

**REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA
SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2026**

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 changed the definition of “Clergy” to include both Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastors) and Ministers of Word and Service (deacons). Therefore, Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) are now eligible to be nominated for Ticket 1. Deacons are no longer eligible for lay positions.
3. 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 may also 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 2029)

NAME	CONGREGATION
The Rev. Timothy Ness	St. Paul, Ardmore
The Rev. Dr. Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath	Redeemer, Jamison

TICKET 2: SYNOD COUNCIL, CHESTER CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2029)

NAME	CONGREGATION
<i>There are no nominees from the committee</i>	

TICKET 3: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER BUCKS CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2029)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Dr. John Connors	God’s Love, Newtown

TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER MONTGOMERY CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2028)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Dr. Marcia Boraas	St. John, Melrose Park

TICKET 5: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, CLERGY (Two rostered ministers to be elected for terms ending 2032)

NAME	CONGREGATION
The Rev. Jane Marston	Tabor, Philadelphia
The Rev. Ann Shade	St. Michael, Sellersville

TICKET 6: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2032)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Mr. Carl Reitz	Redeemer, Jamison

TICKET 7: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2032)

There are no nominees from the committee

TICKET 8: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY (Two rostered ministers to be elected for terms ending 2032)

NAME	CONGREGATION
The Rev. Jennifer Casey	Holy Trinity, Wallingford
The Rev. Tori Callahan Geiger	St. Andrew, Perkasio

TICKET 9: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2032)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Mr. Vincent Spiritosanto	God's Love, Newtown

TICKET 10: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2032)

NAME	CONGREGATION
Ms. Sue Durborow	Good Shepherd, Coatesville

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

TICKET 1: SYNOD COUNCIL, CLERGY (Two rostered ministers to be elected for terms ending 2029)



NESS, TIMOTHY (M-W): Pastor, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Clifton Heights. B.A. from Muhlenberg College. M.Div. from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Synod Stewardship team 2015 to 2020; Synod First Call Education team 2019 to 2022; Synod Consultation Committee; Tuscarora Youth Retreat planning team 2017 to present; Thrivent Local Chapter Board 2013 to 2016; Cooking for various hunger ministries throughout my time in SEPA, including Feast Incarnate, the Life Center of Eastern Delaware County, and Caring for Friends.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

My gifts are a spirit of collaboration, teaching, good listening skills, commitment to our Lutheran tradition, and leadership.

I have been a part of several teams and committees since being called SEPA synod in 2013. I served both as a team member and as leader or chair. In all these instances I am eager to be of help or assistance and to articulate the vision or direction of the work the team is doing. Currently I am the chair of the planning team for the Tuscarora Youth retreat that takes place each spring. In my current call my focus is on children and family ministry, and I bring these same gifts to work with children of all ages, as well as some adult education programming.



RODRICK-SCHNAATH, HEIDI M. (F-W): Interim Pastor, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; St. Luke Lutheran Church, Devon; B. A. from University of Colorado, Boulder; M. Div. from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; D. Min. from United Lutheran Seminary; Member of Faith Alive Curriculum Team, SEPA Synod, 2025 - present + Synod Council Member, SEPA Synod, 2023-present + Member of Synodical Candidacy Committee, SEPA Synod, 2020 - 2022 + Title IX Investigator, United Lutheran Seminary, 2018-2025 (contract position) + Region 7 First Call Event, Planning Committee and Staff, 2005 -2015 + Theological Reviewer, Collaborate: Lutheran Confirmation, Sparkhouse, 2015(contract work) + Chair, Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly Committee 1999 + Member of Central States Synod Council, 1992-1995 LCA Youth Staffer, 1980-81; Board Member, East Mt Airy Neighbors Community Organization, 2011-2015 + Administrator, RevGalBlogPals, Facebook Community, 2014-2022 + Contributor to "Ask the Matriarch," "Friday Five," "Prayers for Monday" and devotions for the RevGalBlogPals.org website, 2009-

2022 + Congregational Coordinator of Volunteers at Hesed House (homeless shelter in IL) 1995-2005.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

1) Creative, insightful problem solver; 2) Skilled storyteller, connecting people with the gospel and each other.; 3) Passion for serving the whole church; 4) Wisdom. It's an honor to be asked for insight or advice.; 5) Teaching is one of the best parts of being a pastor.

A colleague once called me a "Swiss Army Knife. I treasure the compliment for its insight into my creativity, adaptability and servanthood. I've served rural and suburban congregations in Missouri, Illinois and Pennsylvania. It has been a joy to serve synods and churchwide through my work with Augsburg-Fortress, LTSP and United Lutheran Seminary. I am convinced that the church is not dying, it is evolving. I am inspired to keep trying new experiments! Luther was right. "The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me."

TICKET 2: SYNOD COUNCIL, CHESTER CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2029)

There are no nominees from the committee

TICKET 3: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER BUCKS CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2029)



CONNORS, JOHN (M-W): Retired Provost, Academic Affairs. B. A. from University of Wisconsin – Madison; Doctoral from University of Kentucky; Lutheran Church of God’s Love.; Synodical Service – CURRENT: - Member, SEPA Synod Council (Lay man representative, Lower Bucks Conference) 1st 3-year term ending 2026; - Member, Executive Committee of Synod Council (elected lay man) 2023-present; - Member, Constitution Committee (a Synod Council committee) 2023-present [Chair, 2025-present] ; - Member, Care of Creation Ministry Team (2025-present); : Synodical Service – PAST: - Lay Man Voting Member to the Churchwide Assembly (7/28 – 8/2/2025, Phoenix, AZ); - Co-author (with Joy Baxter, PhD), “Resolution on Care for Creation,” adopted by the 2024 SEPA Synod Assembly; Congregational Service

- CURRENT: Member, vocal choir; Teacher, Sunday Morning Children’s Ministry; Member, Mutual Ministry Committee; - PAST: Chair, Nominating Committee (2025); Member, Congregation Council (two consecutive 3-year terms); Member, Christian Preschool Board (6 years); Member, Interim Ministry Advisory Committee; Acted as St Nicholas Seamen's Church Institute of Philadelphia and South Jersey; Member, Board of Directors (2014 - 2022); - Bylaws Committee:- Mission/Education Task Force
<https://www.sciphiladelphia.org/>

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

1. Teaching;
2. Intellectual curiosity;
3. Attention to detail;
4. Written communication skills
5. Recognizing and thanking others for their contributions and successes

[Numbers below correspond to respective gifts above]

1. Church: teach Sunday school; Work: taught pharmacy students about antibiotics in classroom and clinic; 2. Church: researched synod best practices churchwide for reviewing congregational constitutions; Work: researched best practices in drafting policies; 3. Church: reviewing budgets; reviewing congregation-submitted constitutions; Work: compliance with institutional and program accreditation standards; 4. Church: revising home congregation's constitution; co-authoring resolution for 2024 Synod Assembly (Care for Creation); Work: drafted/edited reports for institutional/specialty program accreditation; 5. Church: recognizing/thanking congregation and council members for contributions of time/talent; Work: strove to develop culture of recognizing individuals and celebrating successes

TICKET 4: SYNOD COUNCIL, LOWER MONTGOMERY CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2028)

BORASS, MARICA (F-W): Retired Surgeon. B.A. from Princeton University; M.D. University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; St. John's Lutheran Church, Melrose Park; SEPA Synod Council 2023 – 2026 St. John's: Congregational Council (current President), Social Ministry, Finance, Space Sharing; previously Chancel Choir, Personnel, Pastoral Support, Finance, Property, and both Transition and Call Committees: Blood Donor; Service activities through St. John's - i.e. Feast Incarnate, annual community drives for diapers/hygiene products, Family Promise Food Pantry, pet shelter supplies, cold weather items for the Welcome Church, Gemma Christmas gifts, and ongoing collaboration with The Breathing Room.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

1. Sense of Humor,
2. Thoughtfulness,
3. Attention to detail,
4. Empathy,
5. Discernment of call

There is no question in my mind that my professional calling as a breast cancer surgeon was made possible by these gifts, which were essential to relationships with both my patients and my colleagues. The work was challenging and inherently stressful, requiring both confidence and humility on the part of the surgeon, but the rewards were correspondingly great. I believe these gifts are what allowed me to develop the close interpersonal connections and the personal resilience required to optimally serve those in my care. My home congregation of St. John's is currently going through a transitional period as we work to move our small congregation toward improved financial stability for continued ministry. During my current tenure as Council president, we have engaged with Partners for Sacred Places, evaluated our resources and mission, and are now taking concrete steps to sell our parsonage and utilize the vacant space in our education wing and church building for revenue generation and community benefit. While the congregation is committed and we are cautiously optimistic that our efforts will be

successful, the work remains challenging. Once again, without the gifts listed above, I am certain that I would not have been able to fulfill my role in the process.

TICKET 5: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, CLERGY (Two rostered ministers to be elected for terms ending 2032)



MARSTON, JANE (F-W): Pastor, Tabor Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. B. S. from Dickinson College; M. A. from York University, Toronto; M. Div. from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia; Current: Synod Anti-Racism Team, Vice Pastor at Prince of Peace, Philadelphia, Synod Hunger Team Past: One term on Synod Council; two terms as Conference Dean; Congregational Vitality; Pendle Hill Community Choir; Poll Worker

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

Honestly, I'm not sure I have five spiritual gifts. If wisdom means imagining what principles might look like in practice, I'm pretty good at that. If faith means trusting God walks with us through painful situations and brings good out of them despite our missteps, then I've been learning that.

Before attending seminary, I served as the parish administrator in congregation for more than a decade. I worked with multiple staff configurations (e.g., Senior/Associate pastors; Pastor/Pastoral Intern; Copastors). The pastors I worked with there and on field education and internship were excellent role models. Those experiences, along with five units of Clinical Pastoral Education, have been very helpful to me in ministry, and particularly in the six years I served as Conference Dean.



SHADE, ANN (F-W): Pastor, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Sellersville. B.A. from Eastern University. M.Div. from United Lutheran Seminary. I have served on congregation council at my home church; I have participated in many committees, including worship and music. I have sung in choirs and was a youth leader/guide for many years, attending several youth gatherings. I completed internship at St. Paul's in Glenside. I have been at my church of call for two years and I have been doing a lot of listening. In this time, I have come to recognize the importance of partnership with sister churches as well as community organizations. I love the relationships that we are building in having a wider church presence in the community.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

My strongest spiritual gifts are empathy, compassion, relationship-building, deep listening and a prayerful, pastoral presence. Others share that they experience in me hopefulness in reconciliation, genuine care, and thoughtful dialogue. One of my favorite words to use in ministry is "companion" as I think it defines our ministries and the work that we do as Christ-centered companionship.

These gifts are used during Bible study, where we dwell in the Word of God; we laugh, we cry, and we share stories of our faith journey. They are also present when I visit someone for spiritual or pastoral care. Through discernment and prayer, these gifts have guided dialogue when differences of opinion were shared and there was a need for peace and reconciliation. I have also used these gifts in creating a behavioral covenant currently used at our church. This “live” document serves as a beautiful reminder of who we are called to be and how we are called to love and respect one another as the body of Christ.

TICKET 6: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2032)



REITZ, CARL O. (M-W): Retired Aerospace Engineer. Michigan. B.S. from Penn State University M.S. from Bucknell University; Redeemer Lutheran Church, Jamison. As member of Synod Generosity Team (2015-present), prepared and presented symposia on Electronic Giving and Fall Stewardship Appeals, providing immediate takeaways for congregations in attendance; also did registration at Generosity Extravanzas. As member of Congregational Councils, chaired generosity and finance teams at both Zion, Bristol and Redeemer, Jamison, managing often decreasing resources to continue enabling all ministries. Led major fundraising efforts for physical improvements at both churches. Taught or co-taught Imagination Station (science segment) at

Redeemer’s VBS 17 years. Am past commodore and have been a guiding force to an NPO that promotes sailing education in MD and VA.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

Faith, the trust in God’s abundant love that all will end well; Ability to find and accept workarounds; Teaching, be it one-on-one or teaching a group; Recognition of racial bias and the need for social justice; Encouragement of others to keep going and sometimes try a different path

The three previous times my congregation called a new pastor, I ENCOURAGED having FAITH that it would turn out well. It did. An example of WORK AROUNDS is structuring plans to stay within resources or finding ways to increase resources. I led a campaign to reroof Redeemer that successfully paid for the roof and built an ongoing capital fund. My TEACHING resulted in several Synod congregations using electronic giving and also kickstarted some fall generosity campaigns. Recognition of racial bias gave me the opportunity to advocate for RACIAL JUSTICE among those who do not recognize their own bias.

TICKET 7: CONSULTATION COMMITTEE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2032)

There are no nominees from the committee

TICKET 8: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, CLERGY (Two rostered ministers to be elected for terms ending 2032)



CASEY, JENNIFER (F-W): Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Wallingford. B.A. from West Chester University. M.Div. from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. Synod Hunger Team – past; Dean – past; Synod Council – past; Reference and Counsel; Candidacy Committee; First Call Theological Education - Co-Hort facilitator; Seminary Field Education Site – supervisor; Chester Eastside Inc. - board member.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

Bridge-Building; Curiosity; Discernment; Clear-Eyed Compassion; Administration

I've used these gifts through relational ministry and leadership — building trust across differences, listening carefully to people's experiences, and helping cultivate connection and community. Curiosity and discernment help me pay attention to both the realities people are carrying and the movement of the Holy Spirit within communities. My gifts with administration coupled with compassion shape how I approach conflict, change and care for others, holding honesty and grace together. In both the church and broader community, these gifts have helped communities navigate change with honesty, compassion, and hope.



CALLAHAN GIGER, VICTORIA (F-W): Pastor, St. Andrew Lutheran Church. B.A. from Bridgewater College; M. Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary; M. S. W. from Rutgers University. Camp Counselor/Craft Director/Director of TLC at Camp Mount Luther (2016-2020) I am a first call pastor and have not had synodical experience in the SEPA synod, and I am hoping to gain experience and become more involved. I have extensive leadership experience through my schooling. One example is my service on the Honor Council of Bridgewater College and serving as Chair my Senior Year. Volunteer: Ride for the Runaways (2025-Present) Volunteer: Rise Against Hunger (2025-Present); Volunteer: Emmanuel E-meals 1000 meals challenges (2023-Present); Volunteer:

Rescue Pets Serving Vets (2020-2023), Volunteer: Open Doors (2017-2020).

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

My five spiritual and personal gifts are discernment rooted in trauma-informed care and harm reduction, compassionate listening, integrity, a commitment to reconciliation, and courage to uphold the tension of accountability and grace. I value confidentiality and Spirit-led discernment that seek restoration, while honoring the dignity and safety of each person.

As a therapist and pastor, my discernment process is colored by a lens of trauma-informed care and harm-reduction practices. Assessing circumstances, intentions, one's level of accountability, and their understanding of their impact on others. Compassionate listening is vital to my work and ministry, creating space where people feel seen and heard without judgment. I uphold strict confidentiality and integrity, while doing so in light of the promises made during Ordination. In service to the church, I lean into the tension of accountability and grace, when managing conflict among congregants and staff. My commitment is to reconciliation, when possible, while protecting the dignity and safety of each person.

TICKET 9: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY MAN (One lay man to be elected for a term ending 2032)



SPIRITOSANTO, VINCENT (M-W): Retired Owner/ Head Technologist, Makefield Dental Laboratory. Lutheran Church of God's Love, Newtown. Church Council President – 7 terms / Finance, Worship & Music, Evangelism & Property Committees; Congregational Rep. to Synod & Conference meetings / Synod Assembly Volunteer (NJ & SEPA Synods); Lay Worship Assistant & Usher / Tech Team (live stream worship during COVID closure); Youth Group Chaperone / Vacation Bible School Staff; Weekend/holiday Cook & Kitchen Supervisor; Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, Yardley; Donated Dental Services (low income/disabilities) / Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program (donated services); The Peace Center, Bucks County – trained Peacekeeper for public gatherings/events; Pennsbury Manor – historic interpreter for school & public tours.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

Responding to God's loving grace and Spirit, I seek to love others by being an attentive listener and effective communicator. I'm naturally patient, sympathetic, compassionate and empathetic. I learned Parliamentary Procedure running church meetings and I enthusiastically support my commitments. I instinctively want to help whenever and wherever it's needed.

Raised as an Italian Catholic named Spiritosanto ("Holy Spirit") I became active in churches when I met and married a Lutheran pastor. We've served churches in NJ and SEPA Synods for 40 years where I've applied many of my talents – some I didn't realize I had! I recently retired from owning a commercial Dental Laboratory which required knowledge of sound business practices and patient care skills which proved helpful in parish ministry. My faith informed my business decisions to support several Donated Dental Service programs. I'm feeding my passion for history as a volunteer School Tour Interpreter at Pennsbury Manor.

TICKET 10: COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE, LAY WOMAN (One lay woman to be elected for a term ending 2032)



DURBOROW, SUSAN U. (F-W): Retired Owner/HR, Veteran Construction & Utility Services, Inc. B.A. from West Chester University. Lutheran Church Good Shepherd, Coatesville. Church Council; Staff Support; Property; Volunteered at various elementary schools on the PTO and on various other committees. I am currently helping one of the local elementary schools with their garden club.

Spiritual and/or Personal Gifts:

-Faith in God; -Listening to others; -Service to others
-Believing that there is good in all of us but realizing that there are times when the good does not always come through; -Treating all people fairly, no matter what our differences may be.

I have been an active member of my congregation for many years. I have given of my time, gifts and resources as I have been able to. I have served as Council President during two separate terms as a council member. I was in an HR position at various companies and have used this experience in running a business with my husband. I have worked with past Pastors on the Staff Support/Mutual Ministry committees. I am a certified Food Manager at our church. We host various congregational and community events, and I am responsible for the safe serving and handling of the food at these events.