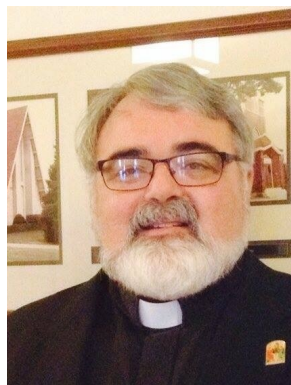


Synod Assembly Speakers



ELCA Churchwide Representative

Rev. William Callister
ELCA CWO

Rev. Bill Callister is currently the pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Streator, Illinois— a congregation of the Northern Illinois Synod. He was born and raised in Chicago and grew up as a member of the Luther Memorial Church in Chicago. He attended school at Gordon Tech High School, North Park College, and the Lutheran School of Theology of Chicago, where he graduated in 1990.

Pastor Callister's ministry started in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod where he served as an intern at Wiley Lutheran Church in Ellisville, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Canton. He was ordained by Bishop Kaitschuk at the Church of the Little Flower in Springfield during the synod's assembly on June 29, 1990. He served at St. John's Lutheran Church in Toluca from 1990 to 1998, and at Zion Lutheran Church in Clifton from 1998 to 2015. During those calls he had also served as interim pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lacon from 1991 to 1992, Immanuel Lutheran Church in Minonk and Bethany Lutheran Church in 1996, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Kankakee from 2000 to 2001 and 2006 to 2009.

He has also served as Dean of the Northeast Conference, and on the boards of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, Illinois, and the Lutheran Campus Ministry in Bloomington-Normal. Rev. Callister is currently the Dean of the South Conference in the Northern Illinois Synod and serving on the ELCA Church Council for the term 2019 - 2025. He is married to his wife, Dodi, who works as a Physical Therapist at OSF Streator Center for Health, and they have an adult daughter, Brandi.

ECUMENICAL GUESTS

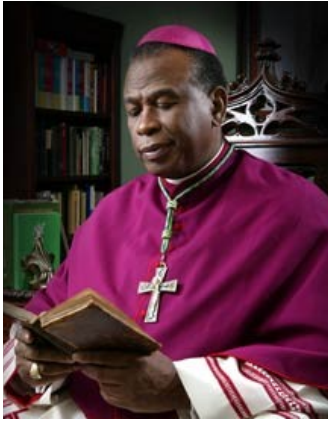


Rev. Elissa Bailey
Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Great Rivers, PCUSA

Rev. Elissa Bailey is a native of Iowa but has lived in Illinois since the spring of 2009. Elissa obtained a BS in Psychology from Iowa State University and an M.Div. from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. Following seminary, Elissa served as the pastor of the First United Presbyterian Church in Bushnell, IL for just under a decade. During that time, Elissa and her husband, Don, welcomed three children into their family. In 2010, Elissa began serving as the Assistant Stated Clerk of the Great Rivers Presbytery.

In 2014, Elissa became the Stated Clerk of the Great Rivers Presbytery. In 2018, Elissa and her family moved to Bloomington where she would serve as the transitional associate pastor at Second Presbyterian in Bloomington and later the transitional pastor at First Presbyterian in Danvers. In the summer of 2020, Elissa began a Master's of Mental Health Counseling as she works towards licensing as a clinical therapist.

Elissa now serves in a joint agreement between Great Rivers Presbytery and East Iowa Presbytery as the Stated Clerk for both Presbyteries. Her greatest joy in her work is accompanying the session clerks through their various duties. Elissa continues to live in Bloomington with her husband and three children, now aged 9, 8, and 4. They also have a 13-year-old cat named Jake and a 5-month-old cat named Kion. She enjoys coaching soccer, being a Girl Scout leader, and traveling with her family. She is more than halfway through her studies for her counseling degree. Elissa feels called towards helping those who have been hurt by the institution of the church to be able to encounter/re-encounter the risen Lord whether that be within the walls of the church or outside.



Bishop Emeritus Edward Braxton

Catholic Diocese of Belleville, Illinois

Bishop Braxton was born in Chicago. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1970 by Cardinal Cody, Archbishop of Chicago. Bishop Braxton was ordained a bishop in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis by Archbishop (now Cardinal) Justin Rigali in 1995, the anniversary of his First Mass. He served as pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Oak Park. He studied for the priesthood at Quigley Prep. Seminary, Niles College Seminary and St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, IL, in the Archdiocese of Chicago, where he earned his BA, MA, S.T.B. and S.T.L. degrees. He did his post graduate work at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium where he earned his Ph.D. in Religious Studies, and an S.T.D. degree in Systematic Theology summa cum laude. While at Louvain, he did parish ministry at American military bases in Germany and Brussels. Bishop Braxton returned to Chicago where he pursued his post doctorate fellowship at the Divinity School of the Univ. of Chicago.

He was then asked to serve as Chair of the Ecumenical Thought at Harvard Divinity School in the late 1970's. Over the years Bishop Braxton has served in many forms of pastoral service in many diverse locations, from 1986-1992, such as University of Notre Dame, Washington D.C., Rome, and New York (office in the World Trade Center, but gratefully prior to 2001). Throughout his ministry he has frequently been invited to preach in major Catholic and Protestant pulpits. He's preached many retreats for priests, deacons, religious, and lay people around the United States and Canada, Central and South America, Europe and Africa.

His writings on a wide range of theological and pastoral topics have appeared in various journals and periodicals such as *Harvard Theological Review*, *New York Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and many others. He is the author of numerous articles on African American Catholics, many of which have been translated and published abroad. His books, *The Wisdom Community* and *The Faith Community: One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic* are widely used in Catholic colleges and universities. Bishop Braxton has been working his way upward over the years and serving in different areas, such as coordinator of the Catholic Charities in Missouri. Serving on boards, like the Priests Personnel Board, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, and many other Seminaries, and organizations.

In 2005, he was appointed Eighth Bishop of Belleville. He has given particular emphasis to education and the work of vocations to the priesthood. In 2010, he celebrated his 40th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood and his 15th Anniversary of his ordination to the Episcopacy, and his 5th Anniversary of his installation in Belleville. He celebrated these anniversaries in Rome at the concluding ceremonies of Pope Benedict XVI's Year for Priests.

He has a wide variety of interests including being an avid reader of almost all topics, traveling to Africa, Europe, Asia, North and South America. He enjoys a wide variety of music, sailing, the outdoors, skiing, in line skating, whale watching, and white water rafting. On his 40th anniversary of ordination card he wrote, "While there have been days in my life as a priest when I haven't been happy, there has never been a day that I was unhappy that I was a priest!"



Bishop Frank Beard

Great Rivers Conference, United Methodist Church

Bishop Frank J. Beard was elected as a Bishop in the North Central Jurisdiction on July 13, 2016. Prior to his election, he served as an ordained Elder in the Indiana Area of the United Methodist Church. The newly elected Bishop was assigned to The Illinois Great Rivers Conference effective September 1, 2016.

Bishop Beard has a wealth of experience in a variety of ministry settings across the United Methodist Church. He has served as a local church pastor, a District Superintendent, and as Senior Pastor of a large congregation.

Bishop Beard is a gifted preacher and teacher. He has a passion for Jesus Christ that is contagious. His primary focus is encouraging churches to be "on fire for Jesus." His life quote is, "I want to be so full of Jesus that when a mosquito bites me it will fly away humming 'there is power in the blood!'"

The Reverend Doctor Frank J. Beard received the following formal education:

- B.A. Degree from Taylor University, Upland, IN – 1979
- M.Div. Degree from Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY – 1982
- S.T.M. Degree from Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN – 1986
- D. Min. Degree from Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY – 1997

Bishop Beard is married to his wife Melissa and has two adult daughters: Eleanor & Emily, and two grandchildren: Maya and Elijah. The Bishop is an avid fisherman and loves to tell stories about his fishing adventures. When asked if he is going fishing he is quick to reply, "No, I'm going catching, anybody can fish!"