

Southeastern Minnesota Synod ELCA – 2024 Synod Assembly
Late Nominations Biography Information
May 11, 2024

Those nominated were invited to submit responses to these two questions:

- 1) List three current or past congregational, synodical, or churchwide service activities.
- 2) Describe your sense of God calling you into mission and service in Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA. What are the gifts, skills, experiences, and areas of expertise that you could bring to the work?

Synod Council At-Large – Lay

Linda Bean – Minneola Lutheran Church, Goodhue, MN

- 1) Attendee Synod Assembly in 2024 & 2023; Financial Secretary at Minneola Lutheran; Nominated attendees to Cannon River Conference 2024
- 2) As a newer member at Minneola and to the ELCA I continue to feel called to a deeper and more connected relationships not only to people at Minneola but broader and wider ministries in the Synod. I have a background in organizational operations as a past employee to the city of Kenyon. I also have experience in financial management thru both the city and now Minneola's Financial Secretary. I feel God calling me to a deeper relationship with the larger church body.

David Holger – Arendahl Lutheran, Peterson

- 1) Past President, Bethesda Lutheran, Ames, IA; trustee, Arendahl Lutheran Church, secretary/treasurer, Arendahl Cemetery Association
- 2) No answer.

Mrs. Jennifer Levisen – First Lutheran Church, Albert Lea\

- 1) Council President, Former Call Committee Member, Communications + Technical Support during Sunday Services
- 2) I am incredibly proud to serve First Lutheran Church and give voice to our congregation. This involvement strengthened my voice, values, and understanding of myself in all aspects of my life and I am grateful. My professional background in communications and marketing give me the ability to help communicate, in a variety of ways, ideas, thoughts, and the stories that connect us. The opportunity to share myself and my gifts with the synod would be one I would not take for granted. Forging connections strengthens us as a whole and I would be honored to be part of this experience.

Synod Council At-Large – Rostered

Rev. Shawn Brooks – Faith Lutheran, St. Charles

- 1) Conference Dean, Western Iowa Synod, 2018-2021; Voting Member from Western Iowa Synod to Churchwide Assembly, 2019; President, St. Charles Area Ministerial Association, 2023-Present
- 2) Having always served multipoint ministries, I feel a call to help congregations to connect with one another and with the synod. I have often been able to bring people into dialogue. I have a variety of administrative experience and work well on teams.

Rev. Jes Bakken Busch – Faith Lutheran, Dodge Center

- 1) Planning committee for Synod Assembly (3 years), dean of central Conference in Northern IL synod.
- 2) I feel a deep call to share the love of God for all people, and this translates into my desire to be a part of shaping the culture and community of our larger church body.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member – Lay Male

McLellan Bean – Minneola Lutheran Church, Goodhue

- 1) Attendee of Synod Assembly in 2023 & 2024; Nominated Attendee for Cannon River Conference 2024; Member of Stewardship Board at Minneola since 2022
- 2) As a newer member to the ELCA I feel called to attend Churchwide with a broader and more diverse faith experience. As I bring my faith journey to this assembly, I also look forward to learning more about the ELCA structure and processes. Faith has been a prominent aspect of my life and as I continue to walk this journey I feel God calling me to engage deeper and more broadly, trusting my experience to be a gift while learning and expanding my own understanding of being church together."

Scott Broughton – Bethel Lutheran, Northfield

- 1) Youth ministry
- 2) No answer.

Burton Svendsen – Trinity Fellowship, Rushford

- 1) SEMN synod council; SE MN synod assembly manager; Trinity head facilitator churchwide voting member
- 2) God has saved me. Working with my church, and the synod are my way of giving back.

Robert Thomsen – Mt. Olive, Rochester

- 1) Church Council President, Stephen Minister, Children Sermons
- 2) The ELCA is so important in the world and I hope to see how I can be part of the exciting work it is doing.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member – Rostered Male

John Torris Lohre – United Lutheran Church, Red Wing

- 1) No answer.
- 2) No answer.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member – Person of color (POC) or whose primary language is other than English (ESL)

Elga Broughton – Bethel Lutheran, Northfield

- 1) Music Ministry
- 2) No answer.

Deborah Lyanga – St. John's Luth. Church, Kasson

- 1) Assistant Pastor, Partnership liaison, on-call minister
- 2) I am called to serve in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, guided by a commitment to global partnership, community outreach, and the empowerment of women and marginalized groups. My experiences in establishing international connections have equipped me with the skills to foster inclusive and supportive environments within our communities.

Emmanuel Kaghondi – Our Saviors Lutheran Church, Owatonna

- 1) A member - Synodical Global ministry Table; Director of Ministry with Youth and Families, St. John's Luth. Church – Northfield; Church Musician
- 2) I feel called to serve in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, driven by a profound sense of mission to foster cross-cultural understanding and nurture globally informed believers. My background in music, education and youth engagement equipped me with unique skills to connect and inspire diverse communities. These experiences honed my ability to bridge cultural gaps through artistic expression and shared worship, enriching the spiritual lives of those I serve. I am always eager to bring these gifts and my passion for inclusive, faith-driven community building to the Synod's mission.