

# New Conference Ministers

+Bishop Jon V. Anderson

We are excited to introduce our new Conference Ministers who will be serving through the next eight months. We are thankful for their willingness to serve and the gifts God has given them to share.

- Pr. Ted Kunze will serve in the Shetek Conference.
- Associate in Ministry Signe Gray will serve in the Great River Conference
- Pr. Joyce Graue will serve in the Lakeland Conference.
- Pr. Art Wiese will serve in the Lakeland Conference.

As we encourage congregations to make adjustments to best serve the mission field that is and will be, so also our synod staff is changing. We are making an adjustment that has great potential but will be different than how the synod has been staffed for the first 26 years. We have an opportunity in the interim period from the retirement of Pr. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl (Dec. 31, 2014) through the end of the bishop's current term (Aug. 31, 2015) to explore different ways of staffing our synod's life.

**Conference Ministers** - are compensated volunteer positions who work alongside the elected Conference Dean and Conference Chairperson. The conferences where we place these conference ministers will be in three of our four corners and our largest conference. These pastors or associate in ministry will serve 4 hours a week. Bp. Jon Anderson will provide coverage in the fourth corner, Watonwan River Conference.



The Conference Ministers will assist the synod minister who serves in the conference where they are located. In particular, we imagine them helping with exit interviews and opening phases of call process. As we study the time use of the existing staff we know the amount of driving time is a major cost of doing synod ministry. Having a local minister would reduce drive time, increase efficiency and effectiveness.

As our congregations' mission support continues to erode, we face difficult strategic choices. At the end of December, we continue to be significantly behind the amount of mission support we received in 2013. This is leading to preparation for a budget revision for 2015. We have been working hard as your synod's staff and governance to operate as efficiently as possible. We have sought to teach generosity so we might create more mission support for local congregations and for the larger church.

Conference Minister  
Experiment



We have and will continue to seek to find alternate forms of financial energy to serve the synod's ministry and mission the coming chapters of its life. We are deeply appreciative for the generous support of so many that makes our synodical, churchwide and global ministries happen.

Our goal is to twist this challenge toward opportunity. What kind of moves can we make that will lead to a sustainable future in staffing the synod's life, ministry and mission? Can we spread the responsibility for caring for the life of leaders and congregations across the synod's territory? We will learn more about how this might serve the gospel in our mission field in the coming months.

Mission Support Intents – As your congregation prepares for your annual meeting, we would be glad to hear your current budget proposals for mission support. If these change at your meeting you can give us a call to make the adjustment. [Here is the link.](#) Please take a moment now to find your proposed budget and enter these numbers. Your minutes of effort will help us plan for your synod's future.



**Southwestern Minnesota Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.