

# VITAL CONGREGATIONS and WHOLE & HEALTHY LEADERS



Deacon Tammy Jones West with Pastor Cassie McIntosh Overcash.

## **On a routine school field trip, Cassie McIntosh Overcash received a simple invitation to sing in the choir. And just like that, everything changed!**

Cassie and her family had just moved to N.C. and her new school offered a field trip to Camp Agapé's Center for Environmental Education (ACE Ed) in Fuquay-Varina. ACE Ed Director, Mir Youngquist-Thurow, learned that Cassie's family was Lutheran and said, "Come sing in the choir with my daughter."

Cassie found a church home at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, Fuquay-Varina—a vibrant congregation with choirs, community, and a passion for youth ministry. Abiding Presence was involved in the synod's Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) and before long, Cassie was involved in LYO as a participant and later as a leader. She spent many summers working at Camp Agapé in a variety of roles. Her Lutheran connection led her to Lenoir-Rhyne University and then on to Southern Seminary.

At every turn, Cassie was formed by the vital congregations and exceptional leaders she encountered across the synod: Pastor Jeffrey Ingold, then pastor of Abiding Presence; Mir and Randy Youngquist-Thurow, directors at Agapé+Kure Beach Ministries; Tammy Jones West of the synod staff; Liz Fisher, an adult leader with LYO; Dr. David Ratke and Dr. Jonathan Schwiebert, professors at Lenoir-Rhyne; and many more. "If Mir hadn't told me about Abiding Presence, my whole life would've been different. One person telling me about a congregation changed my whole life! I wouldn't have met Tammy [Jones West], I wouldn't have met my husband! It's pretty crazy!"

As Cassie prepared for rostered ministry, the synod's candidacy committee helped her identify her leadership skills. "I started candidacy knowing that I wanted to serve in the church but not knowing where or how. Pastor Ted Bost of the committee was so affirming and great to talk to. The committee affirmed

gifts—like administration—that I didn't think translated into ministry but they assured me they were appropriate gifts for pastoral ministry." Supporting and encouraging leaders, and helping them learn to be whole and healthy as they serve, is a primary goal of our synod's candidacy committee. And it doesn't stop there. The synod continues to walk with leaders through their first call and each call thereafter.

"If the vital congregations, institutions, and leaders of the synod hadn't aided in my discernment by affirming my call, I don't know if I'd be here." Pastor Cassie currently serves in the NC Synod at Grace, Thomasville.

*Thanks be to God for Pastor Cassie's ministry!*



Cassie (far left) and others with the synod's Lutheran Youth Organization.

## VISION STATEMENT

**God calls the North Carolina Synod of  
the ELCA to...**

*Cultivate & Celebrate  
Vital Congregations*

*Identify, Equip and Nurture  
Whole & Healthy Leaders*

*Embrace & Engage  
in Collaboration*

*Proclaim the Promise of the  
Resurrection with a Prophetic Voice*

**...all for the sake of the world.**

Bishop Tim, the synod staff, and Synod Council thank you for all the work you do for the sake of the Gospel – in your congregation and community, as well as in partnership with other congregations in the synod and across this church!



**North Carolina Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
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