

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA 2021 Synod Assembly Minutes

God's Vision: A world that embodies the fullness of life: justice, peace, equity, hope and love for everyone, including all races, genders, identities, abilities, and social status.

Our Mission: We follow Jesus, form communities, love all.

Friday April 30, 2021 – Orientation, Worship, and Introduction

I. Welcome

The 2021 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly convened virtually on 30 April 2021, held via Zoom Technologies due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Assembly leaders and Synod staff were assembled under CDC guidelines and safety protocols at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. Following an orientation session for those new to the Synod Assembly and those seeking to become familiar with the technology platforms, the Synod gathered in worship.

II. Worship

Worship was led by musicians **Michael Schaner** and **Zach Jones (St. Luke's, Waukesha)**, **The Rev. Amy Reumann**, Conference Deans and Co-Deans, and Rostered Ministers new to the Synod. The liturgy included a virtual choir of Synod singers performing "God We Gather" from the new hymnal supplement *All Creation Sings*. The prayers of the people were submitted and read aloud from Zoom. **Bishop Paul Erickson** led a litany of thanksgiving for the ministries of **Our Savior's Milwaukee**, whose ministry ended on 12 July 2020 and **Abiding Savior, Milwaukee**, who held its final worship service on 7 March 2021.

Bishop Erickson delivered the sermon, reflecting on the appointed gospel (Easter 5B) from John 15:1-8. Recalling his grandparents' raspberry plants, which he has transplanted and moved to each of his dwellings, his message centered on Jesus' message during the night of his betrayal: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Heeding the call of Christ to abide and stay connected in the midst of hard times still to come, he noted the challenge of doing so in the fluid and unstable times in which we live. God's love, he proclaimed, is not confined to the experiences of love we are accustomed to—but remains connected to us. God's presence is a connection that cannot be taken away and connects us to follow Jesus.

Offerings collected were shared with the ELCA Women International Leaders Fund, which invests in established and emerging women leaders from the ELCA's global companion churches. A video of this ministry was shared with the worshippers.

At the conclusion of worship, **Bishop Erickson** led the liturgical Opening for a Synod Assembly, and declared the Assembly in session as of 7:58 p.m.

III. Opening of Assembly Matters

Bishop Erickson gave a brief introduction into the Lumi voting platform and the schedule for the Assembly. He shared an outline of the election process for synod leadership positions.

Bishop Erickson noted there were still open positions to be filled for a few election slates. It was shared with the Assembly that in action taken this week (**SC21.04.05.**), the synod council changed how two positions have been designated.

Previously, the North Conference was asked to identify a nominee for the Churchwide Assembly voting member seat who was a lay male—person of color or primary language other than English. There were also two at large positions for lay male voting members. The Council voted to make one of the at large lay male positions be designated as a lay male person of color or primary language other than English, meaning that the North Conference lay male position is not limited to a person of color.

Assembly Voting Members and Guests were invited to join Breakout Rooms based on their conferences to caucus, completing nomination business and engaging in community conversation.

At 8:45 p.m., **Bishop Erickson** welcomed voting members back together and concluded with a closing prayer, taken from Setting 12 of new ELCA Hymnal Supplement *All Creation Sings*. The opening gathering concluded at 8:49 p.m.

IV. Nominations

The following nominations were received by the Assembly at the 10 p.m. Deadline:

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY (TERM: 8/8/22 - 8/12/22)

Ticket 1: AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE/PERSON OF COLOR OR PERSON WITH PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH (VOTE FOR ONE)

Youa Reinicker (St. Matthew's, Wauwatosa)

Briana Roberts (Incarnation, Milwaukee)

Ticket 2: AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE (VOTE FOR ONE)

Elaine Disbro (St. Paul's, Milwaukee)

Ticket 3: AT LARGE, LAY MALE/YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT (VOTE FOR ONE)

Ian Bischoff (Mount Pleasant, Racine)

Ticket 4: AT LARGE, LAY MALE/PERSON OF COLOR OR PERSON WITH PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH (VOTE FOR ONE)

Joshua Lee (Cross, Burlington)

Xavier Thomas (All Peoples' Gathering, Milwaukee)

Ticket 5: AT LARGE, LAY MALE (VOTE FOR ONE)

Todd Beutin (St Luke, Greendale)

Robert Gee (Capitol Drive, Milwaukee)

Ticket 6: AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR TWO)

Rev. Bradley Brown (North Cape, Franksville)

Rev. Brian Hooper (St. Stephen the Martyr, Greendale)

Rev. Lindsay Jordan (St. Luke's, Waukesha)

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke (Holy Cross, Menomonee Falls)

Rev. Beth Ann Stone (Mount Pleasant, Racine)

Ticket 7: CENTRAL CONFERENCE, LAY MALE (VOTE FOR ONE)

Tony Johnson (Village Church, Milwaukee)

Ticket 8: NORTH CONFERENCE, LAY MALE (VOTE FOR ONE)

Jonathan Dehlinger (Advent, Cedarburg)

Ticket 9: SOUTH CONFERENCE, LAY FEMALE (VOTE FOR ONE)

Carol Yust, (Emaus, Racine)

Ticket 10: SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR ONE)

Rev. Denise Mbise (Trinity, South Milwaukee)

Ticket 11: WEST CONFERENCE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR ONE)

Rev. Kimberly Jordan (Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee)

Ticket 12: WEST CENTRAL CONFERENCE, LAY FEMALE/YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT
(VOTE FOR ONE)

Amelia Anderson (St. Mark's, Waukesha)

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/27)

Ticket 13: AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE (VOTE FOR ONE)

Lynn Hooper (Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Racine)

Ticket 14: AT LARGE, LAY MALE (VOTE FOR ONE)

Robert Gee (Capitol Drive, Milwaukee)

Ticket 15: AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR TWO)

Rev. John Brink (Cross, Burlington)

Rev. Bill Knapp (Fox Point, Fox Point)

Rev. Aida Muñiz (Redeemer, Hartford)

Rev. Andrew Nyren (Prince of Peace, Milwaukee)

Rev. Krista Zimmerman (Mount Pleasant, Racine)

NOMINATIONS FOR SYNOD COUNCIL (TERM: VARIES)

Ticket 16: AT LARGE, VICE PRESIDENT, LAY | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25 (VOTE FOR ONE)
Joyce Caldwell, PhD (Faith, Cedarburg)

Ticket 17: AT LARGE, TREASURER, LAY OR ROSTERED | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25 (VOTE FOR ONE)

Rev. Karen Pahl (Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Racine)

Ticket 18: NOMINATIONS AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25 (VOTE FOR ONE)

Laura Hermanns (Holy Communion, Racine)

Jean Nelson (All Saints, Wales)

Ticket 19: AT LARGE, LAY MALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25 (VOTE FOR ONE)

Steven Hartfield (St. Mary's, Kenosha)

Ticket 20: AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25 (VOTE FOR ONE)

Rev. Kevin Beebe (Spirit Alive!, Kenosha)

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Robert Gee (Capitol Drive, Milwaukee)

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Jennifer Brandt (St. John, Jackson)

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Rev. Denise Mbise (Trinity, South Milwaukee)

Ticket 25: WEST CONFERENCE, LAY FEMALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/23 (VOTE FOR ONE)

Vickie Stretz (St Olaf, Rubicon)

Ticket 26: WEST CENTRAL CONFERENCE, LAY MALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/23 (VOTE FOR ONE)

Name: Edwin Aparicio (Ascension, Waukesha)

Saturday May 1st, 2021 – Plenary 1

I. Welcome, Prayer, and Orientation

The 2021 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly re-convened virtually on May 1 2021, held via Zoom Webinar Technologies over the Lumi platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Assembly leaders and Synod staff were assembled under CDC guidelines at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. The proceedings were also livestreamed via Facebook Live.

Bishop Paul Erickson welcomed voting members and convened Plenary 1 at 8:31 a.m. He introduced the theme of this year’s assembly, “We Form Communities—Gathering as People of the Promise,” noting the Assembly’s focus on the ways the Holy Spirit invites all people into new ways of being the church, connecting with God, and expanding the definitions of neighbor love.

The Rev. Kristin Nielsen, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission, led the Assembly in a brief reflection and opening prayer. Sharing a centering prayer based on John 15:1-4, she invited participants to practice active rest, abiding in God’s presence and centering on a word or phrase in the text. She invited participants to take note of any insights and experiences of the presence of God which emerged in their practice.

Bishop Erickson acknowledged the Indigenous peoples whose lands the Synod lays within and offered lament for the ways these places were taken from their original inhabitants. He shared thanks for the many individuals who have been a part of the planning for the virtual aspects of this Synod Assembly, specifically thanking **Assembly Manager Mary Romskog** and **Communications Specialist Robyn DiGiacinto** for their work in the preparation of the Assembly.

Jennifer Prinz, Portico Benefit Services Regional Representative, brought virtual greetings to the Assembly. She lifted up the resilience of church leaders and members, highlighting physical, mental, and spiritual wellness. She also brought greetings from **The Rev. Jeff Thiemann**, Portico CEO, who challenged the Assembly to take one “ridiculously small step” toward wellness.

Bishop Erickson recapped the events of Friday’s opening gathering. As of 8:30 a.m., 29 online offering gifts totaling \$1079.44 had been received for the ELCA Women International Leaders Fund.

He then walked through the basics of the Lumi technology platform with the Assembly, describing its functions for users during floor discussion and balloting, and highlighting methods of communicating with Assembly leaders. The Assembly was reminded to use pronouns as a

means of identification when speaking before the Assembly. **Bishop Erickson** also provided an overview of the process of unanimous consent, which can be used at the chair's discretion to conduct business. Two test votes were taken via the Lumi meeting platform.

II. Report of Credentials

Lee Johnston (Redeemer, Milwaukee) presented the first credentials report. As of 9:05 a.m. there were 253 voting members registered and present, 103 rostered ministers and 150 lay voting members. 9 non-voting participants were also present, for a total attendance of 259.

III. Approval of Assembly Appointments

The Assembly received notice of the appointment of the Parliamentarian, Reference and Counsel and Nominations Committees by **Bishop Erickson**, who noted that because of the virtual assembly, the functions of the Elections and Credentials committees are being fulfilled by the technical team at Lumi. The chair declared the motion adopted through unanimous consent.

Synod Assembly Action

Approval of Assembly Appointments

SA21.05.01.

The Assembly approved the appointments of the Reference and Counsel Committee and Nominations Committee, and Parliamentarian.

Adopted by Unanimous Consent

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Bishop Erickson presented the 2021 Synod Assembly Agenda, noting that there is space for flexibility in the agenda at the discretion of the chair, should such need for adjustments arise. The chair declared the motion adopted through unanimous consent.

Synod Assembly Action

Approval of Agenda

SA21.05.02.

The Assembly approved the 2021 Synod Assembly Agenda as presented.

Adopted by Unanimous Consent

V. Approval of Rules and Procedures

Bishop Erickson directed the Assembly to review the recommended Rules and Procedures for the 2021 Synod Assembly. There have been special rules crafted for the process of a virtual assembly, and two new rules have amended typical matters for debate on the floor. Lifted up before the Assembly were rules that a 3-minute time limit would exist for all speeches from the floor, and that debate would end after 3 individuals had spoken for *and* 3 individuals had spoken against a motion. The chair declared the motion adopted through unanimous consent.

Synod Assembly Action

Approval of Rules and Procedures

SA21.05.03.

The Assembly approved the 2021 Synod Assembly Rules and Procedures as presented.

Adopted by Unanimous Consent

VI. Report of the Nominating Committee

Secretary **Matthew Schlake-Kruse (Adoration, Greenfield)** presented the report of the Nominations Committee following the closing of nominations at 10 p.m. on Friday, April 30th. **Schlake-Kruse** presented the following slate of nominees, who will be selected on Ballot 1.

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Name: Edwin Aparicio (Ascension, Waukesha)

VII. Budget Presentation

Acting Treasurer Bob Reinders (Living Faith, Racine) presented a review of the 2020 Synod Financial statements and formally presented the 2022-2023 Synod Budget.

Directing the Assembly to budget materials, Reinders encouraged notice of the restricted funds, special purpose funds that have been donor-designated or are available for use with the discretion of the Synod Council or other Synod ministries. A narrative budget describing how the Synod uses mission support from congregations was shared in the pre-Assembly materials.

The greatest challenge in forming the 2022-2023 Synod Budget is the continuing declining trend in congregational mission support. **Reinders** noted that this year-over-year decline in revenue has impacted the budget decisions and forced discernment on how to support various ministries outside of the general synod budget.

Reinders recommended the Assembly review the Rationale Document drafted after the pre-Assembly budget hearings, which describe the insight and details which led the Synod Council to recommend proposed reductions to ELCA Mission Support, Lutheran Campus Ministry funding levels, and the decision to propose a deficit (unbalanced) budget. He noted that on a long-term basis, the continuation of deficit budgets will be unsustainable for the synod.

A video was shared with the Assembly, highlighting specific line items in the proposed budget and noting the year-over-year comparisons in mission support, staffing costs, and the

impact of the 2020 Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPP) on the 2021-2022 budget. It was presented that last year's PPP-supported budget surplus of nearly \$88,000 will be applied to undesignated reserves to offset shortfall in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Before applying the surplus, the budget deficit for 2021-2022 was estimated to be (\$123,000).

Following **Reinders'** video report, **Bishop Erickson** offered deep thanksgiving for **Reinders'** work in the role of acting treasurer following the sudden and tragic death of former Synod Treasurer **Tom Gauthier**. Assembly voting members were encouraged to submit any budgetary questions to the Assembly e-mail account. These questions would be lifted up during floor discussion during Plenary 2.

VIII. Stretch Break

At 9:48 a.m. **Bishop Erickson** called for a stretch break, facilitated virtually by Portico Benefit Services Representative **Jennifer Prinz**.

IX. ELCA Representative Report

Bishop Erickson recalled the Assembly into session at 9:51 a.m. The Assembly viewed the video report from ELCA Presiding Bishop **Elizabeth Eaton**, who noted the loss, learning, and listening this church has undertaken in the midst of the pandemic. She noted the role of accompaniment, as the Churchwide expression walks alongside synods and congregations. "As we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel," she noted, "we look to the future of what Jesus has in store." She invited the assembly to imagine what the future will look like—as together the church joins what God is doing: learning from one another and being church together for the sake of the world. Noting God's gifts of tenacity, generosity, and faithfulness, **Presiding Bishop Eaton** boldly acclaimed, "God's plan has a church."

The Rev. Amy Reumann, Senior Director for Witness in Society and ELCA Director for Advocacy Ministries, addressed the Assembly on behalf of the ELCA Churchwide Organization. **The Rev. Reumann** served as a pastor in the Greater Milwaukee Synod earlier in her career, both on staff at **Mt. Zion, Wauwatosa** and as Assistant to the Bishop. She previously served as director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministries in Pennsylvania (LAMP).

In her ministry, **The Rev. Reumann** oversees 17 state public policy offices, leads federal policy work, and is active in the ELCA's work with the United Nations and corporate social responsibility. Lifting up her learning and ministry with **Venice Williams** in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, she named urban farming as a vocation in her life.

The Rev. Reumann shared deep thanks on behalf of the Churchwide expression for the Greater Milwaukee Synod's partnership in forming communities through mission support. In 2020, \$912,019 were shared with the churchwide expression. She noted the creation and tangible support of the newly formed COVID-19 Response fund, which reflects the ELCA's awareness of the need for change and the pandemic's impact on increasingly vulnerable communities. Grants were shared to offer assistance in communities where racial inequality exacerbates the need for innovation in these moments. Monies granted from the ELCA to the Greater Milwaukee Synod

supported upgrading technology for digital space, food and hygiene supplies, and community connection.

The Rev. Reumann also gave thanks for faithful stewardship through gifts to ELCA World Hunger & Lutheran Disaster Response. 2021 Domestic Hunger Grants & Big Dream Grants were distributed to support **Racine Vocational Ministry, Reformation, Cross, Hephatha, and The Table**. Lutheran Disaster Response shared over \$5.8 million with organizations in 49 nations, 32 synods, and 3 social services agencies.

Focusing on Mission, **The Rev. Reumann** offered thanks and prayers for the synod's missionaries and international companions, especially the Lutheran Church in El Salvador and the Meru Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, where the church continues to advocate for equitable vaccine distribution and access despite gender and economic inequities. She also shared the priorities of the Lutheran Office of Public Policy in Wisconsin, including "Ending Hunger, Caring for God's creation, Immigration, Ending human trafficking, Climate Change, and Juvenile Justice Reform."

The Rev. Reumann noted the Synod's participation in the economic partnership of the Mission Investment Fund, both by using the MIF as a lender for building projects and through investment in the MIF's investment opportunities. She also promoted the plans for the rescheduled ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis/St. Paul from July 24-28, 2022. The Youth Gathering will center on the theme: "Boundless: God beyond Measure."

Bishop Erickson thanked **The Rev. Reumann** for her partnership and presentation and noted a gift box of items from Synod ministries would be shared with her, including Mt. Meru Coffee, maple syrup from **St. Olaf, Rubicon**, and items from Alice's Garden and the Kujichagulia Producers' Cooperative, associated with Synod-Authorized Worshipping Community **The Table**.

The Rev. Reumann's report concluded with a video update on Peace not Walls, the ELCA's strategy and program for accompanying Palestinian Christians. The video featured greetings from **Bishop Ibrahim Azar** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), who shared the eager expectation of the post-COVID return of "pilgrims, partners, and fellow members of the Body of Christ to join their Lutheran family in Palestine." The ELCA organizes Peace Not Walls with the Lutheran World Federation, focusing on human rights, advocacy, and maintaining the ministries of Christian schools and Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem. One Augusta Victoria hospital physician noted it is the only medical provider of high-quality oncology and kidney care in the region for Palestinians. He noted the emergency protocols allowed for a rapid response to the health needs of COVID-19. Economically, **The Rev. Gabi Aelabouni**, ELCA Country Coordinator, noted 30% of church members have lost jobs in an already high time of unemployment. He lifted up the important ministry of the ELCJHL, naming that "What makes a place holy isn't ancient stones, but is living faith—the church as the living presence of God's spirit among the people."

X. Lutheran Campus Ministry Report

Makayla Jones and Jeff Saether, Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) students at Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee presented the report of Lutheran Campus Ministry of Greater Milwaukee, a Synod ministry.

Jones, a 5th-year student shared an excerpt from her personal faith statement ahead of her confirmation on 2 May 2021. “LCM has given me the opportunity to notice how God pours [life and love] into me, so that I may pour into others.” In Jesus, she said, we see an example of courage in advocacy for the marginalized, and we know what it means to be freed and forgiven, by God’s perfect and unconditional love; In community with her fellow Marquette students, **Jones** gave thanks for the Holy Spirit of comfort, resurrection and hope

Saether, a sophomore at UWM reflected that LCM has been nothing but astonishing. He was introduced to the Corner House from his former pastor, where he discovered many unexpected gifts, especially a real group of trusted friends. He accentuated the diversity of people in the UWM LCM community and the challenge to keep a community that can be welcoming to *anyone* looking for a safe space to practice and explore their faith. He noted the adaptation of the students and peer ministers, who had previously centered ministry on providing free meals and fellowship. 40% of current college students face food insecurity. Sharing thanks with the Assembly for the financial and prayerful support, **Saether** expressed hope and excitement for the future help, love, and joy LCM students will continue to receive amidst the challenges of college life.

XI. Reference and Counsel Report

Mary Winter (Galilee, Pewaukee), presented the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee. The 2021 Reference and Counsel Committee met via Zoom on 25 March 2021, 13 April 2021, and virtually via e-mail to discuss and present the two resolutions submitted for action by the 2021 Synod Assembly.

The two resolutions, both submitted by the Congregation Council at **Trinity, West Bend**, were reviewed, edited, and formatted to meet the necessary requirements for resolutions and to ensure clarity.

The authors of the resolutions, represented by **The Rev. David Schoob** and **Nicholas Schoob**, were consulted and gave their approval to the final form of the resolutions.

The Reference and Counsel Committee formally presented Resolutions 1 and 2 to the Synod Assembly for action. The committee elected not to indicate a preference for or against the adoption of each resolution, simply presenting these resolutions for action by the Synod Assembly.

2021 Resolution 1

Resolution on Authentic Diversity and Inclusion in Synod Life

Submitted by the Church Council of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend

WHEREAS past actions of the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly have committed this synod to being a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Synod (1991 Resolution 2, [1998 Resolutions 4 and 5], 2018 Resolution 1) and a synod committed to anti-racism (1998 Resolution 3, 2003 Resolution 2); and

WHEREAS these commitments were made by the synod as a whole, making everyone responsible for living into these commitments more fully; and

WHEREAS it requires the mutual work of congregations, the Synod Council, Synod staff, and Synod ministries to turn these commitments into action; and

WHEREAS these commitments only have meaning if they lead to concrete changes in our life together; and

WHEREAS the synod has been blessed with the gifts of many people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and yet people in these communities have not always had their gifts affirmed by being welcomed into the ministry we share; and

WHEREAS there is a need for greater structural accountability throughout the ELCA regarding authentic diversity and inclusion; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's Authentic Diversity Task Force states that "the church must embody Christ's mission through the lens of a crucified Jesus, who gathers all to himself in one family devoid of hierarchies and unhealthy power structures," and

WHEREAS "the manifold communities of the ELCA are called to exhibit *authentic diversity*—demographically matching the ethnic and racial composition of their respective contexts, as stated in the ELCA constitution (5.01.A16.), [and] they are likewise called to recognize that race and ethnicity intersect with other marginalizing traits (including gender, sexuality, and ability) and that people in these groups are also vulnerable" (*HOW STRATEGIC AND AUTHENTIC IS OUR DIVERSITY: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action*); **therefore, be it**

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council and Synod Staff continue the work of 2018 Resolution 1, to "journey with willing congregations who are not yet RIC," and "annually identify congregations who are not RIC in order to invite these congregations into recurring conversations with Synod staff about their congregational identity and the Synod's RIC identity;" and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Staff should encourage all congregations to learn about their communities and neighborhoods and to develop and implement outreach plans geared toward increasing authentic diversity representative of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic class, and ability; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council form a Task Force to consider changes to the synod’s life (i.e., changes in election procedure, representation on synod teams, call processes) and to explore further ways to hold educational events and encourage participation in leadership development around issues of inclusion and justice in areas of race, gender identity, and sexual identity for all leaders, both rostered and lay; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Task Force develop a plan to measure and achieve progress towards Authentic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which would allow for structural accountability; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a report of progress be made by the Synod Council at the 2024 Synod Assembly.

*Note: In the ELCA Document, “**HOW STRATEGIC AND AUTHENTIC IS OUR DIVERSITY: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action,**” The Churchwide organization is called to develop an assessment process, to be utilized across all three expressions of the ELCA, that records, maps, and evaluates the efforts of diversity initiatives, including the creation of a Synod Accountability Report Card Toward Authentic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.*

2021 Resolution 2

Resolution on Modifying Gendered Language in Synod Nomination Processes

Submitted by the Church Council of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend

WHEREAS the Greater Milwaukee Synod has committed itself to being a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) synod since 1991; and,

WHEREAS the Greater Milwaukee Synod’s Vision, Mission, Values, and Practices Statement (2019) states that God’s vision is “a world that embodies the fullness of life: justice, peace, equity, hope and love for everyone, including all races, genders, identities, abilities, and social statuses;” and,

WHEREAS structural systems of gender oppression both actively and passively function to reject, diminish, ignore, silence and cause violence to members of non-majority groups; and

WHEREAS the ELCA’s representational principles give voice and presence at the Synod Council level for those who are often marginalized within social structures, yet seem insufficient to ensure that the diversity of God is honored and celebrated within this Church in its life together; and,

WHEREAS the Synod Constitution, in required provision †S6.04. notes that “the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least ... at least 45% of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and at

least 45% shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall include both men and women;” and,

WHEREAS at the 2019 Synod Assembly, floor discussion about gendered language within our processes of appointment and nomination was named as harmful to our community as it perpetuates the marginalization of gender queer, non-conforming, non-binary, expansive, and agender individuals and communities; and

WHEREAS gender non-conforming, non-binary, expansive and agender individuals are limited to serving in an un-defined category; and,

WHEREAS not all gender non-conforming, non-binary, expansive and agender individuals are in positions where they are able to freely proclaim and celebrate their gender; and,

WHEREAS the language human societies use to identify gender is imperfect, fluid, expanding, and shifting ; **therefore, be it**

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council create a Task Force to study and determine how best to remove and modify prohibitive and harmful gendered language from synod processes of nomination, taking into account how best to represent and invite all LGBTQQIA2S+ siblings, (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Agender, 2 Spirits, and others) especially all gender queer, non-conforming, non-binary, expansive and agender individuals into synod leadership; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Task Force develop a resolution to be acted upon by the 2022 Synod Assembly and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Task Force craft a Memorial to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, addressing these language issues on the Churchwide level; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council, in consort with the Reconciling in Christ Committee, yearly review and consider future language modifications around gender diversity within this Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council commit to updating these wordings around gendered language to better celebrate and reflect the growing and changing community every three years.

XII. Break

Bishop Erickson proclaimed Plenary 1 in Recess for a 10-minute break at 10:33 a.m.

XIII. Bishop’s Report

Bishop Erickson relinquished the chair to **Vice President Joyce Caldwell**, who subsequently invited the Bishop to present his annual report to the Synod.

A. Ministry in the Time of Pandemic

Bishop Erickson began his report with reflections on the nature of the past 15 months of ministry in a time of pandemic and the cautious optimism with current data on vaccination rates. He commended the Assembly's viewing of the Minneapolis Area Synod's conversation with Dr. Michael Osterholm, ELCA member and one of the nation's leading experts on the pandemic. He cautions that even if most of the folks a congregation are vaccinated, worship is still a public event, and it may still be a while before all can safely gather indoors without restrictions. He also shared the hope that by fall, things will begin to look a little more like what we used to know.

B. Ministry of Synod Staff

Bishop Erickson announced the full vaccination status of the synod staff, who will return to in-person office hours in early May while remaining closed to the public until further notice. He shared his deep appreciation for the "diligence, creativity, and patience" of the staff under the challenging circumstances. He then invited staff members **The Rev. Jennifer Arnold, The Rev. Matthew Short, and The Rev. Kristin Nielsen** to share brief summaries of their work and how they live out the vision by "finding and fostering community" in 2019 and 2020.

The Rev. Arnold reflected on the vital work of caring for lay and rostered leaders throughout the synod, adapting to "come together virtually" to learn, grow, and collaborate on "the beautiful, challenging questions before the church." Seeing her work as connection, convening, and coordinating events, she both gave thanks for Zoom and named the continual need to find new and lasting connection with the peoples who comprise the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

The Rev. Short, in his work as Director for Evangelical Mission, noted he has never experienced a year when the connections between congregations, synod, and churchwide have been more vital and vibrant. Reflecting on the promise of God that "we are not alone," he noted his experience of God's blessings being shared through over \$100,000 in COVID relief grants, inter-congregational collaboration with technology, and less competition among churches. He lifted up his specific ministry with Synod-authorized ministries: **Breaking the Chains Church, The Table, and Wayfarer's Faith Collective**, as well as his stewardship, with the Siebert Lutheran Foundation, in facilitating "The Digital Reformation."

The Rev. Nielsen emphasized the role of stabilizing and centering congregations in the midst of transition, as her work adapted alongside churches as they found new ways to thank and send their pastors off with God's blessing, begin and continue call processes, and begin the Mission Exploration Team journey of "discovering what's next." She noted the multiplied levels of anxiety and uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, and gave thanks for God, who continues to provide places of "unexpected grace," and who "keeps us moving when we're tired and uncertain."

C. Synod Transitions

Bishop Erickson referred the Assembly to the full transition report found in the pre-Assembly materials, noting that since the 2019 Synod Assembly, 30 call processes have been completed and 13 new rostered ministers have entered the Greater Milwaukee Synod. The Bishop has presided over 7 ordinations, with a few pending on the horizon. A brief video allowed new rostered ministers to the synod to greet the Assembly.

Bishop Erickson also presented a prayer of thanksgiving and commendation alongside the necrology report. 11 rostered ministers have died since the 2019 Assembly: **the Rev. Frank Bauman; the Rev. Robert Scheuermann; the Rev. Paul Kuenning; the Rev. William Truby; the Rev. James Davis; the Rev. Stanley Hanna; the Rev. James Swiecichowski; the Rev. Lawrence Sandin; the Rev. Donald Haines; the Rev. John Keller; and the Rev. Kermit Lauterbach.**

A video was shared with the Assembly, honoring rostered ministers celebrating milestone anniversaries in ordained and commissioned ministry and congregations celebrating milestone anniversaries of their founding.

D. Spiritual Emptiness and Sabbath Rest

Bishop Erickson acknowledged the deep level of emotional, physical, and spiritual exhaustion he has witnessed among rostered leaders and congregations from the pace and nature of doing and being church during the pandemic. He also reflected the emotional and spiritual impact of the cultural reckoning on racism, polarization and political division, and intensity and prevalence of these issues, keenly observing that those very things which can help one through hard times—worship, song, community, laughter, and physical contact, have been limited or restricted to all.

Describing our collective fuel tanks as empty, **Bishop Erickson** commended finding and taking time to live in ways that refuel one's whole self. He shared his gratitude for the Synod's personnel policy, which allows him to observe and take sabbatical from 23 May to 22 August 2021. He encouraged sabbath rest for all pastors and deacons to "replenish their souls," announcing the opening of \$10,000 for mini-sabbatical grants of \$500 for rostered leaders to find needed respite.

E. Social Awareness

Bishop Erickson transitioned to name other priorities for the Synod in the coming year. He named the need to deepen and expand our commitment to being antiracist individuals in an antiracist church. Referencing the events of the past year, pastoral letters he has written, and actions taken by the Synod staff and Synod Council, he stated "I've come to believe that tension and discomfort are a small price to pay if we are moving toward the beloved community that God envisions for us all. We may well be at different points along the path, but wherever we are, we need to figure out how to take the next step."

Reminding the Synod of its 2019 adoption of synod wide statement of Vision, Mission, Values, and Practices, the Bishop emphasized one practice that the synod

committed to is “Showing up,” whereby we pledge to “live out our faith by engaging in service, action, and advocacy around issues of poverty, violence, racial equity, gender, LGBTQIA+ issues, immigration, mental illness, and injustice.”

F. Mission Appeal

Bishop Erickson concluded his report to the synod by connecting these social topics to the Synod’s mission appeal, “Equipping the Saints.” Noting the campaign’s \$2.3 million goal, he emphasized the way in which COVID-19 has reiterated the need for coming together and organizing the synod’s resources to do the things God is calling us to do: innovation, collaboration, and leadership development. He thanked the Assembly for the privilege of serving as bishop.

Vice President Caldwell then returned the chair.

XIV. Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal Report

The Assembly viewed the Launch Video for the Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal, with testimony shared by **The Rev. Marilyn Miller** and **Bishop Erickson**. Using Jeremiah 29:11, **The Rev. Miller** noted that gifts to the campaign will center on supporting innovation and collaboration funds, investment in diversity and leadership, and supporting and strengthening the ministries of Outreach for Hope and Lutheran Campus Ministry. Gifts received will be tithed to extend holy work with the wider church and global partners.

Campaign Manager Joyce Caldwell shared her anticipation and excitement for what God will bring about, as the Holy Spirit “will help us form communities in new, creative, and currently un-seen ways as we listen deeply and learn and grow together in collaboration.” **Caldwell** announced early engagement and generosity has resulted in \$215,000 in gifts and commitments from the Steering Team, Synod Council, current and former Synod Staff, and LCM Board members. This total represents nearly 10% of the \$2.3 million campaign goal.

A legacy lead gift from the now closed **Our Savior’s Milwaukee**, along with \$10,000 pledge from **The Rev. Peter and Gerry Rogness** are part of the early gratitude shared by those on the steering committee. **The Rognesses** (with permission) **reflected**, “When we saw that you were positioning those [vital] ministries for strength in the future, we wasted no time to add our support. We hope and trust that others will do the same. Thanks for the years of partnership...that continue....”

The Assembly was guided toward the full appeal prospectus, which presents the areas of the campaign in more detail. **Caldwell** also invited the Assembly’s voting members to assist in the active giving stages of the campaign: through prayer; by lifting up leaders to host events, make personal visits, and serve on teams for retired rostered ministers, active rostered ministers, and congregations; and by prayerfully discerning one’s ability to make a contribution.

Equipping the Saints will not begin its full congregation focus until 2022. **Caldwell** assured the Assembly that this congregation focus will never encourage a financial gift from a congregation’s budget, but will teach congregations how to run an effective special gift appeal. She extended invitation for 10-15 congregations to commit as “First Round” congregations, who would also receive training for conducting education and appeals among members; she also

sought congregational endowment information should the mission appeal align with an endowment's mission goals.

XV. First Ballot

The first ballot, consisting of individual tickets for various Synod Council, Consultation Committee, and Churchwide Assembly was conducted via the Lumi Platform (and via phone for those without technological capability). The bishop declared all ballots closed.

XVI. Point of Inquiry

Following the completion of the First Ballot, **The Rev. Kevin Beebe (Spirit Alive, Kenosha)** raised a point of clarification, noting that the way tickets for the first ballot had been completed for Churchwide Assembly Voting Members, two lay persons of color were vying for one specific seat; **The Rev. Beebe** sought clarification as to the rationale forcing these representational nominees into competition against one another without allowing them to also be eligible for at-large seats. He questioned whether this process works against the hope and ideal for a more diverse set of voting members.

Secretary Schlake-Kruse spoke to these concerns, noting that prior to Friday evening's conference caucuses, there had been no contested slates for the representational seats, and that in compiling the tickets for Ballot 1, when these races became contested, the nominations for each individual had been submitted and allotted for the specific Person of Color/Person whose primary language is other than English. The failure to allow non-winning nominees from a specific ticket to proceed to another ticket for an at-large seat had been an oversight and could be corrected in the future. However, with the balloting having been closed and voting on Ballot 1 completed, **Schlake-Kruse** noted that this oversight would need to be addressed following the Assembly and could be modified going forward.

XVII. Closing Prayer and Recess

At 12:17 p.m., **Bishop Erickson** led the Assembly in prayer and proclaimed the Assembly in recess for lunch until 1:00 p.m., thus concluding Plenary 1.

Saturday May 1st, 2021 – Plenary 2

I. Opening Devotion and Prayer

Bishop Erickson declared **Plenary 2** in session at 1:07 p.m.

The Rev. Jennifer Arnold, Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership, opened the plenary with devotions based on John 15:4-5: "Abide in me, as I abide in you." In light of the pandemic and our shifting ways of communication, she invited the assembly to reflect and name those with whom we find deep connection. Focusing on the connection between God and

humanity and among our siblings in Christian community through baptism in the vertical and horizontal shapes of the cross, **The Rev. Arnold** reflected on the breadth of our connection of siblings in the same vine of the church. She invited reflection on those individuals who have connected to us in our faith journeys. She then asked the Assembly to consider how to encourage connections in local congregations and to share our own stories of connection within our congregations. She led a litany whereby the Assembly proclaimed, “We are the branches.”

II. Report of the Credentials Committee

Lee Johnston reported as of 1:00 p.m, there were a total of 311 attendees: 173 lay voting members; 130 rostered voting members, and 8 non-voting participants.

III. Mission Moment Videos

The Assembly viewed a leadership video from the Churchwide expression, lifting up the new Young Adult ministry program, Abide. **Kaleb Sutherland**, ELCA Director of International Programs, also presented on the work of the ELCA Fund for Leaders; diversity among new leaders in this church; and the International Leaders program for community development and justice across the globe.

A video from the ELCA Federal Credit Union and Mission Investment Fund, lifting up the work of the Credit Union in helping secure Paycheck Protection Program funding in the midst of the pandemic.

IV. Motion to Suspend the Rules

The Rev. Kevin Beebe (Spirit Alive, Kenosha) moved to suspend the rules concerning elections to allow candidates nominated and not elected to Person of color/Person whose primary language is other than English Churchwide Assembly seats to be considered for at-large seats. The motion was seconded.

This non-debatable motion, requiring a 2/3 vote, was immediately voted upon using the Lumi platform. Voting results were: **154 in favor; 89 opposed; 13 abstained. 63.37% in favor.**

The motion to Suspend the Rules was defeated.

V. Election Results- Ballot 1

Secretary Schlake-Kruse announced in detail the results from Ballot 1. **Bishop Erickson** declared winners elected and declared the nominees moving ahead to subsequent ballots.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY (TERM: 8/8/22 - 8/12/22)

AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE/PERSON OF COLOR OR PERSON WITH PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

226 voting; 114 needed for election; 19 abstained

Youa Reinicker- 93

Briana Roberts- 133- Elected.

AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE

242 Voting, 6 abstained

Elaine Disbro- 242 - Elected

AT LARGE, LAY MALE/YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT

243 voting; 5 abstained

Ian Bischoff- 243- elected

AT LARGE, LAY MALE/PERSON OF COLOR OR PERSON WITH PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

231 voting; 116 needed for election; 15 abstentions

Joshua Lee- 79

Xavier Thomas- 152-elected

NOMINATIONS AT LARGE, LAY MALE

230 voting; 116 needed for election; 20 abstentions

Todd Beutin- 110

Robert Gee- 120- elected

AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR TWO)

243 voters; 122 needed for election; 6 abstentions

Rev. Bradley Brown -61- Removed from Ballot 2

Rev. Brian Hooper -94- Advanced to Ballot 2

Rev. Lindsay Jordan -94- Advanced to Ballot 2

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke -111- Advanced to Ballot 2

Rev. Beth Ann Stone -118- Advanced to Ballot 2

CENTRAL CONFERENCE, LAY MALE

238 voting; 7 abstentions

Tony Johnson -238-elected

NORTH CONFERENCE, LAY MALE

238 voting; 7 abstentions

Jonathan Dehlinger -238- elected

SOUTH CONFERENCE, LAY FEMALE

238 voting; 7 abstentions

Carol Yust- 238- elected

SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE, ROSTERED MINISTER

238 voting; 7 abstentions

Rev. Denise Mbise -238-elected

WEST CONFERENCE, ROSTERED MINISTER

238 voting; 7 abstentions

Rev. Kimberly Jordan -238- elected

WEST CENTRAL CONFERENCE, LAY FEMALE/YOUTH OR YOUNG ADULT

238 voting; 7 abstentions

Amelia Anderson -238- elected

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/27)

AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE

240 voting; 7 abstentions

Lynn Hooper -240-elected

AT LARGE, LAY MALE

238 voting; 9 abstentions

Robert Gee -238- elected

AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR TWO)

248 voting; 125 needed for election; 9 abstentions

Rev. John Brink - 47

Rev. Bill Knapp -55

Rev. Aida Muñoz -142-elected

Rev. Andrew Nyren -69

Rev. Krista Zimmerman -159-elected

NOMINATIONS SYNOD COUNCIL

AT LARGE, VICE PRESIDENT, LAY | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

245 voting; 3 abstentions

Joyce Caldwell, -245-elected

AT LARGE, TREASURER, LAY OR ROSTERED | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

241 voting; 6 abstentions

Rev. Karen Pahl -241-elected

AT LARGE, LAY FEMALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

223 voting; 112 needed for election; 26 abstentions

Laura Hermanns -128-elected

Jean Nelson -95

AT LARGE, LAY MALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

240 voting; 5 abstentions

Steven Hartfield -240-elected

AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

242 voting; 5 abstentions

Rev. Kevin Beebe -242-elected

CENTRAL CONFERENCE, LAY MALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

233 voting; 10 abstentions

Robert Gee -233-elected

CONFERENCE, LAY FEMALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

236 voting; 7 abstentions

Jennifer Brandt -236-elected

SOUTH CONFERENCE, ROSTERED MINISTER | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/25

236 voting; 7 abstentions

Rev. Matt James -236-elected

SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE, ROSTERED MINISTER | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/23

238 voting; 6 abstentions

Rev. Denise Mbise -238-elected

WEST CONFERENCE, LAY FEMALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/23

237 voting; 6 abstentions

Vickie Stretz -237-elected

WEST CENTRAL CONFERENCE, LAY MALE | TERM: 9/1/21 - 8/31/23

236 voting; 8 abstentions

Edwin Aparicio -236-elected

VI. Ballot 2 and Results

The Assembly proceeded to vote on Ballot 2, voting for two voting members at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

BALLOT 2: AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR TWO)

Rev. Beth Ann Stone

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke

Rev. Lindsay Jordan

Rev. Brian Hooper

Secretary Schlake-Kruse announced the results and **Bishop Erickson** declared both an election and the nominees moving ahead to Ballot 3.

For the record, abstained votes were counted and mistakenly included in the announcement of majority votes needed for election on Ballot 2. 124, not 129 votes were needed for election. The outcome of the election stood as declared.

BALLOT 2: AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR TWO)

246 voting; 6 abstentions; 124 needed for election.

Rev. Beth Ann Stone- 138-elected

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke – 119-advanced to Ballot 3

Rev. Lindsay Jordan- 113- advanced to Ballot 3

Rev. Brian Hooper- 105- removed from Ballot

VII. Ballot 3 and Results

The Assembly proceeded to vote on Ballot 3, voting for one voting member at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

BALLOT 3: AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR ONE)

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke

Rev. Lindsay Jordan

Secretary Schlake-Kruse announced the results and **Bishop Erickson** declared **Deacon Ellie Schmidtke** elected.

BALLOT 3: AT LARGE, ROSTERED MINISTER (VOTE FOR TWO)

251 voting; 7 abstentions; 126 needed for election.

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke –144-elected

Rev. Lindsay Jordan -107

VIII. Outreach For Hope Report

The Rev. Chris Manke, Outreach for Hope Executive Director, presented a video on behalf of the ministry, which began 25 years ago as the Synod’s Outreach Fund. Outreach for Hope stewards donations to fund ministry partners at the Synod’s many urban outreach ministries. Video clips from Outreach for Hope supported congregations, including Village, Milwaukee, and Grace, Kenosha. In 2020 and 2021 Outreach For Hope began seasonal social concern drives, including Project Lunchbox, COVID relief funds, Coats for the Cold, and Souper Bowl of Caring Hunger funding drives. Walking together in ministry, Outreach for Hope aims to accompany congregations in the highs and the lows of our mutual life together.

Manke invited the Assembly to save the date for this year’s Family Ride/Run/Walk Fundraiser, held on Saturday, September 25th.

IX. Racial Justice and Equity Video

Judith Roberts, Senior Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the ELCA Churchwide Office, noted the presence of this church amidst the impact of COVID on African-American, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Native communities. She lifted up the leadership of the Southeastern Synod in the light of Ahmaud Arbery’s shooting death; the subsequent deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd at the hands of police revealed the church’s willingness to open its doors, march in the streets, and continue the work of racial justice in our denomination’s journey. Citing our baptismal call to “work for justice and peace” in all the world, she encouraged congregations and the synod to work together.

X. Vice President’s Report

Vice President Joyce Caldwell shared her report with the Synod. Reflecting on the writings of Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, she noted how some fifteen years after her first reading, *Things Fall Apart* continues to resonate and describe how things have been falling apart in so many different ways during this past year, and how much we have to learn in HOW things fall apart both in our own lives and in our communities—and the role we play in that.

Caldwell’s report reflected how in some ways, the year 2020 DID help us see things more clearly, even as we felt pressures of trying to hold things together. For our Black and Brown siblings here in the U.S., things have always been falling apart. The history of slavery, Jim Crow, mass incarceration and all of the accompanying realities of violence, oppression, and discrimination have damaged and diminished our siblings in so many ways seen and unseen, but have also left each of us damaged in different ways and have left us broken as a beloved community of God’s people.

What has 2020 meant for us collectively as God’s people? As Congregations? As a Greater Milwaukee Synod?

A. We Follow Jesus

Caldwell recalled the 2019 Synod Assembly, which passed a Statement of Vision, Mission, Values, and Practices which has served to guide us as a synod during this past year.

Hearing our mission words: “we follow Jesus,” she noted, “I hear words that guided congregations and ministries during this past year to re-double efforts to provide food and support, even as resources may have been more limited. I hear words that led individuals and congregations in Kenosha and across the synod to raise voices for justice and calls for an end to violence.”

B. We Form Communities

Caldwell connected these words to all the ways the synod was moved to form communities in ways none of us had ever imagined. Rostered ministers began to meet weekly on zoom. Congregations were able to reach new people who would show up to watch a virtual service who might never show up in a building. Some people found that a phone still worked to regularly check on people who lived alone or needed a word of support.

C. We Love All.

When I hear our mission words “love all,” **Caldwell** noted, “I hear words that continue to prompt us and challenge us to notice those who have been overlooked, unheard, and diminished in the eyes of those with power and privilege. I hear our past commitments and resolutions to be an anti-racist and Reconciling in Christ synod. To love all means I have to take notice of the people and the times and ways and places in which I feel uncomfortable and to sit with my discomfort to listen more deeply.” She encouraged the Assembly that to “Love all” requires sitting quietly, listening with humility, and hearing deeply the stories of our neighbors, and striving to change our lives as that is needed to bring fullness of life for everyone.

Caldwell shared her gratitude for the Synod’s commitments to justice through the years: passing resolutions and stating our intentions to be anti-racist in who we are and how we act; welcoming and affirming those who are LGBTQIA+ as a Reconciling in Christ Synod. Acknowledging her privilege and her falling short, she reflected that unlearning and re-learning things we have been taught requires deliberate attention and intentionality. Whether with regards to pronoun use, language around race, or discussions of gender. we need to take our own responsibility to learn and change.

D. Intersection of Jesus and Justice

In her dual roles as Synod Vice President and Campaign Manager for Equipping the Saints **Caldwell professed her** hope that as a synod we will find new and innovative ways to be church; that we will build deep, authentic partnerships of collaboration based in mutual respect and understanding; that we will be able to lift up and support Black,

Indigenous, People of Color and LGBTQIA+ leaders; that we will hold ourselves accountable to an antiracist journey by calling a racial justice organizer onto the synod staff; and that we will continue to support all rostered ministers in each of their journeys, including recognizing the importance of Sabbath and sabbatical time for rest and renewal.

E. Scripture and Luther Inform Our Being

Caldwell, using the promise of the Easter story and recalling the hopeful words about planting trees attributed to Martin Luther, expressed excitement and continued energy for the possibilities we have as individuals, congregations, and a synod to create something new. “It may feel some days that our world is going to pieces. We may wonder how we are going to hold things together, but still we hope. Always we hope. I give thanks that we are in this journey together as a synod and I cling to the promise that God’s Spirit is alive in us and is guiding us.”

F. Thanksgivings

Caldwell thanked **Bishop Erickson** and the Synod staff for navigating the synod over the past year, especially when there was no script. She also gave thanks for the rostered ministers and the lay leaders who led and guided congregations and honored outgoing members of the Synod Council, whose terms end on 31 August 2021: **Amber Anderson, Sara Booher, Mark Christiaansen, Pastor Elizabeth Jaeger, Josh Kuehn, Aliliywa Mbise, Bob Reinders**, who also served as interim treasurer, **Pastor Sarah Stobie, and Janet Wunrow**

In closing, **Vice President Caldwell** also remembered **Tom Gauthier** with thanks and shared our collective sadness at his death in January 2021. He was a valued member of our synod council with his quiet and unassuming nature and positive outlook will continue to live among us and to ground us in our calling to be about God’s work of justice for all God’s people.

XI. Action on the 2022-2023 Budget

Bishop Erickson noted there were no questions submitted about the budget, presented in Plenary 1. It was moved to adopt the budget as presented.

<u>Synod Assembly Action</u>	<u>Adoption of 2022-2023 Budget</u>
SA21.05.04.	
The Assembly adopted the 2022-23 Synod Budget as presented.	
	<i>Adopted by Voting on Lumi Platform 240 in favor; 4 opposed; 5 abstentions</i>

XII. Constitutional Changes

A. Changes to S9.03-Conference Changes

Secretary Schlake-Kruse presented and moved, on behalf of the Synod Council, that the Assembly amend **S9.03.** to replace the term cluster with conference, and to change

the number of members on the nominating committee from 13 to 7. Coming from the Synod Council, the motion needs no second.

Schlake-Kruse noted this action will complete the work begun at our Special Synod Assembly in January, as the final constitutional provision with reference to clusters, would now be replaced with conferences. Notice of this proposed amendment was given, under S18.13.b of the Synod Constitution in November 2019. A 2/3 vote is needed to adopt this amendment.

<u>Synod Assembly Action</u>	<u>Amendment to Synod Constitution</u>
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SA21.05.05.	
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The Assembly amended S9.03. of the Synod Constitution, replacing the term cluster with conference and changing the number of members on the nominating committee from 13 to 7.	
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<i>Adopted by Voting on Lumi Platform 222 in favor; 9 opposed; 4 abstentions</i>	
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B. Recommended Changes from 2019 Churchwide Assembly

Secretary Schlake-Kruse then moved, on behalf of the synod council, to adopt *en bloc* the recommended changes to the synod constitution and bylaws as recommended by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Schlake-Kruse gave a brief overview of these recommended changes includes updates to legal terminology and phrasing regarding disability status, removing references to the adjective synodical, and clarifying the term president as the leader of a congregational council. Other substantive changes include an update on the use of Robert's Rules of Order, and allowing congregational consent for temporary Synod administration over a congregation.

<u>Synod Assembly Action</u>	<u>Amendments to Synod Constitution & Bylaws</u>
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SA21.05.06.	
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The Assembly amended provisions S7.22.; S7.26.; S8.14.; S10.08.; S13.25.; S13.40.; S14.14.; S14.17.; S14.42.; and S15.14. of the Synod Constitution and provisions S.10.08.01. and S8.11.01 of the Synod Bylaws, as recommended by the Office of the Secretary and the ELCA 2019 Churchwide Assembly.	
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<i>Adopted by Voting on Lumi Platform 233 in favor; 6 opposed; 6 abstentions</i>	
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XIII. Stretch Break

Bishop Erickson invited the Assembly to take a brief stretch break, led by **Jennifer Prinz**, Portico Benefit Services Regional Representative.

XIV. Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Task Force Report

The Assembly received a video update on 2019 Resolution 2, from the Opioid and Substance Use Disorder Task Force. **The Rev. Molly Doreza** shared of the Task Force’s partnership with Faith Partners, who have led 17 congregations and groups in trainings to develop congregational care teams and education around OSUD. She noted the Task Force has received, through the Siebert Lutheran Foundation, granting to support a coordinator to continue the work and work alongside congregations as they address these serious issues, which have wreaked even more havoc during the pandemic.

XV. Resolutions

Mary Winter, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, presented Resolutions 1 and 2 to the Assembly.

A. Resolution 1

Be It RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council and Synod Staff continue the work of 2018 Resolution 1, to “journey with willing congregations who are not yet RIC,” and “annually identify congregations who are not RIC in order to invite these congregations into recurring conversations with Synod staff about their congregational identity and the Synod’s RIC identity;” and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Staff should encourage all congregations to learn about their communities and neighborhoods and to develop and implement outreach plans geared toward increasing authentic diversity representative of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic class, and ability; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council form a Task Force to consider changes to the synod’s life (i.e., changes in election procedure, representation on synod teams, call processes) and to explore further ways to hold educational events and encourage participation in leadership development around issues of inclusion and justice in areas of race, gender identity, and sexual identity for all leaders, both rostered and lay; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Task Force develop a plan to measure and achieve progress towards Authentic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which would allow for structural accountability; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a report of progress be made by the Synod Council at the 2024 Synod Assembly.

The Rev. David Schoob (Trinity, West Bend) moved the adoption of Resolution 1. The motion was seconded.

The Rev. Schoob spoke in favor: He pointed to two things that are important in this resolution: (1) For the synod to lead as an anti-racism educator; we have to move on certain areas. He noted “This has to be the work of all of us—we claim this work together.” (2) We need to look at the way our structures can adapt to be more diverse, open. Referencing the earlier election, he noted “we meant to include people, yet limited their full participation.” He named the need to carefully examine this resolution’s issues. We need people to hold us accountable, and this resolution seeks to call us again to this desperately needed work.

The Rev. Bill Beyer (Grace, Thiensville) raised questions of clarity. In his 5 years as convener of the RIC ministry team, he sees many of the tasks resolved are already responsibilities of the volunteer RIC team, such as the execution of the 2018 Resolution on RIC Identity. He sought clarity as to what further role this resolution would give to the RIC team.

The Rev. Schoob responded to the question, noting that the intent of the authors was to allow those details to be worked out in partnership. His sense was that the RIC team should not be the sole actor, and it should be the role of the whole synod, particularly RIC congregations, in the role of engagement.

The Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse (St. Paul’s, Milwaukee) raised a question of who the Synod staff is accountable to in these areas, and how does the Synod measure that?

Bishop Erickson responded to this question, noting the Synod Staff is primarily accountable to the Synod Council and Synod Assembly on these goals.

Synod Assembly Action Adoption of Resolution 1:

SA21.05.07.

The Assembly adopted Resolution 1: *On Authentic Diversity and Inclusion in Synod Life*

*Adopted by Voting on Lumi Platform
170 in favor; 47 opposed; 18 abstentions*

B. Resolution 2

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council create a Task Force to study and determine how best to remove and modify prohibitive and harmful gendered language from synod processes of nomination, taking into account how best to represent and invite all LGBTQIA2S+ siblings, (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Agender, 2 Spirits, and others) especially all gender queer, non-conforming, non-binary, expansive and agender individuals into synod leadership; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Task Force develop a resolution to be acted upon by the 2022 Synod Assembly and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Task Force craft a Memorial to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, addressing these language issues on the Churchwide level; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council, in consort with the Reconciling in Christ Committee, yearly review and consider future language modifications around gender diversity within this Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council commit to updating these wordings around gendered language to better celebrate and reflect the growing and changing community every three years.

Nicholas Schoob (they/them) (Trinity, West Bend) made the motion and spoke in favor of its adoption. They noted the primary purpose of the resolution was to point out the fact that as a synod, we want to celebrate and recognize the goodness of God’s creation in all people. This requires us to live in new realities, which are, in their opinion, in our current structures and models, unreflective of those living outside of the binaries of gender. Calling on our cousins to “shave away bits of themselves” to participate in the church keeps us from being the whole church we desire to be. They seek a new understanding of who we are as the people of God, and to be more inclusive of those outside the gender binary without sacrificing one’s identity to do that.

The Rev. Carolyn Sellers-Rizzo (Kingo, Shorewood) raised a question of clarity. She wondered what ministry teams and task forces would be working on this resolution, and sought clarification as to how the existing RIC team will be impacted by that work. **Schoob** responded that the RIC team is one of the major resources for members of the LGBTQIA+ community; and the hope for this resolution that this task force will be appointed by the Synod Council.

Secretary Schlake-Kruse spoke in favor of the motion, noting that the author’s original intent was that this work would be a grassroots effort to both change our synod’s policies and language about gender, but also to impact change on the churchwide level. He noted that the structure of the church is that the ELCA Constitution for Synods impedes that possibility, which must be addressed by either the Churchwide Assembly and/or Social Statements; thus, this resolution has the added resolved clause asking for a memorial to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

Synod Assembly Action Adoption of Resolution 2:

SA21.05.08.

The Assembly adopted Resolution 2: Modifying Gendered Language in Synod Nomination Processes

*Adopted by Voting on Lumi Platform
190 in favor; 39 opposed; 14 abstentions*

XVI. Closing Announcements

Bishop Erickson gave thanks to all who helped carry out this hybrid assembly: **Assembly Manager Mary Romskog**; Synod Staff and Officers; Parliamentarian **Matthew Brockmeier**; **Ellie Schmidtke** and volunteers and hosts **Holy Cross**; the staff of AV Milwaukee and Lumi.

The 2022 Synod Assembly is scheduled for May 20-21, 2022 at the Italian Community Center. Next year's assembly will include a bishop's election.

Prizes were given to those who responded to requests for assistance with the *Equipping the Saints* Mission Appeal.

The Synod Zoom Blues, a light-hearted music video composed by **Phil Smith**, Office Administrator, was shared with the Assembly

XVII. Closing of Assembly and Installation of Newly Elected Officers.

Bishop Erickson presided at the Rite of Installation for Elected Officers, reading from Romans 12:4-8. He then led the Liturgy for the Close of a Synod Assembly.

Synod Assembly Action Adjournment

SA21.05.09.

Having reached the conclusion of the agenda and with no further business to conduct, Bishop Paul D. Erickson declared the 2021 Synod Assembly closed at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse
Synod Secretary