

# 2007 Consultation Committee Nominee Biographies

## Clergy Female Nominees for Consultation Committee—Vote for 1 (four-year term)

21A – The Reverend Frances R. Olson

21B – Vacant

21A—The Reverend Frances R. Olson † Lutheran church of the Good Shepherd, Rockford (North Conference)

*Occupation:* Retired Pastor

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation:* As a parish pastor I have led worship, preached, taught, led congregational, council and committee meetings, worked on budgets, cared for those in need, called on those who have not yet hear the good news and so much more. I have served as a pastor in various settings, city, rural and mission.

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the community:* Community involvement has included among other things serving on the ethics committee of the community hospital and as an on-call chaplain.

*Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod:* As a retired pastor I continue to seek ways to serve the church I love. Serving on the Consultation Committee will be challenging and hard work. It will be a new endeavor for me, but I am honored to place my name in nomination and will seek to serve to the best of my ability.

*My priorities for this ministry:* Listening to the concerns and cares of the people of God gathered in a particular place would be a priority. Bishop Wollersheim likes to remind us that “This is God’s church”, not the pastor’s, not the people in the pew, not even the folks at church-wide. For me, this is an important and essential reminder and it just might be an important part of the work of the Consultation Committee.

*My faith statement:* “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8) These words challenge me daily. Jesus Christ is both the greatest comfort and challenge in my life. I am acutely aware of my failure to live justly, love kindness and walk humbly with God, and so I humbly rest in the grace of Jesus Christ.

21B – Vacant

## CLERGY Male Nominee for Consultation Committee—Vote for 1 (four-year term)

22A – The Reverend Jeff Schlessinger

22B – The Reverend Thomas Hanson

22A—The Reverend Jeff Schlessinger † St. Matthew’s, Princeton (South Conference)

*Occupation:* Ordained Minister

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation:* General pastoral duties as the sole pastor.

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the community:* Coaching youth baseball and soccer teams.

*Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod:* Was asked by the nominating committee and felt that my gifts would be useful on this committee.

*My priorities for this ministry:* To help congregations in need look at their congregation from a new perspective so that they might help heal conflicted or unhealthy communities.

*My faith statement:* I believe that God, made fully known through Jesus Christ, through the gift of faith, has saved me and all he has chosen.

**22B—The Reverend Thomas Hanson †** Shepherd of the Hills, Schapville (Northwest Conference)

*Occupation:* Ordained Minister

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation:* As a parish pastor I have been involved in all aspects of congregation life. One special interest, in which I have done graduate work, is church organization and development. Other special leadership interests include Bible study, vocation development and personal spirituality.

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the community:* I currently serve on the Augustana Board of Trustees and on that college's Center for Vocational Reflection Advisory Board. In addition, I lecture and lead congregation and community courses on older adult spirituality issues.

*Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod:* The Synod's Consultation Committee will enable me to bring 35 years of parish experience and my graduate study in church organization and behavior to the work of being an agent of reconciliation in conflicted situations.

*My priorities for this ministry:* My priorities in this ministry include working toward diffusing potentially divisive and destructive situations by encouraging people to give voice to frustrations and seek positive and healing solutions that the ministries to which individuals and congregations are called may be strengthened.

*My faith statement:* I believe that Baptism calls us to the life-long responsibility of assessing and developing our personal gifts and employing those gifts in human community to the glory of God.

**LAY Female Nominee for Consultation Committee—Vote for 1 (four-year term)**

23A – Ms. Sharon Courtright

23B – Vacant

**23A—Ms. Sharon Courtright †** Immanuel, Altona (Southwest Conference)

*Occupation:* Farm wife, Bible stud leader

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation:* I have been and am currently the WELCA chairman of Immanuel's unit. I have held many positions in our local organization. I have served on the NIS Women of the ELCA board 2 times – first a Southwest Conference representative and second as the Mission Growth chairman. Last year Ann Terry and I lead the annual Synod retreats for the Women of the NIS. Currently at Immanuel, Altona I lead an adult Sunday school class.

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the community:* I lead 2 Bible studies, 1 for younger Moms and 1 for Senior citizen women. I have been a mentor mom for the organization M.O.P.S. I helped start a non-denominational women's retreat 14 years ago; served on the board for 6 years; served as chairman for 3 years. I have a heart for women and their spiritual lives.

*Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod:* I think that I have good skills at listening to situations and hearing and seeing what isn't said or visible. Many times people have come to me just to talk. They say I am a good listener.

*My priorities for this ministry:* I would serve on this committee and do the job that I am elected to do. It would have high priority as I see the necessity for the church to be a healthy place for Pastors and members.

*My faith statement:* My relationship to God hinges on my faith in His son. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord. My faith is not something I use on Sunday and put away for the rest of the week. It is the major part of my life and everything I do, every decision I make is affected by my walk with Christ.

23B – Vacant

LAY Male Nominee for Consultation Committee—Vote for 1 (four-year term)

24A – Mr. Charles Dix

24B – Dr. Jerry Johns

**24A—Mr. Charles Dix †** First, Rock Island (West Conference)

*Occupation:* Electrical salesperson

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation:* I currently serve on our Service Committee and am co-chair of our Church Health Team Taskforce which we utilize the Natural Church Development program. I was a council member of our Church for 3-years serving as the chairperson for the service Spiritual Committee. I teach Sunday school to the 4-6 grade level. I have been a member of the call committee for a new pastor. I have helped to organize several community outreach events such as a coffee house night to help promote fellowship and raise money for our service activities and a St. Joseph day meal for those in need.

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the community:* I currently am a member for the Church's United CROP walk team that organizes and runs our annual CROP walk to fight hunger. I am a Boy Scout leader and am in charge of the 'WOLF' den in our pack. I am currently a board member for our Thrivent chapter in Rock Island and I am the congregational coordinator.

*Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod:* After discussing the role of this ministry with several pastors and lay people in the Church it became very clear to me how important this committee was to the health of our synod and the Church as a whole. Churches that find themselves entangled with issues that distract our minds and hearts from the real mission to spread the good word need our help. I can see the wisdom in providing an impartial panel of people who can talk, discuss and pray with the people of that Church to seek guidance on their troubles.

*My priorities for this ministry:* Without knowing in detail what the current committee is working on I would have to say my priority would be to have the consultation committee center their efforts on the power of prayer. Any conflict or disagreement can be resolved through the power of prayer which will center our thoughts and spirit on the true mission of our Church. The power of prayer can diffuse any argument, cool hot tempers and quiet our minds to the word and wisdom of Jesus Christ. Once you have reached that mutual ground of understanding all issues can be resolved fairly.

***My faith statement:*** By faith is centered on the word of God and my Church family. Each and every day I see people in my Church living the word of God, teaching the word of God and serving the word of God and I am a part of the greater family. Speaking as a person that, as a child, attended many different churches and faiths I never became connected with my faith. Prior to getting married my wife and I visited with our Pastor about our upcoming marriage and the future ahead of us. At that time I began to fully understand myself and my relationship with God. Shortly there after I began to attend church regularly with my wife and with patient understanding and studying the word I began to understand more about my place in this universe, then love of God and my own heart. With the birth of my children I saw the love of my creator in the eyes of my children and it was then that I truly felt the warmth, the forgiveness and love of my God.

24B — Dr. Jerry Johns † Bethlehem, DeKalb (Northeast Conference)

*Occupation:* Writer and Consultant

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation:* Church council president, vice president; member of Stewardship Committee, Mutual Ministry Committee; taught adult Sunday school.

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the community:* Helping feed people through a food pantry.

*Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod:* Although this is a challenging committee, I have skills and abilities that may be helpful to congregations in conflict.

*My priorities for this ministry:* Be a good listener, exhibit fairness and tak appropriate risks to help congregations resolve internal challenges so members can better serve the mission to which we are called.

*My faith statement:* Trust in the Lord and strive to do good locally, regionally and internationally.

## 2007 Discipline Committee Nominee Biographies

Clergy Female Nominee for Discipline Committee—Vote for 1 (six-year term)

25A – The Reverend Joanne Adrian

25B – The Reverend Stacie Fidler

25A—The Reverend Joanne Adrian † Emanuel, Oregon (Central Conference)

*Occupation:* Ordained Minister

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the congregation:* I have been both a pastor and a lay leader. Evangelism is an area of leadership where I have served in both capacities and I especially enjoy this aspect of the ministry whether as a pastor or as a congregational member.

*Areas of special leadership and interest in the community:* My leadership in the community has included many areas, including the ethics committee of the board of Realtors when I lived in the DeKalb area.

*Reason I wish to serve this area of ministry in the synod:* I believe in the importance of process whenever there are conflicts or difficulties facing the community.