

CASL *Communicator*

We Are *Gathered and Sent*



Who lives in the margins? I think that the term “the margins” is used by the dominant social or economic classes to describe those who are not part of that dominant class. It is a phrase used to try to label outsiders, either for the purpose of separating them or of moving them from one group to another.

When I was young, I lived in “the margins.” For me (as many of you might know), it was economic. For one of my daughter’s friends, it was gender identity. (Let’s call him) George was gay in a time when people were just starting to understand sexuality in its different expressions. George saw himself as male but was attracted to other males. This put him in a place that many people did not understand, which made life and love difficult for him, especially in a small town.

George wasn’t much into faith, though he was raised in a “Christian” home, because he had been marginalized by a church that said they were welcoming, but in reality only welcomed people who saw the world like they did.

Who lives in the margins? People who are not truly welcome into the community. People like George. We are embarking on a journey to become a congregation that truly welcomes everyone without insisting that they change who they are at their core. I believe it is the Church who has to change in order to live out the call of Jesus to “to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.”(Luke 4:18) We must change how we see the world and ourselves in order to move into the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

ReconcilingWorks is an organization that helps congregations do this work of change for the sake of God. Here is their Vision and Mission:

VISION: To keep expanding the welcome, liberating those who are forced to live in the margins. To keep dismantling barriers and building bridges. To keep working until all of God's beloved have equity.

MISSION:

ReconcilingWorks advocates for the acceptance, full participation, and liberation of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran Church.

To be a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) congregation is to publicly and proudly proclaim that we honor the God-given gifts of each individual—including their understanding of gender within themselves—and that we truly want them to feel safe and loved as they are at Abiding Savior. Our own stated core value of seeking justice requires no less than that.

There will be work to do, discussions to have, and obstacles to overcome; but for the sake of our call to love as God has loved us, we will become a RIC congregation; we will proclaim it to the world; and we will move into the full Kingdom of God.

Peace be with you. Pastor Paul.

THE 2021 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

We gathered this year under the theme of *Strength for the Journey*, anchored ourselves with the story of the paralytic being lowered through a roof (Mark 2:1-12) and celebrated Collaboration: one of the four elements of our [synod's purpose](#). Gathering online was different, but it still it was a full assembly with worship, the election of members to synod council, the election of voting members to the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the election of a bishop, sharing stories of ministry, and much more!

THE NC SYNOD'S BISHOP'S ELECTION

Each ELCA synod holds a bishop's election every six years. In 2015, Rev. Timothy Marcus Smith was elected to the office of Bishop of the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA, and after serving faithfully for nearly six years was re-elected to serve in another 6 year term as Bishop. The bishop's election was a point of business at the 2021 synod assembly. An election committee which included our own Pastor Paul Myers, planned all of the details and processes of the election



ALL RACES, ONE CHURCH (AROC)

We heard a lot about the new All Races One Church (AROC) Fund of the North Carolina Synod at our 2021 Assembly. This is not your typical budget line item; this is money that makes a difference. This is money that uses our prophetic voice, one of our core values as a synod, to provide hope and healing. This is something new that will give our synod strength for the journey as we support our already vital and vibrant congregations and rostered leaders of color.

At the beginning of the assembly, we heard from Pastor Richard Hogg who shared the vision and dream of this fund from our own African Descent Strategy Team. Paul Philips, our synod treasurer, told us about new seed money for the All Races One Church Fund and the hope that this seed money will grow.

In Bishop Tim Smith's reflection, we heard about the long process and the hard, holy conversations that went into this new dream for our synod with our African Descent Strategy Team, the Mission and Ministry Committee of Synod Council, and our synod's Directors for Evangelical Mission. We seek to celebrate our siblings of color and provide a vibrant future for them as whole and healthy leaders, and ensure that we have vital and diverse congregations

At each triennial Churchwide Assembly (CWA), voting members gather from the 65 synods of the ELCA. Synods are allowed varied numbers of voting members to CWA based on the number of the synod's congregation members. The NC Synod is allowed 15 voting members—the bishop and vice president take two of those slots. The rest of those elected to serve as NC Synod voting members to the 2022 CWA were: Grace Berbaum (Philadelphia, Dallas), Mike Hix (Messiah of the Mountains, Burnsville)

Robin Huffman (Macedonia, Burlington), **David Johnson (Church of the Abiding Savior, Durham)**

Warren Keyes (Holy Trinity, Raleigh), Deacon Mindy Makant (St. Luke, Conover)

The Rev. Cassie Overcash (Grace, Thomasville), Paul Phillips (Good Shepherd, Raleigh)

Deacon Katie Rivers (St. Mark's, Asheville), Grace Robinson (Christ-South, Charlotte)

Brooke Watson-Summerour (Advent, Charlotte), The Rev. Greg Williams (Grace, Hendersonville)

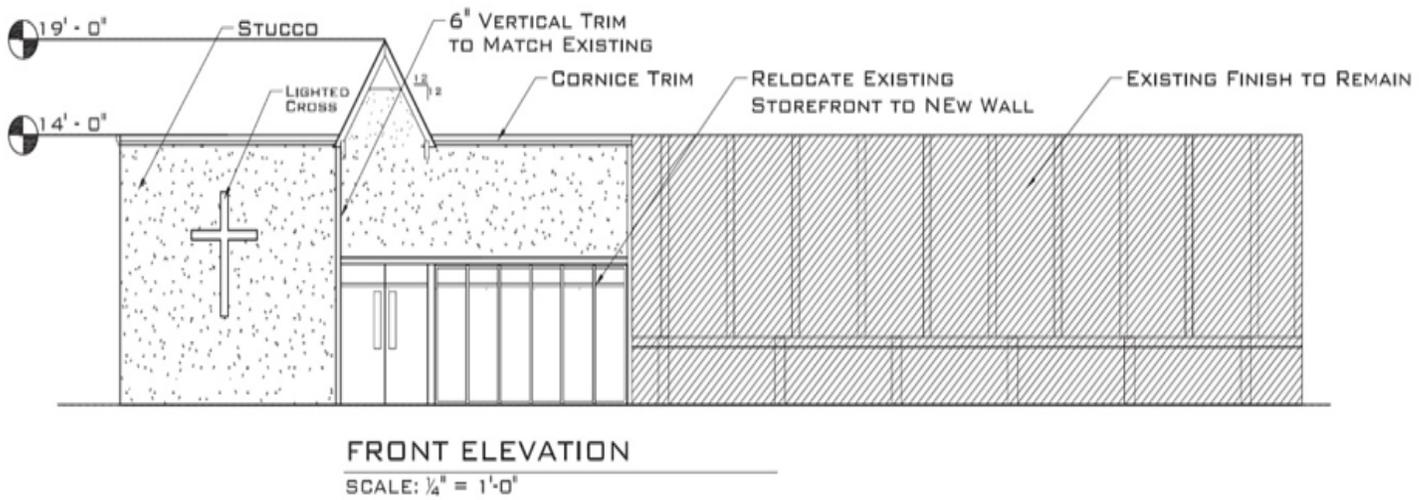
The Rev. Paul Wollner (Augsburg, Winston-Salem)

3 PREACHY PROPHETS NC SYNOD SUMMER BIBLE READING PLAN

The North Carolina synod's Summer Bible Reading Plan just recently started! This year we'll be reading "3 Preachy Prophets: Amos, Joel, Hosea" together. Beginning Sunday, July 4, daily devotions will be posted on [Facebook](#) and [the website](#) or you can [subscribe](#) to receive them in your inbox. Writers from NC Synod congregations—pastors, deacons, and laypeople—will share their thoughts about a chapter and offer questions to ponder. In 28 days we will read through Amos, Joel, and Hosea and consider their lessons for our lives today. Please consider participating?

JUNE 11, 2021 SPECIALLY CALLED MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

Just prior to news of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting changes, the congregation voted to approve hiring a structural engineer to move forward with planning a building expansion to include accessible restrooms and conference rooms. Drawings are complete, bids were received and the congregation council needs to update the congregation and to get approval for the next step in the plan. The congregation will meet via Zoom following worship on Sunday, June 11, 2021.



People in Action!



Thrivent Opportunities



We continue to be blessed by your Thrivent Action Grant dollars. Two grants have been given to allow for the purchase of seedlings and supplies for growing and maintaining our budding Small Community Garden. Your continued use of these grants for our ministries gives us the opportunity to bless others as we have been blessed.

Thrivent Choice Dollars:

Members of Thrivent Financial can recommend where some of Thrivent Financial's charitable outreach funds go by directing Choice Dollars. If you are a member, please consider directing your Choice Dollars to Abiding Savior. These Dollars accumulate in your account and are not automatically allocated. Your Choice Dollars can be designated online. If you need help or have questions, please contact Veronica Johnson.

Thrivent Action Grants:

Think about an unmet need in the community and how you can help. Each Thrivent member is eligible to receive up to two \$250 Thrivent Action Team Grants per year. As we begin a new year, we will have new opportunities to access this funding. If you need help writing these grants, or have questions regarding how these funds can be used, please contact Diana Haywood. Using these grants is just good stewardship.

Please use your Grants and Choice dollars!!