

2007 Congregational Life Committee Nominee Biographies

CLERGY Female Nominees for Congregational Life Committee: Vote for 1 (three-year term)

10A – The Reverend Diane Dardón

10B – Vacant

10A— The Reverend Diane Dardón † Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northern Illinois University

Occupation: Ordained Minister

Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation: I have always had a strong interest in and ministry with youth and young adults. One of my passions in ministry is working with these two groups. As a part of this work and in keeping with my other ministry passion, I am very active in developing and leading short-term mission trips, either domestically or internationally.

Areas of special leadership and interest in the community: Education and community service are two areas in which I seek to serve and lead within the community and congregation.

Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod: Our church has a huge resource in the youth and young adults who are often times simply waiting to be recognized for their leadership roles. I am a huge advocate for youth and young adults and would consider it an honor to be a voice, a teacher, a guide in moving congregations in this synod toward a better understanding of youth and young adults as leaders in the church. I would also consider this an opportunity to serve as a resource as congregations work to engage young adults in active leadership roles in their congregations and communities.

My priorities for this ministry: My top priority for this ministry is to serve as a resource person to congregations, youth and young adults, the synod and communities. My second priority is to serve as an advocate for youth and young adults as they strive to engage more actively in the life of the church and grow in their faith.

My faith statement: I believe that our loving God created all that exists. I believe that God has created all children with hearts to love and to serve and that we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out our lives in love and service. I believe that Jesus—both human and divine—is my Lord, my Savior, and that through His life, death and resurrection He offers each of us grace and forgiveness. I believe God's divine Word is given to us to guide us in our lives and through scripture God speaks to us. I believe that through the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion our sins are forgiven, we are gifted with grace upon grace, and that we are nourished and sent through these sacraments to live out godly lives.

10B – Vacant

CLERGY Male Nominees for Congregational Life Committee: Vote for 1 (three-year term)

IIA – The Reverend Greg Olson

IIB – Vacant

IIA—The Reverend Greg Olson † First, Prophetstown (Central Conference)

Occupation: Ordained Minister

Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation: Pastor of a church for 30 years.

Areas of special leadership and interest in the community: Have served as President of the Lions Club, Chairman of the Food Pantry; Advisor for the High School Leo Club, Secretary of the Ministerial association, and on the boards of the Community Foundation and a local nursing home.

Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod: I have experience that would benefit the committee and a sense of responsibility to the whole church.

My priorities for this ministry: Coordination and support of the Synod Youth leaders; bringing Sunday school leaders together to share ideas; giving people servant experiences to help them grow in faith.

My faith statement: I believe that God has called me to serve others through word & sacrament ministry. I believe Jesus is the Lord of my life, my Savior & that I experience him in prayer, worship & serving others. The church is the church when it is there for others.

IIB – Vacant

LAY Female Nominees for Congregational Life Committee: Vote for 1 (three-year term)

12A – Judy Engebretson

12B – Jessica Panella

12A— Ms. Judy Engebretson † Bethany, Crystal Lake (Northeast Conference)

Occupation: Teacher

Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation: Adult education; confirmation teacher; assisting minister; drama group; global mission

Areas of special leadership and interest in the community: Lecturer: Global Issues (Islamic World)

Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod: To help facilitate continued congregational growth in faith and spirit-guided ministries, which forms the heart of our mental life in Christ.

My priorities for this ministry: Encourage new and creative approaches to educational programming; coordinate and advise congregations on ministerial resources; help congregations to effectively transition to the new ELW hymnal.

My faith statement: My faith journey has been and is one of dedication, service, and study. Living “in Christ” forms the foundation of my life experience.

12B — Jessica Panella † Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley (Northeast Conference)

Occupation: It Operations Consultant

Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation: Leadership Team Member 2002-2004; Council member 2004 – present; currently Council President through 2007; helped lead and form the Senior High Youth Ministry.

Areas of special leadership and interest in the community: President of my homeowner's association from inception (1998) – present; volunteer as an alumni volunteer recruiting students for the University of Iowa.

Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod: As a member from the very first day of a new congregation and serving on the leadership team as well as the council, I have seen from the ground up what a congregation can need assistance with. I would love to be able to help out other congregations and similar needs.

My priorities for this ministry: Support the goals of the committee by actively participating on the subcommittees, and bringing my point of view to the work being accomplished. I hope to help provide resources and support to all congregations in the synod. I would also like to find new and different resources to supplement the current. I also hope to learn from this experience as well.

My faith statement: All things in life happen for a reason – that reason is God. He is the good news!

2007 Ministry Support Committee Nominee Biographies

Lay Female Nominee for Ministry Support Committee—Vote for 1 (three-year term)

13A – Ms. Denise Rode

13B – Ms. Karen Dowsett

13A — Ms. Denise Rode † First, DeKalb (Northeast Conference)

Occupation: University Administrator, Instructor (NIU & DePaul University)

Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation: Communion assistant, lector, member and chair of Youth Ministry Committee, Sunday school teacher and confirmation leader, Congregation council member, Call committee, part-time Senior High Youth Director (18 years), supporter of LCM at NIU, served on two pastoral intern support committees; past president- of congregational WELCA

Areas of special leadership and interest in the community: member of Altrusa International; member of DeKalb Chamber of Commerce; Athena Award committee; Hope Have (homeless shelter) volunteer; member of DeKalb Tri-Congregational Association (ecumenical group from Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran churches who plan and support joint worship and service efforts); active volunteer for DeKalb public schools; supporter of literacy efforts, public radio, LSSI and the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation on state, regional and national levels.

Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod: As an anticipated 2007 Diakonia graduate, I believe I am called to use to my life skills and experiences in service to God and the church. With an extensive background in higher education administration, counseling, and teaching, I hope to bring an informed lay perspective to the area of ministry support. I am aware that budget cuts and shifts in staffing at the Synod level have changed the landscape of this committee's work, and I wish to contribute my efforts and energy to support the mission of this important committee, which is enabling Christians of the Northern Illinois Synod to realize their call to ministry as both lay and professional workers.”