

2025 Synod
Assembly

Nomination Booklet



North Carolina Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Nominations for Assembly Elections

Below is a list of all the positions that are up for election at the 2025 Synod Assembly. Please read through each section and each person's information carefully to make an informed decision during voting.

NC Synod Vice President

- 4-year term of 2025-2029—choose one candidate

NC Synod Council Secretary

- 4-year term of 2025-2029—choose one candidate

NC Synod Council

- 4-year term of 2025-2029—choose 2 Lay Males, 3 Lay Females, 1 Rostered Male, 1 Rostered Female

NC Synod Discipline Committee

- 4-year term, 2025-2029
- This will be a Block Vote; you will vote to approve or disapprove the selected members of the Discipline Committee as a whole.

Information Key

- * = person of color or primary language other than English
- YA = Young Adult
- I = Incumbent

Synod Vice President, 4-Year Term—**Choose One**

More nominations for this position will be accepted on the Assembly floor.

**Cameron McCall: Synod Vice President Nominee**

Congregation : Christ the King (CtK), Cary

Education : BS (2000) and MS (2009) in Computer Science from NC State

Occupation : Manager in Software Development

Experience : Cameron's experience as a manager has given him many leadership opportunities to run effective meetings, manage interpersonal relationships and team dynamics, direct responsibility for outcomes, and coaching opportunities for growth. He has been involved in Sunday school teaching and a youth advisor at CtK for 8 years. His passion for working with youth got him "hooked" on volunteerism at church and has been an adult mentor for LYO, retreats, Lutherock, the ELCA Youth Gathering, and more. Cameron has served the last 6 years on his congregation council, three of which as the council president where he has navigated many transitions and turmoil and help strengthen their commitment to being a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

Synod Secretary, 4-Year Term—**Choose One**

More nominations for this position will be accepted on the Assembly floor.

**Jill Nelson: Synod Secretary Nominee**

Congregation : St. John's, Salisbury

Education : Bachelor of Science from Colorado State University

Occupation : Retired

Experience : Jill Nelson has served on the NC Synod Council from 2019-2025 and has served on the Legal and Audit Committees in that time. Jill also served on the NC Synod Assembly Minutes Committee from 2008-2013. Jill held a career as an administrative assistant for various people including architects (1998-2012), the NC Synod DEM (2008-2009), and the bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod (1981-1987).

Synod Council Lay Female, 4-Year Term— **Choose Three**

Nominations for this position will not be accepted on the Assembly floor.

**Dr. Sylvia Black: Lay Female Nominee (*, I)**

Congregation : Holy Trinity, Chapel Hill

Education : MBA from Uni. Of Kansas; M.S. in Computer Science from UNC Chapel Hill; Ph.D. in Strategic Management from Columbia Uni.

Occupation : Executive Leadership Coach

Experience : Sylvia has served on the NC Synod Council since 2021 and is up for reelection. She served on the NC Synod Candidacy Committee from 1990-2000, five of those years as the chair. She has participated in various ELCA activities including the International Women Leaders Planning Group, the ELCA Capital Campaign Committee, Fund for Leaders Leadership Table, and Global Refugee President's Council.

**Megan Bollinger: Lay Female Nominee**

Congregation : Holy Trinity, Hickory

Education : Bachelor of Arts in Religious Development from Lenoir-Rhyne, 2017

Occupation : Administrative Assistant

Experience : While serving as a youth director, Megan had the opportunity to collaborate with congregational members who were invested in the lives of the youth, such as their mentors and families. At her current congregation, Megan teaches confirmation classes. Part of her role at LR is to take broad ideas and break them down into actionable items to accomplish the goals of the college.


Lisa Hamilton: Lay Female Nominee

Congregation : Nativity, Arden

Education : BA(1979)–Oberlin College; JD(1982)– Indiana Uni. School of Law

Occupation : Retired Trial Attorney

Experience : Lisa currently serves on the NC Bishop Election Committee and has been a member of and served small, medium, and large churches. She has served on congregation councils, and committees of Personnel, Search, and Music & Worship. She has advised and counseled clients and has a thorough understanding of business and budget documents. She has served on boards of directors for several non-profits as a member, president, and vice president.


Dr. Barbara Huffman de Belon: Lay Female Nominee

Congregation : Resurrection, Kings Mountain

Education : MS (1981), Ed.M. (1982), and Ed.D. (1984) in Movement Science from Columbia Uni. Teachers College

Occupation : ELCA Coach

Experience : Barbara has served various positions in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod including Council Member and Secretary from 2014-2016 and the Vice President from 2016-2018. She currently does work as an ELCA and ICF Certified Coach with a specialty in team and group coaching.


Peggy Poe: Lay Female Nominee

Congregation : Amazing Grace, Granite Falls

Education : BA in Middle School Education from Lenoir-Rhyne; Masters in School Library Science, Appalachian State

Occupation : Retired

Experience : Peggy has served on her congregation's council for the past 6 years where she has served as the vice president, secretary, and treasurer and continues to be the church treasurer. She also serves as the volunteer church secretary where she prepares the bulletins, creates a monthly newsletter, and assists the pastor as needed. She also has experience writing grants.

**Brooke Watson-Summerour: Lay Female Nominee (*, I)**

Congregation : Advent, Charlotte

Education : Masters in Practical Theology, Pfeiffer Uni., Masters in Christian Ministry (May 2025, LTSS), 4 units of Clinical Pastoral Edu. at Atrium Health Cabarrus

Occupation : Chaplain

Experience : Brooke has served on the congregation council at Advent Lutheran Church as the Youth Board liaison and served as a voting member at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly for the NC Synod. She is currently serving as a lay synod council member for the NC Synod.

Synod Council Lay Male, 4-Year Term— **Choose Two**

Nominations for this position will not be accepted on the Assembly floor.

**Shawn Booker: Lay Male Nominee**

Congregation : Grace, Thomasville

Education : Certificate (1999), John Hopkins Hospital School of Nuclear Medicine; B.S. in Medical Imaging (2003), Bloomsburg Uni.

Occupation : Nuclear Medicine Technologist

Experience : Shawn has served as the president and vice president of his congregation's council with 2 years remaining in his term. He has also served on the Bloomsburg Uni. Alumni Board of Directors for 6 years and 4 years on their executive committee. He is a part of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and served 3 years on the Technologist Section Board of Directors.

**Jody Laffon: Lay Male Nominee**

Congregation : Old St Paul, Newton

Education : Tactical Automated Security Systems Admin. Training (2000)

Occupation : Retired

Experience : Jody has spent 27 years traveling around the world serving in the military and working with a diverse group of people, which has given him a broad perspective and understanding of how others need to work together. He serves on the NC Synod Legal Committee, which gives him the opportunity to use his knowledge to help others. He currently serves as a trainer for his congregation's safety and security staff to provide a secure environment for worship.

**John Lineberger: Lay Male Nominee**

Congregation : Emmanuel, Lincolnton

Education : AS in Funeral Service, Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service; Study in Sacred Music and Organ, Lenoir-Rhyne

Occupation : Funeral Director and Embalmer

Experience : John has been serving as his congregation's Director of Music Ministry since 2020 and has over 20 years of previous service as director of music and/or organist in ELCA congregations and in other denominations. He is currently a board member of the city of Lincolnton's Downtown Development Association.

**Brinkley Sugg: Lay Male Nominee**

Congregation : Holy Trinity, Raleigh

Education : BSN (1994), UNC Chapel Hill; MDiv (1988) and MSN (1997), Duke Uni.

Occupation : Retired Nurse Practitioner

Experience : Brinkley has been a member of Holy Trinity in Raleigh for 34 years, with service on council, call committees, and multiple other committees. He has a theological education but the perspective of a lay person, and he has more than 30 years of work in healthcare, both public and private practice, with multiple leadership positions.

Synod Council Rostered Female, 4-Year Term— **Choose One**

Nominations for this position will not be accepted on the Assembly floor.

**The Rev. Karen Battle: Rostered Female Nominee (*)**

Congregation : Advent, Charlotte

Education : MDiv (1986), Trinity Luth. Sem.; Spiritual Director (2020), Pneuma Institute; Certified Grief and End-of-Life Coach (2023), Faith+Lead Online

Occupation : Retired Pastor

Experience : Karen currently serves on the NC Synod Bishop's Transition Team. She has also served on the SWPA Synod Ecumenical Relations Committee while co-pastoring a joint ELCA/PCUSA Synodical Worshipping Community. She was also the Director for Educational Resources for the churchwide Women of the ELCA organization.

**Deacon Susan Jackson: Rostered Female Nominee**

Congregation : St. Paul's, Wilmington

Education : BA in Religious Studies, Philosophy, and French, Lenoir-Rhyne; MA concentration in Christian Edu. (2010), LTSS

Occupation : Deacon, Youth and Family Ministries

Experience : Susan served the on synod's Synod Gathering Task Force and Planning Team in 2024. She also served on the Lenoir-Rhyne Uni. Alumni Board from 2015-2021. Currently, she is the WingspanILM UNCW Campus Ministry Board Secretary, a position she has held since 2022.



Deacon GeoRene Jones: Rostered Female Nominee

Congregation : Amity, Cleveland

Education : BBA, Catawba College; MTS, Hood Seminary; additional coursework through Gettysburg Sem. and LSTS

Occupation : Awaiting Call as Minister of Word and Sacrament

Experience : GeoRene served as a paralegal for 28 years. She has served as a congregation council member and on the Constitutional Update Team at St. John's, Salisbury. She has served in multiple NC congregations including Wittenberg in Graite Quarry, St. Luke's in Mt. Ulla, and Amity in Cleveland.



The Rev. Christy Lohr Sapp: Rostered Female Nominee

Congregation : St. Andrew's, Hickory

Education : MA in Religion, Uni. Of South Carolina; PhD in Theology (2009) from Exeter Uni. & Harford Sem.; Candidacy Coursework (2014-2017), Luther Sem.

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Christy is the dean of the Catawba Conference in the NC Synod. She is on the NC Council of Churches Advisory Board and serves on the Lenoir-Rhyne University Board of Trustees.



The Rev. Rachel Theisen: Rostered Female Nominee

Congregation : Faith, Conover

Education : BA in English Lit. (2006), UNC Wilmington; MDiv with studies in Leadership Development (2020-2024), LTSS; Prepare/Enrich Marriage Consultant (2021)

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Rachel currently serves at Faith, where she was invited by the bishop to serve as their interim minister. Her life as a pastor and mom has shaped her into a relational leader. As a certified Prepare/Enrich counselor, she's committed to supporting people and communities toward healthy relationships and faithful growth.

Synod Council Rostered Male, 4-Year Term— **Choose One**

Nominations for this position will not be accepted on the Assembly floor.



The Rev. Paul Carlson: Rostered Male Nominee (I)

Congregation : Calvary, Morganton

Education : BA in History (2003), MDiv (2008), Wartburg Theo. Sem.

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : In Paul's 17 years of ministry he believes that the church is here for the community, not the community for the church, and because of this he joyfully serves as the chair of the Mission and Ministry Committee of the NC Synod, the Vice-President of Options for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Shelter, and is the founder and coordinator of the Morganton Area Winter Emergency Shelter Network of over 100 volunteers.



The Rev. Dr. Julius Carroll: Rostered Male Nominee (*)

Congregation : St. Philip, Raleigh

Education : BA in Urban Studies (1976), Queens College; MDiv (1981) and DMin (2008), LTS Philadelphia

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Julius is currently a member of the synod's Outreach Task Force for redeveloping congregations and new mission starts. From 1988-1991 he was the chairperson of the ELCA Outreach Board. And in 2005 he was the ELCA Director of African Descent Ministries and the project manager for the "ELCA African Descent Strategic Plan."


The Rev. Jonathan Conrad: Rostered Male Nominee

Congregation : St. Paul's, Wilmington

Education : BA in Communication (1993), NC State; MDiv (2003), LTSS

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Jonathan has served various positions in the NC Synod including Fall Convocation Committee Chair, Campus Ministry Team Chair, and has been dean in 2 conferences. He has also served as the president/chairman of the Faith Leaders United in Wilmington from 2018-2024, and has served as the chair of the New Hanover Disaster Coalition from 2019-2021.


The Rev. Matt Hansen: Rostered Male Nominee

Congregation : St. John's, Concord

Education : BA (2013), Concordia College; Certificate (2023), Institute for Ecumenical Research; MDiv (2024), LTSS

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Matt is currently serving in his first call as a rostered minister. He is currently serving a 2-year term as a lay member of the NC Synod Council. He had a decade-long career in digital communications.


The Rev. Thomas Johnston: Rostered Male Nominee

Congregation : St. James, Rockwell

Education : BA of Religious Studies (2020), LTSS; MDiv (2024), Trinity Luth. Sem.

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Thomas serves on the NC Synod's Engage the Bible Ministry Team (since 2023). He also served on the Lutheran Alliance for Faith, Science, and Technology Steering Committee in 2022. And served his Pastoral Internship at Calvary Lutheran Church from 2022-2024 in Richland Hills, Texas.

**The Rev. John Mouritsen: Rostered Male Nominee**

Congregation : Morning Star, Matthews

Education : BA (1992), Wittenberg University; MDiv (1996), LTS at Gettysburg; Stephen Ministry Leader and Care Provider Training (2023)

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : John is a former member of the Board of Directors at Agape Kure Beach Ministries. He has also served as the NC Synod delegate for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2017 and previously served as the Dean for the Mecklenburg/Union Conference in the NC Synod.

**The Rev. Jeff Topinka: Rostered Male Nominee**

Congregation : St. Mark's, China Grove

Education : MDiv (2022), United Luth. Sem.

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Jeff's call to ministry began when he attended an AA meeting. He learned the gift of grace given in a radical way and realized God comes to those outside the church. He attended the 2006 mission start of Christ South in Charlotte, experiencing the gospel in a way that met people where they were with no prerequisites. Now in his third call, when faced with closure, his congregation acted boldly to renovate and rent their extra space and are now experiencing growth.

Discipline Committee

Nominations for this committee will not be accepted on the assembly floor.

**Marty Adams: Discipline Committee**

Congregation : Alamance, Alamance

Education : BS in Business Admin and Women's Studies (1981), Uni. Of Maryland

Occupation : Retired

Experience : Marty has 30+ years of experience managing executive and leadership development, primarily in federal law enforcement agencies. During that time, she served on the disciplinary review board, assessing infractions and ensuring that they were treated equally throughout 60,000+ employees nationwide and worldwide.

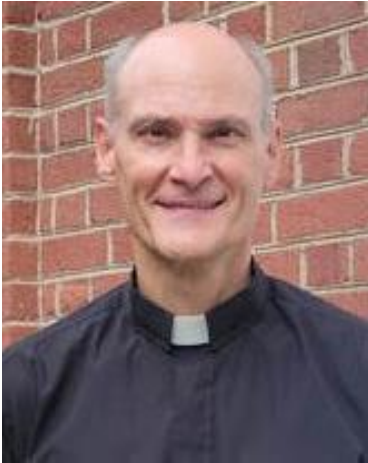
**John Flemming: Discipline Committee**

Congregation : Christ the King, Cary

Education : BS in Business Admin. (1971), UNC Chapel Hill; JD (1978), Wake Forest Uni. School of Law

Occupation : Retired attorney

Experience : John is a retired in-house legal counsel with financial institutions. He has served various leadership roles in congregations, non-profits, and the military. He has served on the NC Synod Council (2013-2016), and started as the chair of the Synod Finance and Property Committee in 2018 and continues to serve on that committee.

**The Rev. Dave Keck: Discipline Committee**

Congregation : St. Mark's, Mooresville

Education : BA (1987), Lenoir-Rhyne; MDiv (1996), LTSS

Occupation : Pastor

Experience : Dave has served with the Lenoir-Rhyne Board of Trustees, TSC Board of Advisors, the synod's Elections Committee, and a variety of local boards and synod-related campaigns. Dave appreciates the nomination to serve Christ and the church through the NC Synod Discipline Committee.

**The Rev. Julie Tonnesen: Discipline Committee**

Congregation : Macedonia, Burlington

Education : BA in Middle Grades Education (2014), Elon Uni.; MDiv, (2019), Duke Uni.

Occupation : Campus Minister

Experience : Julie walks alongside students in her campus ministry as they navigate disciplinary processes through the University and the legal system. She is serving on the Bias Education Response Team at Elon, which requires her to provide input on appropriate consequences for those who exhibit bias or other forms of harm. She also serves on Elon's Community Prevention and Capacity-building Team.