

Arkansas- Oklahoma Synod, ELCA Leadership Team

2018 Synod Assembly Report

*First of all, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because the good news of your faith is being spread throughout the whole world. -Romans 1:8*

Having the privilege of being the leadership team chair has given me even greater insight to the profound depth of faith, commitment to service, profound gifts, and awesome love that resonates throughout the world as a result of the leadership of this Synod. As these leaders are empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit to share the love of Christ, the world sees new life in tangible ways. Therefore, first, we give thanks for them – rostered and lay alike, who have been God’s blessing to us.

This year has been focused on listening for deep understanding of how the Synod can offer even more support this awe-inspiring ministry. Many conversations with the people in their first call to rostered ministry, and other ministry focus areas, have led to some wonderful visions of new programming in those areas. There has also been a renewed interest in leadership education for various lay ministries, and options to offer this are being explored, especially those which use various video technologies. Bishop Girlinghouse and Assistant to the Bishop Albertson give a great deal of attention to their visits with every rostered leader, where they became even more diligent witnesses to all the good and the hard of the synod. The moving of the Spirit in these visits will shape the upcoming programming to support all the leaders in the synod.

The leadership team is always looking for people who are ready to take a role in supporting the leadership of the synod. Please contact the synod office if you would like to be on this team!

I encourage everyone to take an informal role on this team by joining with me in giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ for the leaders closest to you. Pray for them. Tell them thank you. Give their ideas a shot. Respect their humanity and be supportive of their self care and family time. Make sure they have the resources to take their vacation time and help them plan sabbaticals. Believe that they are truly called to proclaim God’s love to you, and then listen for it. Help them to make your congregation a place where people know God’s love by basking in that love for yourself, and then bringing it to share the others who gather with you, even as you receive it anew in worship. Be kind to all. All of these little things make just as important as the events and programs that the formal leadership team puts together.

Blessings to each of you.

Submitted with respect and love 4/9/18

The Rev. Amanda Esping, leadership team leader