

Minutes of the 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 29 – 31, 2014

Thursday, May 29, 2014

The 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly took place from Thursday, May 29, 2014 through Saturday, May 31, 2014 at the Country Springs Hotel Conference Center at 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, Wisconsin. The Assembly included The Local Table, with a light meal, on Thursday afternoon.

In Thursday's worship message, Synod Bishop Jeff Barrow walked the road from El Salvador to Emmaus, professing joy at being part of a church that was finding ways to find unity of purpose with other faith traditions. Rev. Kerstin Hedlund presided, assisted by Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, with Rev. Betty Baires serving as lector. Rev. Andy Fetters blessed the Good Shepherd Grant Recipients with the water of baptism.

Plenary I

Order for Opening of Assembly

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 7:15 pm. The bishop welcomed special guests of the Assembly: Rev. Ruben Duran, Program Director, New Congregations for the ELCA;; Rev. Larry Westfield, Regional Gift Planner – Wisconsin Area Synods, ELCA; Rev. Scott Anderson, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of Churches; Rev. Mark Lepper, Admissions Specialist, Wartburg Theological Seminary; Ms. Marilyn Olson, Assistant to the Vice President for Advancement, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; Mr. Dan Schwiesow, Director – Regional Managers, Mission Investment Fund, ELCA; Ms. Brenda Skelton, President, Siebert Lutheran Foundation, and Rev. Dick and Naomi Bruesehoff, Outreach Coordinator, Portico Benefits Services.

The bishop asked Rev. Bruesehoff to address the Assembly, with Rev. Bruesehoff congratulating the synod for continuing to achieve participation by 65% of those eligible. That level of participation in Portico's wellness program translated into \$50,000 in savings on premiums this year for those covered in the synod, and with about half that amount coming back to the synod for wellness activities. Rev. Bruesehoff explained that Portico is providing an incentive for those insured to pay attention to their health, with the result that "people are getting healthier," with a "real connection in congregations." This improvement in health also translates to increased health for ministries in the synod.

Rev. Bruesehoff stated that "nobody can be healthy alone." He reported that last year, \$173 million was paid out in medical claims, with about a third paid out for just one percent of the members. While overall there is improved health, "there will be people who will become ill. Not only can't we be healthy alone, but we won't allow people to be ill alone."

He concluded by saying that there are three things that individuals can do in order to achieve a healthier community as a whole for the sake of the ministry we have together, offering to share this information with those stopping at the Portico table throughout the Assembly

Bishop Barrow concluded the introductory remarks by thanking those planning the Assembly. Planning Committee members were invited to stand.

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Report of the Credentials Committee

Bishop Barrow called upon Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, to give the committee's report.

Mr. Groenewold reported that in attendance at the opening of the Assembly on Thursday, May 29, 2014, were 124 rostered persons and 155 lay people, for a total voting membership of 279. Also present were 24 visitors for a total attendance of 303. A quorum of voting members was present.

Adoption of Agenda

Bishop Barrow then asked the Assembly to approve the agenda as recommended by the Synod Council and printed in the Synod Assembly Supplement (hereinafter "Supplement").

Assembly Action

SA14.05.01. Adoption of Agenda

The Assembly voted to adopt the agenda as printed in the Supplement.

Bishop Barrow declared the agenda adopted.

Appointments

Bishop Barrow referred the Assembly to the printed Supplement where members of the Credentials, Elections, Nominating, and Reference and Counsel Committees were listed. Synod Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier was appointed to serve as Assembly Parliamentarian. He asked the Assembly to ratify the appointments.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.02. Ratification of Appointments

The Assembly voted to ratify the appointments as printed in the Supplement.

Approval of Rules

Bishop Barrow asked the Assembly to approve the proposed Rules and Procedures of the Assembly, as recommended by the Synod Council and printed in the Supplement.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.03. Approval of 2014 Assembly Rules and Procedures

The Assembly voted to adopt the 2014 Assembly Rules and Procedures as presented.

The bishop declared the Rules adopted.

Electronic Voting Tutorial

Ms. Tracy Apps, Synod Director of Communication, provided a brief tutorial on the synod's electronic voting system. Test votes were taken, showing that blue remained the favorite color of Voting Members, and that they were having fun (but not yet by an overwhelming margin). Travel led the list of popular activities from Ms. Apps' short list. A large majority voted yes to the question of whether they had "the hang of it."

Nominating Committee Report

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Bishop Barrow called on Nominating Committee Chair Ms. Debra Kohler to present the committee's report. Ms. Kohler thanked members of the committee for their service, and gave special thanks to those who have agreed to answer the call to service by standing as nominees. She placed in nomination those persons who had already agreed to stand for election, with Bishop Barrow calling for nominations from the floor three times for each position nominated by the committee. Eight floor nominations were made for seven positions without other nominees, with one floor nomination for a position with one nominee. The source of nominations follows the names as shown below.

Nominated for Synod Council

At Large – Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2015
Rev. Jay McDivitt – Nominating Committee Nomination

Nominated for the Consultation Committee

Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2015
Rev. Christian Marien – Nominating Committee Nomination
Lay Male – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2019
Mr. Grant Younquist – Nominating Committee Nomination
Lay Male – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015
Mr. Christopher Ellerd – Nominating Committee Nomination
Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015
Ms. Susan Daniels – Floor Nomination
Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2019
Ms. Allison Bremer – Floor Nomination
Clergy – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015
Rev. Sheila Rawn – Floor Nomination
Rev. Ari Mattson – Floor Nomination

Nominated for the Discipline Committee

Clergy – Full Terms (2) from September 2014 through August 2020
Rev. Ed Weiskotten – Nominating Committee Nomination
Rev. Roy Nelson – Nominating Committee Nomination
Lay Male – Full Term from September 2014 through August 2020
Mr. Robert Gee – Nominating Committee Nomination
Lay Male – Partial Term from Election through August 2016
Mr. Jerry Key – Floor Nomination
Lay Female – Full Term from September 2014 through August 2020
Ms. Alicia Ellis – Floor Nomination
Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2016
Ms. Kathleen Holat – Floor Nomination
Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2016
Rev. Karen Natterstad – Nominating Committee Nomination
Rev. Grant Quever – Floor Nomination
Clergy – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2016
Rev. Stacy Seger

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

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Mr. Paul Bedker, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, was asked to give the committee's report. The committee met on May 13th to review all properly submitted resolutions and memorials. Members of the Committee were listed in the Committee's report in the Supplement.

Mr. Bedker reported that four resolutions had been submitted and reviewed. The text of these resolutions was included in the Supplement, and will appear in these minutes as each resolution is considered.

Recommendations were as follows:

- Resolution 1 – Recommended for adoption.
- Resolution 2 – Not recommended for adoption, with comment that, while the Committee was sympathetic to the purpose of this resolution, it was agreed that the proposed actions could be counterproductive or have other unintended consequences.
- Resolution 3 – The Committee forwarded this resolution without recommendation, noting that the impact on the synod's budget means that a higher threshold for approval is required than normally true for resolutions.
- Resolution 4 – Recommended for adoption.

Report of Synod Council Vice President

Vice President Mr. Scott Manske presented his work as generally being behind the scenes. He said that didn't know fully what to expect, having been a Sunday school and confirmation teacher, and taken Bible classes as part of his life in the church. He called the last year a "learning experience," but continued that he knew there were those who would support him, especially his wife.

Mr. Manske said that he set his own path, following the work of "a great vice president," Ms. Sue Cyr. He said that he created a full agenda, making sure that the Synod Council can discuss and resolve issues. He added that the Synod Council is designed in part to support synod staff, and also in part to listen to congregations. He said the Council had made progress on several issues raised by the previous Assembly. While "some members of the Council may have felt overwhelmed, others had confidence," he continued. Noting key areas for the Council's attention, he cited the Funding Task Force, the new task force to determine future funding procedures from the assets of closed congregations. The Cluster Task Force, led by Esther Rusch, and other concerns, including Palestine, a synod endowment fund, missions outside our borders, the synod leadership forum, the synod's financial status, and the process of supporting the ELCA's 25th anniversary campaign. He thanked members of the Synod Council, asking those present to stand. He said "I am not alone when I am with the Synod Council, or with the synod staff."

Addressing the diversity of worship in the synod, Mr. Manske reported that he had worshiped at various congregations, large and small, with great variety in other regards. "We are not alone – Jesus has walked with a number of congregations over the years, and will continue to walk with them." He described the range of churches; some self-sufficient, some in the very poorest neighborhoods, and which are open doors to many

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tongues, including Spanish, Korean and Hmong. "Thanks to the congregations for letting me not feel alone."

He ended his report by asking "what the synod can do for you that it is not already doing." If you are facing struggles, he said, you are not alone, with neighboring congregations or the synod available to provide help. "I am not alone, you are not alone, we are not alone."

Anniversary Recognitions

Bishop Jeff Barrow and Vice President Manske recognized milestone anniversaries of service by rostered leaders in the synod.

Celebrating 25 years of service

- Rev. Marcia Carrier (not present)

Celebrating 40 years of service

- Rev. G. Thomas Osterfield (present with wife Gail)
- Rev. June Eastvold (present with husband Dr. Michael Frome)
- Rev. Ronald Bachman (not present; wife Laura accepted recognition) the bishop noted that Rev. Bachman is in hospital, remaining beloved in the heart of his congregation, offering a prayer for him.
- Rev. Ronald C. Matter (present with wife Margaret Mary)
- Rev. Stephen Engelstad (present with wife Gayle)

Celebrating 50 years of service

- Rev. Joseph Lewandowski (not present)
- Rev. Lawrence C. Sandin (not present)
- Rev. Carl L. Johnson (present with wife Donna)
- Rev. Francis Odden (present with wife Miriam)
- Rev. Gerald V. Goodrich (present, with fondness for late wife June)
- Rev. Robert R. Scheuermann (present with wife Rev. Barbara Rasmussen)
- Rev. Theodore H. (Ted) Romberg (present; wife Sharon is in hospital; prayer by Bishop Barrow for her)

Celebrating 60 years of service

- Rev. John H. Schumell (not present)
- Rev. Harvey M. Berg (present with wife Shirley)

The recognition of service ended with a prayer by Bishop Barrow.

Following announcements, the Assembly recessed for the evening at 8.55 pm.

Friday, May 30, 2014

Plenary II

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 8:03 am. The morning began with devotions shared by Ms. Christine Shander, Children, Youth and Family Director at Galilee Lutheran Church in Pewaukee.

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Announcements by Bishop Barrow included “shameless promotions” for among other things Reformation Lutheran Church selling honey in angel jars with the text of John 3:16, support for Cross+Generational Ministry by saying “hunger” and other special words on Friday, with money going to the next offering, and for Rev. Joseph Ellwanger’s new book, a history of his ministry, including work with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold gave the report of the Credentials Committee, reporting first that the numbers presented on Thursday evening did not include one sheet of attendees. The revised figures were 125 rostered, 161 lay, for a total of 286 voting members. There were 36 visitors, making a total of 322 individuals present.

He continued by reporting that in attendance by 8:00 am, Friday, May 30, 2014 were 137 rostered persons and 177 lay people, for a total voting membership of 314. Also present were 41 visitors for a total attendance of 355. A quorum was present.

ELCA Representative Report

Rev. Ruben Duran presented the ELCA Representative Report, beginning with a video greeting from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. In her video, Bishop Eaton said that the best part of her job is to “see the church in action, our story in action,” expressing and embodying God’s love across this church. Included were profiles of missions, with Bishop Eaton stating the hope that those reached by the ELCA are “not just a bunch of clients on whom we are perpetrating good works.” Her call was for the Lutheran presence to serve all people, including those who may not be Christians, with the notion that “somebody always need somebody,” and that grace is something we all need to receive.

Rev. Ruben offered “greetings from your colleagues south of the border at the churchwide offices,” noting his close work with Rev. Sandy Chrostowski on the synod staff. He praised the “exciting outreach” in our synod, saying that Christ is present on the streets of Milwaukee and in the small towns and rural communities. He offered special thanks for Bishop Barrow’s work, both in the conference of bishops, and in his work “with people who need the church.” Of note was the bishop’s work to affect public policy, with Rev. Ruben also praising the synod’s staff (followed by general applause). He spelled out the intent statements of the ELCA: “we are church, we are Lutheran, we are church together – we are church for the sake of the world.” Being the church together is highlighted this year in the Stories of Faith in Action publication, and in “God’s Work, Our Hands” Sunday on September 7th. He urged congregations to being planning for this date, and to consider worship at the service site and/or partnering with other ELCA congregations.

After taking note of the Assembly’s “noisy offerings” for hunger, Rev. Ruben spoke of the ELCA’s response to hunger, with, \$18.6 million spent last year, and continued by talking about the continuing renewal of the church by the young: “the church is always renewed by the faith of its youth.” This led to comments on the ELCA Youth Gathering in 2015, about which people sometimes say “don’t go to Detroit – it’s dying.” “Yeah, but we remember Good Friday”

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Statistics shared included 41 new congregations last year, 155 congregational renewal efforts, 225 seminary students supported, along with international scholarships and the issues of hunger and malaria. Malaria, he said, is something we can tackle, adding that \$250,000 was needed for this work in Namibia.

In observations extending beyond institutional issues, he said that population growth continues most in the south and west, with an ever growing Latino population. But the challenge, he said, is more than geographical, including socio-economic, generational, ethnic and multicultural. He reported that 1,400 existing congregations are located in zip codes with at least 30% Latino population, and 2,000 in zip codes with at least 30% African-American populations. In fact, he said, half of ELCA congregations are in communities that embody some significant form of diversity, whether in population or finance or age.

That said, he added that "our identity is a theological identity," not intrinsically tied only to specific populations. While he said that "we are graying," there are new faces in our midst, and we possess the gift of hospitality. While Lutherans were once "called, gathered and nourished," we now aim to be "claimed, gathered and sent." Geography, he added, is spreading out for new congregations, with a church that can become one with no ethnic majority.

People in communities doing God's work, including a total of 490 new congregations created since the beginning of the ELCA, with another 352 new congregations under development, including 15 new congregations last month. Twenty-eight congregations are in the planning stages.

Priorities for the ELCA include accompanying congregations as evangelical centers for mission, and building capacity for witness and service in the world; especially addressing poverty.

In closing, Rev. Ruben recalled the Road to Emmaus, a downhill road seven miles long. Something happened, he said, on that road that caused the two disciples to run uphill to share the story of their meeting with Christ. What happened? On that road, they began to recognize the presence of Christ, who is walking with us. The disciples were left with burning hearts; they had a different look on the way back, a sense of urgency, couldn't wait to tell the story. We have the expectation to seek Christ every day.

You have been given that because of the presence of Christ. Where are you today, are you on the way to Emmaus? Do you experience the presence of God? Where are you, where is your congregation? God wants to send you back home with a burning heart: everyone, may God bless you with a burning heart.

Bishop Barrow thanked Rev. Duran. He said that you want people in the national church who are not going to create red tape, but to cut through it.

The bishop explained that Rev. Chrostowski's is absent for daughter's wedding. "She is the broad shoulders we stand on in the office."

In mentioning the malaria challenge, with the special need for \$250,000, it was nice to have ended up with \$300,000. He added that the ELCA's new fund drive, totaling \$200 million, is a goal that says we do want to be a church on the move.

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Finally, the bishop had a word about Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, who, he said, "says more with fewer words than anyone I've ever met."

First Ballot

Bishop Barrow called for voting members to cast votes, using the electronic voting system to cast separate ballots for each open office. Votes were recorded on the electronic system, with results reported at the time of the vote. There were 329 active participants on the voting system (additional registrants had been added since the figures reported by the Credentials Committee). Names in **bold face with asterisks** were declared elected, with each person's vote total following their name.

Nominated for Synod Council

At Large – Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2015

Rev. Jay McDivitt* 261 votes

Nominated for the Consultation Committee

Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2015

Rev. Christian Marien* 269 votes

Lay Male – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2019

Mr. Grant Younquist * 260 votes

Lay Male – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015

Mr. Christopher Ellerd* 260 votes

Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015

Ms. Susan Daniels* 258 votes

Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2019

Ms. Allison Bremer* 254 votes

A point of order was raised by Ms. Esther Rusch, Faith Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, regarding the lack of published information on candidates nominated from the floor, including the two candidates for the Partial Clergy Term on the Consultation Committee below. Bishop Barrow ruled that the results of the vote for this position, which had been conducted, were void, and that contested elections involving floor nominees would be deferred until the scheduled second voting period to allow the distribution of such information.

Clergy – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015

Rev. Sheila Rawn – Floor Nomination

Rev. Ari Mattson – Floor Nomination

Nominated for the Discipline Committee

Clergy – Full Terms (2) from September 2014 through August 2020

Rev. Ed Weiskotten* 239

Rev. Roy Nelson* 229

Lay Male – Full Term from September 2014 through August 2020

Mr. Robert Gee* 250

Lay Male – Partial Term from Election through August 2016

Mr. Jerry Key* 252

Lay Female – Full Term from September 2014 through August 2020

Ms. Alicia Ellis* 262

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Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2016

Ms. Kathleen Holat* 265

The following election was deferred based upon the bishop's earlier ruling, pending distribution of biographical information.

Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2016

Rev. Karen Natterstad – Nominating Committee Nomination

Rev. Grant Quever – Floor Nomination

A point of order was raised, asking whether the biographical information was limited to the congregation name. It was stated that there is more information; the Assembly will continue to wait for that information to be distributed.

Clergy – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2016

Rev. Stacy Seger* 261

Budget Presentation

Mr. David Groenewold, Director of Finance for the synod, explained key provisions of the proposed FY2016 synod budget. As background, he noted that while mission support for the previous year, which ended January 31, 2014, was above budget, it still represented the seventh consecutive year of decreased giving for general mission support. The focus of giving by the synod is to the ELCA, which receives 55% of the synod's mission support, and to partnership ministries, including the largest seminaries, Wisconsin Council of Churches, and the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, with ongoing support for Lutheran Campus Ministry, at \$135,000 per year.

For this year the synod is looking at yet another reduction in commitments from congregations. Mr. Groenewold referred to the budget printed in the Supplement, which calls for the same amount of income as this year based on commitments. He noted the shift in focus for grants from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation, though with the amount expected to remain unchanged at \$30,000. There were no questions. This budget will be submitted for discussion and action tomorrow.

Synod Endowment Fund Presentation

Rev. Larry Westfield told the Assembly that burning hearts are also generous hearts, and that we can be grateful there are so many in our church. He reported that two years ago a discussion began on how the synod could encourage legacy giving among its people. This discussion stemmed in part from the fact that Outreach for Hope was receiving a small number of bequests. The question was "how can we encourage that same kind of experience for all the other ministries that are supported by the synod?" This was followed by a presentation to the Synod Council, with the question being "how do we expand this invitation to be engaged in legacy giving?"

A task force was formed to provide leadership to exploring the question. The task force's recommendation to the Synod Council was forwarded to the Synod Assembly in the form of Resolution 1, addressing the question of establishing gifts. This fund is meant to be a container to accept gifts in five categories: Hunger and Poverty, Justice and Anti-Racism, International and Global, Youth Leadership and Development, and Health and Wellness. The ongoing purpose is to engender a culture of generosity in which individuals are encouraged to pray and to consider one or more ministries of the

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church for a bequest. Now, he said, is the time to discuss and to act. If approved, the Synod Council would set up an oversight board. Rev. Westfield ended his report by saying that everyone has the ability to set up a legacy gift, and that it would be wonderful if this resolution could be approved unanimously.

Consideration of Resolutions

Bishop Barrow invited Mr. Paul Bedker, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to return to the podium to present the pending resolutions.

Resolution 1 – Resolution on Establishment of a Synod Endowment Fund

The first resolution, which was submitted by the Synod Council, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Resolution on Establishment of a Synod Endowment Fund

Whereas, Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given to humankind - the created world, the Gospel, life, time, abilities, money, including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources; and

Whereas, the biblical principle of proportionate giving, to return to the Lord a portion of the gifts God has first given to his beloved children, is both a privilege and an appropriate response of gratitude to God; and

Whereas, Christians can give to the work of the church through gifts in and from wills, life insurance policies, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder and other trusts, and transfers of property such as cash, stocks, bonds and real estate; and

Whereas, a small but growing number of individuals are choosing to include one or more ministries of the GMS with a planned gift, it is the desire of Greater Milwaukee Synod (herein referred to as GMS) to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with loyalty and devotion to our Lord; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod establish a new and separate fund to be known as the Greater Milwaukee Synod Endowment Fund (herein referred to as the Fund), with the following provisions:

- The purpose of this Fund is to distribute financial support to ministries of the GMS. Those ministries include but are not limited to the following areas: Hunger & Poverty, Justice & Antiracism, International & Global, Youth Leadership & Development, Health & Wellness
- No portion of the distributions of the Fund shall be used for the annual operating budget of the GMS, and,
- The GMS Endowment Fund Committee (herein referred to as Committee) shall be the custodian of the Fund, The committee is to be formed through the action of the GMS Council by appointment or, if the Council decides, by the same process as is followed for the staffing of other synod standing committees. The committee will have the authority to establish the investment plan, after receiving approval of such investment plan from the GMS Council and take appropriate action to carry out that plan. The

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committee will also have the responsibility to recommend distributions to the GMS Council for their approval. Once approval is granted the Committee would then be responsible to see that distributions are carried out as quickly as possible, and,

- The purpose, governance, administration and management of the Fund and Committee will be defined by the plan of operation to be approved by the GMS Council. The Fund will be subject to an annual audit, as part of the GMS audit. In addition, The Committee shall report on a bi-monthly basis the status of the Fund, including investment return, additions, distributions, and make-up of investment portfolio.
- The GMS Council with the advice of the task force working on the creation of the GMS Endowment will select a name by which the GMS Endowment will be known and identified.
- The task force working on the creation of the GMS Endowment will also provide recommendations to the Council regarding the plan of how to attract funds to the Fund.

Rev. Grant Quever, Gethsemane Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brookfield, asked whether this synod was indeed the only synod without an endowment fund, noting also that when an endowment fund was created for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin clergy were encouraged to tithe from their estates in their wills.

A speaker in support noted that the assignment of oversight to a committee raises fiduciary issues, with ultimate responsibility shared by the committee and the Synod Council. Part of the concern was the issue of liability.

Rev. Steve Kersten, Atonement Lutheran Church, Muskego, said that in looking at other resolutions, with special attention to costs of Assembly, would it be possible to add a Synod Assembly scholarship fund to the endowment.

Rev. James Bickel, Galilee Lutheran Church, Pewaukee and Executive Director of Outreach for Hope, said "I have a vested interest in this, but I want to speak about a faith issue; this is about our faith and how we express it. We generally think about what we have in our pockets, but God gives us everything. When we leave, we leave that all behind." He said that the church is often a low priority for such giving, but that with an endowment fund we have an opportunity to say "this is what we are about; this is what our life is about." Saying that tax advantages today are structured so well for setting up an estate, while leaving something for children, but making "a real difference for the ministries that are your passion." This, he said, is a way to move our gifts forward.

Rev. Ted Romberg, retired, and a member of Ascension Lutheran Church in Waukesha, said in addressing the fiduciary issues that there is intended to be an ELCA Foundation tie-in. He said that his congregation started an endowment fund which has grown but which, he went on, has not affected current giving. These gifts are meant to be after life, through wills. Individuals would then have options for all three expressions of the church for planned giving: to their congregation, the synod, or the ELCA. He added that there are two attorneys working on details for the structure of the endowment fund. He is in favor of the resolution.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.04. Adoption of Resolution 1

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 1 as presented:

Resolution on Establishment of a Synod Endowment Fund

Whereas, Christian stewardship involves the faithful management of all the gifts God has given to humankind - the created world, the Gospel, life, time, abilities, money, including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources; and

Whereas, the biblical principle of proportionate giving, to return to the Lord a portion of the gifts God has first given to his beloved children, is both a privilege and an appropriate response of gratitude to God; and

Whereas, Christians can give to the work of the church through gifts in and from wills, life insurance policies, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder and other trusts, and transfers of property such as cash, stocks, bonds and real estate; and

Whereas, a small but growing number of individuals are choosing to include one or more ministries of the GMS with a planned gift, it is the desire of Greater Milwaukee Synod (herein referred to as GMS) to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with loyalty and devotion to our Lord; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod establish a new and separate fund to be known as the Greater Milwaukee Synod Endowment Fund (herein referred to as the Fund), with the following provisions:

- The purpose of this Fund is to distribute financial support to ministries of the GMS. Those ministries include but are not limited to the following areas: Hunger & Poverty, Justice & Antiracism, International & Global, Youth Leadership & Development, Health & Wellness
- No portion of the distributions of the Fund shall be used for the annual operating budget of the GMS, and,
- The GMS Endowment Fund Committee (herein referred to as Committee) shall be the custodian of the Fund, The committee is to be formed through the action of the GMS Council by appointment or, if the Council decides, by the same process as is followed for the staffing of other synod standing committees. The committee will have the authority to establish the investment plan, after receiving approval of such investment plan from the GMS Council and take appropriate action to carry out that plan. The committee will also have the responsibility to recommend distributions to the GMS Council for their approval. Once approval is granted the Committee would then be responsible to see that distributions are carried out as quickly as possible, and,
- The purpose, governance, administration and management of the Fund and Committee will be defined by the plan of operation to be approved by the GMS Council. The Fund will be subject to an annual audit, as part of the GMS audit. In addition, The Committee shall report on a bi-monthly basis the

status of the Fund, including investment return, additions, distributions, and make-up of investment portfolio.

- The GMS Council with the advice of the task force working on the creation of the GMS Endowment will select a name by which the GMS Endowment will be known and identified.
- The task force working on the creation of the GMS Endowment will also provide recommendations to the Council regarding the plan of how to attract funds to the Fund.

The vote on Resolution 1 was 260 in favor, 16 opposed.

Resolution 2 – Resolution Encouraging Voting Member Diversity and Participation

The second resolution, which was submitted by the Waukesha Cluster, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration. It was noted that the Reference and Counsel Committee recommended against passage of this amendment.

Resolution Encouraging Voting Member Diversity and Participation

WHEREAS many congregations do not send as many voting members to our annual assembly as they would be eligible to send; and,

WHEREAS other congregations send no voting members to our annual assembly; and

WHEREAS the annual fee to register is a significant barrier to participation even in well-resourced congregations; and

WHEREAS the sample polling done at the 2012 Assembly found that a majority of voting members had been there previously in that capacity, frequently more than five times; and

WHEREAS the typical days for this Assembly (Thursday-Saturday) tend to make it less likely that different, younger, and/or working age people will attend as voting members; and

WHEREAS the congregations of this Synod provide the vast majority of income to the Synod and rightly expect the Synod to facilitate the business of the congregations without billing the congregations for additional fees; and

WHEREAS we otherwise place a high value on diversity, inclusion, removal of financial barriers, and broad participation in the life of our church; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that beginning in 2015, the Greater Milwaukee Synod schedule future Assemblies on weekend days and evenings, and be it further

RESOLVED that all congregations be strongly encouraged to send a full slate of voting members to attend each assembly, and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations be further encouraged not to send the same people as voting members in consecutive years, and be it further

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RESOLVED that the Synod Council implement, as a part of the 2015 registration process, means by which substantial discounts of at least 25% be utilized to celebrate full slates (for the 3rd voter member per congregation and up) and the rotation of congregational representation (discount for anyone who did not serve the previous year). Funding for these discounts should come from General Synod revenue rather than increased fees for registration, and be it further

RESOLVED that the long-term goal of this Synod be to eliminate registration fees entirely through adjustments to the general Synod budget beginning in 2015 with the goal of achieving fee-free access to our own assembly as of 2017.

Rev. John Horner-Ibler, Pastor of Cross of Life Lutheran Church, Brookfield, and Dean of the Waukesha Cluster, spoke on behalf of the second resolution. He asked for three minutes, to have time to explain the rationale for this resolution and the spirit in which the resolution was presented. He said that this is not meant to be the last step, and that there is the presumption that there would be amendments, but that the goal is to move forward with action on this issue. He stated that fewer than half of potential lay voting members had registered, and urged more rotation of voting members, leading, he said, to greater vitality in an Assembly with a shorter and more focused timespan. He said that moving to weekends and evenings would give more individuals a chance to attend. He estimated that the first year financial impact would be \$5,000 or less. He urged passage in the spirit of conversation, and downplayed potential unforeseen outcomes.

Mr. Matthew Brockmeier, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Random Lake, and Synod Secretary, noted that at its May 2014 meeting the Synod Council took action to begin discussions on issues of representation at and affordability of the Synod Assembly over the next year.

Mr. Jerry Key, Peace Lutheran Church, Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, and member of the Synod Council, stated his concern that the resolution was too detailed, and suggested not accepting it.

Rev. David Schoob, Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend, made a motion to "refer the question of Assembly participation and affordability to the Synod Council for consideration," stating that it is appropriate to move this to the Council as the most efficient way to move this process forward.

Mr. Gary Bennett, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Hartford, asked that this discussion, if approved, also include consideration of meetings of committees and other similar bodies.

Mr. Jerry Key, Peace Lutheran Church, Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, encouraged those who submitted the resolution to meet with the Synod Council as part of this discussion.

Rev. John Horner-Ibler, Pastor of Cross of Life Lutheran Church, Brookfield, and Dean of the Waukesha Cluster, asked that a date be set for completion of this discussion.

Rev. David Schoob, Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend, responded that a timetable was not included in his motion, in part because of the impact on budget, and the budgetary timeframe that would be involved.

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Ms. Esther Rusch, Faith Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, moved an amendment to the motion to refer the question to the Synod Council to add the words "with the Synod Council to report its findings to the 2015 Synod Assembly."

Rev. Brad Brown, North Cape Evangelical Lutheran Church, Franksville, spoke in favor of adding a deadline to the resolution.

Rev. John Gugel, St. John's Lutheran Church, Brookfield, suggested that also included in the resolution should be a discussion of the location of future Synod Assemblies.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.05. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to adopt the motion to amend the previous motion to include the words "to receive the Council's report at the 2015 Synod Assembly."

The vote on the motion to amend was 250 in favor, 27 opposed.

Rev. John Gugel made a motion to amend the original motion to include review of location as a factor for consideration.

A point of order was made, that this motion was not germane to the issue. The chair ruled that the amendment was germane, allowing its consideration.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.06. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to adopt the motion to amend the previous motion to include the words to include review of location as a factor for consideration.

The vote on the motion to amend was 205 in favor, 75 opposed.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.07. Adoption of Motion to Refer Consideration to Synod Council

The Assembly voted to adopt the motion to "refer the question of Assembly participation, affordability and location to the Synod Council for consideration, with the Synod Council to report its findings to the 2015 Synod Assembly."

The vote on the motion to refer was 243 in favor, 40 opposed.

The bishop thanked those responsible for the resolution, noting that these issues regarding the Synod Assembly have been a growing concern.

Resolution 3 – Resolution Encouraging Intentional, Called Interim Ministry in Our Synod

The third resolution, which was submitted by the Waukesha Cluster, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration. The Reference and Counsel Committee forwarded this resolution to the Synod Assembly without recommendation.

Resolution Encouraging Intentional, Called Interim Ministry in Our Synod

WHEREAS some pastoral transitions create unique stresses in congregations due to an especially beloved, long, or troubled pastorate; and

WHEREAS trained interim pastors have long been seen as vital to facilitating successful congregational transitions to future settled pastors; and

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WHEREAS retaining a trained, motivated, and caring group of interim pastors has long proved difficult due to the uncertainty of compensation between calls; and

WHEREAS the uncertainties of consistent compensation often cause interims to leave an interim call prematurely or entirely in order to assure ongoing employment; and

WHEREAS the Bishop of the Synod should have maximum latitude and flexibility in assigning interim pastors to the settings in which their gifts are most needed and that this flexibility should be unrelated to the immediate capacity of any one congregation to fairly compensate that particular interim pastor; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Greater Milwaukee Synod call and compensate on a full-time basis at least four duly trained pastors to serve the congregations of the entire Synod on an ongoing basis as interim pastors; and be it further

RESOLVED that the initial such call be issued beginning in 2015 and the program be fully implemented by the end of 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations to which these Pastors are assigned reimburse the Synod for employment expenses incurred during their stay; and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations reimburse the Synod for these employment expenses on a sliding scale set by the Synod Council and ranging between 75% and 110% of total costs with the scale taking into account the congregation worship and budget size and costs previously incurred by the congregation (or expected to be incurred) with a settled pastor; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Synod budget to pay the balance of costs for interim pastors not to exceed \$20,000 per year per pastor and not to exceed \$75,000 in aggregate for all interim pastors once the program is fully implemented; and be it further

RESOLVED that the calls for these interim pastors be issued by the Synod Council and their assignment to be under the authority of the Bishop and her/his staff in regular consultation with the Cluster Deans and Synod Council.

Rev. Jay McDivitt, Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Waukesha, and Synod Council, spoke in favor of the resolution, noting the high turnover and large number of interim calls at his current and previous congregations. He cited as a primary concern the economic uncertainty of serving as an interim minister, where there are weeks or months without predictable income. Rev. McDivitt noted another issue, that not all ministers have all the gifts for effective interim service, and that the availability of appropriate interim ministers cannot be assured at any particular time in the synod. He called this resolution is a step in the right direction, promoting the reliable ministry needed "during tender times of transitions," and encouraged the Synod Assembly to take this issue very seriously.

Rev. Sherman Martell, Luther Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Allis, said that about six years ago there were discussions about interim ministry, and that one of

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the questions that arose was about training for interim ministers. This was, he said, a stumbling block to assuring good interim calls, and he asked what training is typical for current interim ministers. He also asked how many interim ministers are currently serving in the synod.

The bishop responded that he did not have the number of interim ministers available offhand, but that usually there are from twenty to thirty congregations in transition at any moment. All of those, he said, require some sort of interim status. He added that there are trained interim ministers, and that the synod attempts to encourage that training with anyone looking at interim ministry. He also said that there are more and more synod calls to interim ministers, with part of the reason being the three-year limit for On Leave from Call status, to avoid having individuals serving interim calls lapsing from the roster. He said that there are certainly more than four current interim calls. As a procedural matter, the bishop said that because of the budgetary impact, this resolution would require a two-thirds vote to accept, and that the proposed budget would need to be reduced by \$75,000 in other areas to remain in balance, as required by the Assembly Rules.

Rev. Chuck Brummond, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Slinger, and Co-Director of Rostered Leadership for the synod, said that while he loves the spirit of this resolution, he is not sure that he is in favor or passage. Because of the complexity of the question, and the fact that this is a "very significant ministry," it deserves greater attention and should, he said, be referred to the Synod Council. He noted that the cost for training for interim ministry is about \$1,500.

A motion was made to refer the question of intentional, called interim ministry to the Synod Council to consider, and for the Synod Council to report back to the Synod Assembly in 2015.

Rev. John Horner-Ibler, Pastor of Cross of Life Lutheran Church, Brookfield, and Dean of the Waukesha Cluster, spoke against the motion to refer. He said that because the first year was a phase-in period in the resolution, the initial costs may be overstated. He said that those numbers should not scare the Synod Assembly into thinking the issue needs long-term study. Interim ministry is, he said, a spectrum of things, and this addresses the most difficult congregational transitions. He said that we should be putting resources into assuring the long-term survival of our ministries; "let's not put this stuff off – we're getting killed by putting stuff off."

Rev. Chuck Brummond said that he is not sure the Synod Assembly has enough information to vote on the resolution, taking into account how it is structured. He said that one consideration is that implementing this plan would raise questions on compensation for other interim ministers.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.08. Adoption of Motion to Refer Consideration to Synod Council

The Assembly voted to adopt the motion to "refer the question of intentional, called interim ministry to the Synod Council to consider, with a report by the Synod Council to the 2015 Synod Assembly."

The vote on the motion to refer was 191 in favor, 91 opposed.

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Bishop Barrow said that he is "glad it is being referred. It is a personal concern, when we get a bunch of interims, some with guaranteed positions and some not."

Announcements

The banquet begins promptly at noon, and should be wonderful. Because of needed set-up for the banquet, all personal items must be removed from the room.

Immediately after recess, all rostered women are asked to assemble for a photo.

The Ministry Fair takes place both before and after the banquet.

"Hunger" (coins drop)

The Assembly recessed for workshops and the banquet at 10:20 am.

Plenary III

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 3:00 pm with a greeting, thanking those present for staying with us. Rev. David Dragseth of Lake Park Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, thanked Barbie Izqueirdo, the Assembly's keynote speaker. Bishop Barrow gave her a scarf like that in the picture of Bishop Desmond Tutu and President Obama, followed by devotions led by Rev. Richard Suero, Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. Pastor Suero led the Assembly through Matthew 6 and the question of fasting. He spoke of his Catholic background, and fasting as a child, asking how we can talk to people about fasting when they are hungry: "how do we sustain the human body – how do we sustain religion – how do we tell people to fast when we are satisfied – how do we teach the teaching of Jesus if we don't live this?" He questioned doing things for others without involving them. "If we are a church, we are a church together – this is the body of Christ, the church of Christ, this is who we are together – when one suffers, everyone suffers."

Following singing, the bishop spoke of Faith/Santa Fe, an old English-speaking congregation that took stock of its neighborhood and reached out.

Announcements included the Mt. Meru benefit golf outing, and honey in the angel jar for sale.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that in attendance prior to the third plenary, on Friday, May 30, 2014, were 149 rostered persons and 187 lay people, for a total voting membership of 336. Also present were 60 visitors for a total attendance of 396. A quorum was present.

Lutheran Magazine and Telescopes for Tanzania

Rev. Tom Pietz, Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hartland, spoke of the awards made to *The Lutheran* magazine, and highlighted an article in the edition included in members' packets on Revs. Sue and Chuck Ruehle, who run the Telescopes for Tanzania program (the Ruehles were in Tanzania at the time of the Assembly).

Video presentations followed.

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The video on *The Lutheran* magazine provided its rationale, to show God's presence in our lives and around the world, sharing stories of God's people living their faith and connecting Lutherans with the global Christian community. *The Lutheran*, it shared, provides an open forum for discussion, challenging us to bring God's grace to all. It went on to say that informed members are active members, who contribute to the vitality of the church.

The Telescopes for Tanzania video featured the Ruehles, who built an appreciation for science education using simple tools, beginning with three telescopes. Their initial work was a success, and they got requests to go back, where they did workshops, with students enjoying hands-on activities. This has, they said, helped students do better with math and science. Their colleagues said that this project creates curiosity about science for young Tanzanians who cannot afford to buy the tools. Sue Ruehle spoke of the need for gifts to reach their current \$14,000 project funding goal.

Second Ballot

With information now available on individuals nominated from the floor, voting proceeded for the two contested positions involving floor nominations.

Nominated for the Consultation Committee

Clergy – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015

Rev. Sheila Rawn 97

Rev. Ari Mattson* 130

Nominated for the Discipline Committee

Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2016

Rev. Karen Natterstad* 133

Rev. Grant Quever 111

Bishop Barrow announced the results of this ballot (* **declared elected**).

Resolution 4 – Resolution Opposing Discriminatory Legislation

The fourth resolution, which was submitted by Cross of Life Lutheran Church, Brookfield, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Resolution Opposing Discriminatory Legislation

WHEREAS God created all people and sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, for the salvation of all people; and,

WHEREAS Jesus Christ, by word and by example, taught us that we should love, interact with and care for all people; and,

WHEREAS legislators in several states have proposed so-called "religious freedom" legislation which in actuality would legalize discrimination against some people; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod oppose any legislation that authorizes acts of discrimination against some people in the name of religion, and be it further

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RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod continue to invite all people into our congregations and communities.

Rev. Sherrie Lorbeck, Cross of Life, Brookfield, speaking in support of this resolution, said that "you might be aware of legislation that would allow business owners to discriminate in the name of religious freedom." It is alarming, she said, that so many states are having this conversation. This would open wide the door to so many kinds of discrimination. As Christ's people, we must speak for justice, for equality, for dignity and for respect.

A voting member said that such legislation actually simply protects business owners from lawsuits, saying that this is about norms, and that the proposed resolution does not seem consistent with the ELCA's position on tolerance. He cited certain discriminatory procedures within the ELCA, including the exclusion of potential pastors if they wish based on sexual orientation.

Mr. Lee Jost, Faith Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, spoke in opposition. The intent of this type of legislation, he said, was to protect those Christians with a different view. This resolution would discriminate against those whose views are different. The summary of the resolution includes a statement on love, but it is about an individual decision to act in the way that business owners believe. This is about freedom. There is nothing in the Gospels about compliance with an anti-discrimination law. The synod cannot coerce love.

Rev. John Bischoff, St. Paul's Lutheran and Zion Evangelical Lutheran Churches, Racine, moved to amend to change "some" to "all" in first resolve. The motion was seconded.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.09. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to adopt the motion to amend the text in the first Resolved statement in Resolution 4, by substituting "some" for "all."

The vote on the motion to amend was 175 in favor, 54 opposed.

Rev. David Schoob, Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend, spoke in favor of the resolution, stating his sense of the spirit of the resolution, which is in part to counter the idea that all Christians believe in such laws. He said that people within the church need to define our religion in a situation where people are being denied housing and jobs, which is a matter of justice.

Rev. Arlen Solem, Associate Pastor, Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, said there was a time when non-white people were not considered human, where Christian people did not allow people of color into their businesses. It did not change everyone's hearts, but that doesn't change the fact that discrimination is wrong. Such measures, he added, could also discriminate against people of color.

Rev. Sherrie Lorbeck, Cross of Life Lutheran Church, Brookfield, and Synod Council, stated that we're all here because we're Lutheran, but we have differing beliefs. At some level what does it mean to be human, and what are basic human rights. Arizona law was vetoed, because the governor said it was so far-reaching. Currently, class of

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race is legally protected. She said she is speaking again in favor of this resolution, so that we can speak out as Christ's people.

Rev. Jay McDivitt, Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Waukesha, and Synod Council, offered a motion to amend the resolution by striking the first resolved statement, replacing it with:

Resolved that members of congregations within the Greater Milwaukee Synod are encouraged not to patronize businesses who refuse to serve customers of all faith traditions or sexual orientations, regardless of any legal protection that might be offered for such practices; and be it further

Resolved that members of congregations within the Greater Milwaukee Synod who are business owners are encouraged to serve all people of all faith traditions or sexual orientations, regardless of any legal protections that might be offered for such practices.

He said that we want to be on record that we do believe in serving all people, regardless of what possible legislation might look like.

Rev. John Horner-Ibler, Pastor of Cross of Life Lutheran Church, Brookfield, and Dean of the Waukesha Cluster, said that the original resolution was written by an attorney, and that he is alarmed both for legal and for faith reasons by the motion to substitute. The original resolution picked up on the Sermon on the Mount. Creating legal precedent moves us away from our faith, by saying that this is a matter for individual conscience. He said that this should be about legislation, rather than waiting for case-by-case protests or boycotts.

Gary Liedtke, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Waukesha, said that he wondered whether both the original resolved statement and the two proposed as substitutes could all be incorporated into the resolution. He moved to amend the current motion to amend, to retain the original first resolved statement rather than replacing it. This motion to amend the amendment was seconded.

Mr. Jerry Key, Peace Lutheran Church, Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, asked the Assembly to go back to the resolution as originally presented, removing all amendments. He said that the proposed changes would defeat its purpose.

Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenosha, asked whether it was appropriate at this point to offer an amendment to that wording of the first resolved statement, as already amended. Because this is not germane to the question on the floor, she will wait to make her motion.

Jay McDivitt, Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Waukesha, spoke in opposition to reinstating the first resolved clause. He said it is not everyone who has the same view on this resolution, but that as a Reconciling in Christ synod, we are already on record opposing discriminatory practices.

A final comment was that business discrimination puts this issue at a lower, more local level. Uncertain about having a policy on this.

A vote was held on Mr. Gary Liedtke's amendment.

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Assembly Action

SA14.05.10. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to adopt the motion to amend the amendment striking the amended first resolved statement and substituting two new resolved statements by retaining, rather than striking, the amended first resolved statement.

The vote on the motion to amend the amendment was 142 in favor, 104 opposed.

The motion on the floor became, in effect, to simply add the two new resolved statements offered by Rev. Jay McDivitt.

A motion was offered to move the previous question (end debate).

Assembly Action

SA14.05.11. Move the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to move the previous question.

The vote to Move the Previous Question was 202 in favor, 25 opposed.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.12. Rejection of Amendment

The Assembly voted to reject the motion to amend the resolution by adding two new resolved statements as proposed by Rev. Jay McDivitt.

The vote to amend was 87 in favor, 160 opposed.

Debate resumed on the original resolution, with a wording change to the first resolved statement.

Mr. Jerry Key, Peace Lutheran Church, Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, said that such legislation is a first step on a slippery slope allowing people in businesses to discriminate.

Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenosha, moved an amendment to the first resolved statement to replace the words "against all people in the name of religion" to "against any person or groups of people in the name of religion".

Assembly Action

SA14.05.13. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to adopt the motion to amend the first resolved statement by replacing the words "against all people in the name of religion" with the words "against any person or groups of people in the name of religion".

The vote to amend was 202 in favor, 44 opposed.

Mr. Dayvin Hallmon, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenosha, asked as a point of information what exactly the resolution would do.

Bishop Barrow responded that resolutions are not legally binding, but give a sense of what we are stating as a synod; they become a statement of what we believe.

Rev. Carol Hegland, Village Church, Milwaukee, said that the "last question raises why I am so excited to speak in favor of this resolution," noting that it gives the bishop the

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authority to stand up and say that the synod opposes such legislation. "We are doing today a 'here we stand'."

Rev. Alexis Twito, Capitol Drive Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, spoke in favor of the resolution, saying that it is "important because it is about sex, it is about gays and women who use birth control. If we allow legislation to give businesses this freedom to discriminate, it poses a problem."

Ms. Pat Campbell, Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, said that no one here is in favor of discrimination, "but many of us have different ideas of what that looks like." Since there is not yet a law allowing this, it is premature to take this action. Being against discrimination is self-evident. Opposed to the resolution unless it is about a specific circumstance; "there is nothing substantial in the works right now."

Rev. Steven Blyth, St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Palmyra, stated that he is against discrimination, but is also against discriminating against people who practice their faith. If a bakery chose not to make a cake for a homosexual couple, can't they choose what to do? What are we trying to do? Are we trying to discriminate against people following their own beliefs?

Rev. Mark Thompson, Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, Glendale, said that such arguments remind him of quietism; being in favor of what is happening, the approach which led to Jim Crow laws.

Mr. Jerry Key, Peace Lutheran Church, Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, said that legislation and the personal behavior of business owners are two different things. "We are allowing businesses to decide who not to serve."

A motion was offered to move the previous question (end debate).

Assembly Action

SA14.05.14. Move the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to move the previous question.

The vote to Move the Previous Question was 203 in favor, 41 opposed.

The vote was on the original motion, as amended in Synod Assembly action SA14.05.13.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.15. Adoption of Resolution 4

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 4 as amended:

Resolution Opposing Discriminatory Legislation

WHEREAS God created all people and sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, for the salvation of all people; and,

WHEREAS Jesus Christ, by word and by example, taught us that we should love, interact with and care for all people; and,

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WHEREAS legislators in several states have proposed so-called “religious freedom” legislation which in actuality would legalize discrimination against some people; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod oppose any legislation that authorizes acts of discrimination against any person or groups of people in the name of religion, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod continue to invite all people into our congregations and communities.

The vote to approve Resolution 4 was 195 in favor, 54 opposed.

Transitions

The bishop read a list of those who’ve come into the synod, asking those present to stand for recognition.

Cluster Task Force Report

Ms. Esther Rusch, Faith Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, acknowledged the work of the Cluster Task Force. 2013 Synod Assembly Resolution 1, which established the Task Force, called for representation that “must fairly represent the lay/clergy balance, male/female balance, people of color/white people balance, urban/suburban balance, and also represent other-abled and the gay, lesbian, bisexual community.” Ms. Rusch said that for the most part that balance was achieved.

She went on to say the purpose of their work had been to understand the purpose of clusters, how they have functioned, and how to structure them for the future. She cited the synod’s constitutional provision +S12.01., which sets as the purpose of clusters “to foster interdependent relationships among congregations, institutions, and synodical and churchwide units for mission purposes.” Rather than functioning as shared mission clusters, she said the reality often was that they had become mutual support arrangements for rostered leaders.

The listening sessions held by the Task Force only drew 20 people (28 including Task Force members), from 17 congregations, and eight clusters. There was, she said, no groundswell of support for changing clusters. To the extent that the desire was to bring people together across lines to discuss issues, it was not clear how realigning clusters would make a difference.

Ms. Rusch ended by saying that cluster renewal is not dead in the water; that there is interest in continuing discussions on the possibility of clusters as lay-led ministries. The Task Force recommends continuing the conversation on lay-led ministries, something that the Synod Council addressed when it called for continuing discussion on cross-fertilization across cluster and other boundaries within the synod at its May 2014 meeting.

Questions and Comments for the Bishop

Ms. Diane Roznowski, Mount Carmel Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, and GMS diakonia Steering Committee chairperson, thanked the bishop for including diakonia in consideration as part of an approach to revitalizing clusters.

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Bishop Barrow reiterated that there is not much passion to redesign clusters. He said that this is an ongoing discussion. He said that over the years, lay people have been set aside as active participants in clusters, and that some larger issues will keep pushing this discussion forward.

Rev. Matthew Short, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Slinger, said that as the dean of a cluster that doesn't meet, he sees a growing congregationalism. To address this trend, he urged all present to go home and tell the stories of the things the synod does. "Talk to your pastor, write a report, give a report – continue to seek partnership outside of our walls."

Announcements from the Bishop

Do not leave items on the table; dinner on your own; there will be a brief meeting for ushers, and rehearsal for choir immediately following this session.

Following announcements, Bishop Barrow declared the Assembly in recess at 4:32 pm.

Saturday, May 31, 2014

Worship before the plenary session was led by Rev. Eric Luedtke, with Rev. Rebecka Feters assisting. Venice Williams preached on seeds and vines, and on the value of being made uncomfortable, as, she said, many were following Barbie Izquierdo's presentation on Friday.

Plenary IV

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 9:39 am.

Announcements

The bishop's announcements included the New Wind Folk School and a rostered leaders retreat at Lutherdale in late August (using Portico funds that came from high participation levels in their annual survey).

He thanked the people who made the Assembly function well, including the tech crew, the staff at Country Springs, the worship planning team, those who set up displays, the Assembly planning team, and those providing child care at the Assembly.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold reported that in attendance on Saturday, May 31, 2014 were 149 rostered persons and 190 lay people, for a total voting membership of 339. Also present were 63 visitors for a total attendance of 402. A quorum was present.

Electronic Evaluations

An electronic evaluation of the Assembly was conducted. Paper evaluation forms were made available for those without voting machines, and for any who wished to add narrative elements to their evaluations.

Report of the Bishop – Bishop Jeff Barrow

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Vice President Scott Manske introduced Bishop Barrow, lauding him for the strength of what he stands for and for how well he represents the synod, saying that he is doing a wonderful job,

The bishop began by saying that his decision not to provide a written report beforehand was intentional, in that many don't read such reports, and that he intended this year's report to be more on the order of a reflection. Once his remarks were concluded, he said, he would conduct an open mic to hear concerns and thoughts about where the synod needs to go, giving those present a chance to respond to his report. He added that a conversation of the faithful is often missing in the church.

He began by referring to Isaiah 35, with its promise that "the eyes of the blind shall be opened," and that God "will come and save you." These words, in the Advent lectionary, represent a time of awakening; a time of reversal of fortunes and of expectations.

This is the new vision we are to have: those of us who have given up, and have been given up on. These words provide the core of what I understand to be the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to stop lamenting and stop living in the past. We are the fragile vessels, and this provides an awakening for those who have fallen asleep. It is a matter of discerning what we take and what we leave behind.

The time of assumed Christianity is gone, here in the United States, and perhaps worldwide. This is increasingly a society of the unchurched. The bishops' academy focused on the "nones," those who claim no religious affiliation, though the faith questions often remain prominent among those who have abandoned religious institutions. One frustration about the church is that there is so much effort to hang on to what has been, rather than meeting those who want to find God. Is desperation driving us together? We still embrace a rigid congregationalism in this country – rampant congregationalism. So much of our church life revolves around this, and too many people have clung to that, rather than preaching the Gospel to a world that is hungry for that message. "It is imperative for churches to begin to work together before reaching the point of desperation." Sometimes I think we would be better off with fewer organizations, but more holy places to gather for word and sacrament. At Holy Communion in Racine one year the snow plowing budget was \$20,000, and the total for plowing for the congregations in Racine was probably \$100,000, for churches that may only have been one-third full. The question is how to be the people of God eager to proclaim the Gospel.

In Isaiah, renewal began with employing the gifts of the sacred remnant – the dreams of a great new reality. Churches are struggling to become missional.

I visited one congregation and asked for a tour of the building before worship. I saw every corner, talked about what had gone on there, and heard the dreams that never materialized in that space. Those may embody the seed of new growth. The trick lies in leaving behind the trappings of the institution, the buildings and hierarchy, but then to remember the important witness of those who have gone before. The celebration of anniversaries of ordination opened things for us in that way.

What do we take with us? I am proud to be a Lutheran. This is not about Nordic self-effacing piety, but about a theology of the cross. Grace is revealed in God's benevolent

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nature toward all of creation. That allows us to walk in the steps of Jesus. Being Lutheran is care of our neighbor, and seeking out the poor: "to understand the poor and disenfranchised as neighbor, rather than simply as the objects or recipients of one's own benevolence."

Water, Agriculture, Dignity

Last year, the Good Shepherd Fund process began to name things we are passionate about in this synod. Five out of 35 grants were funded, but more important; in the conversation generated some things emerged, including that hunger issues matter in this world. But feeding hungry people goes beyond sending food packets or working at a pantry, and I hope it only begins a conversation on what food justice is. It is not justice until it begins to see the faces of those who become empowered to become neighbors.

This can lead to the larger arena of human dignity and justice, to work toward sustainability rather than dependence. In global partnerships the discussion is about sustainability, with a discussion on dependence.

I am proud of the ELCA for addressing and entering arenas, and staying there for the long-haul.

The Good Shepherd money also raised up the importance of being a global church, where we learn from neighbors as we walk together. When you go elsewhere, you see the synod through different eyes

Only one of the five grants only dealt with mission development, which was disappointing. The idea of sharing our faith. We do hospitality badly, because of diminished understanding, but the question based on theology remains: why wouldn't you want to be Lutheran?

One thing to take along is the notion that being part of the Lutheran church can actually bring hope and joy and love to others.

Who do you ask to share this beautiful thing in your life? The theology of the cross offers a path for Christianity in this country. Boldness to the Gospel, and to carry that witness, that spirit of proclamation and witness to justice.

Bishops Open Mic

Rev. Margaret Schoewe, St. Matthews Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, said that we need to keep thinking about how to reach out to young people who are not churched. Wauwatosa, she said, is a growing area. She asked whether there are congregations which have gone out and reached the young who are not churched. She would like to hear, but after the Assembly.

Ms. Kathy Davis, St. John's Lutheran Church, Brookfield, said that she appreciated why the bishop didn't provide a written copy of his report.

Bishop Barrow said that the text will be available on the synod website.

Rev. Matthew Short, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Slinger, said one thing that is fundamental is cultural translation. We have a treasure chest of theology, but often pre-conceived notions. The question is how to break through, to take the gift and put it out

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there in a radically different context. This is every generation's task of cultural translation.

A Voting Member from Adoration Evangelical Lutheran Church, Greenfield, said that the church that her family, with two kids, attends has people embracing new ideas, such as a bible study and the use of social media to promote the church. Initiatives included being at a bar, part of an effort to open up to a greater population. "We met our pastor outside of church, and he is good at using the tools that we use." It is a matter of coming to you. Stop putting people in a box, not boxes for youth and young adults – talk to them as a person, get to know them, start the conversation with what is important to them. Then they can feel valued, and will stay. We are now in a church where all of us feel valued.

Mr. Paul Bauman, Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend, referring to the ELCA representative's remarks the day before, said that with the changing of neighborhoods, is there anything available as best practices to say okay, how do we continue to reach out, not to the same people, but to new people?

Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, said that a t-shirt she is reluctant to wear says "sin boldly – but trust in God more boldly still." She added that if you are part of a congregation thinking about something, go ahead, and trust that God will send the teachers to you. The only true sin, she stated, would be not to have started at all. Sinning boldly – trusting that god will do what he will.

Mr. Dayvin Hallmon, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenosha, said that, as a person approaching 30, he is disappointed in the approach by the synod to the young. Are we serious? Do we have an assertive approach? He is broken-hearted about what he hears.

Mr. Lee Jost, Faith Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, made observations about seeing "a serious, broad reawakened interest in the Christian-Judeo principals on the founding of our nation, a real hunger to grasp the founding father's principals." There seems to be an increase in student enrollments, Belmont, Hillsdale and other Christian academies and higher learning institutions.

Rev. Andrew Nyren, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, said that he does close work with people from other religious traditions, but no longer with Catholic churches in his area. There is no connection, nothing going on. Are there things that you know of going on?

Bishop Barrow responded that there are good relations, with some things on which we are very close. There is now a kind of revival of the ecumenical spirit.

Rev. Jacob Werkheiser, Vernon Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mukwonago, reflected on highs and lows of this weekend, with one of the lows being, for some, the medium – how we conduct business. It "is kind of boring." He urged the synod to change the medium to engage more who are not at the table. At their table, each person writes down a word, and then a drawing, that engage them in the conversation. He spoke of the idea of revival, and of learning, at God's table. Carrying forward the idea of sinning boldly, with intensity, is a challenge. "I would like to hear from you practical methods

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beyond conversing.” Does the bishop have practical ideas for continuing that or fostering more engagement?

The bishop responded that “I’m still the guy who goes on canoe trips.” The whole thing, he said, of media connecting to people is powerful and dangerous. “Others [in the synod] do that better.” He added that “we live in an age of snarky tweeting,” noting the power of civility in our interactions.

Nanette Smith, Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, said that people with disabilities have not been mentioned in our conversations. She said that she leads a group for young adults of different ages that meets once a month. “These folks have some incredible insights, such incredible faith, and we do not have this group represented, there are no materials provided, we need to engage with them.”

In closing this session, Bishop Barrow said that “it is a great privilege to be called to do what I do. I am grateful for those on staff.” In noting the good comments, he said that “baptism always trumps ordination. I am grateful for this office, but baptism calls us all together. I am grateful for everybody in the room.”

Vice President Manske turned the chair back to Bishop Barrow, adding that “sometimes we overthink things.” As an example, his daughter’s friends were volunteering for Vacation Bible School at a time when not enough volunteers could be found. These young people came and were engaged. They did the Ten Commandments, teaching them to the kids. “All they want to do is be engaged and invited. If we open up the doors, they will come on in.” He said his daughter is now known as someone who is “kind of religious.” A friend, who sometimes did not find acceptance elsewhere, asked if they would be accepted at their church. “The answer was yes, we would accept them. Invite and engage.”

Action on Budget

Mr. David Groenewold, synod Director of Finance, moved approval of the budget for February 1, 2015 through January 31, 2016, as presented in the Supplement. There was no discussion.

Assembly Action

SA14.05.16. Approval of Budget

The Assembly voted to approve the Greater Milwaukee Synod’s budget for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2016 as presented, with total contributions and support (income) of \$2,195,500 and total ministries (expenses) of \$2,224,080.

The vote on the motion to approve the budget was 162 in favor, 2 opposed.

Good Shepherd Task Force Report

Rev. Andy Fetters, St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waukesha, presented the report of the Good Shepherd Task Force. He called it a great pleasure to sit on the Task Force, thinking of “the trust that was given to us by all of you and by the bishop. The Task Force celebrates these disbursements – God has blessed us richly. AMEN! We pray for all of these projects to bear fruit.”

Rev. Fetters introduced members of the Task Force, and then introduced a video highlighting the work of the ministries that had received grants. The video presentation

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included a request that congregations consider the use of their assets, when no longer needed for their ministry, to connect with needs in ministry.

Open Forum

The Open Forum, a success in 2013, was repeated this year.

Ms. Ellie Schmidtke, Associate in Ministry/Director of Family Ministries, Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, who supports both bible camps, requested a prayer for all who will be programming and working at the camps this summer.

Ms. Loretta Brockmeier, St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Random Lake, wanted to "speak up for the boring parts of the Assembly, which are extremely vital for adjudication." She said she grew up Catholic, and the church was not transparent. Being part of an open church is, she said, an exercise in self-discipline."

Mr. Jerry Schmidt of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project gave thanks for the synod's support. He said there was one remaining challenge: that they came with coffee, but did not want to carry it away. "Please stop and buy on the way out." He said that the money from the purchase of coffee supports the growers and agriculture in Tanzania.

Rev. Joe Ellwanger, Retired, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; "I am here to report on what I think was a very important emphasis in last year's assembly, the 11x15 Campaign." He said that while there was no report on the campaign at this year's Assembly, he wanted to assure the Assembly that those working on this effort are grateful that some have been engaged in this campaign. He said there is some progress, but that "making a change in this piece of our culture is not easy and is not fast – it is slow, but there is progress." The big progress of the last year, he said, was increasing funding for Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD), which is designed to keep people out of prison in the first place. Theologically, he said, that is where we are at – funding went from \$1million to \$4million, enough to keep 250 people out of state prisons, and 750 out of county jails. This is saying, he added, "that you are a human being, you've got dignity." He repeated the call for "treatment, not incarceration," saying "I will not give up on this issue. This is a church engaged in the nitty-gritty of people at the edges." It is walking with those who are in the criminal justice system. "We recognize the more we are engaged, because of the gospel; I will pause with a semi-colon."

Ms. Brittany Wilson, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, it was a really nice assembly.

Rev. Matthew Short, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Slinger, presented a challenge for members' calendars, to see if a date is open, Friday, October 24th. That is the date of the Lutheran Campus Ministry fundraiser, especially important since we are the only mainline protestant denomination still doing this form of ministry.

Rev. Rachel Young-Binter, Lake Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, and Lutheran Campus Ministry, UWM, reinforced the message about the fundraiser, adding that "we are a reforming church – resetting the table, wider, bigger, the beauty and diversity of all God's people." She described those who sit at the Corner House table, a variety of faith

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traditions as the core group on Wednesday, and interfaith conversations on Monday nights. She said that the LGBT community, people who have often been injured by their faith communities, are a welcome part of the table. "Let me open the doors – thanks for support for Campus Ministry."

A voting member from Spirit of Peace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, addressed their new beginning. We are "really excited about the ministry in our neighborhood – creating a retreat center in their building – so much to show and to tell – open invitation, to come, explore and understand."

Rev. James Bickel, Galilee Lutheran Church, Pewaukee and Executive Director of Outreach for Hope, touted the synod picnic, in conjunction with the Outreach for Hope Bike Ride on September 6th, announcing that online registration opens tomorrow.

Ms. Monica Miller, Atonement Lutheran Church, Racine, said that hunger is one consequence of poverty, and that this coming Wednesday, June 4th, there is another opportunity to reach out further regarding poverty, to lift up the issues of poverty, when WISDOM organizations and others join in a symposium on poverty at Marquette University Memorial Union. This is being done so as not to lose sight of issues of poverty. She said that registration is available on the Wisconsin Council of Churches website.

Ms. Tracy Apps, Synod Director of Communication, "you guys all have a story to share. I am encouraged by these stories, which are a way to increase communication and awareness of what others are doing." She urged members to "publish your story on the synod website. We want to open it up to you, so visit the website and submit your stories. Tell about what is working in your congregations." She said that she wants "to fill the website with your stories, and not have to write it all myself."

Mr. Sean McGinty, Adoration Evangelical Lutheran Church, Greenfield, said that methods of inviting people at Adoration include rummage and bake sales to pull in people. "To get people in, start a dialogue." Next Thursday, Friday and Saturday is the spring rummage sale, with a young adult group holding a brat fry with this and the Meru group adding in a book sale.

Mr. Clarence Royston, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, said that "youth need attention, need to feel like they are somebody." He emphasized the need to "not step on their dreams," their "need to be loved, nurtured and blessed." He urged members to "give them something to do, or they will find something to do." The fundamental thing to remember, he said, is that this is "not about Lutherans, but about Christians," working in neighborhoods with serious issues, including violence, homelessness, and high prison populations." The basic need for them is love," to work with the 06 initiative and 11x15, but to "be the best Christian you can be."

A voting member from St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, urged members to come hear Barbie again tomorrow during the 9:45 am adult education time. Worship is at 8:30 am or 11:00 am. "Please come for everything."

Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, spoke of Sierra Guyton, the young girl shot in a playground last week, asking for prayer for her. The

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week before the shooting, the Zeidler Center, had invited a group of 18 to 24 year-olds from that neighborhood for one day discussion about struggles, another day about obstacles, and a third day to have mentors, coaches, to meet with them one on one. She added that Redeemer offered cards for people to contact for prospective employers when they are looking for a job. This is "the grit of life," she concluded.

Mr. Al Burgemeister, Galilee Lutheran Church, Pewaukee, spoke about the Lutheran Choir, which rehearses Tuesday evenings at St. Matthew's in Wauwatosa. He mentioned their Christmas and spring concerts, inviting all to sing or to hear.

All Peoples Cool Congregations Challenge for Sacred Stewardship is an award for urban greenhouse project and year-round space

"We've heard about the prison population and the struggle for jobs when they come out." Milwaukee Working collects books, with some sold online, and others recycled. Members were urged to consider a book collection for Milwaukee Working.

Ms. Emily Vretenar, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Muskego, said that she was "part of the youth table over here. Being involved as a rep was an honor, getting to vote on big-people stuff." She said that "other churches should invite people to vote," and that this "should have an impact on how our church goes" in the future.

Rev. Andy Fetters, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waukesha, recounted one of the best days he'd had recently, when a member contacted him, had a conversation about some issues at the church, and said six words: "I'm glad you are our pastor." Directing his words to the chair, Rev. Fetters added, "I'm glad you are our bishop."

Closing of Assembly

Bishop Barrow concluded with the Order for Closing of a Synod Assembly.

Rev. Tim Tahtinen, Spirit of Peace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, shared devotions. "I love this theme about the table, and a theology of the table, where everyone is welcome." We talked and shared with people with different traditions. "Some are accustomed to the notion that if you're not like us you're not welcome – I challenge you to go home and to invite people in to dinner."

The Assembly adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:43 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew Brockmeier
Secretary
Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA