



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information Form
Officer – Chair-Elect**

Name: Tyler Tollefson

E-mail: ttollefson@salem4u.com

Phone: 913-961-4535

Current Ministry Role: Director of Student Ministry

Location: Salem Lutheran, Tomball, TX



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

I am currently in my 4th year serving as the Director of Student Ministry (7th-12th grade) at Salem Lutheran, Tomball, TX. Previously, I served as Director of Students and Families at Lord of Life, Leawood, KS (2010-2020), and Director of Student Ministry at Our Savior's Way, Ashburn, VA, (2007-2010). I graduated from CUNE in 2007 and am currently in the Master's program for Executive Coaching and Consulting at the Townsend Institute at CUI. I also spent two summers working in Camp Ministry in California and Colorado. I love that DCEs really are "the jack of many trades" and bring so many gifts, talents, and abilities to the Body of Christ. From camp ministry, congregational ministry, RSO's, and beyond, DCEs impact the Kingdom in so many ways!

I am married to Gentri Tollefson and we will celebrate 16 years together this September. We have 3 daughters, Kyrie (10), Selah (7), and Eden (4). Living in the Houston area, we spend a lot of time staying cool in the swimming pools and in Galveston at the beach. I'm an avid health and fitness guy so you will find me most mornings or evenings running, biking, or swimming!

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

Many gifted and amazing DCEs have paved the way to make it possible for ministry to be where it is today. I want to continue the legacy of being an advocate for DCEs, connecting and uniting DCEs on the mission of Jesus, and being a resource to DCEs who are going to carry on this legacy in the future.



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information Form
Officer – Secretary**

Name: Jim Lohman

E-mail: lohmanjh@gmail.com

Phone: 314-604-3861

Current Ministry Role: Emeritus and serving parttime as
Events Coordinator

Location: Zion Lutheran Church and School

Saint Charles, MO



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

Jim Lohman is a director of Christian education with 40+ years of experience in ministry. Prior to his retirement in 2023, Jim served as associate director for the LCMS Youth Ministry Office and currently serves at Zion Lutheran Church, Saint Charles, MO in a part-time capacity as event coordinator. Jim is a husband, dad, father-in-law, son-in-law, and first-time grandfather to Lewis James, who was welcomed into God’s family through baptism on Easter Sunday. Jim is a KINDLE associate and is currently serving as a learning coach for Next Callings.

WHY DO I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less

Our recent conference was a testimony to the Christ-like servant leaders who are Directors of Christian Education in a variety of settings and situations with students to seasoned veterans represented. As secretary for the board, I will continue to serve this organization as we strive to provide support, encouragement and continue the legacy of our callings as Christian educators.



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information Form
Member at Large**

Name: Steven Whitney

E-mail: steven.b.whitney@gmail.com

Phone: 507-330-1559

Current Ministry Role: Director of Worship & Music

Location: Battle Creek, Nebraska



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

I have served at St. John Ministries in Battle Creek, Nebraska since 2017 as Director of Worship and Music...and other duties as assigned. Over the past ten years in ministry, both in Nebraska and previously in Sterling, Illinois as a generalist DCE, I have set out to serve the Church as a second-chair leader so that children, youth, and adults may know Jesus, and use their God-given gifts and skills to glorify Him through leadership and service. When not at work, my cup is filled by serving alongside my wife, Heather, as the Drama Directors of Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk, Nebraska. Over our ten years of marriage, Heather and I have filled our house with Harry Potter decorations, Friends quotes, and our four children, Elyza (8), Silas (6), Marian (4), and Foster (2).

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

I believe NADCE is the champion of advocating for second chair leaders within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. As we see the number of Rostered Church Workers continues to decline, the Board of Directors should seek ways to support the DCEs as they serve, as well as work with the leaders and initiatives on the Synodical, District, and local levels to actively encourage and build up the next generation of Church Workers to consider DCE ministry.



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information Form
Member at Large**

Name: Jennifer Hills

E-mail: jennifer.hills@sjlc.com

Phone: 703-507-8432

Current Ministry Role: Director of Discipleship

Location: St. John's- Alexandria, VA



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

Jennifer received her Bachelor of Arts, with specializations in Youth Ministry and Theology, from Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois, in 1999. Jennifer has served at St. John's Lutheran Church in Alexandria, VA, as their Director of Discipleship since 2002. She is a 2009 KINDLE Associate. Jennifer is a graduate student in the Master of Organizational Leadership program through the Townsend Institute at Concordia University, Irvine, California. She graduates on May 4, 2024. Jennifer is passionate about helping all people, from children to adults, discover what it means to be a child of God. Jennifer and her husband, Mark, are the parents of Sofi and Charlotte. She enjoys laughing, cooking, reading, exploring, and adventuring with her family in her spare time.

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

One of my great passions is building up and encouraging other DCEs. I've done this for over ten years at the District level and would love the opportunity to serve other DCEs at the national level. I dream of developing a coaching cohort where DCEs can encourage and mentor one another.



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information Form
Member at Large**

Name: Heath Lewis

E-mail: hlewis@csp.edu

Phone: 651-603-6214

Current Ministry Role: Assistant Professor of Christian Education & Leadership

Location: Concordia University, St. Paul (St. Paul, MN)

BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

St. Paul, MN, has been my home since the fall of 2015 when I accepted a Call to serve as the DCE Program Director at Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP). In this role, I mentored DCE students, taught courses in Christian ministry, and worked to reinvigorate CSP's Christian Education programs. In January 2023, I stepped out of the DCE Director position to focus on key institutional initiatives, including directing instructional design for theology, teaching courses in our Doctorate in Educational Leadership (EdD) and Sociology programs, and more.

Prior to CSP, I served as the DCE at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (Edmond, OK), where I led the congregation's parish education, youth ministry, communication, and more for nearly 10 years. I received my DCE Certification from Concordia University, Nebraska, and consider myself a Bulldog at heart after studying at CUNE, Gonzaga University, and Drake University. My wife, Jessica, and I have a two-year-old daughter named Kennedy.

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

I would be honored to serve the DCE community through this board. With a commitment to the mission of NADCE and a vast array of ministry experiences, my goal is to support DCEs by fostering connections and advocating for DCE ministry at every level of the LCMS.





**Board of Directors
Nominee Information Form
Member at Large**

Name: Katy Bass

E-mail: dcekaty@aol.com

Phone: 409-790-9835

Current Ministry Role: Director of Children's & Family Ministry

Location: St. Michael Lutheran – Fort Myers, FL



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

I was born and raised in Nederland, TX and attended Holy Cross Lutheran Church until I moved to attend college. I was raised in a family with one brother and two sisters. I graduated from Concordia – River Forest in 2003 from the DCE program. I served my internship at St. Mark's in Kentwood, MI. I was married to David Bass in May of 2003 right before we moved to St. Louis for him to begin seminary. During our time at the seminary, I served as a DCE at St. John's in Arnold, MO. We have since served in congregations in: Nederland, TX; Chicago, IL; Kerrville, TX; and now Fort Myers, FL. I have served in areas of Children's and Family ministry in each of these congregations. Dave and I have four children. Our two older girls were adopted when my sister passed away in 2008. They are now out of college and beginning their own careers. Chloe is a teacher in Texas and Bethany is an Occupational Therapist in southern Illinois. Her and her pastor husband serve a church there and are expecting their first child in April. Our daughter, Anna, is a sophomore in high school and loves to dance and play tennis. Jonah, our son, is in first grade at St. Michael and loves to draw, play basketball and tennis. I am in my twentieth year of ministry and love teaching children all about Jesus and how much He loves them!

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

It is such a blessing that we have a network of church workers sharing ideas, thoughts, and encouragement. I would love to serve on the board to continue building that community and finding new ways to help DCE's wherever they serve in ministry in the church.



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information Form
Member at Large**

Name: Seth Illich

E-mail: sillich@gstx.org

Phone: (815) 236-9502

Current Ministry Role: Parish DCE

Location: Good Shepherd, Cedar Park, TX



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

I grew up in Crystal Lake, IL attending Immanuel Lutheran School and Church where I fell in love with seeing God work. I had two DCEs during my time at Immanuel and I realized that what I really wanted to do was what they got to do. They encouraged me, supported me, gave me opportunities to be involved with ministry and more and more gave me opportunities to lead. After graduating from High School and spending a year at a community college, I transferred to Concordia University Chicago and graduated in December of 2012. I served my internship and first call at Our Redeemer in Iowa City, IA. In 2015 my wife, Emily, and I got married and less than a month later moved to my second call at Emmanuel in Kettering, OH. In the couple of years after moving we had our daughter, Sofia, and son, Sullivan. Amid all of that, I walked through a health scare with cancer in my abdomen. Which in a weird way was a blessing, to get to be led for a time being was humbling and inspiring. In 2020, we took the call to serve at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Cedar Park, TX and have loved serving God's people in Texas.

In my professional career, on top of serving as a Parish DCE; I have served on the local Johnson County Thrivent Board as a Youth Ministry Representative, I served on the Iowa District Youth Ministry Team, I've been part of planning teams for District DCE Retreats, I have been a guest speaker for conferences and graduations, and I've served on leadership teams planning multi-church youth and children's ministry events.

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

NADCE is a blessing to so many and I would love to be able to use my passion for encouraging and equipping people to be a part of the mission of broadening the impact of DCEs for the purpose of growing God's kingdom.



Board of Directors Nominee Information Form

Congratulations on your nomination for the NADCE Board of Directors. Please complete the following form and submit to NADCE (nadce2013@gmail.com) by **TUESDAY, March 26 at 11:59 PM PST.**

Name: Charessa Koontz

E-mail: charessak@gmail.com

Phone: 804-317-2999

Current Ministry Role: DCE/DFLM

Location: Austin, Texas



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

I am the proud mother of 5 beautiful girls and have been married to my husband Eric for 25 years. I have served the church for over 20 years in various roles and responsibilities. Most recently, I was honored to serve as one of the emcees for the NADCE conference alongside my friend, colleague Jason Phelps.

I have also served on 3 District Board of Directors (SED, English, and Texas) throughout my tenure in ministry. This is something I never thought I would do, but I had great leaders who saw my passion for ministry and especially representation of our commissioned ministers. I have enjoyed bringing to light the issues that districts can partner with us on tackling, so that our focus can be on pointing others to Christ. I also love seeing the partnership between our various roles and how we truly are better together and our Kingdom impact is greater.

I am grateful for the nomination to this prestigious Board that does so much for enriching, encouraging, and continuing to equip us all for ministry.

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

In the past five years, I have seen a disheartening trend of DCEs leaving or being asked to step down/away from ministry. I have also seen a rise in mental health issues for our workers. I want to advocate ways to support the decline of both of these issues.



Board of Directors Nominee Information Member at Large

Name: **William O. "Karp" Karpenko II**

E-mail: bill.karpenko@gmail.com

Phone: 651-344-8579

Current Ministry Role: While semi-retired my favorite volunteer roles are being on NADCE & KINDLE's Board of Directors

Location: We meet virtually or in Mundelein or St. Louis



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

I am ...a follower of Jesus Christ who was baptized on June 23, 1939.
...a first-born who is married to Michele (55 years and counting), the father of a lawyer (son), an organic farmer/artist (son), a social worker (daughter), and the grandfather of three young men.
...a former youth worker/DCE (Buffalo), missionary (Japan & Nigeria), cab driver and streetworker with trouble-prone youth (Chicago).
...a retired professor and DCE Program Director – CUNE and CUC (21 years total) and university administrator – Valpo (13 years).
...the Founder of KINDLE, serving over 24 years in roles such as Board member, Dean of KINDLE: Finishing Well, Administrative Executive, and Operations Director.
...currently supervising my 225 DCE intern as an adjunct professor with Concordia Nebraska.
...incredibly grateful for, and dependent upon, God's daily grace, mercy, and love as I have been blessed to work with so many remarkable DCEs over the years.

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

As a Christ-like servant leader, I would continue to offer 1) an extensive historical background on DCE Ministry; 2) a relationship network that can strengthen NADCE's mission; 3) broad experience in policy-based governance; 4) tested approaches to advocating for DCEs and their ministry; 5) an ongoing commitment to NADCE projects like the DCE Recognition initiative and a web-based platform for congregations seeking a field DCE as well as for DCEs seeking to re-enter the call process.



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information
Member at Large**

Name: Denise Pulfer

E-mail: deafdce@gmail.com

Phone: 608 234-4744

Current Ministry Role: Deaf youth ministry

Location: Austin, TX



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

I graduated from Christ College, Irvine in 1991. I graduated as a DCE with a minor in Multicultural Studies. My first two years were establishing youth programs at 2 different churches. I was then called to be a missionary in Panama for 2 years. I worked with missionaries and local people to set up youth ministry in different areas.

When I returned to the US, I was called to youth programs in different states. It was a joy to set up mission trips and servant events with the youth to expose them to different things. I also learned many ways to open bible studies for youth to know Jesus.

In the year 2000, I became deaf from my disease, NF2. Even though I became deaf, I did not leave my faith in God nor my desire for people to know Jesus. I have written resources for churches, lead youth, families, and young adult programs, and lead different mission/servant events.

Currently, I am beginning new bible studies for deaf youth/young adults. Too many have a hard time reading the bible. Along with deaf, I work with teaching students with multiple disabilities to know how much God loves them.

WHY I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

My wish is to open the work of DCEs for youth and young adults who have a disability. Too often we meet or know a student with a disability but are unaware of resources and accommodation needed.



**Board of Directors
Nominee Information
Member at Large**

Name: Audrey Duensing-Werner

E-mail: dceaudrey@gmail.com

Phone: 402-641-9810

Current Ministry Role: Director of Family Life Department

Location: Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Houston, Tx



BRIEF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY:

Audrey Duensing-Werner has been a Director of Christian Education for 31 years. Audrey has served as a DCE in Michigan, Minnesota, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Texas. She is currently serving as the Director of the Family Ministry Department at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas. Audrey has been a member of NADCE since its inception, a KINDLE associate, and has served on various District and National organizations that have strong relationships to DCE ministry. Audrey has also served as an adjunct professor at Concordia St Paul, a Spiritual Life Minister at Concordia Nebraska, has been a speaker at camps, youth gatherings, women's conferences and on the planning team for LCMS gatherings. Audrey is a step mom to Amanda (Jeremy) and Brandy and a grandmother to Anna, Andrew and Alina.

WHY DO I WISH TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR NADCE? (50 words or less)

I am a huge advocate and mentor for DCEs and I love to champion opportunities that minister best to them in various settings and situations. As a Member-at-large I will continue to speak out and for the DCE and Christian Education on a National level and help provide tools that strengthen the DCE as they continue to grow and serve as Christ like servant leaders.