

2016 Synod Nominations

Synod Council

Ms. Robin Matthews, Great Divide Cluster, eligible for re-election (6-20(2))

My name is Robin Matthews. I live in Helena, Montana and am a member of New Life Lutheran Church. My husband Steve and I moved to Helena 11 years ago from Columbia, South Carolina. My husband of 39 years is a retired Marine. We have two sons and currently 2 granddaughters. I have been a Lutheran since birth. Steve and I have been members of several congregations over the years due to our Marine Corps travels. I have served on church councils and committees through our travels. I currently serve on the Worship and Music Committee at New Life. I currently am not employed.

Mr. Neal Wedum, Golden Triangle Cluster, eligible for re-election (6-20(2))

Neal Wedum, a semi-retired educator from Choteau, Montana, is a lifetime member of Trinity Lutheran Church. He is serving his third term as member of Trinity's Church Council and is finishing his first term on the Montana Synod Council representing the Golden Triangle Cluster. Currently, he is employed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction as a School Improvement Consultant. Civically, he is on the Board of Neighbors in Need and My Student in Need. He recreates reading, woodworking, hiking, running and serving as a volunteer campground host with his wife, Pam, at Two Medicine Campground in Glacier National Park during the summer.

Ms. Mary Hutchinson, Shepherd Cluster, (6-20(1))

Mary Hutchinson has served at the Billings Clinic for 35 years, and has an educational background in Nursing. She has held a variety of leadership roles in the Billings community for the past 20 years.

Her children have been very active in soccer and have been very involved in many volunteer activities associated with this sport.

She has been involved with Council at American Lutheran Church in Billings for the last 5 years. She was asked to fill a vacated position for the Youth representative and has since served 2 terms. She has had the privilege of holding the role of Council president for 2 years and believes that the experience has been enlightening and rewarding. She has been blessed to work with a dedicated group of individuals focusing on the missions of the congregation.

Mr. Doug Allie, Fort Peck Cluster, eligible for re-election (6-20(2))

Doug Allie was born in Glasgow, Montana, September 14, 1947. He was confirmed at First Lutheran Church in 1962 and graduated from Glasgow High School in 1966. In 1970, he graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in Business Administration.

For a number of years he worked in personnel management and labor relations, until joining United Insurance and Realty, Inc., in Glasgow, Montana, as a partner in 1977. He retired from the firm in 2014. Throughout his career, he was an active member of the Independent Insurance Agents of Montana, serving as president of the association in 1993. He also served on the University of Montana Business School Advisory Board and completed two terms on the Church Council of First Lutheran Church. In 2009, he was a member of the Montana Synod team at the National Assembly, and he will finish his first term on the Montana Synod Council this year. He is married and has three adult children.

Nominating Committee

John Sheppard 2020 (2)

Currently serving as a member of the nominating committee for 2015-2016. Completing LPA training program. Member of the Board of Directors for Lutheran Campus Ministry at MSU Bozeman. Has held a variety of church leadership positions, including voting member of Synod assemblies and conventions in three different synods, member of Congregation Council, chair of Music and Worship committee, Adult Forum leader, Confirmation/Affirmation of Baptism teacher, High School Sunday School teacher, member of various church and community choirs, worship assistant, supply preacher, Secretary of the Bozeman Chord Rustlers, Secretary and Chair of the IEEE Central Montana Section.

Rev. Joel Skindlov 2020 (2)

I am Rev. Joel Skindlov and I serve as pastor at Christ Lutheran in Big Sandy and Messiah Lutheran in Havre. I serve on the Montana Synod Mission Table and served as a member of the Strategic Plan task force at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp. I enjoy my work as a pastor because it allows me to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to a variety of different ages of people in creative and life giving ways. My wife Melissa and I have three daughters, Hannah, Harper, and Hadley. They keep us active with their energy and zest for life. I also enjoy reading, participating in outdoor ministry, and making up and singing silly songs with anyone who will join with me.

Kogodus Board – Three positions

Juanita Hogenson

I was born in Waukegan, Illinois and grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I attended and graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with a BA degree in Elementary Education. My teaching career included positions in Des Moines, and Grinnell Iowa and the Great Falls Public School System.

Great Falls has been my home for 51 years, and I have two grown sons. I have always been an active volunteer in the community, including: Cascade County Health Clinic Board of Directors,

Advisory Committee for Enhancement of Higher Education in Great Falls, Montana Education Association, and Great Falls Education Association, American Association of University Women, Friendship Force of Central Montana, and President and Board member of the Cascade Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

In addition, I have always been an active member of my church, including: teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir, serving on the Church Council, board member and President of the Women of the ELCA, Team leader for the Stephen Ministry program, and on numerous committees in my church home.

I am presently active in the Great Falls Community Concert Board of Directors and also usher for the many concerts at the Great Falls Civic Center. One day each week I volunteer at Helping Hands, a program for food and clothing for the needy at First English Lutheran Church. Several days each week I sing with the "Swinging Senior's and we sing at the nursing homes and retirement centers in Great Falls. I am presently President of Kogodus Renewal Ministry and would like to continue to serve for a couple more years on the board.

Pastor Ellen Ayres

- A native of Southern California
- Worked as a prosecuting attorney in California
- Celebrated turning 60 in 2007 by entering seminary at PLTS and enrolling in "Summer Greek"
- While at seminary helped in a nursing home ministry, did chaplaincy training in a hospice facility
- Served internship in Walker, Minnesota in a large Lutheran congregation and a tiny Episcopal mission on the Leech Lake Reservation (first experience driving in snow)
- Graduated from PLTS in 2011 and was called to serve the congregations of Harlem, Hogeland, and Turner, Montana.
- Ellen is a widow with three adult children and one granddaughter.

Lee Thornton Christianson

Birthdate: October 2, 1964

Birth place: Bozeman, MT

Married to Holly Christianson – July 23, 1988

5 Children:

Nate Christianson – Minot, ND

Kate Christianson – Missoula, MT

Jasmine Christianson – Anaconda, MT

Dakota Christianson – Billings, MT

Charlie Christianson – Missoula, MT

HS Graduate from Beaverhead County HS, Dillon, MT, 1983

College Graduate – BA from Concordia College, Moorhead MN, 1987

Work experience:

Financial Consultant - November 2003 to Present

Thrivent Financial – Missoula, MT

I am currently the financial advisor for over 800 clients across north central Montana. I have experience with hiring, training, budgeting, visioning, marketing, planning, and all facets of running a financial services business. I have strong knowledge in all financial strategies dealing with gifting and operations of a business.

Project Administrator - May 2001 to October 2003

Anderson Consulting Engineers – Dillon, MT

I was in charge of finding new projects, bidding, organizing, and overall project administration for a small surveying and engineering firm.

Director of Training/Trainer - February 1994 to May 2001

Great Harvest Franchising, Inc. – Dillon, MT

I was in charge of training new bakery owners for the franchise office. I taught new franchisees all facets of financing, location hunting, construction, opening, and finally operating a financially strong bread bakery business.

Program Director - February 1991 to February 1994

The Glacier Institute – Kalispell, MT

I was in charge of all facets of the outdoor education program that occurred throughout the year at two different facilities. The programs and facilities were located in Glacier National Park and Flathead National Forest.