, sculptors, potters, and live models may be seen working at various places inside and outside the auditorium where worship takes place.[6]

Classic Worship takes its aesthetic cues from expressions found in church history. Saint Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco epitomizes this move. Founded in 1978, the church draws on newer hymns, colorful banners, and informal preaching, all focused on revitalizing ancient traditions. On any Sunday, worship music could be drawn from Gregorian chant, the Geneva Psalter, Anglican plainsong, early American shape-note signing, or global freedom songs. The sanctuary has no piano or organ, so all singing is unaccompanied except for a drum or rhythm instruments. Clapping and dancing is encouraged.

As the service begins, the congregation gathers near the door and moves in a processional to the pews. The sanctuary is arranged choir-style with people facing each other in seats across a central aisle and the presider at one end. Every week, after singing the Lord's Prayer, the congregation comes forward to join hands in a simple dance around the communion table. Images of dancing saints, nine feet high, adorn the walls. So far, ninety of these icons have been painted by church members themselves.[7]

For Reflection

Churches that make room for creative exploration can experience new vitality. Does your congregation stifle artistic expression or celebrate it? Do artists feel like an integral part of your church or do they feel like misfits?

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1. Robert Wuthnow, *All in Sync: How Music and Art Are Revitalizing American Religion* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 79-84.

2. Ibid., 1-20.

3. Art Raney, Daniel Cox, Robert P. Jones, "Searching for Spirituality in the U.S.: A New Look at the Spiritual but Not Religious," Public Religion Research Institute, Nov. 6, 2017, https://www.prri.org/research/religiosity-and-spirituality-in-america/

4. Edie Gross, "Art and Faith Converge at a Hybrid Church/Community Arts Center," *Faith and Leadership*, April 3, 2018, https://faithandleadership.com/art-and-faith-converge-hybrid-churchcommunity-arts-center

5. Mary Beth McCauley, "Making Homes for the Arts in Sacred Places, *Faith and Leadership*, March 10, 2015, https://faithandleadership.com/making-homes-arts-sacred-places

6. Gerardo Marti, *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005, 88-116.

7. Wuthnow, 168-172.

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2021NOMINEE APPLICATION FORM

(Please include a photo of the nominee)

Nominee For: _____

Name: _____
(first) *(middle)* *(last)*

Address: _____
(street) *(city)* *(state)* *(zip code)*

E-mail Address: _____ Occupation *(current or past)*: _____

Phone (please indicate cell or home): _____

Congregation: _____
(congregation name) *(congregation city)*

ELCA Member *(check one)*: ☐ Yes ☐ No Pastor's Signature: _____
(for lay nominees only)

Conference *(check one)*: ☐ Akron-Wooster ☐ Canton-Massillon ☐ Cleveland East ☐ Cleveland West
☐ Eastern ☐ Richland-Ashland ☐ Southern

Demographic Information *(check all that apply)*: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Clergy ☐ Deacon ☐ Lay
☐ Person of Color ☐ LGBTQ ☐ Primary Language not English

Age: ☐ 70+ ☐ 60+ ☐ 50+ ☐ 40+ ☐ 30+ ☐ Young Adult (18-29):_____ ☐ Youth (13-17):_____
(Date of Birth) (Date of Birth)

List no more than three areas of synod service. Indicate **current** service by checking the box.

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

List no more than three areas of congregational service. Indicate **current** service by checking the box.

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

List no more than three areas of community service. Indicate **current** service by checking the box.

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Complete the sentence; My main interest in the church is …

_____

Email digital photo to kkaufman@neos-elca.org

Has the nominee been contacted and consented to be nominated? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Referred by or Submitted by *(Self-nominations must have a referral)*: _____
Phone (primary): _____ (work): _____
Address: _____
Congregation (name): _____ (city): _____

Nominations Needed

Please review and share this list of positions with **your** congregational leaders.
Ask people to recommend or consider a nomination.
Submit nominations by completing the form on the back (also available at www.neos-elca.org)

The following positions will be filled by election at the
2021 Synod Assembly on June 11-12, John S. Knight Center, Akron

SYNOD COUNCIL – 3 year term

Meets five times per year to conduct the business of the synod between assemblies

Akron-Wooster	Lay
Canton-Massillon	Lay
Cleveland East	Lay
Cleveland West	Clergy
Eastern	Clergy
Richland-Ashland	Lay
Southern	Clergy

Vice President	Lay

This position also requires a resume, interview process and background check

1 year term

Cleveland West	Lay
At large	Lay

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE – 6 year term – 1 Clergy and 1 Lay

The Consultation Committee hears disagreements of substantive issues that have been referred to the bishop / executive committee as well as hears charges against a rostered person or congregation which could lead to discipline. Meets only as needed.

VOTING MEMBERS TO CHURCHWIDE, AUGUST 8-13, 2022 – Columbus, OH

Cleveland West	Rostered
Canton-Massillon/Southern	Rostered
Richland-Ashland/ Akron-Wooster	Rostered
Cleveland East/ Eastern	Rostered
Cleveland East/Cleveland West/Akron-Wooster	Lay Female
Richland-Ashland/Eastern/ Canton-Massillon/Southern	Lay Female
At large	Lay Male
Youth (13-17)	Female
Young Adult (18-30)	Male
Person of Color or Language other than English	Female
	Male

Questions may be referred to Nominating Committee Chair Pr. Don King, 216-229-7003 donkingcle@gmail.com
or Karen Kaufman, synod staff liaison, *330-929-9020; kkaufman@neos-elca.org*

Deadline for Submitting Nominations: **March 15**

Completed forms are to be mailed to: **Northeastern Ohio Synod**
Attn: Nominations
1890 Bailey Road
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221