



Southern Conference

2020 Report to Assembly

**Pastor Melissa Waterman
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, De Soto
First Lutheran Church, Murphysboro**

Congregations: 18

Congregations in transition: 9

Our churches have been busy and active in a variety of new ministries. Some of our conference leaders attended the Fall Theological Conference in Carlinville. Our fall conference assembly was held on September 22nd at Peace Lutheran in Steeleville. Bishop Roth was the presenter for the assembly. The presentation focused on:

1. What can congregations be doing during vacancies with lay leaders and what resources are available?
2. Burned out...how do we reinvigorate congregations?
3. What to do in times of transition?

We met at Our Redeemer in Marion in October to do our annual check in with things going on personally and professionally. Early in December we had the Bishop's Colloquy at Mt. Calvary in De Soto.

January we had our monthly gathering at Epiphany in Carbondale. At this gathering, we all brought books we were reading and shared some insights about those books. February we met at Zion in Mt. Carmel. We toured a local women's homeless shelter and learned about their ministry in Mt. Carmel.

Our conference assembly was held on Sunday, March 1st with Epiphany in Carbondale hosting us. We had a great turnout!! Our program was local ministry groups that we support through our benevolence. Pastor Paul Waterman and Katie Anderson (SIU student) talked about the campus ministry that Epiphany Lutheran Church has for anyone in the community that is college age. The purpose of the ministry is to promote spiritual development and spiritual care. Katie and Pastor Waterman are applying to SIU for their group to be a registered University organization.

Three Board members from the Chester Hospitality House spoke to the assembly about their ministry that is over 30 years old. They provide overnight lodging and support to prisoners' families visiting at Menard Correctional Center and other prisons nearby.

Elections were also held that day. Pastor Marlin Otte, retired, is the new dean of the Southern Conference and Pastor Melissa Waterman (Mt. Calvary, De Soto and First, Murphysboro) is the new Clergy VP.

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from meeting in March, April and May. Instead, the Southern Conference met virtually on ZOOM for our conference meetings and text study. In May, Pastor Harold Weber, who served Zion in Walsh, for over 20 years died very unexpectedly.

The Southern Conference continues to struggle with church vacancies. We meet the third Tuesday of the month for conference meetings and we also meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month for text study.