

**DEEPENING DISCIPLESHIP TABLE**  
**South Carolina Synod Assembly**  
**2022**

Rev. Pat Riddle, who served faithfully as the convener of this table for many years, retired and Rev. Megan Lineberger took on the role as convener. The Network chairs and convener met a few times throughout the year with guidance of the synod to determine which areas are still strong as we move through the pandemic and which areas need work or leadership.

Lifelong Faith Formation Network (Deacon Deborah Poole) coordinated events, resources, activities. Region 9 offered four Faith Formation webinars led by leaders of LifelongFaith.com. The Network is searching for persons to lead Christian Education and Worship and Prayer Task Forces.

Congregational Vitality sponsored three webinars by Ryan Panzer, author of *Grace and Gigabytes*. Congregation Vitality has been meeting monthly and are expanding the team. They are preparing a database of resources for rostered leaders and congregations.

Interim Ministry Task Force (Rev. Jane Mitchum) continued to meet bi-monthly via Zoom with all interim pastors in the synod. This group completed a 6-week workshop led by Mark Tidsworth on Systems Theory and its relevance to congregational life. The interim pastors gathered for a walk through of the new Transitions Manual.

Convocation Planning Team (Pastors Shannon Mullen & Christi Pursey, co-chairs) worked diligently to provide a safe Leader's Convocation at Lutheridge. Unfortunately, the event was cancelled. Another opportunity was hosted online featuring Diana Butler Bass as speaker.

SC Synod Leadership for Faithful Innovation (LFI) Task Force (Rev. Ralph Hill)

- The remaining SC churches concluded their third and final year in May 2021. Some participated in a pastor coaching cohort with other pastors from across the country. The remaining SC Congregations are: St. John's/Walhalla, St. Stephen's/Lexington, St. Andrew's/Columbia, Mt. Horeb/Chapin, Living Springs/Columbia.

- Luther Seminary published its LFI materials and provided to each Synod and pastor in April 2021. The 93-page digitalized document is titled "Faithful Innovation Pastor's Companion: Resources for the Journey."

Rostered Ministers Network (Rev. Jason Antley)

The Invitation to Service was held in November 2021. Three inquirers, deacon candidates, were present. Compensation Guidelines have been updated for 2023.

Steward Leaders Network (Rev. Angela Jennings)

- Stewardship Symposium with Dr. Dan Bell met on January 28 at LTSS

- Reading a new book: *Church Finances for Missional Leaders: Best Practices for Faithful Stewardship*.

- The synod participated in Building a Culture of Generosity with Mike Ward. Several congregations were guided through their fall stewardship appeal.

- Lifeline Fund is being under-utilized. Classes on financial management are required. This is a valuable resource of money for those in debt from seminary.

**Community Engagement Table  
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**YAGM** – Rev. Rebecca Wicker

Covid has halted most things. Group hasn't met since before covid. YAGM is taking applications and are aiming to have a 2022-2023 group, but things are still up in the area. Encouraging campus pastors to learn if there's interest. Application process opened Nov. 1 and closed Feb 1.

**Criminal Justice Task Force** – Rev. Reggie Cruse

Haven't done anything since the social statement came out on criminal justice and they met and discussed it for a year and sent recommendations to committee for ELCA. Had an open meeting for anyone to discuss it. 5-6 years ago. Since Covid, nothing really going on now.

There's still a need and something should be done, but there's no committee right now. Need to re-group about what the synod's goals are. Rev. Cruse is willing to take on new goals and sees a great need there. He wants to begin conversation with the Synod office to see where they want to move in the future. The need is still there, but not an organized response. Discussion should include, should we form a new committee, what are the goals of the ministry, etc?

**Inclusiveness Network and Race, Reconciliation & Justice Taskforce** – Rev. Jackie Utley

Had 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in January – Rev. Emily Edenfield, low attendance, tough to get a response from the members. Currently have 11 or 12 members, interested in building the membership. February is Black History Month, Kathy Harris and Pastor Emily Edenfield have discussed doing the LR Race matters class as a group. Looking at potential book studies or movies. The NAACP Columbia chapter is having a parade and festival in February and asked for clergy to come walk – worked with Neal to get it in the e-news. Next key project/focus is Juneteenth (June 19) in connection with Mother Emmanuel remembrance. The workshop – talking together facing racism is powerful and we need more of it. It is a goal to have it in 2023. More Justice.

**Latino Taskforce** – John Valentin

Meeting with Bishop Aebischer, Rev. Carter, Rev. Edenfield and others on Feb. 14 to discuss the need for Latino ministries in the upstate and at large. He believes that the requirements or realities have changed from the time they started 2 years ago to today. Pandemic of course, but also is there a need for a Latino taskforce? Is this the right title for it? There doesn't seem to be much movement among the taskforce, difficulty to gain participation among the pastors in the area. Needs to be a synod-wide initiative and doesn't seem to be interest or participation. John isn't feeling called to this ministry anymore, but will do it because the Bishop asked him and will seek whether there's a need anymore or if someone else should take the lead. After putting together a conceptual framework and presented it to Rev. Edenfield, John doesn't feel there's momentum or interest. Not sure if it's needed or has energy. Planned for Hispanic heritage month and no one responded. Need to discern if there's a need for this ministry and a willingness of the rostered leaders to be a part of it.

**IPAN** -Rev. Greg Moore

Wanting to make contact with the participants and stakeholders. Haven't connected since the Fall. Wanting to reconnect February by Zoom, but some are not as interested in Zoom. Purpose to reconnect and review the vision to learn what's important as we move forward. How do we want educate the community, or congregations going forward? Working to get a safe restart.

**Christian Action Council** – Tex Davis

New director Dr. Regina Moore. Tex has been in contact with her as she begins her role. Board of Directors meeting last Thursday. Grant funds for Covid support in various counties. Will provide more of an update at next Synod Council meeting.

**Hunger Relief Network** - Rev. Rick Mason and Rev. Lisa Isenhower

**Rev. Rick Mason** - Rev. Mason has stepped away from this role after faithful ministry, but there are 3 other people on the team. They evaluated domestic hunger grants and sent info to Chicago. Rev. Brad Bellah has great hunger program he shared with Synod e-news. This is a replicable program and we should encourage others to apply for grants that are available. He will seek to get information about these grants to share with others at the Synod Assembly.

**Rev. Lisa Isenhower** – Willing to continue in leadership role. Main focus has been evaluating applications for domestic hunger grants. Care about World Hunger and feeding ministries. Would like more knowledge of what congregations in the synod are doing to help hunger and not sure how to go about that. Not sure what her role is / should be and what the goals are. Would like to put some definition to the taskforce because that's been the challenge. Would like to meet with Bishop Staff to discuss goals and vision for this taskforce, who around the synod should be a part of this team, and where the Spirit is leading us right now.

**Fellowship of SC Bishops** – Bishop Ginny Aebischer

This group hosted the Annual Bishops Dialogue on October 30, 2021 at the University of South Carolina Center for Diversity. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, The Episcopal Church, was our Keynote speaker. The topic for this presentation was Being the Beloved Community. Bishops representing the churches of the SC Fellowship were all present. The Fellowship of SC Bishops had dinner and fellowship together that evening at the home of Bishop Andrew Waldo. Bishop Andrew Waldo is now retired and the Bishop-Elect is The Very Reverend Daniel Richards. The Bishop-Elect was consecrated on February 26, 2022 and Bishop Aebischer was one of the co-consecrators. The SC Fellowship of Bishops has a few some new Bishops in SC who are working to get to know one another better. Meeting on March 30th toward that end and also to consider our plans for the future.

**Public Education Taskforce** – Bishop Ginny Aebischer

On the agenda of conversation for the Fellowship to talk through. Continue the work that our predecessors outlined but will revisit this goal moving forward.

**Global Mission / Companion Synod Network** - Bishop Ginny Aebischer

Covid has caused great challenges in this ministry. The Companion Synod Coordinators are appointed by the Bishop because they represent this office when they interact with our companion synods. These relationships and further plans are in process due to Covid challenges We hope to put emphasis on telling the companion story in the SC Synod to help our Synod better understand our companion Synods better and to more fully participate instead of having only a small group of people involved. Perhaps a major change and a challenge to shift direction, but needed. Covid has been challenging in many areas but especially in global mission work. Not currently authorizing travel for members of the SC Synod at this time.

**Campus Ministry Task Force**, Erica Lybrand

The Campus Ministry Task Force recently met to discuss the wonderful ways our programming has been benefitting students all over the state. We have very active ministries on several campuses, and many are growing! Now that the COVID restrictions have eased up, most campus ministries are holding their weekly meetings and meals again.

Here are some specific updates on a couple of sites:

Clemson has been worshipping more regularly together, enjoying meals that are home-cooked by members of the University Lutheran congregation, and taking advantage of other fellowship opportunities like Root Beer & Hymns, Blessing of Animals, and God's Work Our Hands service projects.

WELCM (Winthrop) has been growing and thriving this fall, continuing to host three programs each week. They have been tabling on campus and building relationships with first and second-year students who are enjoying their first full in-person year of college life. They have had guest speakers on Intersectionality, and Healing from Religious Trauma, and those conversations are helping the ministry grow both in terms of attracting new members, and going deeper in building a safe and healthy, diverse and inclusive community of faith.

Furman University's ministry is active again and the pastoral intern from Trinity is heading up a weekly campus meeting for a meal and fellowship.

**Latino Task Force**, Rev. Emily Edenfield

Vision: "Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." -Ephesians 4:1b-6

Uno Somos, Somos Uno

Values – P.E.A.C.E

Gathered and sent in the bond of peace, the Latino Task Force:

Proclaims ONE God, ONE faith, and ONE baptism.

Elevates unity among all people.

Affirms diversity and giftedness across generations and languages.

Cultivates hope where there is despair.

Encourages service in communities as a joyful calling of the Christian life.

We are One.

Purpose: The purpose of the South Carolina Synod Latino Task Force is to unite, equip, and encourage English and Spanish speaking congregations and ministry leaders to walk together with Latino communities.

Mission: Our mission is to raise awareness of, advocate for, and be in mutual ministry with our Latino brothers and sisters in Christ.

Tasks: Provide the Synod a focal point for developing strategies and initiatives aimed at assisting our congregations in reaching Latino communities. Engage ministries and congregations through consulting, training, and collaboration to cultivate and enhance leadership within the Latino community. Elevate Latino leaders through continuing education and contextual experiences. Raise awareness of the richness of cultures within the Latino community. Coordinate and collaborate with the ELCA, ecumenical partners, and other organizations to gather and share resources that address needs within the Latino community.

Composition: TASK FORCE COORDINATOR: John Valentin, OFFICE OF THE BISHOP: Pastors Rick Carter and Emily Edenfield, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: Pastor Michael Sherman, SECRETARY: MEMBERS: Pastor Martín Vegas Lopez, Pastor Ginger Litman-Koon, Pastor James Henricks, Pastor Jorge Leone