

## New Structure for Synod Council

By Katie Livingood, Synod Communications Director

Picture the iconic American dinner table: family sitting down to a wholesome meal, ready to talk about the day, their fears, their dreams, and their lives.

In this tradition, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council is now operating under a new structure. The Mission Planning and Action, Congregational Renewal, and Lay and Clergy Leadership Development teams will now become the New Ministry Start, Congregational Renewal, and Mission Support tables. A “table” functions much like a “team.” The difference is the term “table” elicits images of coming together for the common purpose of talking, supporting, and strengthening each other and the ministry, like a family at a dinner table.

The New Ministry Start Table is led by Rev. Peter Reuss, synod mission developer. This table is tasked with helping new and emerging ministries grow and connect with other ministries, coordinating ways to encourage support for new ministries, and identifying potential for new ministries.

The Congregational Renewal Table is led by Rev. Linda Gunderson, synod minister. The purpose of this table is to accompany congregations in the journey of renewal by engaging, challenging, and encouraging them along the path.

The Mission Support Table is led by Larry Iverson, synod minister. This table’s goal is to help people and congregations see and use their gifts, talents, and financial resources to share the gospel of Christ’s love through the mission of the church.

The synod council members will be members of different tables, depending on their talents and interests. Others who are not serving on the council will also be identified to serve on the tables.

This new meeting format has come out of an ongoing strategic planning process. The visioning team has been assisted by Rev. Scott Olson, Central Lutheran Church, Winona, Minn. as part of his Doctor of Ministry dissertation. Olson is assisting the team to identify ways to lift up missional leaders.

This new structure is a fluid structure, said Bishop Harold Usgaard, “We will be developing it as we go, adapting it to meet our ministry needs that we face as a church.”

Of the reason for the need to restructure, Usgaard said, “‘Business as usual’ has not led us to be an exciting and growing church.” He went on to say that, “We need to ask ‘Who does God want us to be? What should we be about?’”

The reorganized council will continue to meet for a retreat in September and regular meetings in November, February, March, and April to take care of the business of the synod. Tables will meet throughout the year as needed. This is intended to make meeting time more effective.

*This diagram (right) represents the structure of the new council. The executive committee will continue to function as it has, and the entire council will continue to execute the business of the synod. The table groups will relate to the council and function independently.*

