I realize as I write this that many congregations are in the midst of preparations for their annual meeting. This is an important event in the life of a congregation, giving chance for folks to take stock of where they’ve been and what they’ve done and highlight a few priorities for the year to come. While the synod’s annual meeting, also called our assembly, is not for another five months, I thought it might be helpful for me to reflect a bit on 2018 and look ahead to 2019.

Let me begin, as I often do, with a word of thanks. I’m grateful for this call, for the team I have to work with in the synod office, and for the many partnerships we share, with the congregations and other ministries that make up this synod, the rostered and lay leaders who serve so well, and for our global companions. We’re all in this together, and I am daily humbled and excited by all that God is doing in and with and through us all.

The most frequent situation into which we as your synod staff are invited has to do with transition in pastoral leadership, and I’m excited that we have been able to see more than 25 call processes to completion in 2018 alone, resulting in new pastors being installed in ministry. I recognize that, for many, the process used can feel long and cumbersome, but we have learned that investing the time to clarify a congregation’s history and mission, to vet and match candidates, and to listen for the Holy Spirit’s guidance is an investment worth making. We are also working to improve the process, and the feedback we received in a recent survey sent to selected leaders of congregations will help us. We are also looking for ways to guide congregations as they seek the best possible leader for their specific context, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

We are also invited into congregations in times of discernment, and we recognize that such situations often lead to anxiety. So much in our world and in our church is changing, and people are wrestling with questions regarding finances, leadership, and mission. We in the synod office know that we don’t and can’t have all the answers to these questions, but we are willing to explore the questions with you and accompany you as you seek the best path forward. Much of this accompaniment is embodied in the Together in Mission event next month, described on the next page of this newsletter and open to everyone: pastors, deacons, and lay leaders. I hope we have a very strong turnout. We are also in the midst of crafting a synodical statement of our vision, mission, values, and core practices to guide us as we seek to be faithful to God’s call on our lives.

Through it all, I am aware that God’s Spirit is alive and well and moving in our midst. I’m grateful for your prayers, for your support, and for all the ways that you are sharing your gifts and passions as we discover how to be church together for the sake of the world.

In Christ,
Paul
Together in Mission Workshops

On Saturday, February 16, congregational leaders from across our synod will gather at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Brookfield (20275 Davidson Rd.) for our second Together in Mission event. This day offers opportunity for mission conversation, learning, and fellowship with other people who are excited and challenged in the ministry we share in Jesus Christ. All laypeople in our synod are invited to come, learn, share and grow in communion with others. Coming together, God strengthens us for this work.

The day starts formally at 9 a.m., but the coffee and fellowship start at 8:15. Following an opening devotional time with Bishop Erickson, we will break out for workshops on a variety of ministry topics. Over lunch we will meet as mission clusters to explore the work in our neighborhoods. Following another workshop time in the afternoon, we will conclude with a final brief send-off gathering and end at 2:45 p.m.

To the left, check out this year’s lineup of exciting and informative workshops.

Child care is offered; please see the notes in the registration information.

Early registration and price break end January 25.

We hope to see you and your fellow members and leaders at this year’s Together in Mission. You won’t want to miss it!

Rostered Ministers in Transition

Rostered Ministers Who Have Recently Changed Calls:

- Rev. Joshua Evans, from candidate for call, to called associate pastor at Unity, Brookfield Cape, Franklin
- Rev. Elizabeth Lee, from the South Central Synod, to called associate pastor at Brookfield
- Rev. Joy Mortensen Wiebe, from the South Central Synod, to called pastor at St Luke, Slinger
- Rev. Peter Peterson, from the South Central Synod, to called pastor at St Mary, Kenosha

Within the Greater Milwaukee Synod

- Rev. Elizabeth Baires, from OLC/o PT associate bridge pastor at St Luke, Waukesha
- Rev. Brian Haberstock, from term call pastor at Mt Hope, West Allis to called pastor at St Johns, Brookfield
- Rev. Jim Roloff, from LWS Wisconsin to associate pastor at Christ the King, Delafield
- Rev. Lindsay Jordan, from called pastor at Christ the King, Delafield to called pastor at St Luke, Waukesha
- Rev. Denise Mbise, from term pastor call at Loving Faith, Barne to called pastor at Trinity, South Milwaukee
- Rev. Michael Mueller, from bridge pastor at Living Faith, Racine, to interim pastor at Mt Hope, West Allis
- Rev. Delancy Schrath, from term pastor associate at North Cape, Franklin to called pastor at St Paul, Milwaukee
- Rev. Deon Wilhelms, from OLC/o term pastor call at Bethlehem, Mukwonago to the Greater Milwaukee Synod
- Rev. Timothy Singleton, from called pastor at Adoration, Greenfield to the Southwest California Synod

Rostered Ministers Who Have Recently Moved To or Left From Call (OLC)

- Rev. Jim Brunner, from oycll call to interim minister at Redeemer, Hartford to OLC
- Rev. Jennifer Carlson Olson, from PT bridge pastor at Unity, Brookfield to OLC

Rostered Ministers Recently Retired

- Rev. John Bollin, from a called call to interim minister at St Mary’s, Kenosha to retirement

Remembering Rostered Ministers Who Have Recently Died:

- Rev. Howard Knox, from called pastor at Trinity, West Bend, WI to Do Not Resuscitate
- Rev. Linda Schmidt, from associate pastor at Trinity, West Bend, WI to Do Not Resuscitate

Churches and/or persons:

- Zion Lutheran Church, in West Bend, WI, where he was a member. We give thanks for the life and ministry of Pastor Howard Knox.
- Zion Lutheran Church, through his service as pastor.
- Trinity Lutheran Church, in West Bend, WI, where he was a member. We give thanks for the life and ministry of Pastor Ed Winters.

Congregations in Transition

Recent Vacancy:

(An initial transition has not yet begun)

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (PT associate pastor)

Missouri Exploration Process:

(No candidates received at this time)

“Transition Process” provides pastoral support and congregation in a time of transition. Each congregation is unique, and so is the MST process. “Transition Consultant” helps do MST process, and have desired pastoral leadership responsibilities. “Interim Pastor” provides pastoral support and moves MST process.

Reviews from last year’s inaugural event:

“I would recommend this event for a colleague, because of the energy, material covered, and overall quality of the event.”

“I enjoyed the different workshops. It gave a more energetic approach to learning.”

For more information or to register, visit milwaukeesynod.org/event/2019-together-in-mission.