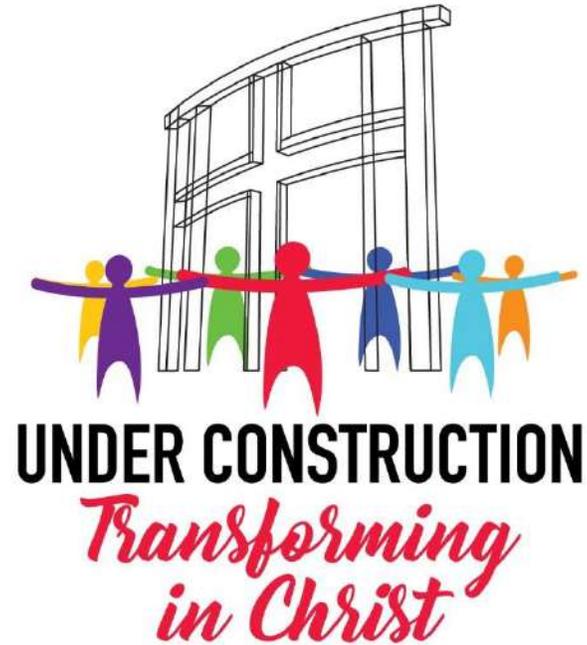


2018



**Part D**  
**Book of Reports**

Synod Staff and Other Synod Ministries Reports

## **PART D**

### **REPORTS OF:**

#### **NT-NL SYNOD STAFF AND SYNOD MINISTRY TEAMS**

Bishop's Associate for Leadership Formation and Congregational Care

Director of Evangelical Mission, ELCA

Synod Communications

Synod Focus Teams:

Congregational Vitality Team (formerly - New/Renewing Ministries Team)

Public Witness Team for Peace and Justice

#### **NT-NL RELATED MINISTRIES**

Briarwood Lutheran Ministries Retreat Center

Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) of Denton

Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) of NT-NL

Parish Lay Ministry Academy (PLMA)

NT-NL Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM)

NT-NL Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) – WELCA

NT-NL Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO)

#### **ELCA CHURCHWIDE REPORTS**

Presiding Bishop, The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton (English and Spanish)

ELCA Fund for Leaders (FFL)

ELCA Mission Investment Fund (MIF)

Portico Benefit Services

#### **NT-NL AFFILIATED MINISTRIES Agencies / Institutions / Organizations (AIOs)**

1517 Media (formally Augsburg Fortress)

Louisiana Interchurch Conference

Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest (LFWS) – (Endowment Trusts)

Joint report from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) and Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS)

Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest (LSPS)

Lutheran Sunset Ministries (Senior Living and Care)

Mosaic (a ministry for people with intellectual disabilities)

Seafarers International House - **NEW**

Texas Impact

Texas Lutheran University (TLU)

Upbring (formerly Lutheran Social Services)

# STAFF REPORTS

## 2018 Synod Assembly Report of the Bishop's Associate for Leadership Formation and Congregational Care The Rev. Kris Totzke



This has been a very active year in the NT-NL Synod. I can no longer claim the “new” status, but there is still learning going on for me in this position. Thankfully, the learning experiences have been positive. I am grateful for the

diversity of experiences that are part of this call, and even more grateful for the welcome and hospitality I have received throughout the synod.

**Candidacy** has been one of our more active areas. We went from thirteen active candidates for ministry to seventeen. Just as last year, most of them are non-traditional students from a variety of backgrounds and contexts. We continue to find new ways to seek out pastors here in our context. Eight of those current candidates are TEEM students (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries.) These are the non-traditional students who are called to lead specific ministries that are often hard to fill. This has often been the path for our ethnic specific communities, but it has also become more common in our rural communities and for students who have a tremendous amount of ministry and life experience. We also have students attending Brite Divinity School and affiliating with ELCA seminaries for their Lutheran learning components, while some are doing Distributive (distance) Learning programs with our ELCA seminaries. While this does fill many of our needs, we still need to work to identify more of our young adults who are called to ministry and learning in a traditional seminary setting. Only three of our seventeen

fall into that category at this time. The good news is, I have met with several people who are interested in ministry and had conversations with pastors about others they have identified who are gifted for ministry. I anticipate that next year our list will be just as long, even with several current candidates nearing completion in the coming year.

**Mobility** is another big portion of my call. If you are the type who looks back at old reports, you may notice the In/Out/Change report for this year is much longer. We've had six new pastors move into NT-NL. There has been more movement this year and will likely be more in the coming year as well. We've had nine retirements since last year's assembly (although two of those pastors continue to serve their congregations in contract roles.) More pastors are anticipating retirement. While this gives me a bigger pool of pastors to call on for interim ministry sites, it also is a challenge as we have more congregations in the process of self-discernment and call.

Some of those congregations are dealing with the issues of falling numbers and decreasing budgets, which leads to the question of their ability to call a full-time pastor. That's a hard reality to face but one that has been pushing us to look at new opportunities. I say opportunity because I think this can be a great way to think about staffing for growth rather than viewing it as a way to avoid death. Conversations have begun with congregations around the possibilities for cooperative ministry and what that can look like in their settings.

## PART D

We also have a brand-new batch of first call pastors in our group for **First Call Theological Education**. Three are newly ordained, one is coming from another tradition to the ELCA, and another is awaiting call. The ELCA requires that all first call pastors continue their education and development for three years. We work together with the other two Texas synods for some of that work, while some is done independently within NT-NL. We have also begun to refer to this as First Call Accompaniment because the goal is more about accompanying the new pastors for support and growth than it is about continued theological training.

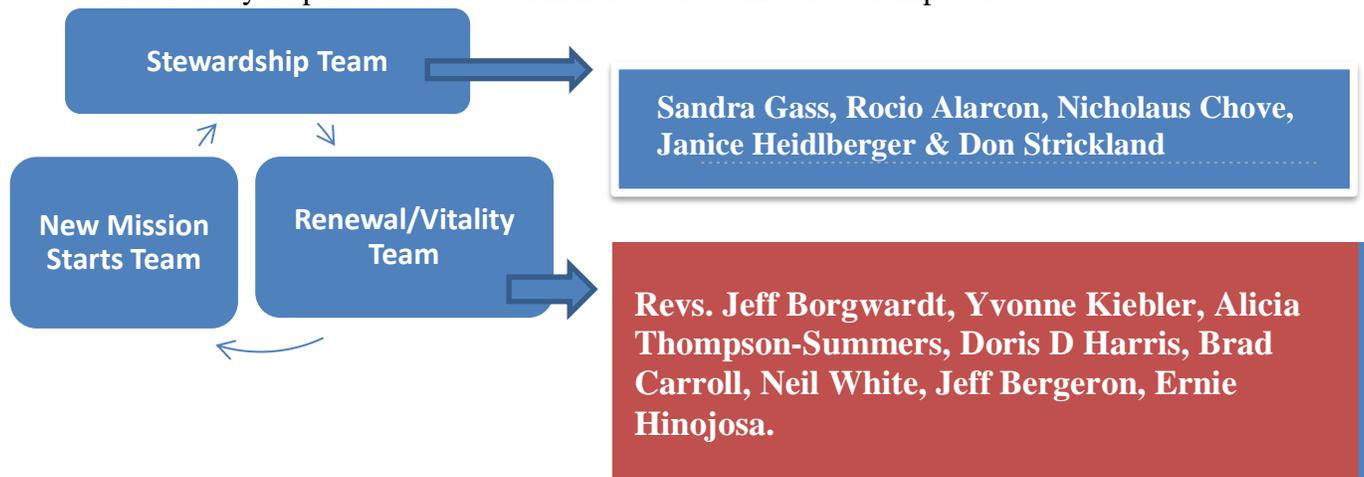
Travel continues to be a big factor in this call. I have continued to discover wonderful things about the region but even more so about our many congregations. The best way for me to get to know the congregations and the people I serve is to get out and visit. Please continue to invite me, so I can discover more of NT-NL. I am blessed to be called to serve in the ELCA and specifically here in NT-NL. I am blessed to work with such a tremendous synod staff under the leadership of a gifted Bishop. I am *really* blessed to know so many of you now here in the synod. Thank you for allowing me to continue to do this ministry here, even as I continue to learn.



## Report to the Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Synod Assembly April 27-28, 2018 Rev. Irma Banales: Director for Evangelical Mission

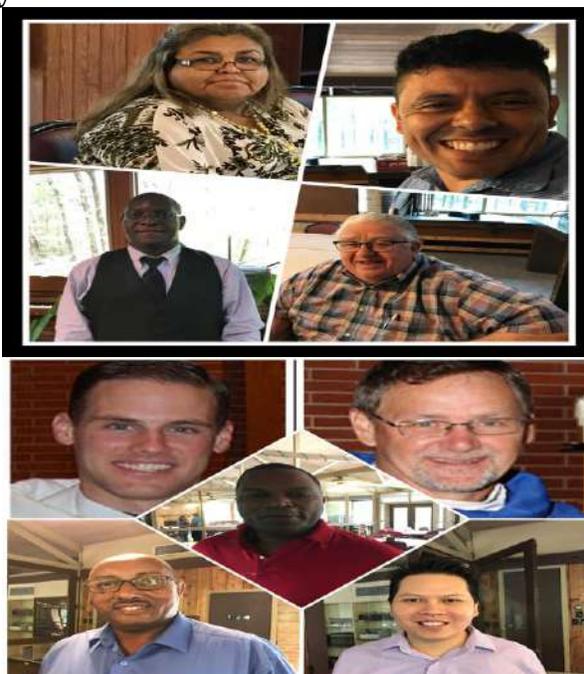
Dear members of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, ELCA; 2017 has been a year of joyful moments and challenging times as well. But I believe I am not alone in this call; [John 15:16](#) <sup>16</sup>*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear first-fruit that will last and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.* God has given us 106 congregations, a Bishop, and a council of leaders with many gifts to be In Mission Together.

Some of my responsibilities as a DEM are to lead three leadership tables:



### 8 new mission starts; led by Mission Developers lay and Clergy

1. Mision San Mateo, Waco TX  
Meeting at St Matthew, Waco TX
2. Iglesia Luterana Adviento, Arlington TX  
meeting at Advent, Arlington TX
3. Umoja International Church, Ft Worth TX  
Meeting at King of Glory, Ft Worth TX
4. Church of the Damascus Road,  
Weatherford TX. Various places
5. Kyrie Mission Pub Church,  
Meeting at Chimera Brewing Com.
6. Umoja International Church, Dallas  
Meeting at King of Glory, Dallas
7. Dallas Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Meeting at St. Luke's Richardson TX
8. Indonesian Lutheran Church Gethsemane  
Meeting at Christ the Servant, Allen TX



## PART D

### 5 Congregations under development



- + Iglesia Luterana San Gabriel, Alvarado TX  
Rev. Jesus Escamilla
- + Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria de Guadalupe, Irving TX  
Rev. Gus Vinajeras
- + First Sagrada Familia Lutheran Church, Garland TX  
SAWL: Angel Villalobos
- + Emanuel Lutheran Church, Dallas TX  
Rev. Cindy Carroll
- + First Lutheran Church, Waco TX;  
SAWL: Austin Nickel

#### In partnership with Ecumenical churches:

- + Louisiana Interchurch Conference Board, representing the NT-NL Synod.
- + Peru for a Reformation Celebration. Methodist, Episcopalian, United Church of Christ, and Lutherans. Visited a couple of Lutheran churches in the country.
- + Church United in Christ Community for a Unity Worship Service.
- + REDIL: Ecumenical Network to Develop the Latino Churches: Presbyterians, Episcopalians, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, United Methodist, and Lutherans.

#### Participation:

- + “Latino Leadership Initiative” four synods: Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast, Southwestern, Northern Texas- Northern Louisiana, and Oklahoma/Kansas synods are part of this initiative in partnership with Rev. Ruben Duran Director for New Mission Starts and the two Presidents Louise N. Johnson from Wartburg Seminary and Jim Nieman from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.
- + Tulsa, OK. Workshop Latino Christian Education for Children.  
20 of us from our Synod participated.
- + ELCA Latino Strategy Team. Planning Team: Spanish Coaching.
- + ELCA Mission Developers/Redevelopers planning Team.
- + ELCA Stewardship Team
- + ELCA “Future Directions Table”

#### Consultations/Meetings:

- + Visited several congregations for conversations about the future of their ministry.
- + Monthly meetings with Mission Developers and Redevelopers in our Synod.
- + The *three African American* Congregations in our synod: Mount Olive, Dallas, St John, Dallas and Community of Hope, Ft Worth, have welcomed me to be part of their partnership and unity
- + Preaching and Sharing the Gospel in several NT-NL Churches.



*Thank You to all the Mission Partners who have supported our New Mission Starts and our Mission Developers. Thank you for Your Generosity. Let us continue working In Mission Together +*

**2018 Synod Assembly**  
**Communications Report**  
**Mr. Jason O’Neill, Communications Manager**



Website and Database

The Synod Council approved a major website update to include a database to begin working like another employee. This has eliminated duplicate efforts by synod staff to maintain required records for our leaders and worshipping communities. The site is also now accessible across all devices via responsive design and offers many user-friendly options (i.e., exporting events from our online calendar to your own calendar, viewable resources prior to downloading, the ability to search for resources in a number of ways, etc.). We will continue to make improvements and upgrades throughout this year.

Guidebook / Book of Reports

With the relaunch of our website and a database to support it, we opted out of using Guidebook for this year’s Assembly and posted the Book of Reports and all other relevant Assembly data online, which is fully accessible on all devices.

Forms / Reporting Ease

Our website now allows us to create custom and simple reporting and registration forms. We will continue to assess what information is vital in order to keep updating our forms to their simplest formats.

Zoom (Video Conferencing)

After research, we have partnered with Briarwood for a Zoom account, which has already paid for itself in savings from meeting costs for our Synod Council. We also use it for PLMA students to have access to classes here at Briarwood, and Briarwood uses it for board meetings. We look forward to how this might improve access to offerings by both the synod and our ministries here.

Regular Communication

We produce a weekly newsletter (usually released at 9am on Mondays) available to anyone (sign up on any page on our website: [ntnl.org](http://ntnl.org)). We produce a monthly newsletter (usually released at 9am on the first Wednesday) targeted to our leaders across the synod.

Newsletter Stats (March 1, 2017 – March 14, 2018)

Increased subscribers from 1,869 to 1,890. Added 175 new subscribers. Removed 154 unsubscribes and bounces. Net 1% increase.

Average open rate of our messages is 26% (non-profit average is 25%; church average is 22%).

Average click-through rate is down from 16% to 15% (non-profit average is 3%).

Social Media Stats (March 1, 2017 – March 14, 2018)

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ntnl.org) account likes from 775 to 835, with 805 followers. Growth of 60 likes (8% increase) and 96% follow rate.

[Twitter](https://twitter.com/ntnl.org) account followers from 1,410 to 1,044. (We added 1,059 followers. Twitter removed hundreds of thousands of bot accounts.)

[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ntnl.org) account followers from 337 to 448. Growth of 111 followers (33% increase).

# SYNOD MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS



## **NT-NL Congregational Vitality Team** **Pastor Jeff Borgwardt, Team Leader**

During 2017 the New/Renewing ministry team has had a name transition to be consistent with the terminology used by the Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA. We are now known as the Congregational Vitality Team. Although a name change sometimes seems like simply rearranging chairs, in this case, our team believes it is a significant change.

The focus of congregational vitality is on assisting congregations to be effective in their ministries in the lives of individuals, in the congregations, and in mission in the surrounding community. This is an ongoing process for all congregations, always, which is why our team believes that this is a significant change for our team and the congregations we work with in the synod. This focus of the team helps us to live into our synodical vision of being “in mission together.”

We live into this vision as a team by working with the revitalization, renewal, or redevelopment of existing congregations, as well as working with opportunities for new mission starts across our synod. Our team continues to work with several congregations in various stages of these processes. Our team members welcome a conversation, formally or informally, about what vitality means for you in the congregation where you are a member or where you serve as a leader.

As we have shifted to this focus on vitality, it also became clear that we needed to make a change in our team structure. We have divided our team into two groups of individuals, one of which is focused on the vitality of existing congregations, the other on the vitality of new mission starts. We will continue to be one team, meeting together for mutual support, Bible study, and the sharing ideas. It is an exciting time to be a part of the Congregational Vitality Team!

In early 2018, several of our team members attended an ELCA training event in Houston for Mission Developers and Redevelopers, for the purpose of being better able to support leaders who are called to those ministries. Additionally, team members also attended a Synodical Coaching training event held at Briarwood, so that we are better equipped to use coaching in our work, as it continues to be an effective way of guiding individuals and congregations to a place of health and vitality.

Our current team members include, Pastors Jeff Bergeron, Jeff Borgwardt, Doris Dupree Harris, Ernie Hinojosa, Yvonne Kiebler, Alicia Thompson-Summers, Neal White. Our staff liaison is Pastor Irma Bañales, DEM. We bid farewell and thank you to Pastor Brad Carroll for his service to our team, as he accepted a call to serve a congregation outside of NT-NL.

If you have questions, please contact any member of the team. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you.

In Christ’s service,  
Pastor Jeff Borgwardt  
Congregational Vitality Team Chair  
[pastorjeff@firstlutheran.us](mailto:pastorjeff@firstlutheran.us)



## **Giving Public Witness to Peace and Justice Team**

### **Pastor Chuck Hubbard, Team Leader**

The Public Witness Team meets on the second Saturday of each month at Shepherd of Life Lutheran Church, Arlington. We welcome those who would like to work with us as we live out a profound sense of call as people of Jesus committed to healing in the world.

We acknowledge that many of the churches throughout the synod are doing that in their own way, addressing social needs in their own communities. The Public Witness team can be a helpful resource to the church as it attempts to intelligently and faithfully confront the social realities that are often divisive within the church itself: racism, human caused environmental degradation, the just treatment of women, immigrant and refugee care, as well as charitable relief for the hungry and the homeless.

A few things for which we are thankful . . .

. . . for the immigration attorneys and staff at Schwamkrug, Freshwater and Lopez (Richardson, TX) who conducted “Know Your Rights” presentations in a number of contexts for the benefit of those at risk for deportation and for the people who love them;

. . . for Shepherd of Life Lutheran Church, Arlington, for its willingness to establish a relationship with a non-Lutheran faith community and have courageous conversations on the reality of racism in our society, and for hosting such important events as the hearings on the proposed ELCA social statement on justice and women;

. . . for Rejoice Lutheran Church, Frisco, and its efforts to build a coalition across religious lines, so that the prevailing social issues faced by the people of Frisco might better be addressed; and

. . . for the faithful people of St. John Lutheran Church, Dallas, who in so many diverse ways bring attention to racism in our culture, believing that if we are willing to face it, we can change things for the better!

We just had our first workshop on “The Church’s Role in Undoing Racism”. The presenters, Mrs. Joyce James and the Rev. Joseph Barndt, provided compelling and hearable presentations on the need to understand deep roots of racism in American culture and its pervasiveness in our institutions.

It is estimated that life expectancy for people of color in America, particularly blacks, is a few years less than that of whites due to race related stress. Racism has physical consequences. National Geographic is taking a hard look at the evidence for institutionalized racism within its own business culture. That is a courageous step; it needs to be done by other institutions, including the church. Good News: We can do something to promote healing – including racial healing – in the world.

Pastor Chuck Hubbard, chairperson  
 NT-NL Public Witness Team  
[pastor@gloriadeigarland.org](mailto:pastor@gloriadeigarland.org)

**PART D**

# - Agencies, Institutions, Organizations - AIO REPORTS

## RELATED MINISTRIES REPORTS

### NT-NL RELATED MINISTRIES

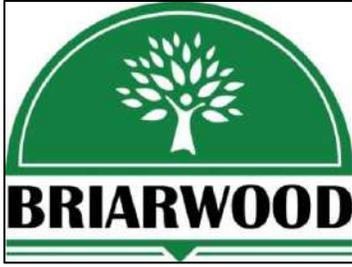
#### Ministries:

Briarwood Lutheran Ministries - Retreat Center  
Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) of Denton  
Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) of NT-NL  
Parish Lay Ministry Academy (PLMA)

#### Organizations:

NT-NL Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM)  
NT-NL Synodical Women's Organization (SWO / WELCA)  
NT-NL Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO)

## PART D

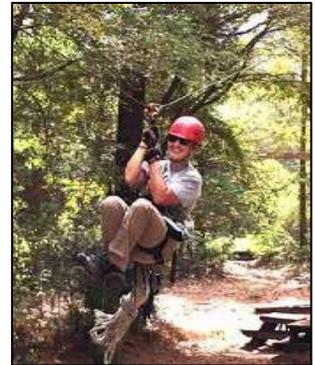


### A Natural Setting Where People Experience God's Love

Evolution is a key component for survival in Nature and in today's fast paced and ever-changing world. Those that don't evolve with change don't survive; however, peace of mind comes in knowing God's Grace and Love never change. At Briarwood, this year has been a time of evolution. We completed the addition of our Zipline/Climbing Wall for the start of the Summer Camp 2017 season. This proved to be a fun and exciting addition for campers and for groups throughout the year. We officially dedicated the climbing wall on September 23, 2017, and in doing so remembered Mamma Jean Oswald and Pastor Eric Schulze. Though missed, the legacy of Mamma Jean and Pastor Eric will live on through this new addition to camp.



Funds given to memorialize these two patron saints of Briarwood, along with gifts from individual donors and congregations, were used to build a 30 foot climbing tower which also included a 450 foot zip-line. The climbing tower and zip-line provide an exciting challenge for campers to develop skills, gain confidence, and have fun at Briarwood. The added element will also serve as a wonderful attraction to our ministry as we reach out with new programming to the community that surrounds Briarwood.



Evolution has also taken place with the staff of Briarwood. Our increased Hosted Ministry and larger Summer Camp ministry necessitated an additional staff member in the kitchen, increasing our total kitchen staff to 3 members. This additional staff is

focused on reducing burn out with our ever growing ministries. We welcomed Ivanna Santiago to the kitchen in January.

Change of the Programming staff at Briarwood has also occurred with the departure of Aaron Colwick. We have taken the opportunity to bring Courtney Sullivan aboard as Interim Program Director. Courtney is a member at Faith Lutheran Church in Flower Mound. She has been a part of the summer staff for the past four years in various capacities and will be going to Medical School in August of this year. The intention is for Courtney to be a bridge in this time of transition as we conduct a nationwide search for a new Program Director. During this time, we are also evaluating how the Program at Briarwood, which is a critical component to directly strengthening Briarwood's relationships with NT-NL congregations and the larger community, can be improved to maximize the ministry's impact. Suggestions and input as to how Briarwood's Program can improve your own ministries are welcome and encouraged.

Perhaps the biggest evolution at Briarwood this year has been Pastor Phil's realization that leadership dynamics are not just changing at the congregational level, but also within the camping world. Briarwood's management team is very active in Lutheran Outdoor Ministry (LOM), which is a network of camp professionals. Looking at the operational models of other LOM camps, Pastor Phil came to the realization that Briarwood was stuck in the past as far as the Management structure of Briarwood stood. The truly successful camps/retreat centers (of comparable size to Briarwood) are moving toward having one operationally- and donor-focused Executive Director over having both an Operations Director and an Executive Director. Phil realized that my expertise as the Operations Director, acquired over the last 10 years, along with support from the NT-NL synod office, would better fit into the model of what it takes to survive and thrive as a Camp/Retreat Center in this day and age.

## PROGRAM MINISTRY



**Overnight Camp** – Under the leadership of a dedicated group of counselors, children and youth again experienced the joy of an amazing summer camp in 2017. Last summer over 300 on-site campers and 396 offsite day campers participated in our outdoor ministry at Briarwood. To serve those campers, Briarwood employed 25 young adults, most of whom came from NT-NL Synod congregations. We have been blessed in 2018 with a grant from MEF to help give the overnight camp experience to those who otherwise couldn't afford to experience God's Love in the natural setting at Briarwood.

**BASE Camp** – New in 2017 at Briarwood was a day camp experience called BASE Camp – Briarwood's Awesome Summer Experience! BASE Camp is specifically designed to serve the communities that surround Briarwood. We are currently reaching out to the community with an invitation to have a unique summer camp experience at Briarwood and still be home for dinner. With BASE Camp, the activities change each week to keep it fresh for returning campers, as well as our staff.



A scheduling evolution is also occurring this summer. We typically have weeks that are more popular than others. To maximize staffing variety, and for increased financial stewardship, this year we are offering 4 weeks of overnight camp based on the past peak summer weeks (BASE camp continues to operate all summer long). The theme for 2018 "This Changes Everything," and we will be exploring how God's gift of grace has changed EVERYTHING for us—our hearts, our perspectives, and our world! The apostle Paul summed it up best in Ephesians 2:8 (our theme verse of the summer,) when he stated, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." More information about Overnight Camp and BASE Camp, along with 2018 on-line camper registration, can be found on our web site – [www.briarwoodretreat.org](http://www.briarwoodretreat.org) .

**Young @ Heart ministries** - One area of our ministry that we are becoming more excited about all the time is our Young @ Heart Ministry. This ministry is focused on serving the retired community around Briarwood and beyond. We are planning both overnight retreats and day events during the week. In February, we hosted a day event in which we viewed and discussed the Disney/Pixar movie "Coco." In the beginning of April, we hosted a 3-day overnight retreat filled with captivating bible studies, games, adventurous activities, and time for personal reflection in the natural setting of Briarwood.



**Retreat Ministries** – Briarwood continues to sponsor a variety of retreats and events throughout the year, and we are grateful for our partnerships with a variety of NT-NL ministries such as Leadership Convocation, Coaching, Via de Cristo, Peer Ministry, Lutheran Men in Mission, and look forward to strengthening these relationships to meet a variety of needs of the various ministries in the Synod. We continue to partner with NT-NL to bring more Leadership development events and new exciting learning opportunities to the greater community.

**Hosted Ministries** – "Location, location, location" is what it is all about for our Hosted retreats at Briarwood. We continue to operate a nearly half million dollar year-round retreat experience at Briarwood. In the past year, we have hosted weddings, company picnics, staff retreats, leadership formation events, rotary club events, Chamber of Commerce mixers, corporate retreats, **free personal sabbatical stays** for clergy, church picnics, and so on. All of this is possible given the remote feel of our peaceful natural setting within the hustle and bustle of the DFW Metroplex.

## **PART D**

### **BRIARWOOD ANGELS**

The ministry of Briarwood is deeply appreciative of our Angels who volunteer their time in support of our ministry. We now have over 65 people volunteering to provide immeasurable support for our ministry by helping with office tasks, fund raising, camp maintenance, building projects, and acting as camp grandparents during summer camp. I want to extend deep appreciation to all our Angels who give of their time and talent to faithfully serve and to extend an invitation to all to participate in this ministry of love and service.

### **FUND RAISING EVENTS**

Donations to Briarwood from individuals, congregations, and organizations help make summer camp and retreats affordable for all people and help make certain that no child is ever turned away from camp because of financial limitations. Financial gifts from around the synod have never been more important and appreciated, and we thank you for your continued support.

Our next big fund raising event is our annual **“Fiesta” on Saturday, May 5, at the Texas Star Conference Centre, 1400 Texas Star Parkway, Euless.** Previously known as the Gala, this event continues to be a big support as we are in high gear planning for summer camp. This event supports our ministry and helps not only with the scholarships vital to turn no one camper away, but also helps us get items to restock the camp store and other pre-camp expenses. Last year, over \$50,000 was raised! Tickets for the event may be purchased at [bidpal.net/briarwoodgala](http://bidpal.net/briarwoodgala) or by calling 940-241-2099.

The second major fund raising event is the **Briarwood Retreat Center Golf Tournament.** This year’s tournament will be held on **Friday, October 19, at Bridlewood Golf Club in Flower Mound.** As in the past, we will play a 4-person scramble format with a shotgun start, and lunch will follow the event. We will continue with a friendly competition between congregations as teams vie for the coveted “Bishop’s Challenge” plaque. Please join us for a fun event that raises money for our ministry at Briarwood!

The Fall Festival will be held with the Thrivent Financial Barbecue “Cooking for Christ” Cook-off. Cooking begins Friday night, October 6, and continues through the night with festivities and judging which take place on Saturday, October 7. Last year, everyone judged a dessert made completely over fire from each team with some unique offerings all around. Come out and enjoy a crisp, fall day away from it all at Briarwood (with smoked treats and fellowship)!

More information about all the 2018 events, retreats, and camps is available at [www.briarwoodretreat.org](http://www.briarwoodretreat.org).

### **THANKS**

The entire staff at Briarwood want to extend a word of thanks to all of Briarwood’s volunteers and supporters – you are God’s blessing to Briarwood, and you bless others through our ministry, and for that, we are all extremely grateful! I want to express my deep appreciation for those who serve on the Ministry Team at Briarwood: Courtney Sullivan, Interim Program Director; Kyle Rydell, Hospitality Intern; Sharon Mersiovsky, Office Manager and Registrar; Christi Cook, Administrative Assistant; Paul Harrington, Facilities Manager; Carlos Carrasquillo, Executive Chef; Ivanna Santiago, Asst. Chef; Juan Carlo, Kitchen Helper; and Antoneta Barnea, Housekeeping. It is truly a joy to work side-by-side with these hard working individuals to make Briarwood a special place through which we are all blessed.

God continues to do amazing things at Briarwood. Thank you for partnering with us in this life changing ministry.

Matt Baumhardt  
Acting Director

[Matt@briarwoodretreat.org](mailto:Matt@briarwoodretreat.org)

940-241-2099 Ext. 211

## Lutheran Campus Ministry at Denton Academic Year 2017-2018

Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) at Denton continues our outreach to students at University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University.

We offer Discussions in Christian Living in the TWU Student Union on Wednesday afternoons. We have a meal (provided by members of Christ the Servant Lutheran in Denton) served every Thursday evening followed by Bible study at the Wesley Foundation building on the UNT campus. We worship together at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church on Sunday mornings.

A highlight of this year was celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. We studied Luther's Small Catechism and held a special ecumenical service on the UNT campus.

LCM Denton staffed the LCM Trivia Challenge on November 19 at Briarwood Retreat Center. The event generated almost \$4000 for the NT-NL Campus Ministry Mission Fund. Christ the Servant, Denton, carried home the Trivia trophy for the second year in a row. Table Décor competition was won by Rejoice, Frisco, for ministry-themed décor. Calvary, Richland Hills, won for creativity. We owe many, many thanks to those who made the event successful.

We enjoyed serving others through several activities. In September, students painted bowls that were sold at the Empty Bowls Luncheon in October. As usual, LCM students assisted with the luncheon (all money raised goes to feed the hungry in the Denton area). In December, we shopped for a child selected from the Salvation Army Angel Tree program.

On Ash Wednesday, we offered imposition of ashes on the UNT and TWU campuses.

On Sunday, April 22, we led Young Adult Sunday at Christ the Servant, Denton, with students preaching, assisting, and leading in all aspects of worship.

On Sunday, May 20, we will hold another Golf Outing at the Trails of Frisco, raising money for LCM Denton. We hope you'll be there and ready for tee-off at 1:30.

Throughout the year, we enjoyed meals together and held parties for Fat Tuesday, end-of-year, Labor Day, and Christmas.

We are available to come to your congregation, with students speaking and sharing musical gifts. Please contact us if you would like to arrange for a visit.

Celene Welch  
Lutheran Campus Pastor  
pastor@lcmdenton.org  
817/269-1229  
[www.lcmdenton.org](http://www.lcmdenton.org)

## PART D



**Report to the  
2018 Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod Assembly  
From the  
Mission Endowment Fund**

### **“SEEDS THAT CHANGE”**

The Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) continues to use the theme “Seeds That Change” as they focus on what makes people give of their time, talents, and resources to the organization.

The financial report for MEF is included in the Synod’s treasurer report found elsewhere in Part B of the Book of Reports.

At its February 2018 Board meeting the following ministries were awarded grants totaling \$74,750: **Advent, Arlington; Adviento, Arlington; Bethany, Dallas; Calvary, Richland Hills; Church of the Damascus Road, Weatherford; Community of Hope, Fort Worth; Dallas Oromo, Richardson; Emanuel, Dallas; Faith, Meridian; First Sagrada Familia, Garland; First Salem, Roscoe; Four Mile, Mabank(2); Gloria Dei, Lubbock; Grace, Abilene; Indonesian Christian Lutheran, Allen; Latino Conference(2); Mision Luterana San Mateo, Waco; NT-NL Youth & Bishop’s Office; Office of the Bishop-NT-NL Camp Scholarships; Our Redeemer, Grand Prairie; Rejoice, Frisco; St. John, Wilson; Santa Maria in Exile, Irving; Shepherd of Life, Arlington; Umoja International Church, Dallas; and Umoja International, Fort Worth**

At its February 2017 Board meeting, the following ministries were awarded grants totaling \$42,500: **Advent, Arlington; Bethany, Dallas; Briarwood Retreat Ministries, Argyle; Calvary, Richland Hills; Church of the Damascus Road, Weatherford; Covenant, Temple; Faith, Meridian; First, Longview; First Salem, Roscoe; Four Mile, Mabank; Mount Olive, Dallas; Mosaic, Richardson; NTNL Public Witness Team; Our Redeemer, Grand Prairie; St. John, Wilson; St. Paul/St. Luke, Levelland; Trinity, Clifton; Trinity/Faith, Wichita Falls; and Zion, McGregor.** In addition, \$15,000 was given to the NTNL Mission Area Director of Evangelical Mission, Pastor Irma Bañales, for several mission ministries. Bishop Erik Gronberg, using DiscipleLife Alive Funds, awarded grants to **Our Redeemer, Grand Prairie; St. John, Dallas, and Trinity, Miles** for technology upgrades.

The MEF Board is grateful for the continued financial support of many congregations and individuals in the synod. In October 2017, the MEF held its thirteenth annual “Seeds That Change” Dinner/Fund Raiser at Christ Lutheran Church, Dallas, with over 120 persons in attendance. Members of Christ Lutheran were the sponsors of the event. The event provided over \$15,000 for the fund. The fourteenth annual event is planned for Saturday, October 20, 2018 at Calvary Lutheran Church, Richland Hills, under the leadership of members of Calvary congregation and their Pastor, Phil Heinze.

The Board expressed its thanks to outgoing board members: Richard “Dick” Wentzel, John Lautner, and Ann Hafften at the February 2018 Board meeting during the “Ritual of Transition.”

The following persons will serve as the Board of Directors of the Mission Endowment Fund from May 1, 2017, to April 30, 2018: **SAWL Mark Hadley**, Shepherd of Life, Arlington; **PLM Timothe Mast**, Four Mile, Mabank; **Pastor Clay McCord**, Trinity, Clifton; **Pastor Yvonne Kiebler**, King of Glory, Fort Worth; **Jon Krueger**, Faith, Wichita Falls; **Sandra Gass**, Rejoice, Frisco; **Marie Levier**, Mount Olive, Dallas; **Linda Ness**, Advent, Arlington; **Bill Anderson**, First, Longview; **Pastor John Schelter**, Our Savior, Mesquite; **Peri Segeran**, Gloria Dei, Garland; **SAWL Nicholas Chove**, Umojo and Faith Community, Fort Worth; **PLM Parma Kersten**, New Life in Christ, Duncanville, **Sabrina Walker**, St. John, Dallas, **SAWL Edy Santos**, Igreja Luterana Adviento, Arlington. **Hattie M. Hammer**, Our Redeemer, Grand Prairie, serves as the part-time Executive Director of the Mission Endowment Fund. **Erik Gronberg** serves as Bishop of the Mission Area.

**Richard “Dick” Wentzel**  
**Board Chair**

**Hattie M. Hammer**  
**Executive Director**

**Dated: February 2018**

## PART D



**The Parish Lay Ministry Academy** is entering its eighteenth year! Since our first graduating class in 2002, the academy has had over 170 lay leaders graduate from the program. Many PLMs have gone on to earn MDivs and serve, or have served, as pastors in NT-NL congregations. Others serve, or have served, as SAWLs and have been an incredible blessing to our synod.

The Spanish language track of the academy was a part of the original vision and has trained dozens of candidates who serve as leaders in our Latino congregations. Some of them have even gone on to be instructors in the PLMA! Classes were held at Calvary Lutheran, Richland Hills, until the completion of the Leadership Center at Briarwood.

The transition has allowed us to do long distance learning, and I don't have to make lunch anymore! With the move, the curriculum was updated to allow more flexibility in course selection while keeping the certified lay ministry track. We've been blessed by many NT-NL pastors who have served as teachers, as well as the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Russel Vardell who served as dean until 2016 when a PLM, Dr. Frank Swehosky, took on the role of interim Dean. I am thankful for his commitment and leadership through the time of transition.

I am honored to take on the role of Dean this year. I have been a part of the PLMA since its inception, so it is near and dear to my heart.

We have moved the registration process to the synod office, and I appreciate the work Tyna Oslie and Jeanne Heggen have already done to make this happen. My role will be to recruit and support our instructors, lead worship, plan and arrange for the yearly graduation service, as well as teach. We will be identifying PLMs in NT-NL conferences and asking them to take on a public role of promoting the PLMA.

We are grateful for your prayers and continued support. I am optimistic and hopeful for the future of the PLMA and look forward to what God has in store for us. We are blessed to be a blessing.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Phil Heinze  
Dean of the Academy

## NT-NL's Lutheran Men in Mission



The LMM Board is working on developing a ministry with SAWL Dan Lund and the Church of the Damascus Road (Prison Church). We are also interested in reestablishing connections between all “men’s groups” in the NT-NL Synod. We welcome participation by all men and groups and would love to hear from you.

Current Officers are:

Douglas Krug - [dr.douglaskrug@yahoo.com](mailto:dr.douglaskrug@yahoo.com)

Tom Ness – [Thomas.Ness@gmail.com](mailto:Thomas.Ness@gmail.com)

Peri Segaran - [perigsegaran@hotmail.com](mailto:perigsegaran@hotmail.com)

Joe Thomas – [Jthomas529@yahoo.com](mailto:Jthomas529@yahoo.com)

Douglas Krug, LMM President

## PART D



### Report of the President NT-NL Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) April 2018

Rebuilding infrastructure among our Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (W-ELCA) units in the many churches in the six geographical conferences has been a priority. In April 2014, we had 24 active W-ELCA units and have now grown into 40 active units throughout our synod.

Communication is another one of our priorities. Our SWO board members are liaisons to the presidents in the different conferences and maintain contact with them throughout the year. We have a person putting together our newsletter, *The Tapestry*, six times a year. We have a social media coordinator who puts finishing touches on the newsletter and sends it out to our member churches and members of our local W-ELCA units. She is able to put news stories on Facebook and on our SWO website.

During July 2017, twenty-four (24) of our women attended the Women of the ELCA Tenth Triennial Gathering in Minneapolis, MN. This was the largest group of women to attend this event from our synod in several years. Among the many events, they heard many inspiring speakers, including our Bishop Eaton, attended workshops, contributed to service projects, and enjoyed the fellowship of Christian women from all over the United States and the world.

This February, I spent three days in Chicago at the Lutheran Center meeting with the other 63 synodical presidents across the US. We heard many interesting speakers and attended several workshops. Information was on overload this weekend.

We had a very successful retreat at Briarwood Retreat Center last October. It was a beautiful place to meet. We had good attendance from throughout the NT-NL, great speakers, good food, and wonderful fellowship with one another.

Briarwood has a Labyrinth but no signs for it. The SWO board has voted to put a directional sign near the Shalom area, and the informational sign will be placed at the entrance to the Labyrinth, which is in the woods at Briarwood behind the dining hall.

Spring brings many Spring Gatherings in which the women in the various conferences get together to take care of business, have Bible study, and have fellowship with one another. The Metroplex North conference will be meeting April 7<sup>th</sup> at Rejoice Lutheran in Frisco. The Heart of Texas conference will meet at First Lutheran in Temple April 14<sup>th</sup>. The Panhandle conference will be meeting in Lubbock April 21<sup>st</sup>. May 19<sup>th</sup> the Eastern Conference will be meeting at St. Stephen's Lutheran church in Shreveport, LA.

June 22-24, our vice-president Pam Nye and I will be hosting the Region 4 presidents and vice-presidents retreat near Crawford, Texas. We have rented the Bosque House for the weekend. Fifteen women will be attending this retreat from Nebraska south through the states to the Gulf Coast of Texas. There are 6 synods, and all will be represented at this retreat, plus three women from the Executive board of the Women of the ELCA.

Our Synodical Women's convention will be held the weekend of October 26-28 at Rejoice Lutheran in Frisco. There will be a business meeting on Friday afternoon, where a new president and board members will be elected. Saturday morning, our speaker will be Kathryn Koob from Iowa who will speak to us about her 444 days in captivity during the Iran Crisis in late 1979 and early 1980. There will be other events and activities during the weekend.

I am in my 4<sup>th</sup> year as president of the Women of the ELCA. It has truly been an awesome experience. A lot of work, but also a lot of rewards seeing the ministry of women in their local units serving their church, community, and the rest of the world.

Blessings and Peace,

Sarah Gohlke, President  
NT-NL Synodical Women's Organization  
Women of the ELCA  
[rsghlke@gmail.com](mailto:rsghlke@gmail.com)



## NT-NL Youth Annual Report to the Synod Assembly 2018

*“Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.” –Philippians 4: 9*

As the world changes the youth leaders, children’s ministers, pastors, camp leaders, and congregational volunteers in the NT-NL continue to show the love of Jesus to the children, youth, and their families in our area. The ELCA youth gathering coming up this summer has been a dominate force in the life of our ministry together. Preparations, learning, and fundraising to participate in this once every three year, gathering keep everyone busy and looking ahead.

At this time, the NT-NL currently has 25 congregations registered to attend the gathering. We also have a Bishop’s Group that comprises youth from 9 different congregations. Our total registration stands at 342 participants. We gathered together in Merkel, TX (outside of Abilene) just a few weekends ago to meet each other, do group building, and learn more about what the gathering will look like this summer. The ELCA Gathering will be a great event. I am interested to see what energy, ideas, and discovered passions those who are going to it will bring back with them after it is over.

We continued our tradition of hosting an annual gathering for both Junior High and High School, though each one looked different this year. Our High School youth were invited for a single day of service as an opportunity to connect with each other and work in the community. This allowed the cost to be reasonable for those who are planning on going to the summer gathering. Our Junior High Gathering had the opportunity to participate in some group building at Group Dynamix as a major part of their time together. We also did a special project putting together and providing bags of commonly needed supplies to those who are facing homelessness. We also had increased participation from varying congregations in our Peer Ministry retreat. We want to continue to expand and encourage all congregations to identify and send High School youth with leadership skills, especially in caring, welcoming, and affirming, to this annual retreat. Those who lead it see the value of having youth who are equipped with these skills present in congregations, sports teams, arts groups, and schools.

As we move forward, there is opportunity for new things to happen. As we continue to reflect on the things that we do together and how we do it, there is room for change. New ideas keep us connected and thinking towards the future. We are always looking for new folks to join in on the process of planning and working to keep the youth in our congregations connected. Let us know how we can support your ministry at the congregational level.

Blessings as you continue to engage in the challenge and joy of serving children, youth, and families.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Lys (Shepherd of Life, Arlington)  
[jonathan.lys@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jonathan.lys@sbcglobal.net)



# ELCA REPORTS

Presiding Bishop – The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton

- English
- Spanish

ELCA Fund for Leaders (FFL)

ELCA Mission Investment Fund (MIF)

Portico Benefit Services



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

“For by grace you have been saved through  
faith, and this is not your own doing;  
it is the gift of God.”  
– Ephesians 2:8

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are Lutheran. For the past year it has been “all Reformation all the time!” So now what? The Lutheran Confessions teach that God freely and graciously creates a trusting relationship between us and Jesus. As we gather to meet in synod assemblies, let us remember that our hope is in the living Christ and share that assurance with the joy of the gospel.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are free of the burden of making ourselves acceptable to God. The cross of Christ and the living Christ assure us that God’s final word for us is life and freedom in Christ. Lutherans confidently and enthusiastically claim this promise: “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1). How does this claim affect your faith journey as an individual, a congregation, synod or member of the church universal? Through his death and resurrection, we have a truly living Lord who meets us, forgives us and calls us to follow, and in that we find our freedom.

Because we are set free in Jesus Christ, we are free from trying to save ourselves and free for loving and serving others. As a church, we walk by faith, trusting God’s promise in the gospel and knowing that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word.

#### **“Future Directions 2025”**

Through “Called Forward Together in Christ – Future Directions 2025,” we are addressing the challenges and embracing the opportunities of the church we are becoming – a church that is confident about who we are in Christ and what God is calling us to do. I invite you to lift up these goals and engage how we journey forward in Christ as church together. You can learn more by visiting [ELCA.org/future](http://ELCA.org/future).

#### **ELCA Youth Gathering**

Many of us will be together at the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston June 27-July 1, 2018. I look forward to sharing in the excitement and energy of our young people as they experience the wonder and joy of being with more than 30,000 Lutherans and grow in their faith formation. For information and resources on the Gathering, go to [ELCA.org/gathering](http://ELCA.org/gathering).

#### ***The Campaign for the ELCA***

We are in our final year of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. Help us rally to the end! As of Dec. 31, the campaign has received more than \$138.6 million in cash and multiyear commitments, representing 70 percent of our \$ 198 million goal. Read more about the campaign’s progress at [ELCA.org/campaign](http://ELCA.org/campaign). Thank you for your continued support!

### **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday**

Sept. 9 is our suggested date for the 2018 dedicated day of service. If your congregation cannot participate on this date, please consider another day. “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday is an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God’s grace. To order T-shirts or download resources, go to [ELCA.org/dayofservice](http://ELCA.org/dayofservice).

### **Join the conversation**

There are two opportunities for you to provide feedback about what this church says on important issues. One is “Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice.” The draft is in two sections: basic theses and fuller explanations, which speak about how sexism harms us all in church and society. The task force wants to hear from you about the content of the draft and this innovative format. Find the draft, supplementary materials and order information at [ELCA.org/womenandjustice](http://ELCA.org/womenandjustice). The other is on the draft of “A Declaration of our Inter-Religious Commitment: A Draft Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” The comment period is open from now until June 30, 2018. Visit [ELCA.org/ecumenical](http://ELCA.org/ecumenical) for more information and the document.

I have shared some of the ways we are loving and serving our neighbor. This is what being free in Christ looks like. This is part of our Lutheran story. This is part of your congregation’s story and your synod’s story.

Wherever you are for your synod assembly, from the Alaska Synod to the Caribbean Synod, there is something that we all have in common – our life in Christ. We have our life in Christ – in the crucified and risen Savior, in the one who poured out his life for us, the one who gave himself away for the life of the world so we may be free. As Lutheran Christians, we live in the freedom of Christ.

With gratitude,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
 Presiding Bishop  
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América

La obra de Dios. Nuestras manos.

“Porque por gracia ustedes han sido salvados mediante la fe; esto no procede de ustedes, sino que es regalo de Dios”.

– Efesios 2:8

Estimados amigos en Cristo:

Somos luteranos. El pasado año las cosas han sido “¡todo Reforma todo el tiempo!” Y entonces, ¿ahora qué? Las Confesiones Luteranas enseñan que Dios crea, gratuita y misericordiosamente, una relación de confianza entre Jesús y nosotros. Mientras nos reunimos en las asambleas sinodales, recordemos que nuestra esperanza está en el Cristo vivo, y compartamos esa seguridad con el gozo del evangelio.

Por medio de la muerte y resurrección de Jesucristo somos libres de la carga de tratar por nosotros mismos de ser aceptables ante Dios. La cruz de Cristo y el Cristo vivo nos aseguran que la palabra final de Dios para nosotros es vida y libertad en Cristo. Los luteranos reclamamos con confianza y entusiasmo esta promesa: “Cristo nos libertó para que vivamos en libertad” (Gálatas 5:1). ¿Cómo afecta esta declaración su jornada de fe como individuo, congregación, sínodo o miembro de la iglesia universal? Por medio de su muerte y resurrección, tenemos un Señor verdaderamente vivo que nos encuentra, perdona y nos llama a seguirlo, y en ello encontramos nuestra libertad.

Porque somos hechos libres en Jesucristo, somos libres de tratar de salvarnos a nosotros mismos, y libres para amar y servir a otros. Como iglesia caminamos por fe, confiando en la promesa de Dios en el evangelio, y sabiendo que existimos por y para la proclamación de esta palabra del evangelio.

#### **“Futuras Direcciones 2025”**

Por medio de “*Llamados a Seguir Adelante Juntos en Cristo – Futuras Direcciones 2025*,” estamos abordando los retos y aceptando las oportunidades de la iglesia en la que nos estamos convirtiendo – una iglesia que confía en quiénes somos en Cristo y en lo que Dios nos está llamando a hacer. Le invito a que se una a nosotros en la consecución de estas metas a medida que avanzamos en nuestra jornada en Cristo. Puede obtener más [información visitando ELCA.org/future](http://ELCA.org/future).

#### **Asamblea Juvenil de la ELCA**

Muchos de nosotros estaremos juntos en la Asamblea Juvenil de la ELCA en Houston, del 27 de junio al primero de Julio de 2018. Anheo ser parte de la emoción y energía de nuestros jóvenes mientras experimentan el asombro y la alegría de estar con más de 30,000 luteranos y aumentan la formación de su fe. Para información y recursos sobre la Asamblea, visite [ELCA.org/gathering](http://ELCA.org/gathering).

### ***La Campaña para la ELCA***

Estamos en nuestro año final de *Siempre Siendo Hechos Nuevos: La Campaña para la ELCA*. Ayúdenos a reunir hasta el final. Hasta el 31 de diciembre, la campaña había recibido más de \$138.6 millones en efectivo y compromisos multianuales, lo que representa el 70 por ciento de nuestra meta de \$198 millones. Lea más sobre el progreso de la campaña en [ELCA.org/campaign](http://ELCA.org/campaign). ¡Gracias por su apoyo continuo!

### **Domingo de “La obra de Dios. Nuestras manos”.**

El 9 de septiembre es la fecha sugerida para el día dedicado al servicio en 2018. Si su congregación no puede participar en esta fecha, sírvase considerar otro día. El domingo de “La obra de Dios. Nuestras manos” es una oportunidad para que exploremos una de nuestras convicciones más básicas como luteranos: que toda la vida en Jesucristo – todo acto de servicio en cada llamado diario, en cada pequeña parte de la vida – fluye libremente de una viva y osada confianza en la gracia de Dios. Para ordenar camisetas o descargar recursos, vaya a [ELCA.org/dayofservice](http://ELCA.org/dayofservice).

### **Únase a la conversación**

Hay dos oportunidades para que usted haga sus comentarios sobre lo que dice esta iglesia acerca de asuntos importantes. Una es el “Borrador del pronunciamiento social sobre la mujer y la justicia”. El borrador tiene dos secciones: las tesis básicas y las explicaciones exhaustivas, las cuales hablan de cómo el sexismo nos hace daño a todos en la iglesia y la sociedad. El grupo de trabajo desea oír de usted con respecto al contenido del borrador y a este formato innovador. Encuentre el borrador, los materiales suplementarios y la información para pedidos en [ELCA.org/womenandjustice](http://ELCA.org/womenandjustice). La otra es el borrador de “Una declaración de nuestro compromiso interreligioso: Borrador de la declaración de la política de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América”. El período de comentarios está abierto desde ahora hasta el 30 de junio de 2018. Visite [ELCA.org/ecumenical](http://ELCA.org/ecumenical) para obtener más información y el documento.

He compartido algunas de las formas en que estamos amando y sirviendo a nuestro prójimo. Así es como se ve el ser libres en Cristo. Esto es parte de nuestra historia luterana. Esto es parte de la historia de su congregación y de la historia de su sínodo.

Dondequiera que usted esté en la asamblea de su sínodo, ya sea en el Sínodo de Alaska o en el Sínodo del Caribe, hay algo que todos tenemos en común – nuestra vida en Cristo. Tenemos nuestra vida en Cristo – en el Salvador crucificado y resucitado, en el que derramó su vida por nosotros, aquel que se entregó por la vida del mundo para que seamos libres. Como cristianos luteranos vivimos en la libertad de Cristo.

Con gratitud,



La Rvda. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Obispa Presidente  
Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en América



**ELCA Fund for Leaders**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

**ELCA Fund for Leaders**  
**Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod**  
**2018 Annual Report**

Thank you to the people of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod for making an investment in the future of the church through the ELCA Fund for Leaders. Our goal is to provide full-tuition support for every rostered ministry candidate at our ELCA seminaries. Together, we are making great progress toward that goal.

In the 2017-18 academic year, the ELCA Fund for Leaders provided scholarship assistance of more than \$2.1 million in support of 251 future pastors and deacons. Thank you for your role in ensuring that these future leaders will be freed from the burden of student debt so that they can go and serve as the church needs and the Holy Spirit leads.

**Your fund**

Since its inception, the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod Fund for Leaders endowment has awarded scholarships of \$28,166.61 for seminary tuition, and the ELCA in total has awarded more than \$17.5 million. We are grateful that the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod Fund for Leaders scholarship endowment provided a total of \$4,100.00 in tuition support during the 2017-18 academic year for:

- Edintzon "Edy" Santos - \$820 - Wartburg Theological Seminary
- Jose Francisco "Frank" Salvador - \$3,280 - Wartburg Theological Seminary

As of Dec. 31, 2017, the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod Fund for Leaders scholarship endowment had the following:

- a total market value of \$108,976.88;
- a total of \$1,254.89 in new gifts in 2017;
- a remaining balance in the income account of \$2,753.08; and
- \$4,200.00** available for scholarships in the 2018-19 academic year (represents amount after a 10 percent conservative cushion retained by Fund for Leaders to account for sudden market fluctuations).

**2018 awards – what's new?**

Beginning in 2018, the ELCA will use a new platform, **ELCA GrantMaker**, for awarding scholarships and grants. As in the past, we are looking forward to receiving the name(s) of the students your synod wishes to support this year through synodical Fund for Leaders scholarships. This year, synods will also direct their applicants of choice to ELCA GrantMaker, where they will submit their contact information to Fund for Leaders. Please read the **Guidelines for synod scholarship funds** document carefully for instructions on this year's scholarship award process.

Although Fund for Leaders awards are intended primarily to pay for tuition, books and fees, students who already receive full-tuition support through Fund for Leaders may also receive synodical scholarships to help with additional expenses. Note that scholarship funds used to cover costs beyond tuition, books and fees (such as room, board, insurance, etc.) will count as taxable income to students and should only be granted provided that there is a clear understanding between the synod and its donors about how the funds will be applied. Please work with seminary financial aid offices to make sure your students are aware of the tax implications of such scholarship awards.

We will notify synods by mid-April of our full-tuition award decisions for the coming year so that synods may plan accordingly. We encourage you to prayerfully discern which rising candidates would benefit most from the support you can offer. **Synods should notify Fund for Leaders and students of their nominations no later than May 15, 2018, and nominated students must complete the Fund for Leaders Synod Scholarship application in ELCA GrantMaker by May 31, 2018.** Applications received after this date run the risk of not being awarded in the fall semester.

Finally, we ask the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, its congregations, and its members for continued support of Fund for Leaders as a meaningful way to make an investment in the future of this church and its leadership. A gift to Fund for Leaders is a wonderful way to celebrate a pastor's ordination or a deacon's consecration, the installation or retirement of a new pastor or deacon, or the anniversary of a congregation.

Again, thank you to the people of Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod for your generous support, and thanks be to God for you!

For more information visit [ELCA.org/fundforleaders](http://ELCA.org/fundforleaders) or call our office at 800-638-3522, ext. 2936.



**Mission Investment Fund**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



**The Mission Investment Fund (MIF)** is the lending ministry of the ELCA. MIF makes low-interest loans to ELCA congregations and ELCA-related ministries for building and renovation projects. With MIF loans, congregations and ministries can purchase property, construct new buildings, and expand or renovate existing facilities.

MIF loans expand the capacity for ministry. MIF loans help create expanded worship spaces, updated space for education and youth ministry, new kitchens for community meals and soup kitchens, affordable housing units for the community and much more.

At year-end 2017, MIF had 888 loans outstanding, totaling \$539.1 million.

To fund these loans, MIF offers a portfolio of investments for congregations, their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries to purchase. At year-end 2017, MIF investments totaled \$506 million.

MIF is a financially strong and stable organization, with a record of steady, controlled growth. With total assets of \$715.7 million and net assets of \$203.9 million at year-end 2017, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 28.5 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds. For more information, visit [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org).

**MIF loans and investments in the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (as of December 31, 2017):**

- 21 Mission Investment Fund loans, with a balance of \$9,519,092
- \$6,602,845 in Mission Investment Fund investments

**MIF representative:**

The Rev. Pamela E. Dorman, Regional Manager, Tel: (224) 935-7243; email: [pam.dorman@elca.org](mailto:pam.dorman@elca.org)



Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA



***We are church together.***

This call from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is at the core of Portico's identity: We serve those who serve the church, so they can serve others. Ecclesiastes 4:12 reads, "a three-fold cord is not easily broken." Imagine, then, the resilience that comes from a community more than 50,000 strong that includes:

- Active and retired rostered ministers, lay employees, and family members
- Congregations, synodical and churchwide ministries, and social ministry organizations
- The dedicated and talented staff at Portico Benefit Services

Together, we pool our resources and carefully steward our gifts, leveraging our collective strength to provide the care our members need. Together, we walk the path toward financial, emotional, and physical well-being, so all might experience God's abundant life. Together, we are church.

In 2017, our community's size and scope allowed Portico to:

**Deliver personalized support that helps our members live well.**

- Skillful Portico Care Coordinators by Quantum Health helped more than 70% of members with ELCA-Primary health coverage navigate the complex world of health care.
- More than 400 members enrolled in Livongo's innovative diabetes management program to make living with diabetes easier and more cost-effective.
- 35% of our sponsored members used Portico's Retirement Planning Tool to get a comprehensive picture of how much they're saving, and how it might last in retirement.
- 3,500+ members gained a better understanding of their financial picture after talking with our new in-house team of credentialed Portico Financial Planners.

**Exceed our goals for practicing good financial stewardship.**

- Over and above a record-breaking year for the markets, the expertise of our investment management team demonstrated our commitment to a long-term, diversified approach to investing.
- For the second year in a row, administrative efficiencies and innovative plan adjustments allowed us to hold our baseline increase for ELCA-Primary health benefits to 5% — below the national trend of 6.5%.
- Benefiting from the run of growth in the markets and strategic fund management, we announced a 4.0% increase in the ELCA Participating Annuity payments for 2018, the sixth consecutive annual increase.

**Speak with one voice on behalf of those who serve the church.**

- As part of the Church Alliance, Portico joined with 37 other denominations to advocate for legislation to protect 403(b)(9) plans designed to help churchworkers save for retirement.
- On behalf of ELCA investors, our shareholder advocacy team championed a history-making climate-change resolution at a major energy-producing company.

The church is a shining example of what happens when we come together to care for one another. Lives are changed, hearts are touched, hurts are healed, hope is shared. We are grateful to lead the ELCA in the good work of wellness, and thankful for your partnership that makes this possible.

We are church together — and together, in Jesus' name, we are creating abundant life for those who serve.

In Christ,

The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, President and CEO

**PART D**

# AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS REPORTS

## NT-NL AFFILIATED MINISTRIES Agencies / Institutions / Organizations (AIOs)

1517 Media (formerly Augsburg Fortress Publisher)  
Good Samaritan Society, ELCA (Senior Living and Care) – Denton Village  
and Lake Forest Village – no report submitted  
Louisiana Interchurch Conference  
Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest (LFSW) – (Endowment Trusts)  
Joint report from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) and Wartburg Theological  
Seminary (WTS)  
Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest (LSPS)  
Lutheran Sunset Ministries (Senior Living and Care)  
Mosaic (a ministry for people with intellectual disabilities)  
Seafarers International House (NEW)  
Texas Lutheran University (TLU)  
Upbring (formally Lutheran Social Services of the South)

## Ten Things You Might Not Know about 1517 Media Spring 2018

1. Since last fall, congregations have experienced the Small Catechism in a new way using *By Heart: Conversations with Martin Luther's Small Catechism*. The book and video-based curriculum are designed to create deep conversations in small groups about Lutheran foundations. This is a great resource for both new members and seasoned Lutherans. [augsburgfortress.org/byheart](http://augsburgfortress.org/byheart)
2. *In Sure and Certain Hope: A Funeral Sourcebook* has become an indispensable resource for those planning, presiding, and preaching at funerals. This fall, Augsburg Fortress will release a companion funeral handbook, designed to assist congregations in teaching about and planning funerals with families and in small groups. [augsburgfortress.org/funeral-sourcebook](http://augsburgfortress.org/funeral-sourcebook)
3. Augsburg Fortress will be releasing a multi-faceted holy communion learning resource for kids and families later this year. Get ready to see a long-time favorite become something new. Receive updates at [augsburgfortress.org/lutheran-learning](http://augsburgfortress.org/lutheran-learning).
4. Fortress Press, Luther Seminary, and the board of the periodical *Word & World* have partnered to launch a new venture called Word & World Books. Its goal is to invigorate and inspire leaders and communities in their mission to proclaim God's *Word* to the *World* God created and loves. The first book in the series is *Future Faith: Ten Challenges Reshaping Christianity in the 21st Century* by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson. [fortresspress.com/word-and-world](http://fortresspress.com/word-and-world)
5. Fortress Press is now producing a greater quantity and variety of books for general readers that intersect religion with topics in art, literature, and culture. Grounded in fresh, substantive, timely, and inspiring theological reflection, these titles are perfect for reading groups, Bible studies, and personal growth. Browse the topics, including youth ministry, social justice, Bible study, and more, at [fortresspress.com/popular](http://fortresspress.com/popular).
6. This spring, Frolic will expand to offer a new Sunday school curriculum for preschool! The new play-based preschool builds faith formation among three to five year olds, and focuses on sharing stories and themes from the Bible. [wearesparkhouse.org](http://wearesparkhouse.org)
7. *Whirl: All Kids* and *Spark: All Kids* are new models of Spark and Whirl for churches with multi-age or single room classrooms. Created for kindergarten through grade five, these programs offer mentoring and leadership opportunities so all kids can learn together! Available this spring at [wearesparkhouse.org](http://wearesparkhouse.org).
8. Sparkhouse Family Book Fairs will continue this year and can now be hosted anytime, anywhere. Receive a selection of free books and extend to your congregation or school a discount with free shipping on select books. You can even use it as a fundraiser for your ministry. Learn more at [SparkhouseFamilyBookFairs.com](http://SparkhouseFamilyBookFairs.com).
9. Sparkhouse Family has grown since its launch in 2014 and has a refined mission: to publish high-quality children's books that help kids thrive emotionally, socially, and spiritually. In recognition of these changes, Sparkhouse Family has a new identity: Beaming Books.
10. From the empty tomb to Jesus' appearance to the disciples, the story of Jesus' triumph over death is told with vibrant art in a new pop-up book, *Jesus Is Risen!* This book will bring the Easter story to life in a whole new way for children and the adults who love them. Take a peek at [beamingbooks.com](http://beamingbooks.com).

Want to learn more? Follow us on social media. Sign up for our free eNewsletters at [augsburgfortress.org](http://augsburgfortress.org) | [wearesparkhouse.org](http://wearesparkhouse.org) | [fortresspress.com](http://fortresspress.com) | [beamingbooks.com](http://beamingbooks.com)

LOUISIANA INTERCHURCH CONFERENCE (LIC)

Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
 Executive Director: The Rev. C. Dana Krutz  
*To Live the Faith We Hold in Common*

Originally formed in 1970, and today with a membership of 16 Christian Churches, Associate Member - The Order of St. Lazarus, and Church Women United, the LIC seeks greater Christian Unity through sharing a common faith in witness, worship, study, and service.

The 48th Annual Assembly of the LIC was held on March 5-6, 2018, at First United Methodist Church in downtown Baton Rouge, LA. The theme was: “*Outlines of the Future Shape of Christian Unity.*” The keynote speaker was: **Dr. Elizabeth Smith, Ph.D.**, a Catholic theologian working in scholarly and pastoral roles in the Boston area. The Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey, Bishop of the United Methodist Church-LA Annual Conference, was installed as President during the Assembly Worship service held at First UMC on Monday evening, March 5th. **Bishop Erik Gronberg** serves *ex officio* as a Board Member and **Mr. Joel Hicks** is his newly appointed Designate. Our sincere appreciation goes out to recently resigned Board members: **Pastor Dale Farley** who served for 27 years, beginning as a Regional Coordinator, then as a Board Designate and as a Secretary on the Executive Committee, and **Mrs. Arlene Lathrop** who served as a Delegate & then a Board Member at Large for 30 years.

**The annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, “Your Right Hand, O Lord, Glorious in Power” (from Exodus 15:6), was commemorated with several events around the state. The LIC task force on Social Justice and Public Policy continues with its Bread or Stones campaign to equip member churches with practical avenues of reducing child poverty, especially in LA, but with TX in mind as well. Mr. Samuel Rottman is the coordinator for the program. We urgently request ALL Synod churches to become covenant partners in this program.**

The LIC Board met in September in Alexandria, LA, and addressed the theme: “*The Church, the Reformation and the Quest for Unity*”. The keynote speaker was **Dr. Denis R. Janz**, Professor Emeritus, Department of Religious Studies at Loyola University, who is well versed on Martin Luther and the Reformation.

Among LIC Commissions, the Stewardship of the Environment continues advocating for the Restore Act that involves coastal restoration working in coalition for rebuilding the gulf coast.

The Criminal Justice Commission continues to focus on juvenile justice reforms, implementation of the Justice Reinvestment Act for adult offenders, and ending capital punishment in Louisiana. Dr. Stephanie Gaskill has been employed as the coordinator for the new Seven Times Seventy Initiative, a program that provides an educational experience for people of faith that seeks to find ways to minister to those returning to society who were originally convicted of violent crimes and/or were sex offenders. Farmer’s Advocate, Mrs. Betty Puckett continues to work as a contract employee, ready to assist farm families on an as-needed basis.

Largely funded by the member churches, we are grateful for the support of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod of the ELCA and its commitment to ecumenical relationships that keep before the churches Christ’s vision of unity in mission, service and witness.

Our website is: [www.lainterchurch.org](http://www.lainterchurch.org).

**PART D**



**NORTHERN TEXAS-NORTHERN LOUISIANA SYNOD**

2017 was another great year. We did over \$11.6 million dollars of legacy planning.

The total breakdown is as follows: \$288,901 of current gifts, \$3.3 million of current legacy gifts (currently funded endowments, charitable trusts, managed assets), and \$6.65 million dollars of future legacy gifts (future endowments, charitable trusts, and outright gifts). We also worked with churches that invested over \$1.4 million in the ELCA Fund A investment fund.

We also paid out over \$790,000 in endowment income and outright gifts to our Sponsors. In addition we distributed \$297,490 to ELCA churches in Texas, \$147,126 to ELCA seminaries, and \$69,970 to Lutheran universities outside Texas.

Below is a snapshot of what we did for your organization in 2017.

current legacy	NTNL Synod	0.00
future legacy		0.00
current gifts		0.00
FundA		0.00
Endowment Payments		39,944.27
Current Gifts		5,174.00
		<b>\$45,118.27</b>
current gifts	Churches in Synod Area	100,000.00
FundA		0.00
		<b>100,000.00</b>
Endowment Payments		9,393.40
Current Gifts		43,000.00
		<b>\$52,393.40</b>
	<b>grand total gifts</b>	<b>\$100,000.00</b>
	<b>grand total pmts.</b>	<b>\$97,511.67</b>

We hope to continue growing legacy gifts you will benefit from, as well as growing your annual checks that will enhance your ministries now.

Peace  
 Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest  
 Mark S. Armstrong  
 Executive Director



## Joint report to synods from LSTC & Wartburg Theological Seminary

Dear Partners in Ministry in the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod,

We know that you seek out and value excellent leaders for your ministries. Wartburg Theological Seminary (WTS) and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), the two seminaries that the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod supports, is dedicated to forming such leaders. This report reflects the spirit of collaboration between our schools and highlights the benefits of the distinctive ways we form leaders.

Of all ELCA students enrolled in our church's seven seminaries, 29% of them attend LSTC or WTS. In fall 2017, Wartburg saw a 77% increase in enrollment in the first year class over the previous year, with many of those students enrolled in the distributive learning program. The two schools have over 150 students who hail from our 18 supporting synods in Regions 4 and 5.

The distinctiveness of our locations and programs mean that those following their call to leadership in the church can find the best fit for their circumstances and passions.

LSTC is located in a bustling, racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. As the ELCA seminary with the highest percentage of residential students, students are able to take advantage of all of the resources and learning opportunities the Chicago area has to offer. LSTC's new strategic plan for 2018-2020 focuses the school on being a community that forms leaders to form communities. In a time of deep polarization in our society, we believe that Christian leaders will play a crucial role in bringing people together. This emphasis is part of LSTC's innovative public church curriculum.

Wartburg Seminary has been forming leaders for over 160 years. Our deep roots allow us to be nimble and explore new ways of preparing people to lead. Although the central location is a castle in Dubuque, Iowa, the technology within these stone walls is far from ancient. In classrooms equipped with newly updated video technology, students from Florida, Colorado, Iowa, Texas, and around the country learn together in real-time. This allows students in our Master of Divinity – Collaborative Learning (CL) program to serve in a congregation or other ministry all four years while learning via video technology. With this program and the help of our partners, we are able to address nearly every education expense a student faces in considering seminary – housing, insurance, tuition, and fees.

Whether face-to-face or online, outstanding faculty and staff at our seminaries form leaders in critical ways.

Gordon Straw, Cornelsen Chair for Spiritual Formation and Coordinator of Candidacy at LSTC, draws on his Native American roots to communicate to his students that spiritual formation is about how we live our lives every day, and that how we live honors God, those around us, and

## PART D

ourselves. We are formed through life experience, he says, as much as through traditional spiritual practices.

Lindsey Queener, WTS Director for Admissions joined the team in early 2018. She said, "When I joined the Lutheran church, our congregation used to pray this prayer: 'Bring to this church those who will be nourished here, and those who will nourish us.' That prayer is my prayer as I begin my work on the WTS Admissions team; that this next generation of leaders will be formed in all kinds of new ways, and we too will be formed in all kinds of new ways by them."

Finally, we'd like to introduce you to just one alum from each of our seminaries.



JustChurch is the name of an ELCA Saturday evening worship service supported by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Iowa City, Iowa. "We offer gritty preaching, engaging those uncomfortable, authentic and exhilarating places where the world intersects the kingdom of heaven, those same places where God calls us to be. *Just church*," Rev. Sarah Goettsch, WTS '01 explains. "We commend it to those who find themselves disenfranchised from organized church, who feel harmed or skeptical towards denominational religion, who are seeking to worship, but not necessarily join."



While a youth director, Kara Baylor was called on to preach when the pastor was ill. That sermon must have gone well, because after that Sunday she had plenty of people urge her to consider seminary. The idea wasn't new to her, of course, but it made her seriously consider it. "The call of the community to leadership is very important to me," said Baylor, who graduated from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 2000. She is now campus pastor at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis., where she "loves the opportunity to be on the faith journey with students, faculty and staff. The college environment is a place where we are supposed to ask big questions and do it within community. It is a great place to help constructive conversation take place."

We invite you and members of your congregation to visit our seminaries to participate in worship, attend a continuing education event, discern a call to ministry or visit with some of the future leaders that you and your synod support through your gifts to Wartburg and the LSTC. To learn more about your seminaries and the innovative and distinctive ways that we are forming leaders, please visit [www.lstc.edu](http://www.lstc.edu) and [www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu).

Your partnership is essential for LSTC and Wartburg to continue our shared mission of providing effective theological education and developing leaders for the many ministries of your congregation, synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Nieman".

James Nieman  
President  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louise N. Johnson".

Louise N. Johnson  
President  
Wartburg Theological Seminary

**LUTHERAN SEMINARY PROGRAM IN THE SOUTHWEST**  
P. O. Box 4790, Austin, TX 78765 / 512-477-2666 / [www.lsp.edu](http://www.lsp.edu)

Dear Friends in Christ,

I would like to share with you a brief reflection that I shared with my friends on [my](#) Facebook page as we began the Lenten season:

"This Ash Wednesday service at Christ Chapel at the Seminary of the Southwest was a beautiful service as ashes were placed on our foreheads. I experienced many moments of grace in that one hour of worship, but of particular note was the moment in which the entire Body of Christ knelt to examine our individual and corporate conscience, all of us in unison and unity bowing our heads to the Holy in our midst. It reminded me of my childhood when I knelt with my parents in that old wooden church in south Texas that was built for Hispanic Lutherans in 1925. That memory of the faithful kneeling and bowing in worship is timeless. It connected me to the entire church catholic of all the ages and allowed me to make their prayers my own. There is something beautiful in reverence. By it we see ourselves as Sacred. In that moment we recall those who have gone before us, those who shaped and formed our faith by their devotion. We are indeed the extended and beloved family of God!"

I share this reflection with you to remind us that our legacy of faithfulness has far-reaching implications. Those German missionaries who reached out to my family in 1917 did not realize then that a son of the church they helped to start would become the director of a seminary program in Texas. They had no clue that in 2014 a Hispanic Lutheran pastor would continue the work they began almost one hundred years later! They were simply doing what they knew best – serving the neighbor by sharing the love of God with my community.

We at LSPS continue this legacy by preparing pastors to serve in emerging ministries. Since 1975 you have helped us to provide theological education for over two hundred pastors who are serving in twenty-five states and three countries. We are able to do this because of your faithful contribution. Our sustainability and longevity depends on it. Please help us to continue this significant ministry with financial support in your annual budgets that will assist us in preparing the leaders who will shape the lives of so many in the future. Like those early missionaries in south Texas, make a difference that will allow others to tell your story. Your legacy depends on it!

Together we can make a difference!

Muchas gracias!



Rev. Javier (Jay) Alanis, PhD, JD  
Executive Director

**LUTHERAN SUNSET MINISTRIES**

*Report to the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod Assembly*

Lutheran Sunset Ministries (LSM) continues to provide services to more than 200 people on a daily basis within our seven comprehensive programs: Sunset Home, a 96-bed skilled nursing facility; Hope Center, a secure 32-bed skilled nursing secured neighborhood for memory loss/dementia residents; Heckmann Residence, a 24-apartment licensed assisted living facility; Rainbow Retirement Community, 54 independent living apartment; and Hospice Sunset; Sunset Companion Services serving Bosque County and a 25-mile radius of Clifton and Windmill Café, a community outreach program.

LSM's website ([www.luthersunset.org](http://www.luthersunset.org)), which was renovated in 2014, has been attracting users to pages such as the Sunset Senior Guide Blog, Sunset Lifelong Learning and information on our various programs. The Sunset Senior Guide Blog went live in November 2014. Since then, we've posted more than 150 blog articles covering senior living, lifestyle, helpful tips and decisions that individuals and families face as their loved ones grow older. It has been our third most viewed page on the website, behind "Our Residences" and "Contact Us." We encourage you to check it out at [www.luthersunset.org/news](http://www.luthersunset.org/news).

Social media has been a fantastic way for us to give people a glimpse into our culture here at LSM. On a daily basis, we are posting and sharing engaging photos, articles, links and videos to capture the attention of our target audience. Through Facebook and YouTube, we've been able to connect with people on a personal level, showing all that LSM has to offer in real time. Links to both are located at the bottom of the homepage of our website.

As a Masterpiece Living community embracing the tenets of successful aging, LSM strives to be a leader in health and wellness services, social engagement activities, opportunities for spiritual growth, and last but not least, education programming. With this in mind, LSM has launched a community-wide education series — *Lunch & Learn Speaker Series*. Throughout the year, residents, staff and members of the community can gather for a noon meal and a short educational presentation by various expert speakers throughout the year. These events will be listed at <http://luthersunset.org/sunset-lifelong-learning/> as they are scheduled.

This Masterpiece Living philosophy spills over into everything we do at LSM. From more engaging and diverse activities to empowering our residents to take on projects that fill them with meaning and purpose, we are constantly looking for ways to maintain and improve our successes.

The Sunset Home recently implemented *It's Never 2 Late (iN2L)*, a computer system that empowers residents to connect, engage and enjoy life. iN2L integrates the hardware, software, media and various components necessary to allow virtually any person with any interest in using a computer — regardless of background, physical or intellectual abilities — to do so pleurably, engagingly, and without frustration. The system is built on a picture-based, touch-screen interface that allows users to simply "touch" their way to find engaging, educational, spiritual and personalized content that is appropriate to their own level of ability. From using e-mail and web cams to connect with family and friends, to enjoying mind-stimulating activities, to improving hand-eye coordination as part of a rehabilitation program, elders with a wide range of physical and cognitive abilities, most of whom have never used a computer, are now enjoying technology using systems adapted especially for them.

In partnership with the Bosque Arts Center, our Resident Art Show has been a huge success. Resident art is displayed and an artist reception takes place, honoring our residents for their creativity. This year's event will take place on March 17.

In 2017, LSM was also voted "Best Retirement Living" and "Best Assisted Living" for the third year in a row in Waco Tribune-Herald's 2016 Readers' Choice Awards.

Lutheran Sunset Ministries appreciates the ongoing support of congregations and individuals of the Synod. Special mention and appreciation to the people in congregations who send quilts for the annual quilt auction in October. The 2017 Volunteer Auxiliary Quilt Auction was a success, bringing in more than \$25,000. We'd like to thank our talented quilt donors, auction bidders, and hardworking Volunteer Auxiliary for another amazing year. The funds raised will fund numerous projects and equipment for the residents of Sunset, significantly adding to their quality of life. Due to the diminishing art of hand quilting and the increased success of the Pot O' Gold Thrift Store, our volunteers have voted to forgo this event. On behalf of the Volunteer Auxiliary, we thank everyone for their participation in this event. In the last 26 years, you've helped our ministry raise thousands of dollars, which were invested back into Lutheran Sunset Ministries. We cannot thank you enough for your support throughout the years. We ask that our donors find other worthy causes to donate their beautiful quilts to in the future.

The health risks of prolonged isolation are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day and 51 percent of people who are 75 or older live alone (AARP). If a strong

support system isn't available, these older adults could run the risk of experiencing dire physical, mental and emotional consequences that are commonly associated with isolation and loneliness. Whether it's due to the inability to drive, lack of assistance or low income, these older adults need a helping hand and access to the right resources. With these stats in mind, LSM decided it was time to offer the same enriching opportunities they provide their residents to the community at large. After brainstorming, some research, and visiting café's with similar models, it was approved in 2016 by the Board of Directors to pursue the idea of Windmill Café.

More than a café, Windmill not only offers lunch to the Clifton Community, but offers programming for those who are 55 or better. This programming includes opportunities such as educational speakers, art classes, exercise classes, computer basics, health fairs and more. For more information, visit

[www.lutheransunset.org/windmill-cafe](http://www.lutheransunset.org/windmill-cafe).

Clifton is a great place to retire. LSM has all the services needed with the continuum of care available on our campus, which is particularly beneficial to couples who may require different services in the future as they age, plus the local clinic and hospital across the street. Clifton has been designated by the State of Texas to be a Certified Retirement Community and a Texas Cultural Arts District. To learn more about Clifton, visit [www.cityofclifton.org](http://www.cityofclifton.org). To learn more about LSM, visit [www.lutheransunset.org](http://www.lutheransunset.org) or our Facebook page, Lutheran Sunset Ministries. To set up a visit for your church group call Andrea Hikel at 254.675.8637 ext. 2224. Come and visit!

## PART D

To our friends and partners in the

### Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana Mission Area

where Mosaic provides services out of Corsicana,  
Dallas, Lubbock, San Angelo and Waco:

Thank you for your support and prayers!

#### Mosaic's Mission

Embracing God's call to serve in the world, Mosaic advocates for people with intellectual disabilities and provides opportunities for them to enjoy a full life.

#### Mosaic Allied Voices



If you'd like to help people with disabilities in a direct way, please join our advocacy group, Mosaic Allied Voices (MAV). You'll learn about the important issues facing people with disabilities and how you can help in simple ways, like a phone call or email. Visit [www.mosaicalliedvoices.org](http://www.mosaicalliedvoices.org) to learn more.

#### Rejoicing Spirits



Rejoicing Spirits, a ministry of Mosaic, celebrates and values every person's talents and gifts, offering people of all abilities an opportunity to lead and serve their faith community. For more information, please visit [www.rejoicingspirits.org](http://www.rejoicingspirits.org).



A life of possibilities for people with intellectual disabilities.



Dear friends,

Our work at Mosaic is filled with surprising, spontaneous moments that regularly remind us why we do what we do. As example, the following conversation took place after a woman Mosaic supports surprised everyone with her piano talent, playing a wide repertoire of songs.

*Employee: Shari, did you have a piano growing up?*

Shari: Oh, no.

*Employee: Did you ever take piano lessons or have a piano teacher?*

Shari: No. No, I didn't.

*Employee: Did anyone in your family play the piano?*

Shari: No. Just me.

*Employee: So Shari, who taught you how to play? How do you know all those songs?*

Shari: **God. God teaches me how to play. He teaches me the songs I need to know.**

People of faith know that God is always at work—and sometimes works to surprise us!

We have many stories similar to Shari's and we share them to help people understand Mosaic's mission of service and advocacy: We provide a meaningful life in a caring community, giving a voice to people's needs. How that happens looks different for every person we serve.

Shari lives on her own but can't be fully independent. We work with her about 15 hours a week, helping her with the things she can't do, like finances, doctor's visits, etc. Mosaic also serves people who need assistance 24 hours a day, every day.

It is a mission we could not fulfill without you, our church partners. We are grateful for the many churches and faithful people who support our ministry across the United States. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Linda Timmons, Mosaic President and CEO



Mosaic | 4980 S. 118th St. | Omaha, NE 68137-2200 | 877.366.7242 | [www.mosaicinfo.org](http://www.mosaicinfo.org)



# Seafarers International House

Harbor of Hospitality

123 East 15th Street, New York, NY 10003  
212-677-4800 (seven days a week, 24 hours a day) — info@sihny.org — www.sihny.org



Rev. Marsh Luther Drege  
Executive Director

We plan to make a difference. We plan to be part of God's plan. That's why we stand with seafarers. We stand with immigrants. We stand with domestic violence survivors and victims of human trafficking.

The numbers to the right tell part of that story, but what they mostly tell is that Seafarers International House is in the most unique position to visit seafarers in seven different ports, and house immigrants who are just coming out of detention or other challenging circumstances. What these numbers tell is that, while we continue our ministry

of presence to seafarers who come into the ports or who stay at our guesthouse, our robust growth has been especially seen in the number of individuals and the number of nights (1,971 nights provided in 2017 compared to 805 in 2016) where we provide room in the inn for the most vulnerable of immigrants.

Indeed in 2017 we budgeted \$90,000 for aiding the asylees who come stay with us and yet actually invested over \$128,000 to assist and house those asylees who came our way. Obviously the need was greater than

our plans and that is okay. "For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). We are planning for the need by being open to where the need is. We plan to

## Mission Highlights

	2017	2016	2015
<b>Seafarers</b>			
Ships Boarded	1,335	1,686	1,852
Seafarers Visited	17,438	18,970	21,500
Van Trips	2,680	3,145	4,074
Seafarers Transported	8,675	7,661	11,478
Christmas-at-Sea Gifts	1,775	1,771	2,226
<b>Immigrants</b>			
Refugees - Asylum Seekers	31	23	12
Lodging Nights	1,971	805	709
<b>Community</b>			
Domestic Violence-Human Trafficking	27	8	14
Local Disaster Victims	168	72	56
Youth Service Gatherings	10	5	4
Church Gatherings	225	181	179
Community Gatherings	497	398	447

2017 was an unusual year for the port mission. Two port chaplains experienced serious health issues (shoulder surgery and stroke), removing them from service each for a month, another port chaplain experienced family health issues, removing her from service for one month, and two of the ports (Connecticut and Philadelphia) experienced a significant drop-off of ship arrivals in the last two months of the year. Based on the first nine months experience and adjusting for the impact of these health issue and ship arrival factors, the number of ships boarded would have been 1,800, the number of seafarers visited would have been 19,200, the number of van trips would have been 3,000 and the number of seafarers transported would have been 9,000.

serve where the grace of God is most needed and our board of directors and supporters back that plan with all their resources and passion.

We currently plan also to take stock of our mission center- which is our guesthouse in Manhattan. After more than 50 years it is showing its age, and we are called to be good stewards of this valuable resource. Our Facilities Working group is seriously looking at the infrastructure of what our building needs are for another 50 years of service.

Concurrently, our leaders are looking at our mission strategy and planning for emerging needs.

This much is true: we are the Lutheran response to the urgent needs of vulnerable seafarers and sojourners and, with your help, we will continue to plan for those needing our unconditional love today and into the hope and future of tomorrow.

Blessings,

*Marsh Luther Drege*

**Remember, our Guesthouse also accommodates church gatherings and civic groups traveling to New York City in connection with their missions and needing safe, affordable lodging. Through these accommodations, we support your missions. And by staying here, you help to support our mission to seafarers, immigrants and other displaced persons.**

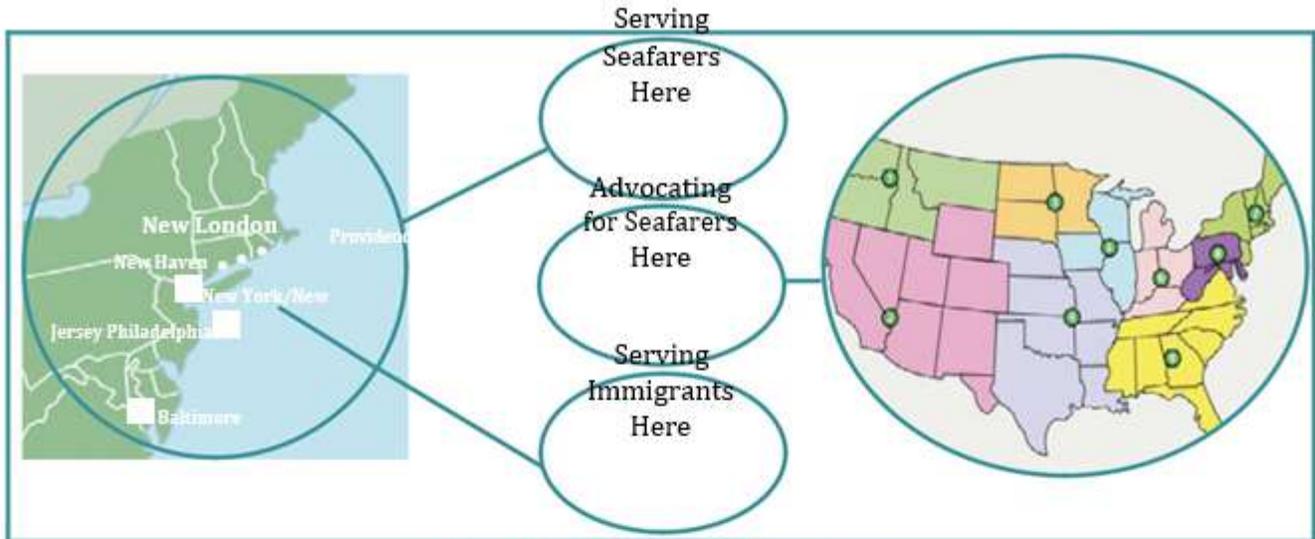
*Sleep Well, While Doing Good*



YEAR IN

REVIEW

**PART D**



**Non-Polarizing Advocacy**

*"We have entered a whirlpool. Social conventions, economic truths and political consensus have been upended. Nearly all our self-evident values have been sucked into a vortex of fear, doubt and denial."*

That's how we at Seafarers International House saw the world in January 2017. Little has changed since then, and we are challenged to articulate our role as an ELCA social ministry to seafarers and immigrants in this polarized environment.

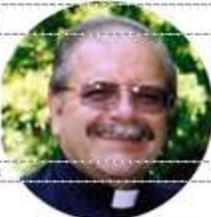
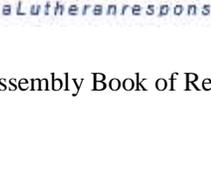
Seafarers just need a little time in port to disembark their ships, stand on *terra firma*, do some shopping, mingle with people ashore and return to their ships. Only the United States requires disembarking seafarers to hold visas in order to protect our homeland security.

Immigrants just try to escape violence or seek a better life or grew up here not knowing they were undocumented. They are subjected to workplace and residential raids, imprisonment and deportation, in order to protect our cultural heritage.

Collectively, we need to uphold and advocate for the common good of all humanity. Part of that collective effort is Seafarers International House's mission to seafarers and immigrants. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton has stated, *"As Lutherans, we live out our biblical calling by serving in ministries with migrants and refugees in our communities and advocating for laws that reflect this commitment."* We will continue to stand with and advocate for our seafarers and immigrants.

But we must listen too, especially to the people with whom we disagree, lest we lose the possibility of learning and the opportunity of reaching common understandings. We must become eloquent listeners, willing to allow ourselves to be persuaded by those people with whom we disagree. That willingness will breed trust; that trust will overcome fear, doubt and denial; and we may recover our better values and the common good.

- 1. Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, *Statement on Dreamers*, February 9, 2018
- 2. Robert B. Reich, *The Common Good*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 2018

	<b>Ruth Setaro</b> Port Chaplain - CT & RI			<b>Luisito Destreza</b> Port Chaplain - NY/NJ	
	<b>Arnd Braun-Storck</b> Port Chaplain - NY/NJ			<b>Bob Schmitt</b> Port Chaplain - Baltimore	
	<b>Sage Brown</b>		<b>Max Seaneath</b> Social Worker - NY/NJ		

*Seafarers International House is a Lutheran response to the urgent need of so vulnerable seafarers and sojourners*



## Report to the 2018 Synod Assembly

### Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod

Thank you for the privilege of being a partner with you in the mission of Lutheran higher education.

Highlights of the 2017-18 year at Texas Lutheran University include:

- Record Enrollment in the Fall of 2017, with our largest Freshmen class in history.
- A new Master of Science in Data Analytics.
- A \$1.9 million grant to our nursing program.
- Continued high rankings of TLU by *U.S. News and World Report* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Celebration of *500 years of Reformation* with noted speakers such as Kathleen Norris, Rev. Timothy Wengert and Rev. Bradley Schmeling, along with a Reformation Cantata featuring the TLU Choir in a world premiere performance.
- Hosting a national gathering of retired ELCA bishops and spouses on campus.
- Higher Spring Enrollment and higher retention.
- Celebration of the Grand Opening of the Weston Center for the Performing Arts.
- Hosting nationally noted speakers such as Rita Moreno, Diane Guerrero and Shaka Senghor.
- Addition of two new members to the TLU Corporation (both of which are TLU alumni): Ms. Sarah Lynch, member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort Worth  
Pastor Jeremy Ullrich of Shepherd King Lutheran Church in Lubbock
- Addition of one member of the TLU Board of Regents, representing the NTNL Synod: Pastor Kendra Mohn of Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort Worth

TLU is proud to be part of the ELCA's life and ministry. We are grateful for the continuing national recognition we receive for academic quality, value and service. We feel pride in our expansion of facilities for nursing, theatre, music and athletics. We welcome your support in prayer, students and contributions. The opportunities and challenges before the university never cease to engage and enliven our vision and conversations. Thank you for your partnership with us in our mission of higher education. Together we are finding ways to learn boldly and live to inspire.



## LIFTING UP GOD'S CHILDREN

God counts every strand of hair on a child's head and every freckle sprinkled across a sun-kissed nose. In His heart, no child is a mistake. Tragically, not everyone believes this truth.

Tens of thousands of children are treated as objects instead of treasures. Upbring is a faith-based nonprofit working to break the cycle of child abuse by empowering children, families and communities.

### The Hands and Feet of Jesus

Upbring understands the unique needs of the communities served by the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod because we serve here, too. With children's and community services strategically located across North Texas, as well as disaster response services in Louisiana, we are humbled to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need.

Upbring.org

 /UpbringOrg |  @UpbringOrg

## 2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Upbring's research shows that child abuse and neglect often extend beyond the four walls of a home and into the fiber of our communities, the result of financial difficulties, failing health, marriage turmoil and other stressors. Upbring delivers services that address the spectrum of each child's and family's needs.

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- **Foster In Texas (FIT):** 1,913 children welcomed into loving foster homes through 14 FIT offices across Texas
- **Adoption:** 172 children connected with forever families (42 through domestic and international adoption, 130 through foster-to-adopt)
- **Residential treatment centers:** 357 brave girls given a safe place to heal through the power of spiritual care, education and state-of-the-art therapy
- **Unaccompanied immigrant minors:** 1,349 brave, unaccompanied child refugees given food, shelter, spiritual care, therapy and educational services
- **BeREAL:** 30 young adults transitioned from foster care to independent living
- **Upbring Education Services:** 2,323 children given a safe, inclusive place to grow inside and outside the classroom in Upbring Head Start Preschool and Trinity Charter Schools

### COMMUNITY SERVICES - LUBBOCK

- **Neighborhood House:** 15,410 Lubbock-area residents provided emergency assistance for food vouchers, hygiene products, prescriptions, utility assistance and other necessities
- **Health for Friends Clinic:** 6,031 visits to our free clinics

### DISASTER RESPONSE

- Approximately 2,305 people assisted with short – and long-term needs in the aftermath of disasters
- 756 volunteers coordinated
- 39,792 volunteer hours served