

## Bishop Smith's reflections—December 8, 2015



### *Call process coordinator transition*

Lutherans have always somewhat uniquely believed that when it comes to "rostered ministry" (ordained = Word and Sacrament; lay rostered Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers, or Deaconesses = Word and Service), the call of the congregation **is** the call of the Holy Spirit. Unlike Methodists or Roman Catholics, bishops don't appoint our professional leaders. Congregations pray, envision, interview, and vote to issue the call. Candidates prepare, pray, envision, and interview congregations. Yes, it's a two-way street, a relationship, not just a prospective employee seeking a job!

The synod staff's role in this process is to link up available candidates for rostered ministry with congregations needing a rostered (called) leader. This linking is based on the Rostered Leader Profile (RLP) of the candidate and the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) of the congregation. While all of this is going on, a synodical staff person visits with the congregation council upon news of the vacancy, helps appoint a committee to train the congregation's call committee, and goes to the call committee either in person or electronically with names of candidates. All through the process, the synod's call process coordinator spends countless hours emailing, talking on the phone, sending names and profiles to candidates and scouring the ELCA's database to see what candidates/congregations need a match.

For the past eight and a half years, Connie Young has been the NC Synod Call Process Coordinator and has conscientiously, faithfully, and ably navigated that process for dozens if not a hundred or more congregations. Three years ago she went from full-time to half-time, as she moved to Hendersonville. She has announced that she will be retiring at the end of this calendar year. Read her letter in this issue of the NC Synod E-news.

Also retiring this year from several years of part-time (10 hr./week) contract work with our call process is Kay Conrad of Winston-Salem. We are grateful to Kay for her deep knowledge of the church and her care for congregations. Finally, Pastor Carl Sachtleben has participated in our staff call process as a volunteer for a few years as well, including our weekly meetings. Due to family commitments, he also is ceasing to be involved on a weekly basis, though we are grateful that he has agreed to help read MSPs and RLPs for call processes involving larger congregations.

In light of these transitions, I petitioned the Synod Council this past weekend to help us combine those several part-time positions into one. That position will also take on primary staff responsibility for newly-revitalized social justice ministry in the NC Synod. It will combine Connie's management and matching work along with Kay's hands-on traveling and visiting in congregations with councils and/or call committees. Various other bishop's staff—myself, Phil Tonnesen, Beth Kearney, and John Mocko—will take on primary responsibilities for some call processes as well.

I have offered the new position to Sandra Cline, whom many of you know through her more recent positions in the Development Offices of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and Agape+Kure Beach Ministries. Sandra is the consummate "churchwoman" who loves this synod, knows it perhaps as well as anyone of whom I'm aware, and fervently desires to help us navigate and tweak the call process here in the NC Synod. In fact, she approached me when I was first elected and said that, if ever that position were to open up, she would love a shot at it! She has served on committees and boards of the synod and the larger church too numerous to name and is currently serving another term on Synod Council, from which now she will resign due to her new position. As we bid farewell and thanks to Connie, Kay, and Carl, we are grateful for Sandra, who will begin January 1!

Grateful to serve among you,

In Christ,

Bishop Timothy Smith



**North Carolina Synod**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.