

Who's Up Front?



Bishop Ann Svennungsen, Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop

Ann was elected February 18, 2012, to a six-year term as bishop by voting members of the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly. The historic vote—held at Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Prior Lake—made her the first woman to serve as bishop in any of the ELCA's six Minnesota synods.

Rev. Svennungsen has been a leader in congregations and church-related organizations for more than 30 years. Following graduation from seminary in 1981, Svennungsen pastored congregations in Iowa City, Iowa, and Edina, Minnesota. In 1996, she became senior pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead, Minnesota, a 3,700-member congregation and—at the time—the largest ELCA congregation to be led by a female senior pastor. In her years of parish ministry, Svennungsen mentored several younger pastors and developed Trinity's Transition into Ministry Pastoral Residency Program, funded by a \$750,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment.

In 2003, Svennungsen was named president of The Fund for Theological Education, a national, ecumenical organization devoted to raising up the next generation of excellent and diverse ministers and scholars, annually awarding \$1.2 million in scholarships and other support.

From 2007 to 2010, Svennungsen served as president of Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas, where she led development of a comprehensive new strategic plan. Most recently, she was interim college pastor at St. Olaf College and held an appointment as Resident Scholar at the Collegetown Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at Saint John's University.

Svennungsen also founded and serves as director of The Presidents' Pledge Against Global Poverty—an initiative inviting university presidents to pledge five percent of their annual income to combat global poverty—a moral and public commitment intended to inspire greater giving and resolve among leaders in universities and other sectors. This work echoes the ELCA's deep commitment to "faith in action," including efforts to eradicate extreme poverty worldwide.

Born and raised in Shelby, Montana, Svennungsen graduated summa cum laude in mathematics from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and received her Master of Divinity degree from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Trinity Seminary awarded Svennungsen the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 2008.

Married to Rev. Dr. William Russell, a Reformation specialist, they are parents to Sarah (Dan) Karlgaard, John Russell (deceased), and Mary (Geoff) Koslig; and grandparents to John and Annika Karlgaard.



Rev. Dr. David Lose, Keynote Speaker

David J. Lose became the president of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia on Sept. 1, 2014. Before that, he held the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary, where he also served as the Director of the Center for Biblical Preaching and Academic Dean. He earned his MDiv (1993) and STM (1997) at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He received a four-year presidential scholarship to Princeton Theological Seminary, where he was awarded a PhD in homiletics (2000).

David is the author of *Preaching at the Crossroads: How the World — and Our Preaching — Is Changing* (2013), *Making Sense of the Cross* (2011), *Making Sense of the Christian Faith* (2010), *Making Sense of Scripture* (2009), and *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (2003). In addition, he offers reflections on his blog “...in the Meantime” and on the radio program “Day1.”

Prior to his faculty appointment at Luther Seminary, Lose held pastorates at St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Summit, New Jersey (1993-96); Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Audubon, New Jersey (1997-98); and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Princeton Junction, New Jersey (1998-2000). He speaks widely in the United States and abroad on preaching, Christian faith in a postmodern world, and biblical interpretation.

David will be installed as senior pastor at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis,



Rev. Ruben Duran, ELCA Churchwide Representative

The Rev. Ruben Duran serves as Director for New Congregational Development in the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He is responsible for promoting the development of area strategies, local initiatives, and emerging models for the multiplication of new communities of faith in the U.S. and the Caribbean.

Ruben is a native of Lima, Peru, South America. He was introduced to the Lutheran Church through the work of missionaries. He received a BA in Business Administration from the Escuela Nacional de Turismo, and worked as a Travel Agent prior to coming to the Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle. Ruben is a graduate of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California.

He served parishes in the Seattle and Los Angeles areas prior to becoming Associate to the Bishop and Mission Director for the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA. He has also served as Associate Director for Latino Outreach in the former Division for Congregational Ministries and Executive for Congregational Outreach Services in the former Division for Outreach.



Rev. Barbara Lundblad, Bible Study Leader

Barbara Lundblad received a B.A. in English from Augustana College (1966), the M.Div. from Yale Divinity School (1979), and the D.D. from Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. An ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, she served 16 years as a parish pastor in New York City, as well as campus pastor at Lehman College and New York University. She has taught preaching at Yale Divinity School, Princeton Theological Seminary, Hebrew Union College, and in the D.Min. program of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools.

In 2007, she served as president of the Academy of Homiletics. Her teaching interests include preaching in partnership with the congregation, preaching and social transformation, new forms of preaching, and preaching as an integral part of worship.

Barbara is the author of two books *Transforming the Stone: Preaching through Resistance to Change* and *Marking Time: Preaching Biblical Stories in Present Tense*. This latter book is based on the Beecher Lectures which she gave at Yale Divinity School. In addition she has published articles in journals such as *Currents in Theology and Mission*, *Word and World*, *Journal of Preaching*, and *The Living Pulpit*.

For more than 20 years, she has been one of the preachers on the radio program "Day 1" (formerly "The Protestant Hour"). She has preached in hundreds of congregations across the United States and has given lectures at many seminaries in this country and Canada, as well as a Lutheran World Federation conference in Buenos Aires. She is currently a member at Grace University Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.



Bruce Henry, Music Leader

Bruce A. Henry is a vocalist, performer and educator extraordinaire. Henry's eclectic vocal style has been influenced by legends such as John Coltrane, Leon Thomas, Gil Scott Heron, Al Jarreau, Nina Simone and Marvin Gaye.

Bruce possesses a three-octave range, a pure voice with versatility few can match. Bruce's music has taken him to five continents and he has recorded for Disney, HBO and numerous national ad campaigns. In addition he has performed with and opened for the likes of Doc Severinson, Roberta Flack, Chris Botti, Ramsey Lewis, Stephane Grapelli, Jimmy Jam and The Sounds of Blackness.

Bruce is the Music Leader at Messiah Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

Bruce and his band, The Bruce Henry Band, will provide music for worship, and will perform a musical selection titled, "My American Blues."



Dee Cole Vodicka, Executive Assistant to the Bishop

Dee Cole Vodicka serves as executive assistant to the Bishop. She came to the synod from Augsburg College, where she was a member of the Education Department. Dee worked in the field of education for 19 years as a special education teacher, district coordinator, and in the field of teacher education. Prior to entering the field of education, she worked and lived in intentional Christian community with her husband and children focusing on various works of justice and mercy, including ministries at Koinonia Partners, the Alderson Hospitality House, and the Open Door Community. Dee is a graduate of North Park College (BA) and Georgia Southwestern College (MEd). Dee and her husband, John attend Grace University Lutheran. They are parents to three adult sons. Dee enjoys singing, bike riding, reading, walking, and spending time with her children.



Craig Johnson, Synod Council Vice President



Ty Inglis, Synod Council Treasurer



Tom Olson, Synod Council Secretary



Jason Langworthy, Parliamentarian



Tammy Pust, Parliamentarian