



---

---

## Report of the Vocation and Education Unit

---

---

### Program Committee

Ms. Carolyn J. Butts, Evansville, Wisc. (2013)  
Mr. Robert N. Corley III, Chester, Va. (2013)  
Pr. John F. Hoffmeyer, Philadelphia, Pa. (2009)  
Ms. Kathryn L. Johnson, Louisville, Ky. (2009)  
Pr. Megan J. Jones, Atlanta, Ga. (2013)  
Pr. Donald C. Jukam, Poulsbo, Wash. (2013)  
Pr. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, Waverly, Iowa (2011)  
Mr. Jordan Krey, Weymouth, Mass. (2009)  
Pr. Heidi M. Murken, Grafton, Wisc. (2011)  
Mr. Paul J. Rasmussen, Atlanta, Ga. (2011)  
Mr. Robert S. Schroeder, Shawnee, Ks. (2013)  
Ms. Susan M. Stover, Wayne, Neb. (2011)  
Pr. Nelson T. Strobert, Gettysburg, Pa. (2009)  
Mr. Kai S. Swanson, *chair*, Rock Island, Ill. (2011)  
Ms. Carolyn Wright, Fargo, N.D. (2009)

### Advisors

Mr. David P. Anderson, Strongsville, Ohio  
Pr. Michael L. Cooper-White, Gettysburg, Pa.  
Pr. Darin N. Johnson, Fargo, N.D.  
Bp. Gerald L. Mansholt, Kansas City, Mo.  
Ms. Jo Mueller, Minneapolis, Minn.  
Ms. Mary Ann Pollock, Pasadena, Md.  
Pr. Wayne B. Powell, Hickory N. C.  
Pr. José David Rodríguez, Chicago, Ill.  
Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, Chicago, Ill.  
Mr. Nathaniel Viets-VanLear, Chicago, Ill.

Pr. Stanley N. Olson, *executive director*

### Statement of Purpose

The Vocation and Education (VE) program unit equips people for their callings by developing and supporting leaders—from the Gospel, through the ELCA, for the world. The constitutional description of this unit appears in continuing resolution 16.12.C05., printed in Section X of this volume.

### Strategic Planning for 2007–2009

Three goals have been identified for work begun in this biennium and continuing through 2009:

#### Goal 1: Vocation Claimed

Vocation and Education staff members will center their work in the Lutheran conversation about vocation, and the staff will assist congregational, synodical, churchwide, agency, and institutional leaders to engage in this conversation for the sake of this church's common work and public witness.

#### Goal 2: Networks Nurtured

Vocation and Education staff members will adopt networking as their primary organizational principle and method to equip people for their callings and to develop and support leaders; staff members will engage and enable others to strengthen interdependent partnerships.

#### Goal 3: Leaders Equipped

Vocation and Education program staff will facilitate the equipping of pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, synodically authorized ministers, and other leaders in Vocation and Education areas of responsibility and will engage them in addressing future leadership needs of this church and the world.

Strategic planning for the 2010–2011 biennium is well underway. It is anticipated that these same goals will still be prominent, but with several new outcomes and strategies.

### Organization of the Unit

The Vocation and Education Unit is organized as three work groups, each with several major responsibilities:

**Youth and Young Adult Ministries Group:** Campus Ministry, Outdoor Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, Youth Ministry

**Leadership Group:** Candidacy, Chaplaincy, Pastoral Care and Clinical Education, Disability and Deaf Ministries, Health and Wellness, Leadership of Women in Ministry, Multicultural Leadership Development, Prevention of Misconduct, Rostered and Authorized Ministries

**Educational Partnerships and Institutions Group:** Book of Faith Initiative, Colleges and Universities, Lifelong Learning, *Lutheran Partners* magazine, Schools and Early Childhood Education, Seminaries/Theological Education Network, Theology and Daily Life

### Report of Unit's Work for 2007–2009 and Plans for 2009–2011

The following stories and statistics illustrate this unit's work and point to some challenges we face.

#### Youth and Young Adult Ministries Group

In many venues, this church observed the 2007 centennial of Lutheran campus ministry under the theme "CELEBRATE!" Local and regional gatherings were held around the country; synod assemblies highlighted campus

ministry and, in doing so, raised more than \$325,000 in offerings; 100 former staff joined together with 100 current staff in marking this milestone at the annual campus ministry conference; a 2007 Churchwide Assembly resolution led eventually to Church Council designation of an additional \$100,000 at year's end for new campus ministries and to assist those ministries with the greatest financial need. *Reflections on the Journey* was published in late 2008 and offers highlights of the past 30 years of campus ministry as well as a list of those who have served in campus ministry since 1907.

The outdoor ministry staff team has worked to define and deepen the unit's partnership with the newly formed independent Lutheran organization, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM). We have provided consultation services, educational experiences, and program resources to ELCA-affiliated outdoor ministry organization board members, professional leaders, synods, and congregations. We also have worked to strengthen relationships with other VE program areas, ecumenical partners, and related professional organizations.

A staff position was reconfigured to create a new position in 2008, the youth and young adult ministry program assistant. This two-year contract position provides an opportunity for a young adult to offer staff support to the Lutheran Student Movement and give program assistance to this church's work with youth and young adults in various capacities.

"Jesus Justice Jazz" is the theme for the eighth triennial ELCA Youth Gathering. Some 36,000 youth and young adults registered to journey to New Orleans for the gathering, held July 22–26, 2009. A dynamic new servant-learning model will be employed, including hundreds of opportunities for engaging in community-based renewal efforts focused in six interest areas: health and wellness, literacy, housing, the environment, arts and culture, and wealth and poverty. Offerings from worship and the gathering's second-mile giving challenge will help strengthen the justice-promoting work of the ELCA Hunger Appeal and ELCA Global Mission projects and contribute to continuing ministry redevelopment in the host Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. The gathering's linked ministries, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) and the Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event (DAYLE), were planned for July 19–22, 2009, and feature innovative event designs. The eighth triennial Lutheran Youth Organization Convention was to be held July 26–30, 2009, in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, bringing together up to eight young leaders from each participating synod. The purposes of the convention include community, conversation, and action addressing important issues in the Church and world.

In 2008, young adult ministry partnered with candidacy staff to launch the "Imagine Yourself" family of resources. These resources are designed to help young adults think about their vocations. Included are print and Web pieces as well as a social networking community where young adults can share their own stories, post events, and reflect on questions of discernment. More information on all resources can be found at [www.elca.org/imagineyourself](http://www.elca.org/imagineyourself).

In 2009, young adult ministry will partner with the ELCA Foundation and the Mission Investment Fund to hold a series of networking events for young adults that will help them connect to this church and its various partners for ministry in their local settings. The project is generously sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. More information may be found at [www.elca.org/youngadults](http://www.elca.org/youngadults).

## Leadership Group

The primary responsibility of the Leadership Group is to assist synods in the identification, preparation, and support of leaders who serve in widely varying ministries, primarily in congregations but also in many kinds of specialized work within the institutional church and at its edges. Attention is given to pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers, as well as to synodically authorized ministry.

The Leadership Group has a collaborative and guiding role for this church's work in candidacy and deployment for rostered ministry. Synods and seminaries are the chief partners. An exciting piece in this work has been collaboration with the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit and the seminaries to develop a seamless approach to preparing leaders for new mission starts and other missional work. To help initiate the program, the Mission Investment Fund is providing students registered in these mission-focused programs financial support through the Fund for Leaders scholarship program. The unit also supports first-call assignment and mobility of candidates for all rosters. The rollout of the long-awaited online Mobility and Roster Database project was scheduled for Spring 2009.

Vocation and Education also tracks students in candidacy from entrance until a call is accepted and received. The following chart shows the numbers of candidates for each of the rosters of this church over the past three years:

Roster	Candidates January 2007	Candidates January 2008	Candidates January 2009
Associate in Ministry	320	277	256
Diaconal Minister	189	171	166
Deaconess	13	15	17
Clergy	2051	2024	1938
<b>Total</b>	<b>2573</b>	<b>2487</b>	<b>2377</b>

Openings for rostered leaders are likely to remain stable or increase. Retirements are likely to exceed additions to the rosters in the next several years. This church must continue to seek, prepare, and support gifted people who sense a call to the mission of Christ. The "Imagine Yourself" project is noted above.

The Leadership Group also coordinates the churchwide organization's work in multicultural leadership development and recruitment. In 2008, using congregational reports, the unit intensified its recruitment efforts by sending a letter to more than 6,000 congregations that reported having members of color, asking them to identify potential leaders who might be interested in a church vocation. The group is working to follow up with the significant number of persons who were identified. Over the last three years there has been a slight increase in the number of candidates of color preparing for ministry: eight candidates for the associate in ministry roster, four for the diaconal ministry roster, and 203 candidates for ordained ministry. This year, in partnership with Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, \$190,000 was given in grants to congregations participating in the Horizon internship program, and more than \$151,000 in scholarship assistance was offered to seminarians of color.

Together with chaplains across the country, staff members in the Leadership Group have created a new organizational model to support this church's ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral care, and clinical education. Closer contact is sought. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson has accepted an invitation to participate in the 2010 Atlanta gathering of chaplains and pastoral care providers. ELCA ministers wishing to be professionally certified for service in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education must receive ecclesiastical endorsement through structures administered through this unit. In 2008, there were 487 rostered persons with ecclesiastical endorsement and professional certification serving in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education. This number represents a significant increase from the corresponding total of 366 in 2006.

In collaboration with a team of deaconesses, diaconal ministers, and associates in ministry, the leadership group developed templates and a resource on DVD that are being used in every region to enhance congregational appreciation of the mission contributions and potential of these three Word and service rosters.

In Disability Ministries, the Leadership Group is working to strengthen and support the networks that presently exist to raise the consciousness and sensitivity in congregations and synods and to better serve the mission work with people with special needs. A mentoring program has been established for new rostered leaders. New online resources are presently being developed to assist bishops and congregations in this area of work.

## **Educational Partnerships and Institutions Group**

The Vocation and Education unit sustains relationships with a wide variety of ELCA-related educational institutions and programs, including eight seminaries, 28 colleges, 34 lifelong learning programs, 17 high school programs, 250 elementary and middle school programs, and 1,639 early childhood education programs. For ELCA colleges and universities, and for seminaries and seminary clusters, Vocation and Education staff members attend board meetings

regularly; gather presidents, deans, and other leaders; and offer counsel in various ways, including through the annual Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference for faculty and administrators. The unit provides comparative audits for the seminary system and for the colleges and universities. VE also publishes *Intersections*, a journal serving Lutheran higher education. A staff member normally advises presidential search committees. Since the last churchwide assembly, the following new presidents have been selected or installed by their institutions:

Mr. Denvy A. Bowman, Capital University, Columbus, Ohio  
Mr. Chris Kimball, California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, Calif.  
Mr. Jack R. Ohle, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.  
Ms. Janet Morgan Riggs, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa.

For ELCA early-childhood education centers and schools, a VE staff person advises pastors and school administrators and offers counsel to congregations and others considering the establishment of a school. VE collaborates with the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association and regional school associations. Nearly 150 pastors, principals, and other administrators attended the biennial administrators' conference in October 2008.

During this biennium, First-Call Theological Education staff began a four-year effort, supported by a \$525,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment, to explore "The Vocation of a First-Call Congregation" and identify success-predicting qualities and practices in these congregations. This project has identified congregational traits and practices that have been effective in helping newly rostered leaders make the transition from seminary into public ministry. The project will conclude in January 2010.

The theological education network in the ELCA is well served by the three seminary clusters. The clusters are legally incorporated and serve to draw together other educational providers (such as colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, and synodically-based lifelong learning programs) with the seminaries to expand access to theological education for all members of this church, whether that be for interest in public ministry or for ministry in daily life. The Western Mission Network (Luther and Pacific Lutheran Seminaries and collaborating educational providers in Regions 1, 2, and 3) and the Covenant Cluster (Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Trinity Seminary, and Wartburg Seminary and collaborating educational providers in Regions 4, 5, and 6) organize their work around annual cluster-wide consultations. The Eastern Cluster (Gettysburg, Philadelphia, and Southern Seminaries and collaborating educational providers in Regions 7, 8, and 9) organize their work by regions.

A consultation on seminarian educational indebtedness was convened by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson on September 8, 2008, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill. The Vocation and Education unit has program responsibility for this ongoing effort to reverse the growth of seminarian educational indebtedness. Confidence remains high that the current trajectory of ever-increasing seminarian debt burden

can be reversed through collaborative efforts identified by the consultations.

*Lutheran Partners* magazine, which is sent to all ELCA rostered leaders six times a year, completed and launched a redesigned print and online magazine during this biennium. Most back issues are now digitized and available online also.

The ELCA constitution calls for regular gatherings of the theologians who are teaching at this church's seminaries, colleges, and universities, as well as ELCA members teaching at other seminaries and colleges. These annual events, along with a triennial gathering of teaching theologians and the Conference of Bishops, are arranged by the unit in cooperation with the Association of Teaching Theologians, which was expanded during this biennium to include teaching theologians from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Also during this biennium, convocations of teaching theologians addressed the development of a proposed ELCA social statement on genetics and met with pastors of large congregations.

The Book of Faith Initiative was launched in 2007 to great enthusiasm. Forty-nine synods adopted a grass-roots-developed resolution about becoming Book of Faith Initiative synods, and large numbers attended assembly workshops. More than 19,000 Synod Assembly attendees signed up for information about the initiative and received copies of the initiative's foundational publication, *Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study*. VE invited each of the synods to appoint a person to lead the synod's engagement with the Book of Faith Initiative. One or more "Synod Advocates" were sent by 63 synods to an orientation and training event August 15–16, 2008, at the Lutheran Center, Chicago, Ill. FishersNet/Select, a lifelong learning resourcing effort supported by the unit, is developing DVD teaching resources to support the initiative. Major resources for adults and children are being produced by Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, including the *Lutheran Study Bible* in 2009.

There is vital work being done and much to do, for the sake of Christ's mission.

Kai S. Swanson, *program committee chair*  
Stanley N. Olson, *executive director*