

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

ROBERTO LARA-ARANDA

Metropolitan New York Synod [7C] — Saint Peter's Church

Roberto Lara-Aranda is an award-winning executive strategist with a diverse background spanning the private and social sectors. His work as assistant to the bishop for communications and development in the Metropolitan New York Synod has been transformative in that he has successfully centered social justice and advocacy in all aspects of communication and community engagement. This innovative approach has led to significant increases in membership and donations despite declining trends for faith-based organizations across the U.S. As president of the Latino Ministries Association of the ELCA, Mr. Aranda plays a vital role in addressing the needs of the diverse Latiné community within the church. Prior to his roles at the ELCA, he served as content director at Accenture and Meredith Corporation, driving multimillion-dollar marketing campaigns for global brands. Mr. Aranda now shares his expertise as a guest speaker on topics such as strategic communications and corporate social responsibility. With a deep commitment to a global perspective, he has lived and worked across Europe, the Middle East, South America, Asia and the U.S.



SEAN AVERY

Alaska Synod [1A] — Joy Lutheran Church

The Rev. Sean Avery is pastor of Joy Lutheran Church in Eagle River, Alaska. He holds a Master of Divinity from Wartburg Theological Seminary. Rev. Avery was awarded an ELCA Fund for Leaders Scholarship in 2017 and subsequently served on the Fund for Leaders Leadership Table from 2018 to 2023. Prior to his ordination, he earned a Master of Arts in organizational leadership from Gonzaga University, with an emphasis in servant leadership. Rev. Avery worked in law enforcement for ten years as a dispatcher and reserve sheriff's deputy in western Washington. He served as a church musician in various congregations for nearly 20 years, and at Wartburg. He is passionate about creativity in worship, building community, and faith formation for young people. In his spare time he enjoys nature walks, camping and salmon fishing with his wife and two dogs.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

FELECIA BOONE

Minneapolis Area Synod [3G] — Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

Felecia Boone is vice president of the Minneapolis Area Synod and a member of the synod's racial equity committee. She also serves on the core leadership team for the 2024 Multicultural Youth Leadership Event. Ms. Boone has spent 30 years in local government and is currently a senior diversity, equity and inclusion consultant, which includes supporting diversity and inclusion committees, administering mentoring programs, providing employees with content in support of organizational mission and values, and investigating workplace discrimination complaints. She recently completed a Master of Arts in leadership from her alma mater, Wartburg College, and is a proud member of the college's board of regents. In her spare time she enjoys travel, supporting the Minnesota United Football Club and shopping for unique clothes, jewelry and shoes.



MICHAEL CHAN

Northwestern Minnesota Synod [3D] — Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Dr. Michael Chan joined the Concordia College community in June 2022. Prior to that, he was associate professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. He joined Luther Seminary after completing his doctorate at Emory University and a year of research and teaching at the University of Helsinki. He is a graduate of Luther Seminary (Master of Arts in biblical theology) and Pacific Lutheran University (Bachelor of Arts in elementary education). As Concordia's executive director for faith and learning, Dr. Chan directs the Lorentzsen Center for Faith and Work and the Dovre Center for Faith and Learning, guides Concordia's interfaith relationships and oversees the work of campus ministry.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

TIFFANY CHANEY

Southeastern Synod [9D] — Gathered by Grace

The Rev. Tiffany Chaney lives in Montgomery, Ala., where she serves as pastor developer of Gathered by Grace, a mission community of the ELCA, and as chief diversity officer for Baptist Health. She is a lifetime member of the African Descent Lutheran Association. A native of Mobile, Ala., Rev. Chaney graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in finance, a Master of Business Administration, and a Master of Science in health administration; and from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, where she earned a Master of Divinity degree. She has earned a certificate in diversity and inclusion from Cornell University, a certificate in diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace from the University of South Florida, and a certificate in executive leadership from Princeton Theological Seminary. She is a board member for the Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama and Inspiritus. Rev. Chaney's life-centering Scripture is Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge [God], and [God] will make straight your paths."



CARLA CHRISTOPHER (Co-Chair)

Lower Susquehanna Synod [8D] — St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Rev. Carla Christopher serves as assistant to the bishop in charge of justice ministries for the Lower Susquehanna and Delaware-Maryland synods. She also serves on the churchwide leadership team for Vital Congregations training, is a Proclaim chaplain with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries and writes regularly for Sparkhouse and Sundays and Seasons. A former therapeutic caseworker and diversity / cultural competency consultant in the nonprofit sector, Rev. Christopher is the primary curriculum developer and trainer for Region 8's racial justice trainings and has consulted with numerous synods supporting LGBTQIA+ cultural competency, racial equity and trauma-informed care efforts. A spoken-word artist, she performs regularly with the poetry-funk fusion band Groove Ink.

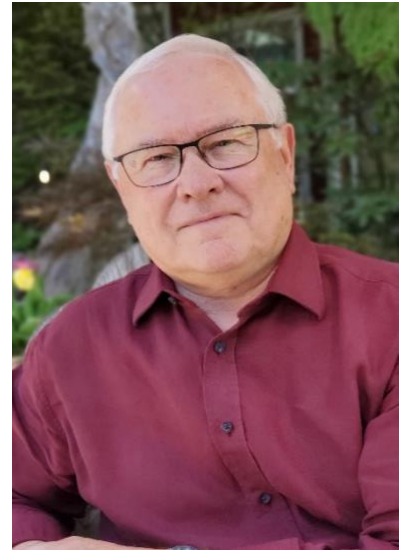


Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

DON CORSON

Southwestern Washington Synod [1C] — Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Don Corson brings over 30 years of leadership experience in the church as a layperson, vice president of the Southwestern Washington Synod, a synod-authorized minister for a rural congregation and, most recently, an ordained deacon at a Reconciling in Christ congregation. He has earned a doctorate in geography and is an accomplished commercial winemaker. As a deacon, he is exploring hospitality as a gateway to sharing the gospel in secular and church worlds, as an expression of God's grace and acceptance of us all. He was ordained as a Deacon, a minister of Word and Service, on July 9, 2023, and installed at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church on July 16.



ANTOINE CUMMINS

Pacifica Synod [2C] — St. Andrew Lutheran Church

Born on the island of Barbados and raised in Brooklyn in New York City, Antoine Cummins currently serves the Pacifica Synod as assistant to the bishop for anti-racism coordination. Prior to this, Mr. Cummins spent time in higher education, working in the office of student life and as an adjunct math professor, licensed tax professional, high school math teacher and football coach. He has spent 12 years serving the ELCA in various capacities including director of campus ministry, engagement coordinator and community organizer. Most recently his passion for organizational change and design has led him into consulting for organizations serious about anti-racism, innovation, young adult engagement and discipleship. Though his journey has been uncharted and filled with many life-giving opportunities, the one thing that keeps him inspired (besides his bass guitar) is how much healing can be found in community, when we approach each other with a posture of humility and walk away from our interactions with a sense of awe and wonder.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

RALSTON DEFFENBAUGH

Rocky Mountain Synod [2E] — Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church

Ralston Deffenbaugh (“Ralie”) is a human rights lawyer who has spent most of his career working for the church. He retired in June 2017 after seven years’ service as the Lutheran World Federation’s (LWF) assistant general secretary for international affairs and human rights. In that role he coordinated the LWF’s international affairs and human rights advocacy and policy development, advised the general secretary, and served as the LWF’s main representative to the United Nations offices in Geneva, Switzerland. Mr. Deffenbaugh’s previous experience includes 18 years heading Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (the U.S. Lutheran churches’ agency for resettling refugees and working with asylum seekers, unaccompanied refugee children and people in immigration detention), six years heading the Lutheran Office for World Community (representing LWF at the United Nations headquarters in New York) and four years at LWF Geneva (also handling international affairs advocacy). During Namibia’s transition to independence in 1989-’90, Mr. Deffenbaugh served as legal adviser for the Namibian Lutheran bishops. A graduate of the University of Colorado (in economics) and Harvard Law School, Deffenbaugh is licensed to practice law in Colorado. He is married to Miriam Boraas Deffenbaugh; they have two adult children.



ELIZABETH FRIEDMAN

Southeast Michigan Synod [6A] — Lord of Light Lutheran Church

The Rev. Elizabeth Friedman has served as pastor of Lord of Light Lutheran Church and Campus Ministry in Ann Arbor, Mich., since 2017. She earned her Master of Divinity at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Prior to ordained ministry, Rev. Friedman earned a Master of Music in violin performance from Rice University, then started an after-school program serving a Nicaraguan community in San José, Costa Rica. After seminary she followed her husband to the United Kingdom, where she taught Suzuki violin. Enthusiastic about engaging young adults in the life of the church, Rev. Friedman served on the board of Lutheran Campus Ministry Network from 2018 to 2023, and as chair during her final year. She is committed to social justice and to creating an environment rooted in authentic hospitality.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

CHARLENE GUILIANI

Greater Milwaukee Synod [5J] — Incarnation Lutheran Church

The Rev. Charlene (“Char”) Guiliani (they/them/their) grew up in Milwaukee, Wis., where they are currently pastor of Incarnation Lutheran Church. They live in Franklin, Wis., with their wife, Shelley, and their twin boys, Joseph and Gregory, who just turned 18. Being a pastor is a second career for Rev. Guiliani; following in their dad’s footsteps, they spent 25 years in law enforcement, retiring from the City of Milwaukee in 2008 as a police sergeant. After spending a week with youth and parents from their congregation at family camp, Rev. Guiliani felt they needed to learn more about the Jesus spoken of in Scripture, and in 2019 they earned a Master of Divinity at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Rev. Guiliani is currently convenor of the Greater Milwaukee Synod’s Reconciling in Christ ministry and of its “2021 Resolution 1: Resolution on Authentic Diversity and Inclusion in Synod Life” team. They look forward to the work ahead and hope to have the conversations necessary to move the ELCA forward and to live into our values. They hope the ELCA can be renewed and truly be God’s church so that when someone sees “ELCA,” no matter their location, they know they will be safe, welcomed and affirmed as the person God has created them to be.



GAIL HAGERTY

Western North Dakota Synod [3A] — Heart River Lutheran Church

The Rev. Gail Hagerty serves Heart River Lutheran Church in Mandan, N.D., and the outreach and reentry ministry Heart River Bridges of Hope in Bismarck. The small congregation gathers on the grounds of the North Dakota Youth Correctional Center and a women’s prison and worships with residents of those facilities. The congregation loves and serves justice-involved people while they are incarcerated and as they transition to the community. Rev. Hagerty was ordained in 2020 after 33 years as a state trial court judge. For 20 of those years she was a drug court judge. During her final six years as a judge she was part of Wartburg Theological Seminary’s TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) program. Rev. Hagerty is married to former North Dakota Supreme Court Justice Dale Sandstrom, and they have three adult children. Over the years she has been active in her church, her community and the State Bar Association of North Dakota, and she serves on the North Dakota Commission on Uniform State Laws.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

REGINA HASSANALLY

Southeastern Minnesota Synod [3I] — St. John Lutheran

The Rev. Regina Hassanally has served as bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod since September 2019. As bishop she delights in conversations with pastors and deacons, walking alongside congregational leaders, Sunday-morning coffee hours and imagining future possibilities. She believes in the power of God to transform lives, and her ministry is focused on gospel proclamation. Prior to being called as bishop, Rev. Hassanally served a vibrant and lively congregation in rural southeastern Minnesota. She has earned a Bachelor of Arts in biology health professions from Northwestern College and a Master of Divinity from Palmer Theological Seminary.



RUTH ELLEN HOWARD

Central States Synod [4B] — St. Mark Hope and Peace Lutheran Church

Since ze was 6 and demanded to be called “Ruth Ellen” instead of “Ruth,” Ruth Ellen Howard has stubbornly refused to conform to society's expectations of hir. A genderqueer lesbian, a Baptist, a congregationalist Lutheran and a layperson who has been to seminary, Ruth Ellen embraces paradox and contradiction, in hirself and in the world, and seeks to bridge binaries and transgress borders. Hir home church, St. Mark Hope and Peace, sits on Troost Avenue, a historic red line that divided the poorer, Blacker east side of Kansas City, Mo., from the wealthier, whiter west. Ze loves the church that is Christ's body, and longs to see it fulfill the purpose that is its duty and delight: building justice, reconciling peoples and feeding a hungry world.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

THELMA JACKS

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod [7F] — Saint Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church

Thelma Jacks has enjoyed a successful career as a senior manager in various nonprofit agencies and as owner of the consulting firm TJ and Consultants, Inc. With more than 35 years of experience in project management, logistics, staff supervision, report generation, data analysis/interpretation, and planning conferences and special events, Ms. Jacks has mounted both individual and corporate efforts to establish an ombudsman capacity within the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, increase grant funding for many agencies and create low-income and affordable housing for special needs and targeted groups of people. Since her retirement Ms. Jacks has served as a consultant to nonprofit organizations on capacity building, grant writing, survey and survey analysis, and program evaluation. Ms. Jacks is a member of Saint Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church in Devon, Penn., where she serves as a communion assistant and a member of the endowment fund and the stewardship team. She also served as chair of the human resources ministry and as co-chair of the social ministry team. Ms. Jacks holds a Master of Social Services from Bryn Mawr College, with an emphasis on administration, research and evaluation, and survey analysis, and an undergraduate degree from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania.



RYAN JOHNSON

Western Iowa Synod [5E] — Our Saviors Lutheran Church

Ryan Johnson is a young adult from Rock Valley, Iowa, who is studying at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn. Mr. Johnson is pursuing a career in health and physical education as well as playing football for the Cobbers. In 2018 he attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas. From 2019 to 2020 he served on the ELCA Youth Core Leadership team, helping organize and guide the Youth Summit Assembly. Mr. Johnson was elected to serve as a young adult representative of his synod at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, Ohio. He currently serves as a young adult representative on his congregation council.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

STACY KITAHATA

Northwest Washington Synod [1B] — Immanuel Lutheran Church

Stacy Kitahata is co-executive director of Holden Village, a remote wilderness community and retreat center in the Cascade Mountains of Washington state. Ms. Kitahata contributes more than 30 years' experience facilitating and training for intercultural equity leadership and organizational change in nonprofit organizations and higher education. In the ELCA, she has specialized in ministry and leadership development as coordinator for evangelical outreach, ELCA Region 1; as dean of the community and as a professor at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; and as associate director for global education with ELCA Global Mission. Ms. Kitahata has degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles and from McCormick Theological Seminary. She divides her time between Holden Village and Seattle, where her spouse is an ELCA pastor.



KRISTIN JOHNSTON LARGEN

Northeastern Iowa Synod [5F] — St. John's Lutheran Church

The Rev. Dr. Kristin Johnston Largen is president of Wartburg Theological Seminary. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in English from Colorado College, her Master of Divinity from Wartburg Seminary and her doctorate in comparative theology from the Graduate Theological Union. She served at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Arvada, Colo., before entering full-time ministry in theological education. Previously she taught at Clafin University and at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary), where she also served as academic dean. Prior to her current position, Rev. Largen served as professor of systematic theology at United Lutheran Seminary and as college chaplain and associate dean of religious and spiritual life at Gettysburg College. She is married to the Rev. Dr. John Largen, and they live in Dubuque with their Jack Russell Terrier, Rufus. Rev. Largen is passionate about the Holy Spirit's invitation to renew the church for the sake of proclaiming the gospel in a world that desperately needs healing, reconciliation and new life.

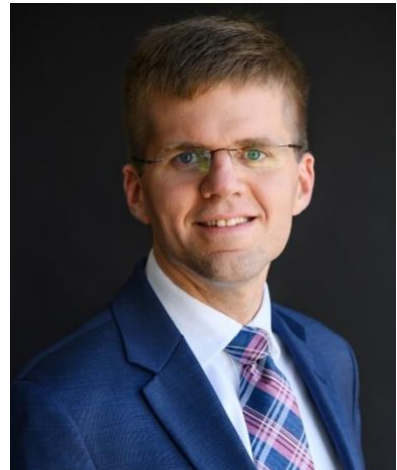


Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

DAVID LENZ

Northeastern Ohio Synod [6E] — Messiah Lutheran Church

David Lenz is managing partner of the law firm Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell LLP in Cleveland, Ohio, where he focuses his practice on trust and estate planning and administration and on nonprofit organizations. He brings leadership experience from all three expressions of our church as a congregation president, secretary for the Northeastern Ohio Synod and current member of the ELCA Church Council. Among other roles he has served as a student leader and adult board member of different Lutheran Campus Ministry sites and as a member of the ELCA's Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group. Mr. Lenz hopes to leverage this diverse experience in our church, helping us hold fast to what is necessary but dream about what is possible. He hopes the perspectives he brings from his law practice and his work on synod and churchwide constitution committees will help him spot obstacles and identify solutions in our governing documents. He, his wife and their daughters are members of Messiah Lutheran Church in Lyndhurst, Ohio.



ALEXANDRA MACK

New Jersey Synod [7A] — Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Alexandra Mack has roots in both the North Carolina and the New Jersey synods. A lifelong Lutheran, she is currently a member of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Red Bank, N.J. As a leader on the New Jersey Synod's LoveStruck team, she conducted discussions about race, diversity and how God works in our communities at the 2015 and the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering. Recently Ms. Mack graduated from New Jersey City University with a bachelor's degree in global business. She works as a social media manager and content strategist at the New York City-based design agency Squeaky Wheel Media. She is passionate about inclusivity and spends much of her free time learning about history from new perspectives.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

THOMAS MADDEN

Upstate New York Synod [7D] — Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word

Thomas Madden is an adjunct professor in the motion picture sciences program at Rochester Institute of Technology and an active consulting expert in digital color-imaging. Previously senior principal scientist and group leader for the Eastman Kodak Company, he contributed to numerous publications and U.S. and foreign patents. Mr. Madden is vice president of the Upstate New York Synod, and chair of worship and music and past president of his congregation. A former executive director and CEO of Lutheran Charities of Western New York, Mr. Madden also served and chaired the Lutheran University Association, the Inter-Lutheran Agency for Campus Ministry in the Rochester Area, and the Valparaiso University Alumni Association. He is an avid devotee of music — especially choral singing, with its camaraderie and spiritual nourishment. He also enjoys the miracle of turning viniferous grape juice into wine and has an ongoing pipe-organ project in his basement.



SUSAN MCARVER

South Carolina Synod [9C] — Incarnation Lutheran Church

Dr. Susan Wilds McArver is the H. George Anderson Professor of Church History at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, where she studies religion in America, particularly the history of Lutheranism in the Southeast. From 2009 to 2015 she served on the ELCA Church Council and as chair of the Program and Services Committee. Dr. McArver served on the ELCA task force recommending that the church create a new Ministry of Word and Service roster with its own entrance rite, and earlier on the task force writing the social statement *Our Calling in Education* (2007). For many years she has been president and a board member of the Lutheran Historical Conference, one of the few institutions representing scholars from the ELCA, the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

CANDY McCORKLE

North/West Lower Michigan Synod [6B] — Immanuel Lutheran Church

Dr. Candy McCorkle has spent over 25 years in higher education and currently serves as vice president of diversity and inclusion at Western Michigan University (WMU). Prior to joining WMU she served as director of diversity and inclusion at Alma College. Dr. McCorkle began her career as an associate professor of psychology at Spring Arbor University, served as director of its Masters of Counseling program, and was an assistant professor of counseling and director of the Global Campus Counseling program at Central Michigan University. Prior to her time at Alma College, Dr. McCorkle served as adjunct administrator and assistant dean of the honors program at Jackson College. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in psychology at Wright State University, her Master of Science in clinical psychology from Eastern Michigan University and her doctorate in counselor education and supervision from WMU. Dr. McCorkle has facilitated several workshops on privilege and identity, creating inclusive learning environments, and the basics of diversity and inclusion. She has served as a keynote speaker on topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion in educational and mental health settings. Dr. McCorkle completed a year-long fellowship with the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE), focusing on the work of chief diversity officers.



EVAN MOILAN JR.

Southwestern Texas Synod [4E] — Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Evan Moilan Jr. is a partner with GSB Fundraising, providing expertise in governance, planning, change management and fundraising to organizations across the country. He brings to the commission more than 25 years of executive and board leadership for organizations that include campus ministry, outdoor ministry and social services. Prior to consulting, Mr. Moilan last served as chief mission officer for Upbring, a multistate Lutheran social service agency. As a volunteer, he has served as chair of the board for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and as vice president of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. He currently serves on the boards of RefugeeOne and Acts of Wisdom. Mr. Moilan earned an undergraduate degree from Arizona State University, a professional certificate in nonprofit management from the University of Texas at Austin, and the Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) credential. Mr. Moilan lives in Bastrop, Texas, and attends Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with his wife and two children.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

SARAH MORRIS

Grand Canyon Synod [2D] — Our Savior’s Lutheran Church

Sarah Morris is executive director of Arizona Academic Decathlon, an educational nonprofit that has provided high-level scholastic competitions for high school students in the state for more than 30 years. She also serves as adjunct faculty for the Maricopa Community Colleges. Prior to her career in education, she worked as a law librarian for two decades. Though Ms. Morris was raised as a Lutheran, she stopped attending regularly as a preteen. She returned to her faith seven years ago and since then has been actively involved in supporting the work of the church through leadership roles, committee memberships and volunteering. Ms. Morris earned a Master of Arts in information resources and library science from the University of Arizona and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Arizona State University.



LAUREL MUHLY-ALEXANDER

West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod [8H] — St. Mark’s Lutheran Church

Laurel Muhly-Alexander is a recent graduate of West Virginia University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Journalism degree in public relations and studied Spanish and the Appalachian region. She serves on the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod Council and works at the Humble Walk, a ministry of Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Maryland. Ms. Muhly-Alexander resides in Washington, D.C., with four nuns and a cat.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

ANTHONY ORMSBEE-HALE

Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod [4D] — Messiah Lutheran Church

Anthony Ormsbee-Hale serves as senior vice president of strategic operations for a health care real estate organization serving over 4,000 senior adults in six states. His professional expertise spans operations, legal/HR, finance, clinical, sales and marketing, asset management and information technology. Mr. Ormsbee-Hale completed his executive education at Cornell University, focusing on strategic human resource management, and holds the Professional in Human Resources designation from the HR Certification Institute, as well as the Certified Professional designation from the Society for Human Resource Management. Mr. Ormsbee-Hale is a member of Messiah Lutheran Church in Weatherford, Texas. He is married to Trenton Ormsbee-Hale, a seminarian in the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod and a student at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.



MATTHEW RIEGEL

West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod [8H] — St. Paul Lutheran Church

The Rev. Matthew Riegel serves as bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod. He has served calls in a two-point parish in small-town settings and in a center-based campus ministry at a land grant university. His longstanding research interests include the sanctification of ecclesiastical politics within a distinctively Lutheran framework. He is a bit obsessed with parliamentary law and enjoys ruminating over questions of constitutional economics. Bishop Riegel earned a Master of Divinity and a Master of Sacred Theology from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary).



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

LEON SCHWARTZ (Co-Chair)

Southeastern Iowa Synod [5D] — St. Paul Lutheran Church

Leon Schwartz has served in a leadership capacity in all three expressions of the ELCA: as a congregational president, treasurer, and Sunday school and confirmation teacher; as chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee for the Southeastern Iowa Synod; and in the churchwide organization as chair, vice chair and secretary of the board of trustees for Portico Benefit Services. He was employed by the state of Iowa for over 33 years in leadership, technology, finance, administration and planning positions, including serving as chief operating officer for the Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System. He has also served as a consultant in the pension industry in North America and Africa. Mr. Schwartz earned his undergraduate degree from Iowa State University and his Master of Public Administration from Drake University. He spends time in Bamako, Mali, in West Africa with his spouse, a senior U.S. diplomat, and owns and operates the family farm where he grew up near Greenfield, Iowa. Mr. Schwartz has a penchant for good governance and organizational structure. He looks forward to the opportunity to help discern what God has in store for the ELCA.



DALLAS SHEALY

South Carolina Synod [9C] — Summer Memorial Lutheran

Deacon Dallas Jolliff Shealy serves as executive director of South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers, where she has worked for 18 years. She graduated from Newberry College and Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, where she earned a Master of Arts in religion. Deacon Shealy was commissioned/ordained in 2000; her first call was to Newberry College as director of alumni affairs and then as director of development. She has earned a Certificate in Fundraising Management and an Executive Certificate in Fundraising Management from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Deacon Shealy serves on the board of trustees and as treasurer for Lutheran Outdoor Ministries.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

ADAM SORNCHAI

Northwestern Ohio Synod [9D] — St. John Lutheran Church (Windfall)

The Rev. Adam Sornchai is pastor of St. John Lutheran Church (Windfall) in Cardington, Ohio, where he was ordained and installed in 2011. He currently serves as dean of the Southeast Conference of the Northwestern Ohio Synod. Rev. Sornchai earned his Master of Divinity from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary) and is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry in transformational leadership at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Prior to that, he attended St. John's University in Queens, N.Y., where he earned Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in theology.



MELODY STACHOUR

Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod [8G] — St. Matthew's

Melody Stachour is an adult education instructor specializing in communications and collaborative workstreams. In addition, she is a Navy Reservist, currently serving as senior enlisted leader for a Navy Reserve unit in Virginia. Ms. Stachour is director for Pride in her company's LGBTQIA+ Business Resource Group and serves as director for community relations for Sparta, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation serving the support and advocacy needs of transgender service members. A committed Lutheran, she came to the ELCA during her college years; has participated in a preaching-learning community as a lay preacher with two different congregations; and dives into the Lutheran confessions with study partners from across the United States. She serves on the synod council of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod and several of its subcommittees.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

CHERYL STUART

Florida-Bahamas Synod [9E] — St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Cheryl Stuart (she/her) is a lifelong Lutheran and has served in a range of capacities in the ELCA. In addition to congregational leadership roles, she was vice president of the Florida-Bahamas Synod for 12 years (through 2021). She also served a term on the ELCA Discipline Committee and more than 10 years on the Joint Ministries of Region 9 Council, including several years as chair. She was a board member of ReconcilingWorks, including a term as co-chair. Ms. Stuart has practiced law in Tallahassee, Fla., for more than 35 years and is gliding into retirement. Her private practice focuses on land development and finance, and she has spent the latter years handling legislative matters for clients in those areas. She is a married mother of four and a grandmother of seven. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in economic policy from Michigan State University and a master's degree in public administration and a Juris Doctor from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She and her husband, Steve, like to escape the Florida summer heat and retreat to Traverse City, Mich., as often as possible. In her spare time, you might find her watching the Detroit Tigers or Detroit Red Wings or taking in a college softball game.



LONI TAYLOR

Montana Synod [1F] — Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

Loni Taylor (Chippewa Cree) is from Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation in Montana. She looks forward to learning, sharing and being prayerful with others on the commission. She has earned associate's degrees in Cree language, Native American studies and small business management, all from Stone Child College. Loni has been an emergency medical technician (EMT) for the last 17-plus years. She serves as an elected leader for her tribe/reservation, as president of the church council for Our Saviour's Lutheran Church on the reservation and as a member of the ELCA Church Council. She hopes to bring to the table both current events and past history that are Native American/minority-related.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

LINDA TIMMONS

Nebraska Synod [4A] — St. Thomas Lutheran Church

Linda Timmons is president and chief executive officer of Mosaic, an affiliated social ministry of the ELCA that provides personalized services to nearly 4,900 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other diverse needs. She is positioning Mosaic to thrive in the rapidly transforming health care environment through creative services that are effective and efficient, delivered by mission-driven employees and contractors. She assumed the CEO role in 2008 after serving five years as president and chief operating officer, during which time she led the organization's largest team through the 2003 consolidation of Bethphage and Martin Luther Homes into Mosaic. Passionate about service and advocacy, she speaks publicly on behalf of Mosaic and in support of people with disabilities living full lives in their communities. She also regularly engages donors and volunteers, both one-on-one and in small groups. Ms. Timmons earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and, in 2011, was honored with the school's Distinguished Alumni Award. She also earned master's degrees in public administration from Texas Tech University and in human services from St. Edward's University.



Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

SUSAN JOHNSON (Facilitator)

National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

The Rev. Susan Johnson is national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, a position she has held for 16 years. Bishop Johnson has served on the Lutheran World Federation Council as an adviser, council member and vice president for North America. She currently serves on the Central Committee and Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches. Bishop Johnson is known for her commitment to justice, ecumenism and spiritual renewal.



KEVIN ANDERSON (Resource)

Kevin Anderson serves as a member of the ELCA Church Council, as chair of its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and as a member of its executive and audit committees. He is a managing director in the national tax office of BDO USA, LLP, a national accounting and tax advisory firm with offices throughout the United States and affiliated firms throughout the world. He is an attorney and certified public accountant specializing in complex federal income tax issues for businesses and individuals. Mr. Anderson has significant public accounting, law firm and government experience spanning approximately 44 years. In addition to many other positions, he has served as a trustee for Portico Benefit Services, as a member of the Committee on Appeals and the Committee of Hearing Officers, as secretary of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, and as president of two congregations. He and his wife, Mary Jo, are members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Md.

