

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly

June 1-3, 2017

The 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly took place from Thursday, June 1, 2017 through Saturday, June 3, 2017 at the Country Springs Hotel & Waterpark at 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, Wisconsin. Thursday included worship, with the Order for the Opening of Assembly, but no plenary sessions.

Friday, June 2, 2017

Plenary I

Call to Order

Bishop Paul Erickson called the Assembly to order at 8:31 am. The session began with music by Ms. Karen Horwitz and devotions led by Rev. Cheri Johnson, who spoke of connections to water.

Welcome and Introduction of Planning Team and Special Guests

Bishop Erickson welcomed those in attendance, and introduced and thanked the Synod Assembly Planning Team, consisting of Rev. Bill Beyer, Ms. Melissa Bissing, Rev. Carol Hegland, Ms. Judy Kolstad, Rev. Chris Marien, Rev. Jay McDivitt, Rev. Tom Pietz, Ms. Mary Romskog and Rev. Matt Short.

He also announced guests of the Assembly, including Deacon Tammy Devine, ELCA Wellness Manager, Portico Benefit Services; Mr. David Dalton, Vice President for Marketing and Sales, Mission Investment Fund; Rev. Arnold Pierson, President, ELCA Federal Credit Union; Rev. Cindy Crain, Director, Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin; Mr. Richard Bauer, Enterprise Sales Representative, Vanco Payment Solutions; Mr. Doug LeClair, Regional Representative, Church Mutual Insurance Company; and Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman, Executive Director of the Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA, serving as ELCA representative for this Assembly.

Other introductions included Assembly Parliamentarian Mr. Stephen Knowles, Synod Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier, and Synod Vice President Mr. Scott Manske.

Housekeeping notes included noting the reserved table for speakers in front of the podium on the floor of the Assembly, the paperless guidebook app, internet connectivity, and the availability of reports on the synod's website. There are Post-It notes to respond to the questions posted on doors in the lobby: those are the same questions as at the cluster listening events. This morning's question is "for what are you grateful?" The offering from the opening worship was \$1,706.05 last night. The bishop urged those present to text gifts in order to reach a total of \$2,000 (one day's staffing for the LSS refugee office).

The bishop reported on the open space conversation scheduled for early afternoon, calling it a chance to connect with other people about issues and conversations that matter. Topics are listed in the supplement, though there is also still a chance to fill five "wild card" slots. Topics 16 through 19 as listed will only be held during first hour, and will then be replaced by five new topics. He asked for those present to submit possible topics before break, and will hold a vote if there are more than five new topics offered.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Portico Benefits Welcome

Deacon Tammy Devine's presentation on Portico Benefit Services began with a video, presenting the need to tend to oneself as part of God's creation with well-being looked at from a "whole person" perspective. Portico, she said, exists to provide benefits including new services and tools, and featuring a retirement planning tool, to allow you to "manage your money, rather than money managing you."

Along with serious tools, there is also online Reformation fun – Martin Luther as funds manager? Suggestions for other wellness activities and online, with a brochure available at the Portico table in the lobby.

Report of the Credentials Committee

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

Mr. Groenewold reported that in attendance at the Assembly at the opening of the first plenary session on Friday, June 2, 2017, were 124 clergy and 206 lay people, for a total voting membership of 330. Also present were 26 visitors for a total attendance of 356. A quorum of voting members was present, and lay members comprised more than the required 60% of voting members.

Adoption of Agenda

Bishop Erickson 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

SA17.06.01. Adoption of Agenda

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

Appointments

Bishop Erickson reported on appointments to the Credentials, Elections, Nominating, and Reference and Counsel Committees, and of Mr. Stephen Knowles as Parliamentarian, as published in the Supplement.

Approval of Rules and Procedures

Bishop Erickson asked the Assembly to approve the proposed Rules and Procedures of the Assembly, as recommended by the Synod Council and printed in the Supplement. The bishop gave a brief overview of Robert's Rules and other procedural issues, including the procedure for using the floor microphones. He noted that in some instances the practice of "calling the question" can actually slow down final action on a motion, especially if there is not extended debate.

Assembly Action

SA17.06.02. Approval of 2017 Assembly Rules and Procedures

The Assembly voted to adopt the 2017 Assembly Rules and Procedures as presented.

Recognize and Welcome New Congregations

Bishop Erickson called upon Secretary Matthew Brockmeier to present four new congregations for recognition and reception by the synod. Each congregation made a

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

brief verbal presentation to the Assembly, describing their new mission and/or their process of coming together. After an implausible result from the electronic voting system, all actions were taken by voice vote or a show of green or red cards, a procedure used for the remainder of the Assembly.

Journey in Faith Lutheran Church, Racine (January 24, 2017)

Journey in Faith Lutheran Church was formed by the consolidation of Emmanuel Lutheran Church and Gethsemane Lutheran Church, both of Racine.

Council Action

SA17.06.03. Recognition and Reception of Congregation

The Assembly voted to recognize and receive Journey in Faith Lutheran Church, Racine, Wisconsin, as a congregation of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of January 24, 2017.

Living Faith Lutheran Church, Racine (February 14, 2016)

Living Faith Lutheran Church was formed by the consolidation of Atonement Lutheran Church and Our Savior's Lutheran Church, both of Racine.

Council Action

SA17.06.04. Recognition and Reception of Congregation

The Council voted to recognize and receive Living Faith Lutheran Church, Racine, Wisconsin, as a congregation of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of February 14, 2016.

United Lutheran Church in Racine (June 4, 2017)

United Lutheran Church in Racine was formed by the consolidation of St. Andrew Lutheran Church, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, all of Racine.

Council Action

SA17.06.05. Recognition and Reception of Congregation

The Council voted to recognize and receive United Lutheran Church, Racine, Wisconsin, as a congregation of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of June 4, 2017.

Unity Lutheran Church, Brookfield (January 1, 2017)

Unity Lutheran Church was formed by the consolidation of Christ the King Lutheran Church and Cross of Life Lutheran Church, both of Brookfield.

Assembly Action

SA17.06.06. Recognition and Reception of Congregation

The Assembly voted to recognize and receive Unity Lutheran Church, Brookfield, Wisconsin, as a congregation of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of January 1, 2017.

Nominating Committee Report

Bishop Erickson invited Nominating Committee Chair Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld to present the committee's report. Members of the Assembly were invited to make nominations from the floor for all positions.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Rev. Thomas-Breitfeld began by thanking Mary Romskog and Matthew Brockmeier for their help in the nominations process. He urged members of the Assembly to consider serving the church in a wider way through service in elected synod positions, noting that it was harder and harder to fill open slots over the years. The nominating form is available on the back of the supplement or from synod staff.

The bishop added that any positions on the Consultation Committee that are not filled by floor nominations and election by the Assembly may be filled by Synod Council appointment until the next Assembly.

Rev. Thomas-Breitfeld then presented any nominees position by position, with the bishop calling for floor nominations for all positions.

Nominated for the Consultation Committee

Clergy – Full Terms (2): September 2017 through August 2023

Rev. Ari Mattson - Floor Nomination

Rev. D. Andrew Fetters – Floor Nomination

Lay Female – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2023

Ms. Melanie Helmke – Floor Nomination

Lay Male – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2023

Mr. Dennis Faherty – Floor Nomination

Mr. Sean Alan Heinritz – Floor Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Kenosha/West Racine Cluster – Lay Male – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Mr. George R. Sorenson – Floor Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Milwaukee Cluster 1 – Clergy – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Rev. Tim Tahtinen – Floor Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Milwaukee Cluster 2 – Lay Female – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Ms. Janet R, Wunrow – Cluster Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Northern Lakeshore Cluster – Clergy – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Rev. Elizabeth Jaeger – Cluster Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Northwest Cluster – Lay Male – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Mr. Mark Christiaansen – Cluster Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Racine Cluster – Lay Male – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Mr. Bob Reinders – Cluster Nomination

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Nominated for Synod Council

At Large – Lay Male, Person of Color – Partial Term: Election through August 2019

Mr. Jerry Key – Nominating Committee Nomination

Nominated for Vice President

Lay Person – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Ms. Joyce A. Caldwell – Nominating Committee Nomination

Nominated for Treasurer

Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021

Mr. Tom Gauthier – Nominating Committee Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Youth – Lay Person – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2019
No Nomination

Nominated for Synod Council

Young Adult – Full Term: September 2017 through August 2021
Ms. Aliliywa Mbise – Synod Council Nomination

Budget Presentation

Synod Financial Administrator (and former Treasurer) Mr. Lee Johnston presented the proposed budget as recommended by the Synod Council. The presentation began with a showing of the mission support video featuring Bishop Erickson, in which he called on congregations to consider a special increase in mission support by congregations. To date 15 congregations have pledged increases. More pledges were solicited.

Mr. Johnston referred to the Report of the Treasurer in the Supplement, and went on to say that the proposed budget (for FY2019, beginning February 1, 2018) is very similar to current year budget. The budget is based on 55% of mission support up to \$2 million being forwarded to the ELCA, with any amount of mission support beyond \$2 million remaining for the work of the synod. He said that FY2019 will be the first budget year with bishop's new staffing model in place. In recent years the synod has had staffing vacancies, which offset revenue shortfalls. There have been, he continued, eight consecutive years with giving reductions. The proposed budget will allow the synod to do its work and continue efforts to support partners.

Last year the synod ended up with a surplus of roughly \$5,200. This year, there will be a likely shortfall. Mr. Johnston said that this presentation does not include a question and answer period, which will be part of discussion on the budget tomorrow.

The bishop announced that Mr. Johnston will do an open space conversation on the budget in the plenary hall, and that Mr. Stephen Knowles will also do an open space conversation for resolution amendments. Members of the Assembly were urged to attend these conversations early during the open space period, since both presenters will leave early if there is no interest.

Report of the Bishop

Bishop Erickson turned over the chair to Vice President Manske for the duration of his report. Mr. Manske introduced the bishop, saying that the bishop jumped right in at the

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

beginning of his term, has met many leaders and members during the cluster listening sessions, asking where the synod is going. He added that he “appreciated his vision.”

The bishop began by noting that it had been twelve months since accepting this call and that there is a lot that he still needs to learn, saying that “challenges and mistakes will still come.” He expressed gratitude for the support that he’s found, for love of church, love of people, for the patience shown to he and the staff, for willingness to explore new ways. He is grateful for support and prayers.

We are “partners in something that is really important. Prayers are crucial.”

He expressed gratitude for the staff, introducing them, with special recognition for members of the staff who are leaving, including interim Director for Evangelical Mission Rev. Dave Daubert; for Ms. Rhonda Hill, Director of Discipleship; and for Mr. Dave Groenewold, Director of Finance.

In brief remarks Ms. Hill called for the synod to “keep praying, pushing and believing – be bold – let the Spirit do its work,” with Mr. Groenewold talked about his pleasure in the work, saying that coming to the synod from the corporate world “changed my life.” The bishop reported that applications for the Mission Leaders position will be accepted through June 15th.

He then enumerated new Ministers of Word and Sacrament, noting also other milestones for leaders and congregations.

Tying together his thoughts on synodical leadership, and background on thinkers who influence him, the bishop spoke of cultivating an environment that releases the missional imagination of God’s people, adding that “the wisdom will not come from somewhere out there,” but instead will come from the people already near us. He carried these thoughts into how the Assembly was structured, with no workshops or keynote speeches, but instead the open space time and table conversations, with a goal of releasing missional imagination.

He turned to thoughts on listening sessions, including a recap of those held in clusters, and a look at how congregations can carry that process forward. He called for listening, imagination and courageous action by congregations as they do their own listening.

This call was defined as the need for “deep listening,” incorporating prayer and Dwelling in the Word. “Listen to brothers and sisters within the community of faith, but also to those who are not yet in these rooms, who are different from us, voices with uncomfortable messages. The first step is listening.”

He moved to the need for imagination; for finding ways to think beyond the customs and traditions that have served us well. Creating life-giving meaningful relationships that are sustained in the context of our Christian communities. He said this may mean some consolidation of congregations, with some of this based on numbers, but also hoping that “we are looking at new ways.” We need the “courage to risk.” Selling the buildings is an act of faith, but these may be risks worth taking.

The bishop spoke of the structure and focus of the synod staff’s work, with priorities to:

- Accompany congregations in transition

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

- Accompany leaders in transition (especially those retiring and leaving the congregations they have served)
- Develop leaders for mission (creating new models for leadership development, focusing on head, heart and hands, and encouraging mutual learning and a diversity of voices)
- Develop resources for mission (with a focus on partnerships and strengthening vital and vibrant ministries which are vulnerable because of insufficient resources)
- Organize the synod for mission (revisit cluster structure, which varies in effectiveness)

He ended his report with “a word of gratitude – for what you do in communities and congregations. I can’t do it alone – none of us can.”

Mr. Manske then turned the chair back to the bishop.

Music

Following a break, Ms. Karen Horwitz accompanied the Assembly as it sang “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.”

Vanco Payment Solutions

Mr. Richard Bauer shared a message from Vanco Payment Solutions, telling the Assembly that they currently serve more than 4,000 ELCA congregations across the country. From his vantage point serving the entire ELCA, he said that the Greater Milwaukee Synod is a role model for the use of their services, with 70% of congregations served by Vanco. This synod, he said, was the first adopter for their automatic withdrawal services, which “were cool once upon a time, but now giving apps” are taking their place. He encouraged the use of new tools, including give-by-text functionality, and thanked the Assembly for Vanco’s participation.

ELCA Federal Credit Union

Rev. Arnold Pierson introduced the ELCA Federal Credit Union, which now has members in 43 states and 63 synods. He said that loan refinancing has saved members an average of \$1,400 per loan. “Thank you – a joy to be with you.” His presentation ended with a video.

ELCA Representative Report

Rev. Stephen Bouman’s presentation as representative of the ELCA was preceded by a video featuring Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton framing remarks in the Catechism. She spoke of the Lutheran movement not being inward-looking, citing its presence in more than 100 countries, with significant growth in sub-Saharan Africa and in Asia. She called the Lutheran movement a way for people to be served by God’s hands, with the gift of Grace that sets people free.

Rev. Bouman began his talk with words from Hebrews chapter 10; “let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another,” saying “I’m here to provoke us today, to put a call in front of us.”

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Leadership, he said, starts at the font. He recalled that on 9/11 he was bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, when a chaplain marked the foreheads of emergency workers entering the World Trade Center with a cross, which people reported seeing glistening as they escaped the buildings. These were “angels ascending and descending.”

He gave thanks for the leaders in the synod, and for those completing diakonia, which he called “the heart of everything we do.” He also gave thanks for the strong level of financial support given by the synod to the ELCA.

He called attention to leaders sharing with the church throughout the world, to social ministry institutions, to the Youth Gathering, to the World Hunger fund, which not only feeds, but also is in the world to change it, and to Lutheran Social Services, with its work in community development and advocacy.

He exhorted those listening to show up! To listen, engage and show up! Jesus walks toward us on the water in a moment of chaos – who are you inviting out of the boat? Listen with the intensity of those cutting a hole in the roof; engage as those grabbing the hem of the garment.

Rev. Bouman spoke of immigrants, noting how many of those who arrived here earlier were economic migrants. He said that he “if we as Lutherans don’t help, there will be another church that will.” He went on to talk about Kansas City welcoming 1,000 new migrants, and how the ELCA is focusing on immigrants for new starts.

Next Rev. Bouman talked about efforts to promote peace, including a back-channel process with Iran, funded by Norway, in which he was involved. Peace, he said, is a long game, but is about relationships.

Working in areas of conflict, like South Sudan, is yielding results, with this area being the fastest-growing group of churches in our church. People want to start a church in their own country, and are doing so. This work has included creating both a church and a hospital. Partners, missionaries, ELCA mission developers: “we need all of us together to make these things happen.”

In closing, Rev. Bouman said that “we are called to these spaces – we are not here to take care of buildings. Either the resurrection of Jesus changes everything, or there is no reason for us to be here.” Paul, he said, was vulnerable on the road – we are vulnerable – that is who we are.

2019 Churchwide Assembly

Ms. Carolyn Jewett, member of the ELCA Church Council from the Greater Milwaukee Synod, announced that the next Churchwide Assembly will take place in Milwaukee from August 5th through 10th, 2019.

Bishop Erickson encouraged the Assembly to “show them how we do church in the Greater Milwaukee Synod.”

Open Space Announcements and Topic Selection

There were seven suggested topics for the five open slots in the afternoon’s Open Space sessions. The topics were listed, and following another failed attempt to use the

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

electronic voting system, it was announced that all seven topics would be accommodated. The topics included issues of justice, community organizing, ministering with girls, ministry and creation, Luther's anti-Semitic writings, Outreach for Hope and engagement with AMMPARO.

Church Mutual Insurance Company

Mr. Doug LeClair gave thanks for Church Mutual being able to participate in this event, with special thanks to synod Finance Director Dave Groenewold, who he said has been a great steward of the insurance program for the synod. He urged members to review Church Mutual's expanded [website](#).

Announcements and Prayer

The elections team was called to meet at the podium as the lunch recess began. Pastor Matt Short offered a prayer. The Assembly will reconvene at 2:30 pm, following the Open Space sessions.

Friday, June 2, 2017

Plenary II

Bishop Erickson called the Assembly to order at 2:45.

Music & Devotions

Rev. Jay McDivitt played guitar as the Assembly sang "Come, All You People" to begin the second plenary session, followed by devotions offered by Denise Rector.

Announcements

There was an update on the ongoing offering begun at last night's worship, with encouragement to use the text-to-give option. Open Space received applause from the Assembly. There is an online evaluation form. Information on finding lost items. Another call to post notes on the doors in the lobby, and to use the four-foot Luther statue for photo opportunities.

Devotions

Ms. Denise Rector, an intern at Ascension Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, shared devotions, speaking on the topic of living justice. "What does living justice look like? I believe it looks like right relationship. To see where relationship needs healing."

Including references in scripture about leaving a share of the harvest for the poor and the alien, and to scattered seeds growing, she spoke of the need for God to give growth, saying that "our greediness will lead to injustice."

"The God we serve sees the hungry, the poor, those who could not work, the oppressed. We are not on the judgement seat, God is." Right relationship requires a recalibration of how we see things.

Climate change, she said, is largely invisible in day-to-day life. "Am I in right relationship with those living on an island, those whose society does not have resources?" Living justice as the sea level rises in their part of the world.

Living water and living Word give us courage. Living justice is how we change our circumstances. We work for justice when we advocate for a fair approach.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly

June 1-3, 2017

The resolutions we will consider “are tangible bits of living justice. Take this work with us. Your voice matters in this living justice. Your voice is the work of God bringing living justice today and in the future.”

Mission Investment Fund

The Mission Investment Fund presentation began with a video on helping to accomplish the mission God has set before people.

Mr. David Dalton then talked about this financial ministry of the ELCA, which provides loans for capital projects, drawing attention to the investments offered and their favorable rates. He reported that at the end of last year the MIF had eleven loans in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, totaling \$11 million.

He expressed appreciation for the synod’s support and participation, adding that their loans expand the capacity for ministry.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold gave the report of the Credentials Committee, reporting that at the beginning of the second plenary session there were 141 clergy and 218 lay people, for a total voting membership of 359. Also present were 28 visitors for a total attendance of 387. Lay representation remained above 60% of total voting members present.

Outreach for Hope

Outreach for Hope (OFH) Executive Director Rev. Jim Bickel began by saying “you are Outreach for Hope – we are Outreach for Hope together!” This “helps to assure that all can be around the table,” pointing out the OFH brochures on tables.

After introducing Advancement Director Ms. Maripat Monahan, he introduced two success stories: a welcome center at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenosha, and a number of initiatives serving the community by Cross Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. The Cross initiative was shared by a person who moved from needing help to needing to give back to the community.

Rev. Bickel ended the OFH report by saying that it “is a mission we share together as the Greater Milwaukee Synod. Please continue to donate generously to this vital work.”

Report of the Synod Council

Vice President Mr. Scott Manske shared that he was not running for a second term as vice president. This is not, he said, a reflection on the value of the work, but is instead about the demands of his work.

He highlighted the role of the vice president as the highest lay leader in the synod, and the work of the Synod Council as an independent body to work and advise. He asked all members of the Council who were present to stand for recognition, and spoke of his appreciation for the support he had received from staff and the Council.

In a PowerPoint presentation, he shared a number of details of the work of the synod, which he described as including representing the church publicly, encouraging congregations, growing and sustaining leaders, partnering globally and locally, and raising up youth and cross-generational ministry.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Using data from several recent years, he painted a picture of a synod made up of 128 congregations, 73,000 baptized members and 55,000 confirmed members. While this represents a decline, he noted that 21,000 attend worship on a regular basis.

While giving to the synod has also declined, overall giving to congregations by their members has increased. Referring to the presentations on the work of the synod, he said “we are a people who give. All these stories touch my heart.”

He also provided details on shifts in congregation size, and the aging of the synod’s rostered leaders, which will mean more leadership transitions in coming years.

In the area of congregational leadership, he addressed the topics of compensation guidelines and health insurance for rostered leaders.

One of the most important things done by the synod is to connect people, something which, he added, the Synod Assembly especially accomplishes.

Even without brick and mortar, he said, we “would still be church.” Pastors and people of faith are more important.

“Do we travel alone? Not on a road built by those who came before. Thank you.”

The bishop recognized all those leaving the Synod Council.

First Ballot for Consultation Committee and Synod Council

Bishop Erickson called for the first ballot for those nominated for positions in the synod.

Assembly Action

SA17.06.07. Election of Nominees

Election to full terms (September 2017 through August 2023) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Consultation Committee, Clergy

Rev. Ari Mattson

Rev. D. Andrew Fetters

Voice vote

SA17.06.08. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2023) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Consultation Committee, Lay Female

Ms. Melanie Helmke

Voice vote

SA17.06.09. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, Representing the Kenosha/West Racine Cluster, Lay Male

Mr. George R. Sorenson

Voice vote

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
June 1-3, 2017

SA17.06.10. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, Representing the Milwaukee Cluster 1, Clergy

Rev. Tim Tahtinen

Voice vote

SA17.06.11. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, Representing the Milwaukee Cluster 2, Lay Female

Ms. Janet R, Wunrow

Voice vote

SA17.06.12. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, Representing the Northern Lakeshore Cluster, Clergy

Rev. Elizabeth Jaeger – Cluster Nomination

Voice vote

SA17.06.13. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, Representing the Northwest Cluster, Lay Male

Mr. Mark Christiaansen

Voice vote

SA17.06.14. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, Representing the Racine Cluster, Lay Male

Mr. Bob Reinders

Voice vote

SA17.06.15. Election of Nominees

Election to a partial term (Election through August 2019) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, At Large, Lay Male, Person of Color

Mr. Jerry Key

Voice vote

SA17.06.16. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) as Vice President of the Greater Milwaukee Synod

Ms. Joyce A. Caldwell

Voice vote

SA17.06.17. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) as Treasurer of the Greater Milwaukee Synod

Mr. Tom Gauthier

Voice vote

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

SA17.06.18. Election of Nominees

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2021) as a Young Adult Representative on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council

Ms. Aliliywa Mbise

Voice vote

Lutheran Campus Ministry Report

A video, "We Rise by Lifting Others," began the Lutheran Campus Ministry report.

Rev. Rachel Young Binter, whose birthday was today, read from Acts 17, and introduced two students, Dayna Samuels and Sean Alan Heinritz, who addressed the Assembly.

Dayna Samuels is a peer minister at the Corner House; not a Christian, but beginning rabbinical studies in the fall. "A diverse community of Lutherans, Christians, Catholics, international students, Jews, all genders and orientations. We use our different views to find a picture of God from many views. Not just holding sacred spaces. Not all the same beliefs, but no matter what we believe, we all have a home at the Corner House."

Sean Alan Heinritz, another student, thanked Pastor Rachel, and said that "each congregational contribution means that we are fed, good food, every week." Not just good food, though, but also spiritual food. Sean took a selfie with everyone.

Resolutions

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Mr. Todd Beutin, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, was asked to give the committee's report. This took the form of reading the Resolved statements, and noting the committee's recommendation, prior to debate and action for each resolution. All resolutions were recommended for adoption in their final form.

Resolution 1 – In Support of Prison Congregation and Prison Reform, which was submitted by Hephatha Lutheran Church and Reformation Lutheran Church, both of Milwaukee, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

WHEREAS, Jesus, in Matthew 25, says that when we visit someone in prison, we are visiting him; and

WHEREAS, Prison Congregations of America provides direction and resources to assist in establishing congregations within prisons; and

WHEREAS, The Greater Milwaukee Synod, in collaboration with the ELCA Congregational Centers for Mission, has launched Breaking the Chains Congregation at the Felmers Chaney Correctional Center (minimum security prison), 2825 N. 30th St., Milwaukee, and has called Rev. Mark Thompson as the first pastor of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, Member congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod could gain spiritual enrichment, and opportunities for witnessing to the Gospel, by participating in the worship services of Breaking the Chains Congregation, by serving on the Prison Congregation Steering Committee, or by engaging in a local jail ministry; and

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

WHEREAS, Faith communities throughout Wisconsin are engaged in organizing efforts to reduce mass incarceration and racial disparities in Wisconsin's prisons, and in efforts to initiate more restorative justice policies in the Wisconsin prison system, such as earned release policies and treatment alternatives and diversionary programs for persons caught in the criminal justice system with underlying addiction and/or mental health issues; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod continue its support of Breaking the Chains Congregation, by encouraging member congregations to send volunteers to participate in the Saturday evening worship services, to be represented on the Prison Congregation Steering Committee, to invite Rev. Mark Thompson to speak at congregational worship and other gatherings, and to contribute financially to the ministry needs of Breaking the Chains Congregation, and be it further

RESOLVED, That congregations be encouraged to participate in ministries at local county and city jails, and nearby state prisons, as opportunities are available, and be it further

RESOLVED, That congregations be encouraged to engage in prison reform and reentry initiatives, especially in the Restoring Our Communities (ROC) campaign¹—aimed at reducing mass incarceration in Wisconsin--being carried out by four congregation-based justice organizing groups in the Greater Milwaukee Synod area: MICAH (Milwaukee), SOPHIA (Waukesha), CUSH (Kenosha), and RIC (Racine).

¹ Restoring Our Communities (ROC) website: <http://www.rocwisconsin.org/>

Rev. Mark Thompson spoke, saying that the State of Wisconsin ranks poorly on incarceration. He mentioned the time he spends at the Felmers Chaney Correctional Center, responding to the need for weekly worship, which was not previously available at Felmers Chaney.

Rev. Joe Ellwanger also spoke in favor, explaining that Hephatha Lutheran Church in Milwaukee has “received the lion’s share of the value of this ministry.” He called this a “beautiful experience of walking with people in prison,” doing the hard work of reintegration. It is important, he said, for all congregations to be involved in fixing a system that is broken. Congregations that do not are “missing out on the opportunity to grow in the Gospel.” This is “not a burden, it is a blessing.” He reiterated his call for every congregation to respond to this resolution.

There were no additional speakers.

Assembly Action

SA17.06.19. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 1 – In Support of Prison Congregation and Prison Reform, as presented.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Resolution 2 – Resolution in Recognition of Rev. David Larson’s Service to Lutheran Social Services, which was submitted by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Whereas, Rev. David N. Larson has provided distinguished leadership as President and Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan since July 2002, and prior to that served as Vice President of Resource Development; and

Whereas, Rev. Larson served as a synod representative to the LSS Board of Directors for six years; and

Whereas, Rev. Larson has tirelessly encouraged a strong commitment to the social ministry of the church, reminding us that “When people are at their worst, we need to be at our best”; and

Whereas, Rev. Larson has been a leading voice of inspiration and challenge to fulfill the mission of LSS, “Motivated by the compassion of Christ, we help people improve the quality of their lives”; and

Whereas, Rev. Larson will retire in 2018 from a career of dedicated service as a Lutheran pastor and social services leader; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod recognize, affirm and celebrate Rev. David N. Larson for his service to the church and the thousands of lives that have been changed because of his passionate and committed leadership.

Rev. Paul Bulgerin, spoke for the motion, as a fellow member of Wartburg Theological Seminary class of 1982, sharing other calls to this action.

Assembly Action

SA17.06.20. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 2 – Resolution in Recognition of Rev. David Larson’s Service to Lutheran Social Services, as presented.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Rev. Larson addressed the Assembly, with thanks to everyone. He noted that he grew up in McFarland, south of Madison. “Deep thanks to all of you, to Bishop Paul for passion and leadership, to the staff for herding cats, to Pastor James Holmberg and to Cindy Halverson, president of the LSS Foundation.”

“The Holy Spirit flows through this world – you grab your surfboards.”

One out of every 50 Americans is touched by Lutheran Social Services, the largest provider of service. This means 100,000 people in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. “You are at your best. Be proud of the work that you’re doing. Then feel guilty that you felt proud, and you’ll be Lutheran again.”

He mentioned a \$30,000 match from the Siebert Foundation for the work of LSS, ending his speech by saying that there is a “fine line between a long sermon and a hostage situation.”

An LSS video, focusing on human trafficking, followed.

There was a motion from the floor to Suspend the Rules, in order to move consideration of Resolution 4 ahead of consideration of Resolution 3.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
June 1-3, 2017

Assembly Action

SA17.06.21. Suspension of the Rules

The Assembly voted to Suspend the Rules to allow consideration of Resolution 4 ahead of consideration of Resolution 3.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Resolution 4 – Resolution in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Milwaukee Open Housing Marches, which was submitted by Clusters 1 & 2, All Peoples Lutheran Church, Ascension Lutheran Church, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Lake Park Lutheran Church, The Table Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community, and Village Church, all of Milwaukee.

WHEREAS, August 28th, 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the open housing marches in Milwaukee, begun on Aug 28th 1967, continuing for the next 200 days organized by the NAACP Youth Council, Father James Groppi, and Alderwoman Vel Phillips, and

WHEREAS, The 1967-1968 open housing marches were done in support of passing a local open housing bill that would desegregate Milwaukee and open up housing throughout the city, and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee's open housing marches garnered national attention and were instrumental in helping pass the Fair Housing Act of 1968 which prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin and sex, and

WHEREAS, Nearly five decades after the federal Fair Housing Act passed, a 2013 study by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found fewer than 9% of black residents in the Milwaukee metro area live in the suburbs — the lowest rate in the country, and that even as major metro areas across the U.S. have modestly desegregated since the 1980s, Milwaukee's rate of black-white segregation has essentially stayed the same, and

WHEREAS, Many of our Lutheran pastors, members, and congregations participated in those marches in 1967 and 1968, and many continue to resist the injustices perpetuated by racism and poverty in Milwaukee today; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That synod congregations be encouraged to support city-wide events on August 28th, 2017 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the seminal open housing marches in Milwaukee and the impact they had nationally on the Civil Rights Movement and the passing of the Fair Housing Act, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Greater Milwaukee Synod designate Sunday, August 27, 2017 to be a "Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Open Housing Marches & Call to Continued Action" whereby congregations would celebrate the legacy of the open housing marches and the continual need to act boldly in the struggle for justice in

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Milwaukee today, with the synod providing timely information to congregations that can be used to promote this event, and be it further

RESOLVED, That congregations and members of the Greater Milwaukee Synod be encouraged to celebrate the “200 Nights of Freedom” that will follow the anniversary, as a means to educate, inspire, and empower similar acts of resistance to injustice.

Rev. Steve Jerbi, representing a sponsoring entity, told the Assembly that this resolution is “reflective of who we are in this region” adding that this is to “celebrate the work of those who came before.” He went on to say that the reality is that “a declining city and booming suburbs is part of our history,” urging this to be celebrated as a victory led by people of faith. “The work 50 years ago continues in new ways, but in some ways, it is the same old struggle.”

Mr. Jerry Key observed that there was national change, “but there was little action in Wisconsin. We may have instigated others to move, but we lost our way.”

Mr. Mike Herold of Capitol Drive Lutheran Church in Milwaukee added that he “lived in a house with people freaking out about people of color moving to their part of town. I’m no longer a naïve 13-year old, but this issue has not totally been resolved – we need this resolution.”

Assembly Action

SA17.06.22. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 4 – Resolution in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Milwaukee Open Housing Marches, as presented.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Resolution 3 – Resolution Calling for the Greater Milwaukee Synod to be a Sanctuary Synod, which was submitted by Clusters 1 & 2, All Peoples Lutheran Church, Ascension Lutheran Church, Hephatha Lutheran Church, Lake Park Lutheran Church, The Table Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community, and Village Church, all of Milwaukee.

WHEREAS, Jesus said we would see him in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner; and

WHEREAS, we are living in times when immigrants from the Central and South Americas, regions of Africa and Asia, and the Middle East are fleeing warfare and devastating poverty, and are being persecuted; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church over the last 75 years has been a leader in refugee resettlement through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Community (Family) Service and thousands of congregations; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement from 1998 proclaims, “We draw on the best of our nation’s traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants, and

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

that we will advocate for just immigration policies including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees”; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of Sanctuary is an ancient custom of the church, going back to the Hebrew people, which calls for the church to be a safe place for those escaping persecution; and

WHEREAS, it is the fifth charge of every ELCA pastor to “speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world”; and

WHEREAS, in Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” and, in Hebrews 13:2, exclaims “In exercising hospitality to the stranger many testified that they received more than they gave as if they had welcomed angels without knowing it”; and

WHEREAS, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were refugees fleeing to Egypt to avoid Herod’s violence; and

WHEREAS, there are already sanctuary congregations in the Greater Milwaukee Synod with more to emerge with the New National Sanctuary Movement Milwaukee Network has been active since 2007; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod encourages its congregations to become more familiar with the resources of the New Sanctuary Movement¹ and the ELCA's AMMPARO² initiative and to consider supporting the movement to provide sanctuary for immigrants in one of the following ways:

1. Sanctuary congregations: providing physical sanctuary (housing, financial, and legal assistance) to undocumented immigrants requesting their help
2. Sanctuary-supporting congregations: providing financial and other material support to sanctuary congregations
3. Welcoming congregations: making a public declaration of welcome to all immigrants and refugees, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod bishop continue speaking out in support of immigrants and refugees, boldly speaking the truth of the biblical commands of welcome and radical hospitality.

¹ <http://newsanctuarymke.org/en/resources/>

¹ <http://www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPARO>

Rev. Alexis Twito moved that Vicar René Mehlberg, intern at All Peoples Church, Milwaukee, and primary author of Resolution 3, be given voice by the Assembly.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Council Action

SA17.06.23. Granting of Voice

The Assembly voted to grant voice but not vote to Vicar René Mehlberg.

Vote by show of cards

Vicar René Mehlberg spoke in favor of the Resolution, citing a long history of the church providing sanctuary to those in need, and calling attention to the fact that Jesus' life depended on sanctuary as a young child. As Lutherans, we have a history that includes one in six Lutherans worldwide being either refugees or displaced persons following World War II.

She said that stepping up to provide sanctuary is nothing new for some congregations, saluting them, "but now the larger church needs to provide . . . radical hospitality and love." She urged this synod to join with other ELCA synods that have passed similar resolutions, taking a public stand.

Rev. June Eastvold asked a question: "what about those among us who would welcome a family into our own home as part of a congregation, and being in violation?" This line of discussion was curtailed by the bishop, as not being germane to the question of the resolution.

Assembly Action

SA17.06.24. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 3 – Resolution Calling for the Greater Milwaukee Synod to be a Sanctuary Synod, as presented.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Reformation Video

A video invitation from Bishop Erickson and Archbishop Jerome Listecky, Archdiocese of Milwaukee to an event at Ascension Lutheran Church in Milwaukee on October 31, 2017 to celebrate strides made through dialogue over the past 50 years. It is an opportunity to give thanks and to repent on obstacles on the way to Christian unity. "Please join us."

Election Results

Mr. Dave Groenewold reported the results of the vote by paper ballot for a lay male member of the Consultation Committee. A total of 302 votes were cast, with 152 needed to elect. Sean Alan Heinritz received 217 votes, and is elected.

SA17.06.25. Election of Nominee

Election to a full term (September 2017 through August 2023) on the Greater Milwaukee Synod Consultation Committee, Lay Male

Mr. Sean Alan Heinritz

Vote by paper ballot – Sean Alan Heinritz 217; Dennis Faherty 85.

Open Mic

Brief statements from members of the Assembly.

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls – [Definitely-Abled-Fellowship](#); Monthly meetings of a group of young adults with disabilities.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
June 1-3, 2017

First Lutheran Church, West Allis – [Weekly feeding program](#); looking for partners.

All People's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee (Havenwoods Campus) – Tuesday Night Together; Gathering to eat, play and have a good time.

Carthage College, Kenosha – Reformation event, part of effort to build relationships with the synod through continuing education activities.

Carthage College, Kenosha - PLAYMOBIL® Luther visiting Assembly, part of promotional material with a grant from the German embassy in Washington – “the four-foot Luther joy!”

Village Church, Milwaukee – [Power Shift](#) ministry to police officers, or anyone else on the streets, from 10 pm to 3 am on the first and third Fridays of the month.

Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milwaukee – Information on bequest used to fund seminary education, restructured to work around the original structure that had outcomes rooted in a racist pooling of resources in white communities. Now supporting people of color or people whose primary language is other than English. Information available from the bishop or from Mary Romskog on synod staff.

Diakonia – Special pins available at the Assembly, with thanks to those present for restoring faith.

Diakonia – Mike Herold speaking of using his gifts doing hospice visitation ministry.

Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hartland – Celebrating 150 years of ministry in a 125-year-old town, with [events](#) beginning on Sunday.

Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church, Brookfield – Celebrating 75th anniversary by planting 75 trees; some at church, some on private property, some in Tanzania. Twenty-five trees planted so far, also with [ELCA Good Gifts](#) seedlings sponsored by kids.

Mt. Meru Coffee Project – Call for those present to visit the Mt. Meru coffee display, while noting impact of project on increased living standards for farmers in Tanzania.

Bethania Lutheran Church, Racine – Deaf-interpreted confirmation classes.

Kingo Lutheran Church, Milwaukee – 150 trees planted or committed, with a focus on trees for the city.

Mount Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Allis – New food pantry opened as needs were identified from [Hope Closet](#) clothing project.

Incarnation Lutheran Church, Milwaukee – Testimonial on quality and reputation of programs, including at Capitol Drive Lutheran Church, with funding from Outreach for Hope.

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago – If considering a call to ministry, or know someone who is, opportunities to visit campus, including [Seminary Sampler](#) from October 22nd through 24th.

Testimonial for ministry at **Luther Manor**.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago – Building an alumni network, while also supporting seminarians going to any seminary. Planned giving. Continuing education program October 10-12.

Mt. Meru Coffee Project – Golf outing returning; want to get 100 foursomes this year.

Alice's Garden, Milwaukee – Invitation to walk the [labyrinth](#), before the bees arrive.

Rev. Carol Baumgartner testimonial on emotional intelligence workshops, with participation supported by the synod.

Lutheran Campus Ministry – Thank you, with call to get high school seniors connected to campus pastors before they leave for college. Online giving available.

Bishop Erickson, in wrapping up the Open Mic session, spoke of God's abundance represented in what was presented. "There is so much – none could do all this work by ourselves. Thanks to all for doing this."

Augustine Financial

Rev. Carolyn Fredriksen and Rev. Tom Pietz announced that [Augustine Financial](#) will match the first \$5,000 raised for this year's Outreach for Hope bike ride, and expressed appreciation for being able to participate in the Assembly.

Announcements

Please take items with you. IF not returning, please turn in nametag and voting machine. Whenever you leave. Childcare until 7:30.

The bishop announced that the Assembly was in recess at 5:20 pm, to resume at 8:30 am Saturday.

Saturday, June 3, 2017

Plenary III

Bishop Erickson called the Assembly to order at 8:30 am, following music by Rev. Tom Pietz and Deacon Stephanie Luedtke.

Rev. Stephen Bouman offered devotions, using an example of the lingering effects of the war between Tanzania and Uganda during Idi Amin's reign in Uganda. Despite these long-term effects on the region, "you know you are welcome before you arrive. When the church goes out in mission, we go out as guests. We go to receive a welcome." We become companions in sharing the bread of the people we greet, who are the ones with the skills and the knowledge.

Referring to II Kings 4, Rev. Bouman spoke of the wealth represented by the simple jar of oil in the house, which was enough to fill the empty vessels from the neighbors. For us, he said, our neighbors are the empty vessels, waiting to be filled with the bread, the water, and Jesus.

"Do we have expectations of God these days? What do we have in the house?"

He then described a discussion with an ayatollah as part of the dialogue with Iran he mentioned in his earlier report. The question to him was how the West could allow God

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

to be mocked – the answer was in the Beatitudes, showing Jesus as a great prophet, but He was more than a prophet – He was persecuted in a way that opened the door to the cross, an unlikely place where God bears with us.

“Stop trying to fix everything – have humility and gratitude for what is in the world, encounter the world as it is.”

“What do you have in the house? Everything we need!”

Announcements

The bishop gave an update on giving online.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold gave the final report of the Credentials Committee, reporting that at the beginning of the third plenary session there were 141 clergy and 218 lay people, for a total voting membership of 359. Also present were 28 visitors for a total attendance of 387. Lay representation was above 60% of total voting members present.

Table Conversations

Table conversations on congregational listening and community engagement were initiated by the bishop.

How will this be done? We are in the midst of a Re-form-ation of how we do church. What has served us well no longer does – we need to change. This period of change is of unknown duration. Count on:

- God being actively involved in the world
- God has an often-surprising way of working in the world
- God might choose to work through small struggling congregations, or outside the church
- There is no easy answer to the challenges in front of us – the vision forward will be generated by ordinary people in everyday situations
- Change is hard and messy – success is not guaranteed

What we need is already here – all we need to do is to create a space for wisdom and for resources to be shared. We need to summon the courage to act – to respond to what we find.

Future viability is not about more attractive programs, or better service ministries; rather it is about life-giving and life-changing relationships in communities of faith.

We must love with unconditional love, as Jesus loved. We must listen with imagination and courage.

The bishop introduced the work of [The Missional Network](#), a consulting group led by Rev. Alan Roxburgh. Rev. Michael Binder of The Missional Network is working with staff, and helped shape the February 25th cluster event

This journey similar to that of other synods in the ELCA, including the East Central Synod in Wisconsin and the Northwest Washington Synod, which has created a path called Living Local. A video on the Living Local initiative was shown. The themes in the

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

video included listening, reflection and experimentation as part of an intensive journey that take time and effort, but is well worth the investment.

The first step, the bishop added, is “deep listening – to God in scripture, prayer and conversation.” He brought the attention of the Assembly to the Dwelling in the Word overview handouts on the tables, and after describing the process, offered a prayer before the table discussions began.

Highlights of the discussions were then shared, including:

- Discernment takes time – where things fall
- A woman of means, able to further spread the Word
- Meet people we don’t know
- Recognize people as people
- The dream was a man, but was there a problem with the vision since it was a woman? They kept to what they were called to do, but what if they had not?
- Nice to see some failure – nimble and flexible to see where the Holy Spirit would lead them next – took some time, but sometimes we are impatient, when they got there they waited a few days inside the gates, but met outside the gates – have to get out of your gate, take some time

The bishop told the Assembly that this is a process that anyone can lead. It can be used in congregation council meetings, with this or other texts. He said this is “how we begin to cultivate missional imagination.” The Holy Spirit is inviting us out to spend time Dwelling in the Word. He urged doing this at council meetings, perhaps for 15 minutes. While not setting the business aside, he said, this is the business of the church. Invoking the Spirit’s presence reframes how we engage the challenges and struggles in front of us.

He also referred to the five questions introduced at the cluster event:

- How would the young people of our congregation and community describe their hopes and fears?
- How would our neighbors describe their hopes for this community in the next 5-10 years?
- How do the experiences of those from different backgrounds differ from our own?
- How do people with different political views connect their faith with their values and behaviors?
- What is God inviting us to pay attention to in our neighborhoods?

Further discussion included:

Rev. Carolyn Sellers of Kingo Lutheran Church, Milwaukee spoke of a post-election listening session. The lessons for her were that people need a safe place where people know they will be respected and not “arm-twisted,” realizing that we are generally united in our values and love of country.

Ms. Holly Hupfer, president of the congregation council at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, spoke of interviews with young adults and children from the congregation. She was encouraged by the presence of God in their answers. She said they are

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

touching people, and bringing youth back into the church. “They are our future, and our church believes in it.”

The bishop introduced the 3x9 process, to begin in September. The intent is to gather a community of congregations, perhaps three or four churches, to meet three times. The hope is to have between four and eight individuals per congregation, and there will be training events through the process, with monthly gatherings for pastoral leaders. Each learning community will have a coach. The particular question could be one of the five questions enumerated above, or perhaps another question for the church or community. He encouraged congregations to consider the questions, and possible partners.

As an example, he cited the discussions that took place in Racine over a period of years that led to the consolidations approved at the beginning of the Assembly.

This process will be communicated in a variety of ways, and will include working with The Missional Network.

Bishop Erickson said that we’re excited about developing these learning communities, which represent an opportunity for congregations to get outside their traditional patterns and rhythms. Congregations, he said, are starting from different places. “Get together with others (Jesus didn’t send us out one by one, but two by two).”

Brief table discussions about possible topics and groupings of congregations followed.

A second video from the Northwest Washington Synod was shown, on their Living Local process. The message was that this process will happen in different ways from congregation to congregation – anybody can do this, but it will be different in each case.

Comments and questions from the Assembly:

Thinking about reaching out into the community – what already exists that we can tie into? In this case, happenstance conversations led to both information and a realization of the plentiful faith in their community.

The possibility that questions may be answered differently by children elsewhere. Need to have more sophisticated conversations. “Important to talk to our kids the way that I hope we talk to each other as adults.”

Approaching questions in a way not formulated by the hierarchy of an organization, and understanding the importance of listening and acting.

When the world wants to get a message out, they do lots of protesting. Jesus was doing His Father’s business in the temple when he was twelve years old. Working to seek and to save.

The bishop urged members to “make a difference, make a connection, and create learning communities, or whatever you want to call them.”

Announcement

Following an announcement that Bishop Elias Kitoi Nassari of the Meru Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania was in the room, Bishop Erickson called for a 12-minute break, beginning at 10:36 am.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1-3, 2017

Session Resumes

After the break, and the singing of "Let Streams of Living Justice" by the Assembly, there was a video from Outreach for Hope promoting their fundraising bike ride scheduled for September 9, 2017. There was also an announcement about an article on [Rev. David Larson](#) in the Journal Sentinel.

Action on the Budget

The budget was moved for adoption, followed by a motion from Rev. Jay McDivitt to amend the 2018/2019 budget to add a new Line between Lines 19 and 20, to read "ELCA World Hunger Appeal," funded at \$1,000 and to reduce Line 72 ("Legal Fees") by \$1,000 (to \$14,000) to accommodate this change.

Rev. McDivitt spoke to the motion to amend, saying that World Hunger is one of the ministries of which Lutherans are most proud. Calling it an "amazing organization, which everyone should support" he said that the synod should "lead by example," placing it in the budget. "This is something that we value" and an action we can model for our congregations.

A question from the floor asked for clarification as to why legal fees had been set as they were in the proposed budget. Mr. Johnston replied that legal fees are something of a wild card, with the amount selected reflecting prudent budgeting, but in an amount "we hope we won't use."

Assembly Action

SA17.06.26. Amendment to Proposed Budget

The Assembly voted to amend the 2018/2019 budget to add a new Line between Lines 19 and 20, to read "ELCA World Hunger Appeal," funded at \$1,000 and to reduce Line 72 ("Legal Fees") by \$1,000 (to \$14,000) to accommodate this change.

This amendment was approved by a show of cards.

Back to consideration of main motion

A motion was made Ms. Carolyn Karl of Lake Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, to grant voice to Mr. Adam Moreno, seminary intern at Lake Park.

Council Action

SA17.06.27. Granting of Voice

The Assembly voted to grant voice but not vote to Mr. Adam Moreno.

Vote by show of cards

Mr. Moreno carried forward the discussion of line items showing value, noting missing items, including the removal of a Cross-Generational Ministry line. He also questioned some designated restricted funds. Mr. Johnston responded that the Cross-Generational item was zeroed out, but there are available reserve funds for this purpose. He said that if there is a ministry that matches restricted funds, there can be discussion on allocating funds.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
June 1-3, 2017

Assembly Action

SA17.06.28. Approval of Budget

The Assembly voted to approve synodical budget for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2019 as amended, with total contributions and support of \$2,064,500 and total ministries (expenses) of \$2,173,830.

Vote by show of cards.

Action on Constitutional Amendments and Bylaws

Secretary Brockmeier moved adoption of amendments to the constitution and bylaws of the Greater Milwaukee Synod as recommended by the Synod Council. These amendments were optional changes included in updates to the ELCA's Constitution for Synods, which was approved by the Churchwide Assembly in August 2016.

Proposed Amendments to Synod Constitution and Bylaws

S7.11.01. The time and place of the Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced six (6) months prior to the assembly.

S7.22. The This synod may establish processes that permit retired ordained-rostered ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered leaders-ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S7.24. Ordained ministers Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of ordained ministers of this synod. Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
June 1-3, 2017

- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant ~~an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ~~ordained~~ minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four-year term.
- S10.03.** The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
- d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service and of other official rosters, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
 - e. Issue letters of call to ~~ordained-rostered~~ ministers and letters of call to associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S11.11.** This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ~~ordained~~ ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- S13.11.** When a ~~pastor or when an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal~~ rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
June 1-3, 2017

resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former ~~pastor or associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal rostered~~ minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

Chapter 14.

~~ORDAINED MINISTERS AND LAY~~ ROSTERED MINISTERS

S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament

S14.015. Each ~~ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

S14.127. No ~~ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. ~~An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

S14.245. All ~~ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament~~ under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

S14.30. ~~Official Rosters of Laypersons~~ Ministers of Word and Service

S14.33. The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

Minutes of the 2017 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
June 1-3, 2017

S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

Assembly Action

SA17.06.29. Approval of Amendments

The Assembly voted to approve amendments to the constitution and bylaws of the Greater Milwaukee Synod as recommended by the Synod Council.

Vote by show of cards.

Following the vote, Mr. Brockmeier invited congregations to contact him for assistance in making updates to their own constitutions. The bishop opined that “constitutions are a reflection of the prevalence of human sin.”

Announcements

Assembly summary sheets were distributed. Members were urged to talk about learning communities back home, including neighbors, members, and other congregations.

“Thank you to all for your willingness to be a part of this amazing adventure we are called to be a part of, the church of Jesus Christ. Cannot be a Christian on your own.”
Thanks also to those who made this Assembly possible.

A brief order of worship concluded the Assembly, during which newly elected and continuing members of the Synod Council and the Consultation and Discipline committees were installed. Worship ended with the singing of “Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen.”

End of Session

Bishop Paul Erickson declared, without objection, the conclusion of the business of the Assembly at 11:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier
Secretary
Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA