

## **Report to the 2019 CSIS Assembly**

### **Pastor Ken Sandlin, Assistant to the Bishop**

It's been almost five years since I began my position as a half time assistant to the bishop. And, after almost five years, I must admit that I don't always like what I do. I don't like telling the chair of a call committee that, once again, we don't have anyone to nominate to St. Paul's or St. Peter's or Trinity. It doesn't make my day to tell a council president that we don't receive as many RMPs (rostered minister profiles) as we did just a few years ago. But even though I don't always like what I do, I still love what I do. I love when a pastor and a congregation fit together well. I love getting a phone call from the council president saying that the vote to call was unanimous. And I love hearing the excitement in a pastor's voice when she/he accepts that call. I've learned, over the last five years, to depend on God's guidance, and to trust where the Holy Spirit is leading. And so, I continue to make phone calls and read RMPs and meet with congregational councils and call committees. It's challenging. It's frustrating. It's rewarding. And I love what I do.

There are three areas that I cover as an assistant to the Bishop. As I mentioned above, I work with the call process; helping councils put together their MSPs (ministry site profiles) and reading the paperwork of pastors who are looking for a congregation. When a good fit is made, the Bishop nominates the pastor to the congregation, and I help them navigate the process from interview to the call vote. Since my last report to the synod assembly, I have met with approximately fifteen call committees and eight councils.

I also work with our synod's candidacy committee. There are fourteen very dedicated members of the committee. They are responsible for working with people in our congregations who are discerning a call to serve as a pastor or deacon in the ELCA. They support each candidate through seminary, walk with them from Entrance to Approval, and rejoice with them when they receive their first call and begin rostered service in the church. If you, or someone you know, feel that God may be calling you to service as a rostered minister, please contact me at the synod office.

And then, twenty-two Sundays a year, I visit and worship with congregations in the East Central Conference and in the northern half of the West Central Conference; greeting them on behalf of the synod staff and the members of all the congregations in our synod. All four assistants make worship visits, and I'm sure we would agree that, in everything we do as assistants to the bishop, visiting and worshipping in congregations is the most enjoyable.

Yes, I love what I do; and it is a privilege to serve as an assistant to the bishop. Please let me know if you have any questions. I am in the office most Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00 until 4:00. And I'm reachable by email almost anytime.