

SPECIAL GUESTS

BIBLE STUDY LEADER



The Rev. Amanda Brobst-Ranaud, PhD

Pastor “Mandy”, as she prefers to be addressed, was born in Pella, Iowa, and was raised in the American Baptist Church, where she was active in Sunday school and music ministry, including teaching Sunday School, choir and hand bells. From an early age, her interests were very diverse: in the course of her childhood, she wanted to be everything from a hair stylist to a veterinarian. She attended Augsburg College, where she studied music therapy. During her sophomore year, her biblical studies professor asked if she had ever thought about being a pastor (which she had not). Over the course of the next seven years, however, this persistent voice shaped her discernment of a call to ministry. In the interim, Mandy and her spouse, Ben, spent a year volunteering at Holden Village, where she served as lead cook and began intentional discernment toward ministry. After Holden, Mandy and Ben finally became Lutheran, and moved to Stockholm, WI, and moved from there to Madison, WI, for Ben to complete his MFA. After Madison, they moved to St. Paul, MN, for Mandy to attend seminary. Her second year of seminary, she realized she had fallen in love with teaching. This led her to apply for her PhD in New Testament at Baylor University. After arriving in Waco, Mandy began supply preaching and was later called to St. Peter Lutheran Church in Malone, where she works part-time, which enabled her to both serve as pastor and complete her studies. Recently, she completed and defended her dissertation “The Elder Brother’s Remedy and the Rich Man’s Fate: Ancient Rhetoric, Characterization, and Moral Formation in Luke’s Parables” under Dr. Mikeal Parsons. This fall, Mandy looks forward to joining the theology faculty at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN. Rev. Brobst-Renaud is passionate about preaching, teaching, and helping people to fall in love with the biblical narrative over and over again.

ELCA CHURCHWIDE REPRESENTATIVE



Ms. Kathryn Mary Lohre is an assistant to the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Theological Discernment. From 2012-2013 she served as president of the National Council of Churches USA, the first Lutheran and youngest woman, and edited the book *For Such a Time as This: Young Adults on the Future of the Church* (2013). Prior, she served as assistant director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, a premier research project on religious diversity in the United States. She was a Consulting Editor for *Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A Lutheran Calling in a Multi-Religious World* (2016). She is currently on the executive committee of the *Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign: Standing with American Muslims, Upholding American Values*, a US-based, an inter-religious coalition to end anti-Muslim bigotry.

WORSHIP LEADERS



The Rev. Erik K. J. Gronberg, PhD - Bishop of the NT-NL Synod

Bishop Erik K. J. Gronberg was elected by the Northern-Texas Northern Louisiana Synod/Mission Area in April of 2016. Prior to his election, he had served as Lead Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort Worth since 2010.

Bishop Gronberg was born in Austin, Texas, to the Rev. Karl Gronberg and Dr. Sharon Gronberg. He graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 2005 with a Master of Divinity and was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). He earned a PhD in Leadership Studies at Dallas Baptist University in 2017. His area of academic interest is adaptive leadership in crisis. You may access his full bio here: <https://www.ntnl.org/people/erik-gronberg/>



The Rev. Kristine Totzke, NT-NL Bishop's Associate for Leadership Formation and Congregational Care

Pastor Kris Totzke came to NT-NL in 2013 as Pastor of [St. Luke's, Richardson](#). In 25+ years of ordained ministry, she has served congregations in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Texas. During this time, she has served as a called pastor to four congregations (two as Associate and two as Solo) and two others as a trained intentional interim.

Her primary responsibilities on synod staff are candidacy (leadership formation) and mobility along with whatever else is needed for congregational care.

Pastor Totzke graduated from Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, MN in 1992. Prior to seminary, she was an elementary school teacher so a love of children is second nature for her. She was raised on a dairy farm in central Wisconsin, and is a lifelong Lutheran. In her down time, she loves to travel and explore new places. One of her best adventures was driving Route 66 from Chicago to the Santa Monica Pier. She also spent a three month sabbatical traveling the east coast in an old RV with her original two cats. Currently her family includes two newer cats, Milo and Max. You may access her full bio here: <https://www.ntnl.org/people/kris-totzke/>



The Rev. Irma Bañales, NT-NL's ELCA Director of Evangelical Mission

Pastora Irma Bañales began as the Director for Evangelical Mission on February 6, 2017. She served as the pastor / developer of First Sagrada Familia Lutheran Church, Garland, TX, from 2013 to 2017. While developing that congregation, she was also the Dean for the NT-NL Synod's Latin@ Conference. Prior to this call, she served as the Hispanic/Latin@

Ministries Coordinator of the synod (2004-2013). She began working for the synod as the Receptionist / Administrative Assistant to the Mission Director (1999-2003).

Pastora Bañales has also been involved significantly with ELCA Churchwide, serving on the following ELCA teams: Mission Developers Training Planning Team, Future Directions Table Team, Latin@ Strategy Table, New Mission Developers Interviewers Team, and Latin@ Coaching Team. You may access her full bio here: <https://www.ntnl.org/people/irma-banales/>

AFFINITY GROUP CONVERSATIONS & LEADERS

Leadership Formation – Bishop Erik K.J. Gronberg, PhD (Assembly Hall)

ELCA Churchwide – Ms. Kathryn Lohre, ELCA Churchwide Rep. (Room 1)

Youth – Ms. Janelle Miller (Room 3)

Ethnic- Specific Ministry - the Rev. Irma Bañales (Room 5/7)



Portrait taking will be offered again this year for all Rostered Ministers, SAWLs, Synod Council Members, and all elected nominees. Photographers are located in Room 6 at the end of the hallway on the South side.



We wish to thank the ELCA Mission Investment Fund for helping to support this assembly through a generous donation.