

**REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022**

1. Nominations from the floor shall be made at the time of the first report of the Nominating Committee during the first business session of the Synod Assembly for all positions to be elected at this assembly.
2. The 2019 Churchwide Assembly has changed the definition of “Clergy” to include both Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastors) and Ministers of Word and Service (deacons). Since this Synod has adopted this change to the bylaws of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod constitution, Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) are now eligible to be nominated for Ticket 1. Deacons are no longer eligible for lay positions. However, until action is taken by the Churchwide Assembly in 2022, Tickets 6, 9, and 12 remain limited to Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastors).
3. This year we begin the restructuring of the Synod Council adopted by the 2021 Synod Assembly. As a result, there are fewer seats open, including two rather than three Clergy seats, one rather than two Young Adult seats, and this year there are no At-Large seats open.
4. A reminder that a person making a nomination from the floor must immediately present to the Assembly office a copy of the nominee’s biographical information, and a picture of the nominee. This nomination form should be completed on-line and sent as an email attachment to the registrar, Ms. Cynta Outterbridge, at coutterbridge@sepa.org. The form can be found on the synod’s website, ministrylink.org.

TICKET 1: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY (Two Rostered Ministers to be elected for terms ending 2025)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Marie Sager	St. Timothy, Aston
Rev. Kathleen Harkness	Trinity, Pleasant Valley (<i>call begins May 1, 2022</i>)
Rev. Gwendolyn King	Trinity, Havertown

TICKET 2: SYNOD COUNCIL, LAY PERSON, YOUNG ADULT (One to be elected for a term ending 2025) “Young Adult” is a person between the ages of 18 and 30 at time of election or appointment.

NAME	CONGREGATION
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TICKET 3: SYNOD COUNCIL, DELAWARE CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2025)

NAME	CONGREGATION
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TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, NORTHEAST/NORHWEST CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2025)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Dorothy Wilson	Faith, Philadelphia

TICKET 12: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, CLERGY (Two Ministers of Word and Sacrament to be elected for terms ending 2026)

As a reminder, until action is taken by the Churchwide Assembly, this ticket is still specifically for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, that is, pastors.

NAME	CONGREGATION
Rev. Daniel Eisenberg	St. John, Mayfair, Philadelphia
Rev. Rachel Scheible	Holy Spirit, Secane

TICKET 13: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2026)

NAME	CONGREGATION
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TICKET 14: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY MAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2026)

NAME	CONGREGATION
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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



CHEEDIE, HEERALAL MUKESH (M-P): Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Penndel. M.Div. from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Attend ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza 2022: Boundless

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: Faith. Spirituality. Good Listener. Encourager/dependable. Team player/friendly.

As a pastor and trained Level II ELCA Discipleship Coach, I am a good listener and use my listening skills to be present in the moment, which in turn helps me to hear what is being said. With a strong sense of faith and spirituality, I trust that all things will and do work out according to God's will in the end. One of my passion is to enable, equip and encourage others to live out their baptism call on a daily basis.



DEAN, HEATHER (F-P): Executive Search Manager. B.A. from Hood College. Reformation Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. Pantry assistant at Children of the Promise Christian Fellowship; Church Council member & President at Reformation Lutheran Church

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: As I have been in the business of helping others, I bring the gift of caring. As I have dealt with every economic status in my line of work, I also bring the gift of non-judgement. With all that being said, my work experiences has taught me to be a great listener, and advocate as well. Being resourceful has assisted me within the Church and my work during these times.

Since November 2019, we have been without a Pastor. As a result, not only have I been Council President but also "the answer for everything". My service to the Church has been ongoing without rest or breaks as I believe I've had the most difficult presidency due to the pandemic. Add my 80 hour work week to the mix and all I have is stamina, fortitude and prayer to keep me going. I needed to be well-rounded and well-versed in order to stay strong and continue on my journey at Church and work.



EISENBERG, DANIEL (M-W): Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (Mayfair). B.A. from Gordon College. M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. SEPA Synod RIC Team (present); Rostered Ministers Equipping Event Planning Team (2021); NJ Synod Reference and Council Committee (2017); POWER Interfaith Economic Dignity Co-chairperson (2020-Present); POWER Housing Access subcommittee (2020-Present); United Mercer Interfaith Organization- Secretary (2015-2018).

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: 1. Biblical knowledge- I am good at connecting the stories of Scripture to the challenges of the present 2. Listening- I am a good listener and a non-anxious presence 3. Exhortation- I have a strong passion for the mission of Jesus and for the

church to be a movement rather than a building. 4. Discernment- I have served multiple churches facing hard decisions related to finances and mission development. 5. Hospitality- I enjoy making people feel welcome and comfortable.

In community organizing with POWER, we have been trained on how to engage in effective listening and relational one to ones to understand how various issues are experienced by those with whom we are speaking. In the congregations I have served, I have not shied away from opening discussion around what some consider to be contentious matters of racial justice, LGBTQ inclusion, and economic justice. I have led book studies, Bible studies, and roundtable discussions in addition to individual pastoral care conversations. Before I was a pastor, I was a server and a bartender. I developed skills in compassionate listening.



HARKNESS. KATHLEEN (F-W): Pastor. B.A. from The Defiance College. M.A. from Kean University. M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Associate Pastor; Anti-Racism Team Member; Stephen Ministry Leader; Bucks County Choral Society,

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: Administration, Exhortation, Musical-vocal, Pastoral, Teaching and Writing In baptism, God called me to serve in various careers over the course of my life: music education, business, stay-at-home mom, elementary education, and in ministry as a pastor. I enjoy sharing my faith with others. I have been very successful at getting the various ministry teams--that had previously worked autonomously--to work together for

a common mission. Planting ideas and "seeds" with various teams has been very effective in developing a sense of community and fellowship within my congregation.

I have found ways to develop programs and studies that meet the needs of the congregation and that are relevant to today's world, such as providing an adult confirmation class, teaching classes about Alzheimer's Disease, the Opioid Crises, Seeking Allah (It's about a Muslim that converted to Christianity and why), and currently I developed a class on prayer to help the congregation discern its future. Continuing education is very important—in the last several years, I've been taking summer courses in both pastoral care and Bible at Yale Divinity School to help discover new insights and depth to my ministry. I believe growth and life-long learning is crucial to keep one's ministry fresh and meaningful. In addition, it has been vitally important to establish daily devotional practices including: contemplative prayer multiple times a day. I have studied the Sacred Enneagram and discovered how my gifts of faith and courage motivate and empower my ministry, and I read daily blog posts from the Center for Action and Contemplation—Richard Rohr and others. With the honing of these skills offered a communal prayer group where members of the congregation learned more about contemplative (centering) prayer and lectio divina (praying with scripture). It gave them an opportunity to practice these less familiar ways of praying. Furthermore, it them us a chance to pray together for our congregation, concerns about our ministries, and for our leaders. I also contacted some colleagues to start a small prayer group where we can prayer together. I have a passion for social justice and have joined the SEPA Anti-racism team. I have taken the training to help educate churches about social issues centered around color. I have completed two years of Bowe Family Systems Theory.



KING, GWENDOLYN S. (F-P): Bridge/Interim Pastor. B.A. from Gettysburg College. M.Div. from Howard University School of Divinity. Trinity Lutheran Church, Havertown. SEPA Synod Council-4yrs; Elected Churchwide Executive Board of Women of the ELCA-6yrs; Chair Constitutional Review Committee for W/ELCA-6yrs; Pastoral Presence United Lutheran Seminary; NCCC Governing Board-6 yrs; Co-Chair Women's Caucus NCCC-3yrs; Elected National Lutheran Campus Ministry Inc. Board ELCA-9 yrs; Elected Board Higherr Education and Schools ELCA-4yrs; Chaplain US Air Force Reserves (Retired Colonel)-30 yrs; Initial Interviewer Candidacy Committee SEPA Synod; Lutheran/Episcopal Dialogue and Implementation Committees-New England Synod-9yrs; Board for Mission

New England Synod-6yrs; Member/Trainer SEPA Synod Anti-Racism Team; Board Member and Sever for "Feast Incarnate" (Meals for HIV/AIDS, Homeless and Food Insecure persons); Chaplain/Attendant for Goodfellowship Ambulance Corp, West Chester, PA; Protestant Worship Leader (part-time) Wesly Enhanced Living Mainline (Sr. Residency Facility) Broomall, PA; Below Five Degree Shelter for Homeless, Webster, MA -2 yrs; Church Shelter for Homeless

Women, West Chester, PA-2yrs; Pastoral Supporter for Welcome Church and The Well (Lutheran Church without walls), Philadelphia, PA

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: Insight, enthusiasm for life and the Lord, encouragement of others are some of my gifts. I can often see the larger picture, while listening to others and discern a possible direction. My perspective as a mature ordained woman of color, who has served in multiple contexts, would be an asset to the Synod Council. I also have an ear and a heart for justice and an openness to the Holy Spirit.

I use these gifts daily as a servant of God in various capacities, along with my openness to God's people in need, with the help of the Holy Spirit. I will often walk with people, offer help and/or lead where or if necessary, while sharing stories along the journey together. Having served within all three expressions of the church, ecumenically, and in interfaith settings, my knowledge base is broad and my perspective an insight can be seen as helpful. I have high energy; an open, curious and inquisitive spirit which is active in ministry; and my years working with/among young adults is considered an asset.



RICHARD, LESLIE (F-W): Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Broomall. B.A. from Gettysburg College. M.Div. from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. M.A. from Chestnut Hill College. St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Springfield. 2 Terms Dean of Delaware Conference - 2014-2020; Synod Council - 5 years; Synod Deputy - 2021-Present; Served as Interim Executive Director of EQPP, a grass-roots Transitional Housing program based in Quakertown.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: My work in Spiritual Direction requires gifts in prayerful discernment and deep listening skills. Having served as a Conference Dean I have experience and understanding of congregational matters, and of synodical and ELCA policy and structure expectations. Some of my pastoral and personal skills include patience, compassion, and a desire for fairness and balance, so that all sides may be heard when there is a matter of concern.

An important focus in my ministry has been my commitment to the health and well-being of congregations and their leaders. In my role as a Spiritual Director I have worked primarily with rostered leaders and seminarians in Lutheran and other denominations. My goal is to companion others as they seek to deepen their relationship with God; help expand their ability to express their desire and lived experience of God; and to assist them to develop their life of prayer.

In my six years as Conference Dean I was met with a variety of concerns on the part of congregations and their leadership. Each situation requires some personal contact and conversation, a diagnostic approach to find out "where does it hurt?" and to listen to the story, with the hope that healing may be possible, and reconciliation and relationship building may be the result. In some cases there were serious allegations which needed to be investigated with the assistance of an Inquiry Team appointed by the Office of the Bishop. Instances such as these might include a proposed structure for the congregation and/or leader to follow over a given timeline, with goals which are to be met. The work has always been intended to create transparency, mend relationships, and restore trust and hope.

I believe my experience and the approach used in the work I have done would be useful to the Committee on Discipline. I am willing to serve if elected.



SAGER, MARIE (F-W): Pastor, St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Aston. B. A. from Augsburg College. M. Div. from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Chicago. Central States Synod: One of two deans of the Western Kansas Conference (2019); member of the Synod Mission Table (2017-2019); member of the Bishop Election Facilitation/Nomination Committee (2019); South Eastern PA Synod: member of the DELCO Executive Committee; member of the Ellis Co Ministerial Alliance and ONE advisory board.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: 1. Intentional listener 2. Evangelism - sharing God's love with ALL 3. Being a healing and reconciling presence 4. Cooperative leader 5. Love for ecumenical work

The gifts listed above have assisted in my everyday ministry as a pastor. I would bring these gifts as well if I were chosen to attend the churchwide assembly on behalf of SEPA Synod.



SCHOTT, JILL A. (F-W): Clinical Supervisor/Therapist, Onward Behavior Health. B.S. from West Chester University. M. S. from Neumann University. Ph.D. from Neumann University. St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Woodlyn. Church Council Member (secretary, vice president); Youth Leader; Sunday School Teacher; VBS Director; Facilitation of Bereavement Support Group.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: My top five spiritual and/or personal gifts are: understanding of human behavior; sense of humor; compassion; empathy and ability to maintain confidentiality.

Through my work as a lay leader in my congregation as well as in my work as a therapist and teacher, I have been blessed to touch the lives of hundreds of people. I have been able to inspire others to learn and grow both personally and professionally. Many of my students and clients have shared with me that they are able to see my passion and commitment and feel comfortable when speaking with me.



SCHIEBLE, RACHEL (F-W): Pastor, Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Secane. B.S. from Temple University. M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Delaware County Conference Executive Committee; NAMI Bucks County; Centennial School District Home and School Association; Northeast Branch of PA Christian Endeavor.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: 1. Ability to interact well with all ages 2. Discernment 3. Pastor 4. Hospitality 5. Teaching

Through my church calling, working with youth earlier, and now as leader in church, I've need to be a good listener. It's important to give my undivided attention to whoever is before me, paying attention to their body language. I've also learned to not react, to wait if plausible, and give forethought to my response. As a servant in the church I strive to be supportive and available to the people. I listen to my neighbor, and work to get to know them. Knowing them requires me to learn what interests and weighs on their hearts.



SMITH, DANIEL G. (M-W): Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Narberth. B. A. from The College of New Jersey. M.A. from New York University. M.Div. from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia/United Lutheran Seminary. Field Education at St. Paul's Olney and St. Luke and the Epiphany in Philadelphia, intern and employee at St. Matthew Lutheran in Springfield, current pastor of Holy Trinity in Narberth, member of Delco Conference Executive Team. Mostly through ministerial positions.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: The ability to listen non-judgmentally, grounding in Scripture, discernment, working on a team, patience

In serving as a pastoral intern and pastor, I have increasingly found myself in situations where the above qualities have been very helpful in navigating tension, disagreement, and conflict.



VARSANYI, JOSEPH (M-W): Retired, Pastor. M.Div., from Concordia Lutheran Seminary. 42 years of service to Congregations, Synods, and churchwide. St. Philip's Deaf Church (Phila); Holy Cross Lutheran (N. Phila); Epiphany Lutheran (Roxborough); Christ the King Deaf Church, (West Chester); Director of Pastoral Care at Paul's Run Retirement Community (NE Phila.); Pastoral Care Director at Jefferson Hospital; St. Peter's Lutheran Church, (Hilltown); St. Michael Lutheran Church (Kensington); Bridge Pastor; University Lutheran Church of the Incarnation (West Phila.); *I organized*

and was co-chair of the Ethics Committee at Methodist Hospital; (2004-2013) I worked closely with the HR Committee at Methodist Hospital, helping to address and resolve employee / employer conflicts. Pastor Joe has a strong interest in American Sign Language, artwork, playing organ and piano, monastic/community life beyond the other involvements listed on the two pages.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: Pastor Joe enjoys positive reputation in the areas of 1. Preaching 2. Collaboration 3. Spiritual care 4. Ecumenical endeavors 5. Language (American Sign Language) and disability support and advocacy.

Pastor Joe served beyond congregational ministry. He served on the SEPA Synod Council in the 1990s. Her founded the ecumenical ministerial in Roxborough established a joint Lutheran

Catholic Relations Committee, managed the clergy volunteer program for locale clergy volunteering in the hospital and co-led a community bereavement program at the hospital.



WELLINGTON, RALPH G. (M-W): Lawyer. B.A. from Kalamazoo College. J.D. from University of Michigan. Christ Ascension Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. Past: Church Council; various committees; Current: church musician; Board Chair of Lutheran Settlement House; Board Chair of Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts; Board of Mann Center for Performing Arts; Board of Trustees of Kalamazoo College.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: 1. I am calm and considerate and do not rush to conclusions. 2. I was raised as a Lutheran and have always remained so. 3. My brother-in-law and several of my closest friends are members of the clergy of the Lutheran Church, so I have a perspective on pastoral service. 5. My experience in law and serving as an arbitrator and mediator gives me a developed perspective on propriety and discipline. 5. While I have often been in court

over legal disputes, I am very experienced in resolving disputes and issues outside the court by discussion and mediation.

I have always been active in churches where I was member, including Christ Ascension where I have been a member for 36 years. Those activities have included service on Council, multiple committees, legal advice, etc.



WILSON, DOROTHY J. (F-W): Retired Analyst. B.S. from Bloomsburg. M. Ed. from Pennsylvania State University. Faith Lutheran Church, Philadelphia Congregational Deacon at Faith, Philadelphia; Feast of Justice.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts: My real strength is my love of God and the willingness to share that love with others and to make a place that welcomes anyone wanting to learn about the goodness of our Lord.

As a congregational deacon, I have worked with others in the church to start a garden, collect "cloaks" on Palm Sunday, and "Pack the Pickup" with food, all in support of Feast of Justice.