



2018 synod assembly: “For the Life of the World”

Claiming our Gifts

At a time when conversations in the church tend to focus on survival and sustainability, in light of a future filled with so much uncertainty, it's more critical than ever that we remember that the body of Christ exists not for itself but for the sake of the world God so loves.

As people of faith, we have been called to new life in Christ so we may serve as the Spirit's instruments of hope and healing for every neighbor on our globe as well as for the earth itself. Join our 2018 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly in Westminster, Colo., as we explore what it means to be "Christ's Church Together," for the life of the world.

Assembly at a glance

We are excited to welcome **Cynthia Moe-Lobeda** as our keynote speaker for the 2018 assembly. Moe-Lobeda is a professor of theological and social ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, Calif. Her areas of teaching

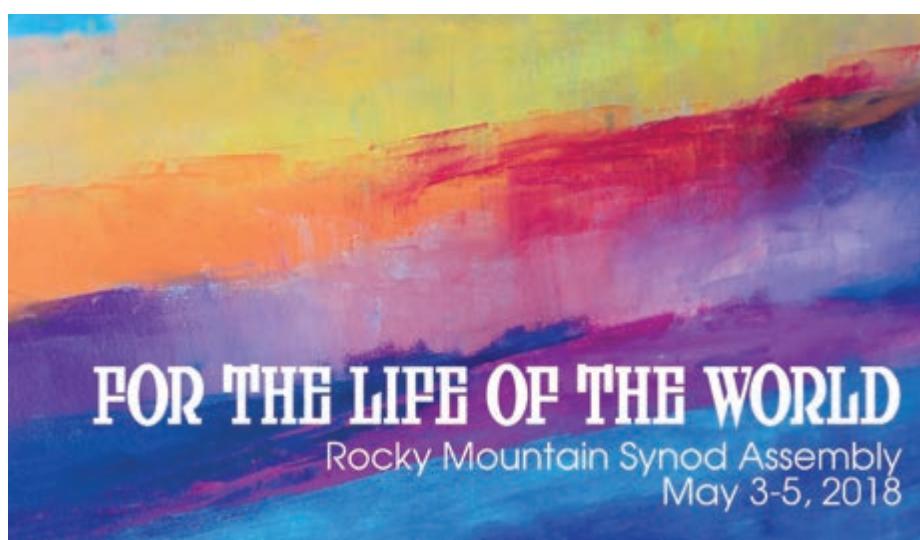
include the ethical dimensions of economic globalization, faith-based resistance to systemic injustice and the role of Bible in ethics.

Tangled Blue will once again join us as our assembly musicians. Making music together since 2003, Joel and Aimee Pakan have shared their gifts in congregations, festivals and youth gatherings around the globe. Currently they are both Fund for Leaders scholarship recipients studying at United Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia.



In addition to electing members to the Rocky Mountain Synod Council, synodical boards and committees, and voting members for the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, voting members to the synod assembly will participate in an ecclesiastical ballot to elect a bishop. While conference gatherings will identify potential nominees prior to the meeting, the ecclesiastical ballot at the assembly begins the actual process, where each voting member writes a name on the first ballot.

Find out more about the 2018 assembly and the bishop election at rmselca.org/assembly. 



What is a deacon?

Equipping All Leaders

Did you know that in the ELCA we have theologically educated, called ministers who serve in roles other than pastor? We are blessed to have deacons among us who serve on the roster of Word and Service, living into such vocations as worship leadership, music ministry, hospitality, chaplaincy, social work and advocacy. Some are leaders in our churchwide and synodical organizations. Deacons respond to God's call by proclaiming the word and living the gospel in service to the neighbor.

The ministry of the diaconate, that is of deacons who serve as called ministers of Word and Service, has been recognized by churches throughout history and around the world. The earliest deacon of the Bible was Stephen.

The ELCA continues to seek to honor the significance of deacons serving at the intersection of church and world, bringing a sharper focus to the ways the church responds to the needs of people. As of Jan. 1, 2017, those who have served on the lay rosters as associates in ministry,

diaconal ministers and deaconesses are now part of the unified Roster of Ministers of Word and Service, and are called deacons. Our new roster more closely aligns with the global church, providing clarity and empowerment to those the church calls to serve.

The ministry of word and service has roots in the New Testament ministry of diaconia—servant ministry. The ministry personified by Jesus is diaconia. Servant ministry transforms leadership from power over others to empowerment of others. Although this ministry has taken different forms throughout the church's history, and many different names, its emphasis has always been to give leadership to the church's mission, to serve people where they live, to create communities of mutuality and empowerment, to speak God's word to the world and, in turn, to speak the needs of the world to the church, to wash feet and work for change.

Currently, 17 deacons are actively serving in the Rocky Mountain Synod. Deacon Joan Kuehn serves First Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs, Colo. The vocation that she lives into is music and worship ministry. In her call she brings God's word to the adult choir, bell choirs and congregation each week as they give glory to God through the gift of music. Kuehn lives out her call to empower and equip members of the church through meaningful worship experiences that help congregation members to understand their own calls to love and serve the Lord.

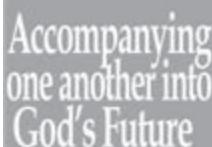
In describing her call to the church, Kuehn said, "My biggest thrill is to get people involved in the ministry of their church. Music is my tool to get people involved; to talk about faith, to pray together, and to talk about the church and the role of the church in the world."

Thanks be to God for the ministry of Kuehn and other deacons across the church! 



Deacon Joan Kuehn (center) with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, the assisting minister and pastoral staff of First during Sunday worship.

Walking together, building community



Since 1948, Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (LFS) has been committed to building a caring and nurturing community in the Rocky Mountain region. As a faith-based, human services agency, LFS serves all people from the beginning of life to end of life through services that heal, strengthen and provide hope.

LFS offers support and services in areas of adoption, foster care, pregnancy counseling, disaster response, older adult and caregiver services, parenting education, abuse prevention and refugee services. Every day, hundreds of people turn to LFS for refuge, help and hope.

The organization strives to recognize areas in need and to find ways to serve those who have seemingly become invisible. In the last year, fueled by gifts to the “Walking Together Campaign,” LFS has developed new services to address unmet needs:

- **Supportive Transition and Emancipation Program:** S.T.E.P. is the teen-focused foster care arm of LFS. As one of the largest foster care providers in the state, LFS developed this program to train foster families to help transition teens from foster care into adulthood. Teens can start the program at 14, providing ample time to practice increasing levels of responsibilities and build support networks. At 18 or after, teens may be able to move into family-supported independent living, where LFS helps them secure independent housing, employment and

connections to healthy adults in the community.

- **Refugee Employment Center:** Employment is the most important priority on a refugee’s path to economic self-sufficiency. The LFS employment center helps many refugees each year secure and retain employment. In addition, the organization now extends these services to other marginalized populations, such as asylum-seekers, limited English-speakers, immigrants, youth aging out of foster care and unaccompanied refugee minors—all are in need of comprehensive employment services.
- **Older Adult Caregiver Services & Guardianship:** O.A.C.S. assists older adults, their families and caregivers navigate the transitions of aging. The Guardianship Program contracts with hospitals to provide guardianship-life services to older adults who are hard to discharge from hospitals because they lack capacity to make a legal discharge plan and have no family or friends to help with decision-making.

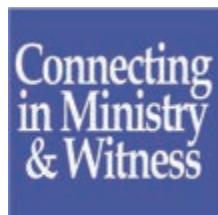
The hallmark of serving through LFS has always been a shared sense of being in this together—joined at the heart with volunteers, clients, donors and neighbors; walking together, building community!

Visit lfsrm.org for more information on how you can get involved and to donate. 



Shalom

By the Rev. Janet Kettering



It was a moment we call "shalom"—when the peace of God that passes all understanding descends and, together, we breathe in the realization that God has already been here.

Such was our experience at the Joint Ecumenical Service of Prayer and Reflection between Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran (ELCA) and Pardes Levavot, a Jewish Renewal congregation, in Boulder, Colo., on Oct. 22. With the opening of the Fox Institute for Creation Spirituality came an unexpected invitation to host the Rev. Matthew Fox at our Sunday morning worship. This was an opportunity to deepen the unique relationship that has existed between Shepherd and Pardes since early 2004.

As congregations from two distinct, yet deeply connected faith traditions, we had studied together, participated in missional events, and broken bread together. As faith leaders and clergy couples, we had shared Shabbat dinner and worshiped together on Christmas Eve and Rosh Hashanah. But we had never embarked on creating a worship experience that could be inviting and meaningful to both faith traditions and the community at large. We agreed

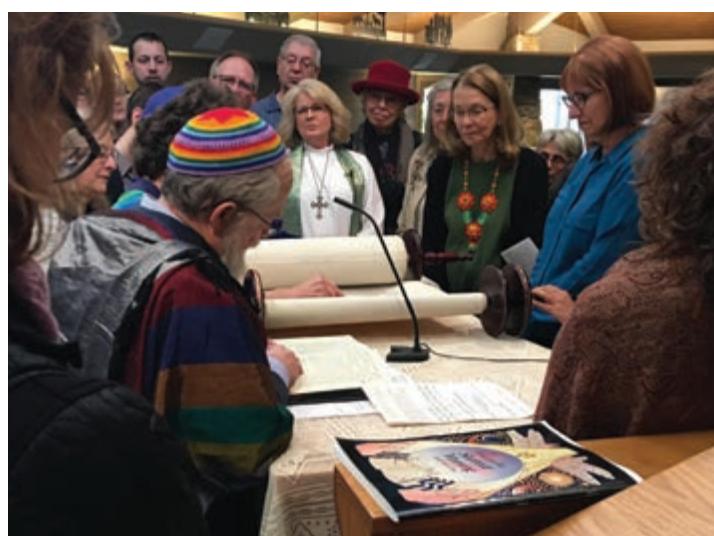


Rabbi Victor Gross (left), Rabbi Nadya Gross and Rev. Janet Kettering welcome all to the service

that it was critical to honor the sacred elements of both traditions.

Our shared sanctuary, with its warm design of natural light and the mixed metals of the Shekinah Glory and Dove of Peace reflected in the credence table, invited such a venture. The sound of running water descending from cupped leaf to cupped leaf of the baptismal font calls forth peace and new life. Ironically, the rich designs of these sacred elements had come through the vision of a Boulder artist and Jewish designer nearly two decades before. One can only wonder if they had also envisioned that their shared artistic expression would ultimately weave together the rich traditions of an established Lutheran congregation and a budding Jewish Renewal community.

With excitement, planning and space for the Spirit to move, the moment arrived and we came together, "renewing" Jews and "re-formed" Lutherans, to sing and pray. In silent adoration of the Torah, we listened as the promise to Abraham poured forth, then later echoed in the words of institution. Together we stood, hearts woven together in the Lord's Prayer, prayed first in Hebrew, then in English, culminating in an intricate, unchoreographed dance of healing prayer, lighting candles, blessing and dining—a moment of peace we call "shalom." ¶



The community gathered around the altar as the rabbi read from the Torah.

Janet Kettering is pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Boulder, Colo.