



East Central Conference Report to the Assembly

*Pastor Rob Rasmus, Dean
St. Matthew Lutheran, Urbana*

Congregations

St. Matthew, Urbana, Pastor Bob Rasmus, Dean, Associate, Pastor Maggie Falenschek
Grace, Champaign, Rev. Dr. Chris Repp
Good Shepherd, Champaign, Pastor Tom Hillertz, Jason Fisher, AIM
St. Andrews Lutheran Church and Campus Center, Champaign—Pastor Amy Thoren
Lutheran Church of Mahomet, Pastor Nikoli Falenschek
Christ, Monticello, Pastor Micah Garnett
First, Decatur, Pastor Al Weidlich, Interim
Holy Cross, Decatur, Pastor Amy Zietlow, part-time, Jan Lawson, SAM
Bethel, Danville, Pastor Ed Stone
St. Paul, Shelbyville, St. John Shelbyville, Tom Galyen, SAM, Jan Lawson, SAM
Grace, Rankin, Pastor Jennifer Hartweg-Brown

East Central Officers

Dean	Pastor Bob Rasmus
Vice Dean	Pastor Amy Thoren
Lay vice President	Jason Fisher, AIM
Treasurer	Kim Johnson
Secretary	Marilyn Dudley

Synod Committees

New and Renewing Congregations: Clergy, Pastor Micah Garnett
Global Mission: Clergy, Pastor Maggie Falenschek
Mission Support and Stewardship Education: Clergy, Pastor Nikoli Falenschek
Candidacy: Lay Male, Mr. Bill Moehring, Clergy, Pastor Tom Hillertz
SAM: Clergy, Pastor Amy Zietlow
Leadership Support: Vacancy
Synod Council: Lay Female, Ms. Tiana Montgomery

We concluded our year with gratitude to the Bishop and synod staff for the filling of all conference vacancies except for First Lutheran Church in Decatur, for whom we continue to pray. This year Pastor Maggie Falenschek was installed as Associate Pastor at St. Matthew, Urbana; Pastor Nikoli Falenschek installed at the Lutheran Church of Mahomet; Pastor Chris Repp installed as Pastor at Grace, Champaign; Pastor Amy Zietlow as part-time pastor at Holy Cross, Decatur; and Pastor Amy Thoren installed as Pastor and Director of the Campus Center at St. Andrews in Urbana.

This winter our conference gatherings included a discussion of the environmental ministry of Faith in Place and the status of LSSI's Storybook Project. LSSI CEO Mark Stutrud was our guest speaker at our Annual Conference assembly where he updated us on the status of the agency in the wake of the cuts made necessary by the failure of our state government partners to fund our programs. Bishop John Roth led our annual Bishop's colloquy at First Lutheran, Decatur. At our Conference Assembly, we elected Pastor Bob Rasmus to second term as Dean, Pastor Amy Thoren as Vice Dean, and re-elected Marilyn Dudley as Conference Secretary and Jason Fisher as lay vice-president.



Northeast Conference

Pastor James Davis, Dean

American Lutheran Church, Gibson City

Interim Oversight: St. John Lutheran Church, Sibley

The Northeast Conference of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod consists of 24 congregations lying east of Interstate 55 and north of Illinois Route 9. We are currently served by nineteen called pastors, one Synodically Authorized Minister, and eleven retired pastors. One pastor is on leave of call. Six congregations are served by Interim or Contractual Pastors.

Our conference gives our best to Pastor Bill Callister who served at Zion Lutheran Church in Clifton. Pastor Bill accepted a call and moved to the Northern Illinois Synod last fall. We also said goodbye to Pastor Connie Frase who retired from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Colfax at the end of April.

Servants United Geographical Parish: There is ongoing discussion into the possibility of forming a Geographical Parish with seven congregations in the conference. Participants have completed the written agreement, and are waiting for the Bishop's Office to review. Once approved by the Bishop's Office, the document will be sent to each participating church council for review.

Our Annual Conference Assembly was held on April 10, 2016 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Chenoa. Vice Dean Tom Krieger presided over the meeting. Pastor Ed Hudelson and his band led us in a Good Old-time Gospel Sing-Along. Bishop Roth brought greetings and commented on visions and priorities for our changing future. We discussed holding a Conference Lay Leaders Retreat in the fall, and the possibilities of setting up Book Study Meetings in the future. Retired Pastor Paul Schwartzkopf, a professional storyteller, delighted us with humorous stories.

The Conference Officers for 2016-2017 are:

Dean	Pastor Jim Davis	American, Gibson City & St. John's, Sibley
Vice Dean	Pastor Tom Krieger	Trinity, Fairbury
Secretary	Ms. Sandy McAuley	Resurrection, Bloomington
Treasurer	Mr. Vern Veal	St. John's, Bloomington

Our rostered leaders met monthly from October 2015 through May 2016. We met with the Emergency Coordinator from Iroquois County; Mr. Jason Fisher led a discussion on *Play in the Congregation*; Bishop John Roth led our Annual Bishop's Colloquy at American Lutheran in Gibson City; Pastor Kurt Hoover led a discussion on leadership skills; Pastor Jim Reents from the Bishop's Office led a discussion on the congregational call process and walked us through a Ministry Site Profile Form; Pastors Matt and Priscilla Geerdes showed pictures and explained the delicate and diverse ecosystems of Costa Rica; we toured and talked with staff members and residents in a MOSAIC Home in Pontiac; and Retired Professor Ralph Klein gave us a tour of the Old and Rare Books Collection at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.



Northern Conference Report to the Assembly

*Pastor John Rothfusz, Dean
Faith Lutheran Church, Washington*

The Northern Conference consists of 26 congregations in the Peoria area and surrounding counties. These churches are served by 22 pastors under call, six interim pastors, and three with contractual arrangements.

The conference saw several pastoral transitions over the past year. Paul Park concluded his long ministry as chaplain of Lutheran Hillside Village, and now serves an interim. Pastor Maureen Stein retired from Trinity, Canton, and now serves as an assistant to the Bishop. Pastor Jim Lillie retired from First English, Peoria.

Pastor Dick Wehrs arrived as the new Senior Pastor at Salem, Peoria. Pastor Elise Rothfusz took a renewed call as Associate Pastor at Salem, Peoria. Pastor Joy Miller took a call to Immanuel, Mionk and Bethany, Wenona; and Pastor John Sipf entered the area as a hospice chaplain with Vitas. He received a synodical call.

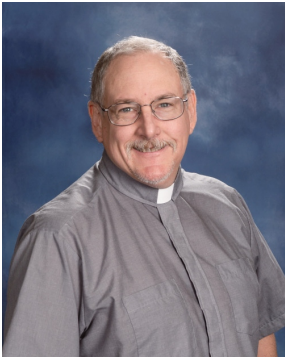
Those serving as Interim Pastors within the conference are the following: Pastor Wendy Popp at St. Timothy, Wyoming; Pastor Raymond Barclay at Bethel, Bartonville; and Pastor Ruth Kaden at St. Mark, Chillicothe, Pastor Ryan Anderson at St. John, Lacon; Pastor Paul Park at Trinity, Canton; and Pastor Phil Lund at First English, Peoria.

The Northern Conference had a very successful “God’s Work, Our Hands” service day in September, and organized a second spring event in April. This was our third year of service in this way, and we truly enjoyed working side by side and partnering with community groups like Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Hillside Village, Camp Kearney, and The Midwest Food Bank. We had a great response from a number of area congregations.

Our Conference Youth Board draws together the gifts of several Youth and Family Ministers and numerous churches to provide exciting opportunities. The annual *Be Like Jesus* retreat draws in over 100 3-8th graders for a memorable weekend of service, music, and faith. The conference has continued working to support *8 Days*, a cooperative young adult ministry for college-age students at Bradley University and Illinois Central College. They are largely unreached by existing churches. We also organized conference transportation to the National Youth Gathering in Detroit.

The Professional Leaders of the Conference meet on the second Tuesday of the month for worship, study and fellowship. Topics since the summer have included: “Do What Matters” Youth and Family Ministry; ELCA Foundation; Ministry of LSSI; Bishop’s Colloquy; a Jewish-Christian Dialogue; A Muslim-Christian Dialogue; and the ministry of Lutheran Hillside Village.

The Northern Conference is an active, positive, and collegial place to share in ministry in Jesus’ name. We are blessed to gather and strengthen one another for service to the Lord.



Northwest Conference Report to the Assembly

Pastor Mike Thomas, Dean

Trinity Lutheran Church, Macomb

Seventeen congregations located in six counties in West Central Illinois comprise the Northwest Conference of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod. Those congregations are served by ten ordained clergy under call (Tony Metz, Luther Memorial, Quincy; Gayle Pope, Christ, Quincy; Patricia Reep, St. Peter's, Coatsburg; Linda Murray, Immanuel, Golden; Brad Eidson, Trinity, Golden; Scott Egbers, First, Beardstown; Colleen Winkler, Grace, Virginia and St. John's, Bluff Springs; Corey Lange, St. Peter, Arenzville and St. John, Bluffs; Pete Hagglund, Christ, Nauvoo; and Mike Thomas, Trinity, Macomb), two retired clergy (Richard Hertenstein, Faith, Augusta and Immanuel, Carthage; and John Ashcraft, Trinity, Carthage), and several Synodically Authorized Ministers.

Clergy/SAM meetings were held in nine of the twelve months this past year, with the topics being:

- ◆ August: Book study & discussion on "Kindling Desire for God" by Kay Northcutt
- ◆ October: Care of Souls (a time of sharing about how things are going in our personal lives and ministry)
- ◆ November: Bishop John Roth provided his Bishop's Colloquy
- ◆ December: Holiday family gathering including a baby shower (Eidsons) and a wedding shower (Egbers)
- ◆ January: Our Christian Educational Materials and are they actually providing education?
- ◆ February: Vacation & funerals, do you go/stay away or return?
- ◆ March: A visit to the Islamic Center in Macomb and a time for Q & A with some local Muslims
- ◆ April: Care of Souls
- ◆ May: TBD

We welcomed Mallorie Hansmann to the conference, a seminary graduate and gifted organist who married Pastor Scott Egbers on January 1, 2016. Two clergy families had their first child, Pastor Brad and Lauren Eidson (son Will) and Pastor Corey and Emily Lange (son Noah). During Holy Week, Will Eidson was hospitalized for pneumonia and further tests discovered an inoperable tumor. The people of Trinity, Golden have provided ongoing care and mutual ministry to Pastor Brad and his family during this difficult time, and the Eidsons continue to be lifted up in prayer throughout the conference. SAM Brian Days was hospitalized for a flesh eating bacteria and tests revealed a type of leukemia which has had Brian hospitalized several times. A few benefits sponsored by various conference congregations and some special offerings have been taken to assist the Days family, and we continue to keep them remembered in prayer throughout the conference.

The laity of the conference continue to live out their discipleship in a variety of ways, loving God and neighbor as we make Christ known by making a difference in our communities and via various mission projects, globally.



Southern Conference Report to the Assembly

*Pastor Laura Kamprath, Dean
St. John Lutheran Church, Campbell Hill
St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Steeleville*

The Southern Conference consists of 18 congregations across the large geographical territory that extends from Metropolis in the south, north to Olney, west to Chester, and east to Mount Carmel. We are currently served by 11 called pastors, along with two pastors and one Synodically Authorized Minister in interim service.

The conference officers for 2016-2017 are:

Dean	Pastor Laura Kamprath	Wartburg Parish
Clergy Vice President	Pastor Gary Ryden	Retired
Lay Vice President	Mr. Larry Saler	Trinity, Olney
Secretary	Mrs. Jane Otte	Our Redeemer, Marion
Treasurer	Mr. Jerry Wilson	Peace, Steeleville

Since last year's Synod Assembly, the Southern Conference has bid farewell to Pastor Chris Repp and his family, as he took a call to serve Grace, Champaign. We welcomed Pastor Karen Husby as the interim pastor at Epiphany, Carbondale. We have also welcomed pastoral intern Chris Thomas and his wife Katie to southern Illinois, as Chris completes his internship year at Our Redeemer, Marion, under the supervision of Pastor Marlin Otte.

Members of the conference congregations gathered in September 2015 for assembly at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Centralia, and in March 2015 for assembly at St. John Lutheran Church (Post Oak), Campbell Hill. In the fall, we heard from Kathryn Sime, author of "Doing More with Less," the cover article of the August 2015 edition of *The Lutheran*. In the spring, we heard from Hugh and Paulette Stempfley about the work of Marion Medical Mission.

Professional Leaders continue to meet each month for fellowship and education. In February, we went on retreat at Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia, IL, as we welcomed Dr. Warren Crews as our presenter on the subject, "Many New Faces of Christ Today: Jesus Seen through Third World Eyes." A text study group meets twice monthly in Carbondale.

The conference's missional spending plan for the year includes gifts to campus ministry, the Hospitality Houses in Vienna and Chester, LSSI, the ELCA Malaria Campaign, and our companion synods in Madagascar; support for a student in the Synodically Authorized Ministry program; and funding of our spring and fall assemblies and our conference professional leader's retreat. We also have a designated fund to provide partial scholarships to every attendee from conference congregations to the Synod Youth Gathering at Rend Lake each February.



West Central Conference Report to the Assembly

Pastor Glen VanderKloot, Dean

Retired

Interim Oversight: St. John's Lutheran Church, Mt. Pulaski

The West Central Conference consists of thirty congregations stretching from Columbia at the southern end of the Metro-St. Louis area, north to Springfield and Jacksonville, west to Batchtown, and east to Shumway and Altamont.

Following a vote on August 30 by all three congregations to blend together in one congregation, on Sunday September 13, 2015 Luther Memorial (Springfield) and Faith (Springfield) held their closing worship services and Atonement (Springfield) marked the end of this chapter of their ministry. On Sunday September 20, this new congregation (subsequently named Peace Lutheran Church) began with its first worship preceded by a reception. Bishop John Roth was the preacher. They meet in the former Atonement's building. They began a process to define their mission assisted by Sister Marilyn. They then chose a new name for the congregation and have now begun the call process.

We rejoiced with Pastor Jon Berg and his wife Jeannie as Jon retired from his ministry at Atonement, Springfield, on May 31, 2015, and relocated to Channahon, Illinois, in the Northern Illinois Synod. Thank you Jon for your service and ministry in our conference. God's richest blessings to you.

We rejoiced with Pastor Bill Zanton and his wife Linda as Bill retired from his ministry at Luther Memorial, Springfield, on September 13, 2015, and relocated in October to the family farm in Wisconsin in the South Central Synod of Wisconsin. Thank you Bill for your service and ministry in our conference. God's richest blessings to you.

We rejoiced with Pastor Glen VanderKloot who retired September 1, 2015, from his ministry at Faith Lutheran Church, Springfield. He and his wife will be remaining in Springfield for now.

In October Pastor Adam Dichsen led a discussion on an article "10 Steps to Immediate Church Renewal & Growth (That Most Churches Will Refuse to Take)" by Dr. James Emery White. Dr. White is the founding and senior pastor of Mecklenburg Community Church in Charlotte, NC, and the ranked adjunctive professor of theology and culture at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, which he also served as their fourth president.

In December Pastor Bill Piece led a discussion on the state of the church and how we are or are not addressing fundamental issues.

On February 18, 2016 Bishop S. John Roth conducted his annual Colloquy for rostered leaders and SAMs in our conference at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Hillsboro. Pastor Gary Sproat was our host and worship leader.

The Conference Annual Spring Assembly was March 13, 2016 at Mt. Zion in Litchfield. Our program consisted of an active presentation by Jason Fischer who is Director of Youth & Family Ministry at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, ELCA, in Champaign IL. Jason's presentation was

"Congregations at Play". He explored the spiritual and health benefits of play and its implications for congregations, including insights from Jurgen Moltmann's book "The Theology of Play".

In April the conference discussed how to deal with and minister to difficult people.

Several congregations in our conference are considering forming some type of cooperative ministry.

Several conference congregations were concerned about the future of the LSSI Story Book Project. They are somewhat relieved that the LSSI Story Book Project for incarcerated parents and their children has survived the drastic cuts that LSSI was forced to take due to the lack of state funding. Gail Beard's position has been eliminated and oversight and administration of the Story Book Project is being moved to LSSI's Marion office under the direction of Mike Davis. There remains continuing concern about the future of this program. Faith Lutheran Church in Jacksonville is putting together a notebook on how a congregation can run this program semi-independently.