

Minutes of the 2016 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 2-4, 2016

Saturday, June 4, 2016

The 2016 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly took place from Thursday, June 2, 2016 through Saturday, June 4, 2016 at Carthage College at 2001 Alford Park Drive, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Plenary V

Bishop Jeff Barrow called the Assembly to order at 8:49 am, following music by Rev. Dave Patterson. The bishop noted that “baptism always trumps ordination.”

Address by Chuck Liedtke, Jr.

Mr. Chuck Liedtke, Jr. shared his faith journey, in the context of Claimed to be led.

In 1986, on the eve of his planned wedding, he put his arm through glass, with great trauma. Surgery followed, along with a rescheduled wedding three weeks later. In the dark moments after the accident he said that he resolved not to give up, trusting that “God would show me the way.”

At the time, he saw this as shorter-term course-setting, but now knows that “this journey will never end” during his life. He paid attention to sermons at his congregation, St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Aurora – sermons by Pastor (now Bishop) Wayne Miller, who preached “service and sacrifice.” He began putting these ideas in practice, working at a shelter and with a youth program. He said he dabbled, but lost interest easily.

He started a new job as chef in a local Benedictine monastery, adding that the Rule of Benedict says that no monk may criticize the quality of the food – an ideal situation for a chef. This did not last, since the monks later outsourced their food service.

He went to work for Marriott Food Service, where he worked for five more years, though his “heart wasn’t in it.” He called himself a “selfish chef; not interested in what you like to eat,” saying that made the job a challenge.

He moved to food service technology, with a cut in salary, but the right thing to do. He regained his love of cooking, enjoying the connection with other people.

In the summer of 2005 he moved to Wisconsin and looked for a new church home. He found this at Christ Our Savior, Sussex, where he found “a mountain of donuts.” He said that Pastor Tom told him that they tried not to make a big deal out of congregation’s ministry.

He became, he said, a grumpy saint, who willingly volunteered, but constantly complained, because of the personal sacrifice in serving others. He added that “God steps in when we doubt ourselves.”

This brought him to the Bread of Healing ministry at Cross Lutheran Church in downtown Milwaukee. His experiences at Cross, he said, were not what he was accustomed to, with chaos and shouting. At first he was serving the meals, then he moved to produce them. “Guests started to pour out their appreciation.”

“Putting the needs of others before myself makes me a better person, makes me feel less selfish - not about food so much as someone caring.”

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He urged those listening to “keep trying until you find something that works for you. Tie your passion to service.”

Video

A video on synod service to congregations was shared.

Election for Synod Council

The bishop called for the second vote to fill the Synod Council seat to which Ms. Betty Warber was appointed to fill a vacancy until the Assembly.

Election for Synod Council – Second Ballot Results

At Large – Lay Female – Partial Term: Election through August 2019

Ms. Amber Davis	208 – Elected
Ms. Betty Warber	121

Consideration of Resolutions

Bishop Barrow invited Rev. Tim Tahtinen, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to return to the podium to present the fourth resolution.

Resolution 4 – Resolution on Justice for the Holy Land through Responsible Investment, which was submitted by Hephatha Lutheran Church, Milwaukee and co-sponsored by All People’s Lutheran Church, Milwaukee and Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

WHEREAS the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts and tensions over the past 65 years have deeply impacted the lives of millions of people, including Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Mideast and throughout the world, and

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, since its inception in 1988, has taken public stands and passed various resolutions in churchwide assemblies and in Church Council meetings, in an effort to work for justice and peace in Palestine-Israel relationships, and

WHEREAS the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land,” as our church’s strategy of engagement in the Holy Land, a strategy that advocates for equal human dignity and rights for all people in the Holy Land, an end to Israeli settlement building and the occupation of Palestinian land, and a two-state solution, with two viable, secure states living side-by-side; and

WHEREAS Palestinian Christians, in the 2009 Statement “Kairos Palestine,” written and supported by leaders and heads of thirteen churches in the Holy Land, including Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran – Bishop Munib Younan and Pastor Mitri Raheb of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land both helped author the statement – called on churches of the world to “stand alongside the oppressed” and work to end “the sin of occupation imposed upon us;” and

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WHEREAS, the continued occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the State of Israel, the ongoing building of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories, and other activities associated with this occupation and settlement, including but not limited to: expulsion of Palestinians from their legally held lands; demolition of their homes; prolonged detention with torture and without due process; arrest, mistreatment and detention of children; separate and unequal systems of law for Israeli settlers and Palestinians; severe restrictions on movement and travel through arbitrary permit systems, checkpoints and the separation wall; and segregated roads and buses; deny the fundamental human rights of Palestinians, hamper efforts to create a just and lasting peace, and violate international law as set forth in the United Nations Charter, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and

WHEREAS, several multinational corporations, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S are complicit in the occupation and its associated human rights abuses: Caterpillar provides specialized bulldozers, including unmanned bulldozers, to demolish Palestinian civilian homes and property; HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise provide IT services and systems so that the State of Israel can collect finger print and facial recognition data on every Palestinian over the age of 16 to track and control their movements; Motorola Solutions provides invisible radar fences, surveillance, and communication equipment used in the occupied territories; G4S provides security systems for Israel's prisons and detention centers, West Bank settlements, and military checkpoints; and

WHEREAS congregations in various synods of the ELCA are sending resolutions to the 2016 ELCA Assembly, asking the ELCA to divest ELCA Board of Pension funds from these four companies,

WHEREAS three of the ELCA's full communion partners - the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church - have each voted within the past two years to similarly divest funds from these and other companies and banks that profit from or are complicit in human rights violations arising from the occupation; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly request that the Domestic Mission Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America direct the Corporate Social Responsibility Team to develop guidelines that will screen out investments in companies profiting from, or complicit in, human rights violations arising from the occupation, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S, and to provide a report with possible recommendations to the November 2016 meeting of the ELCA Church Council,

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and to forward the guidelines to the separately incorporated ministries, agencies, including the ELCA Board of Pension and other institutions of this church for implementation of divestment as appropriate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod urge every congregation to provide opportunities for their members to engage in interfaith dialog with Palestinians—Muslim and Christian—and with American Jews and Israelis, to gain an understanding of the complex issues that plague the people of Palestine and Israel; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to divest of direct or substantive indirect holdings in companies profiting from, or complicit in, human rights violations arising from the occupation, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S, until such time as those companies no longer profit from the occupation or cease operations in the illegal settlements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly encourage its members and congregations to divest of direct or substantive indirect holdings in companies profiting from, or complicit in, human rights violations arising from the occupation, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S, until such time as those companies no longer profit from the occupation or cease operations in the illegal settlements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly encourage its members and congregations to pray and work for a just peace in Palestine and Israel.

Discussion began with Rev. Jon Jacobs, Pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, which co-sponsored the resolution, who said that “this is not a Palestinian issue. . . this is a faith issue, a nonviolent tool.” He went on to say that “as children of Abraham, how do we find a way to live together? We need less religion and more faith.”

Rev. Joseph Ellwanger, retired clergy and member of Hephatha Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, wanted to “make clear what this does not say: it is not anti-Semitic, not anti-Israel, not anti-Gospel. It is pro-Gospel.” He added that “God has a preferential option for the poor and the oppressed.” Stand in solidarity – breaking the silence. “This is a justice issue – we stand with God’s preference for the poor. We have a tradition and history of making this kind of stand.”

Rev. Jacob Werkheiser, Associate Pastor at First United Lutheran Church, Sheboygan, moved to call the question.

Assembly Action

SA16.06.21. Move the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to end debate on Resolution 4.

This motion was supported by 328 voting members, with 19 in opposition.

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Assembly Action

SA16.06.22. Approval of Resolution 4

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 4 – Resolution on Justice for the Holy Land through Responsible Investment, as presented.

This resolution was supported by 296 voting members, with 57 in opposition.

Consideration of Resolutions

Bishop Barrow invited Rev. Tim Tahtinen, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to return to the podium to present the sixth resolution.

Resolution 6 – Resolution in support of Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities, submitted by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Whereas, there are over 90 verses in the Bible that call on people of faith to welcome the stranger and foreigner; and

Whereas the ELCA has issued many statements since its inception on Central America and refugees, calling on this Church to be a welcoming place for those seeking refuge and asylum; and

Whereas children and families from Central America have been coming to the United States seeking refuge from violence, poverty and lack of opportunities, for many years with a spike in the number coming in Federal Fiscal Years 2012-2014, along with an increase in number this fiscal year; and

Whereas companion churches, ecumenical partners, social ministry organizations and other partners are in ministry with the children and families in Central America and in the United States of America; and

Whereas it is the commitment of the ELCA as a church in the world, to accompany vulnerable children and families from Central America today and in the future using the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) strategy as a guide; therefore, be it

Resolved, the Greater Milwaukee Synod in Assembly affirm the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) strategy recently presented to the ELCA Church Council and memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt it; and be it further

Resolved, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly affirm the ministry that is being done in this synod with children and families from Central America; and be it further

Resolved, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly consider ways that it can accompany, foster awareness building and advocate for the children and families in Central America in their country, in the countries in transit and in the United States of America; and be it further

Resolved, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod use the AMMPARO strategy as a guide for accompanying children and families from Central America through the Welcoming Congregations and/or Guardian Angel programs, and for advocating

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policies that are more just and humane and that uphold and defend the human rights of migrant children and their families.

Ms. Gretchen Haugse of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, spoke in support, asking "what situation would cause you to leave your home, your family, your culture . . . it is a crisis. We are acting as church, bearing witness to the Gospel."

Rev. Andy Fetters, Pastor of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waukesha, spoke of his experience growing up with children who were refugees from Vietnam as part of his family. These children, he said, came to the family through Lutheran Social Services. "This is how we live out the gospel."

Assembly Action

SA16.06.23. Approval of Resolution 6

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 6 – Resolution in support of Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities, as presented.

This resolution was supported by 343 voting members, with 10 in opposition.

Bishop Barrow turned the chair over to Vice President Scott Manske for purposes of considering Resolution 5. Mr. Manske invited Rev. Tim Tahtinen, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to return to the podium to present this resolution.

Resolution 5 – Resolution Honoring Bishop Jeff Barrow, submitted by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Whereas, the Rev. Jeff Barrow is completing his first term and sixth year as Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

Whereas, Bishop Barrow has faithfully served the Church and this synod, the region and churchwide through his ministry with the congregations of the synod, the Synod Council, and synod partners, including the Regional Council, the ELCA Conference of Bishops, and the ELCA Church Council; and

Whereas, Bishop Barrow has faithfully represented this synod and the ELCA in his participation on the Seminary Board of Directors, and Outreach for Hope; and

Whereas, Bishop Barrow has promoted cross-synodical relationships with our companion synods in El Salvador and Tanzania; and

Whereas, Bishop Barrow has provided pastoral care and leadership for the Greater Milwaukee Synod candidates for rostered ministry, our ordained and other rostered ministers, and lifted up the need to support all church leaders in a holistic manner; and

Whereas, Bishop Barrow has officiated at ordinations, commissionings, consecrations, and installations as rostered leadership joined the faithful

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communities in the wide variety of ministries within the synod, ministry in and with camps, campuses, care centers, congregations and counseling offices, homes, hospitals; and

Whereas, Bishop Barrow was faithful to his call to interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church, fostering support for the wide variety of expressions of our synod's evangelical outreach vision in emerging ministries including The Table, Breaking the Chains Church, Living Faith in Racine, Unity in Brookfield, and Emaús, ELCA; and

Whereas, Bishop Barrow has been a voice and a presence both within the church and to the wider community, including the political arena, witnessing to our call to be a public church striving for justice, peace, and the care of creation; now therefore be it

Resolved, that we, as members of this annual assembly of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, offer our appreciation and gratitude in honor of the six years of leadership and service by Jeff Barrow as Synod Bishop; and be it further

Resolved, that we, by this action, also offer thanksgiving to God for Bishop Barrow's vision, service, and faithful discipleship; and be it finally

Resolved, that we bestow upon Bishop Barrow and all with whom he continues to share life and ministry, the boundless blessings of Almighty God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and give thanks for the ongoing service Bishop Barrow will bring to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church and to the Lord of that church in whom we have life and salvation, now and forever.

After the resolution was presented, Mr. Manske noted that “we thought about this at Council, and it was this or a coupon to Frostop in Billings, Montana. The bishop chose the coupon.” He does this out of love, love for you . . . that's what I love about him.”

Assembly Action

SA16.06.24. Approval of Resolution 5

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 5 – Resolution Honoring Bishop Jeff Barrow, as presented.

This resolution was approved by a standing ovation.

Mr. Manske returned the chair to Bishop Barrow, who announced seven more drawing winners: Mount Hope in West Allis, the Village Church in Milwaukee, Cross of Life in Brookfield, Reformation in Brookfield, Lincoln Park in Milwaukee, St. Luke in Sheboygan Falls, and Resurrection in New Berlin.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold reported on Assembly registration. At the close of registration before the vote for bishop, there were 166 clergy and 254 lay people, for a total voting

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membership of 420. Also present were 61 visitors for a total attendance of 481. A quorum was present, with at least 60% lay voting members.

Review Voting Process

Rev. Wyvetta Bullock reviewed the process for the fifth and final vote for bishop. A simple majority is required for election on this ballot.

Devotions

Ms. Rhonda Hill told the Assembly that working with Bishop Barrow has been a joy, and expressed her appreciation for hiring “a non-theological Pentecostal girl.” Using text from Romans 12 and from 2 Corinthians, she spoke of good defeating evil, stating that the new bishop will need to lead both the oppressed and the free. “This work is spirit work . . . evil operates not only out in the world, but in here as well . . . do not be overcome with evil.” She said that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was right in saying that “right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.”

“Keep going, hold tight to the faith, overcome evil with good. To the people of color in this room, the tools for this victory are not of this world. Keep the faith; overcome evil with good.” Ending with prayer.

Fifth Ballot for Bishop

Rev. Wyvetta Bullock called for the final ballot for bishop, which will be conducted electronically.

Greater Milwaukee Synod Endowment Fund Committee Report

Rev. Larry Westfield proclaimed that he was “delighted to bring a report” on behalf of the Endowment team, which includes Mr. Larry Nines, Rev. Ted Romberg, Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, and Rev. David Keller. He noted the resignation of Rev. Howard Vrankin from the committee, and encouraged interested individuals to consider service to fill that vacancy.

Briefly recounting the history of the Endowment Fund, he noted that it was authorized by the 2014 Synod Assembly. He told this Assembly that the Fund makes it possible for each of us to make a contribution, either in life or after death.

These contributions are used to support five areas of ministry: hunger and poverty, justice and anti-racism, global ministries, youth leadership and development, and health and wellness.

Rev. Westfield reported that as of the end of April there was \$216,467.95 in the Endowment Fund, which he termed “remarkable for a two-year-old fund. He noted that the bulk of the funds currently in the Endowment came from the closing of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Milwaukee last year, which earmarked their legacy for support of an urban internship program. An initial distribution was made for that purpose to Ascension Lutheran in Milwaukee, with other congregations located in the City of Milwaukee eligible to seek support for urban internships in future years.

He went on to say that, in addition to the Immanuel Fund money, there have been other gifts, but there have not yet been any bequests. He noted that most funding for the ELCA’s endowment fund comes through bequests.

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Returning to the urban internship program, Rev. Westfield said there would need to be \$750,000 in designated funds to generate enough income to sustain it for the long term. He encouraged gifts from congregations who “want to sustain the kind of ministries being supported – we can leave a legacy for ministry.”

Echoing Joshua’s call to serve the Lord, Rev. Westfield called on members of the synod to serve with their gifts. “It’s not complicated or expensive . . . it can make a difference, that difference can be transformational.”

Report of Fifth Ballot for Bishop

Rev. Wyvetta Bullock reported the results of the fifth and final ballot for bishop. There were 355 votes cast, with a simple majority required for election.

The vote totals for the fifth ballot for bishop were as follows:

Paul Erickson	190 - Elected
Lisa Bates-Froiland	165

Comments from the Bishop-Elect

Bishop-Elect Rev. Dr. Paul Erickson, accompanied by his wife Lynn and daughter Sarah, came to the podium to address the Assembly.

In brief remarks, he recounted a story about something one of his predecessors as bishop of this synod said, Bishop Peter Rogness. When the ELCA was being organized, he said, someone marveled that so many bishops were found to serve, with Bishop Rogness replying that it wasn’t that they’d found bishops, but that God says, in essence, “you pick one, I’ll make them a bishop.”

He praised the other candidates as really fine pastors, and said he thought this will be a good place to live and work and serve. Promising to listen as he takes on his responsibilities, he closed with an adaptation of the Holden Prayer and a call for all to join him in getting to work.

Break

Report of the Bishop

Bishop Jeff Barrow began with baseball, recounting how Brewers pitcher Darren Holmes blew a two-run lead in ninth inning during the game in which Brewers slugger Robin Yount got his 3,000th hit. He does not intend to follow suite. “I am the bishop until September 1st, with a ton of work to do.” This includes the Churchwide Assembly, a trip to Tanzania to represent the synod during the Meru Diocese’s bishop election. “A lot to do – loose ends to clean up.”

Moving from pitching to preaching, he recounted being “blown away by Peachtree Road United Methodist Church, one of the most magnificent worship spaces” during the Festival of Homiletics in Atlanta. “The organ was great, the preaching was inspired, the music was wonderful,” with almost 1,500 in attendance. While wonderful, the bishop contrasted this setting with those congregations working with fewer resources, many in search of renewal during the Easter season, many struggling. He spoke of congregations where weariness and brokenness appear, but even with that, “they all join together, connecting – all those fragile people joined in worship.”

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Bishop Barrow called this the “challenge and opportunity for mainline churches, to find our collective voice in a world of individualism,” where “we get caught up in our own little circle, our own little world.” It is not, he said, “about any of us; it is about all of us. The last thing to do is to move to Atlanta and join that church.”

“The greatest privilege is to go to congregations every week, whatever their state, to gather together around Word and Sacrament, and then to be sent into the world to be little Christs.”

Those congregations include, he said, St. John Evangelical Lutheran in Grafton, celebrating 150 years, and St. Paul’s Lutheran in Milwaukee, celebrating 175 years.

“As we begin to discover all that we experienced in Atlanta,” it was apparent that “God’s work is bigger than our individual efforts.”

The bishop said that global partnerships fuel discipleship of people in congregations, not so much through what is done for others, but instead through what is done for us, in experiencing “a new vitality in ourselves. Accompaniment is never a perfect science – can create economic dependence – things done through trial and error – but along the way, those blessed relationships are what is important.”

He recognized the Outreach for Hope ministry, which has built support for the church in areas increasingly affected by poverty. “Thanks to Jim Bickel for planting the name Outreach for Hope in new places.” The bishop said this is symbolic of what we are called to be as Christians in the world today.

“Ministry must extend beyond the reach of any congregation.” He is thankful for extending the reach of congregations, citing as an example The Table, with Venice Williams, extending Word and Sacrament into a moment where “the church is on the cutting edge of the community.”

He also spoke of Breaking the Chains, which will, he said, need more support to make it fly. He spoke of its importance, “in the most incarcerated neighborhood in the most incarcerated state in the most incarcerated nation in the world. To have a place like Breaking the Chains is important.” He recounted that Robert Love, who died last year, spoke to the cycle of going in and out of prison. Serenity Inns helped him get sober and became a leader, and a member of Hephatha Lutheran Church. “What it means to be church together. It makes a difference. The people in that situation are not God-forsaken.”

“Leadership in the church is where we need to go.” The bishop said he was glad for moving some money [to youth-related initiatives in the new budget] to make good use of it. Important for lay leaders to take more of a role. The “lifeblood of people in the church is the laity. The word of God is with us. A bible study for me was usually eight older women who were smarter than I was. It is a living conversation.”

Speaking more of the role of laity, the bishop acknowledged the Diakonia program, which is “meant to acknowledge the gift of the laity in our churches. We are hungry to know more, and to be sent into our communities.”

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Leadership, he said, also involves the development of clergy. There is a “great need for good pastors to equip the saints in congregations.”

When Immanuel Lutheran closed, he said, they used their resources to fund an endowment. “We are better off together than apart. People talked about what God had meant in their lives for decades. They planted people throughout the synod. That is what we are called to do.” He said we must find different ways to fund important ministries, like the endowment fund.

Looking toward consolidation of congregations, he spoke of the two congregations in Brookfield that will form Unity Lutheran Church in 2017. They got to know each other, then shared a common youth director, and now will become Unity. “That is a trend that has to happen in the church going forward. How can we work together – be church together – invite partnerships in ministry that would not have been possible 20 years ago?” It is “fun when we discover all the things we can do together.”

He ended by thanking the staff who have served the synod during his tenure: Mary Romskog (“her toughest job is taking care of the bishop”), Dave Groenewold (“a bean counter with a wonderful heart for ministry – someday he will retire”), Sarah Christiaansen (“a wonderful blessing; takes abuse that she does not deserve; does great work”), Phil Smith (“says he will find out if he doesn’t know, and he does”), Rev. Jim Bickel (“ability to show up, better than almost any of us, and support ministries around the synod”), Rev. Kristin Nielsen (“try to respond to needs of congregations; no call not worth receiving; sometimes deals with conflict or disappointment or crisis”), Rhonda Hill (“she has been such a great blessing to us; a strong-willed person of faith to come on staff and tell the truth”), and Rev. Sandy Chrostowski (“the brains, I’m just the pretty face. Huge respect where she works, now going to the national church because she gets back to, and cares about people. She will bless the national church as coordinator of DEMs across the country”).

Final words in his address? “Healthy leaders and healthy congregations.”

Applause.

Rev. Chrostowski led an appreciation of Bishop Barrow, saying that, with “Jeff’s quips the weekly staff meetings were really good, really blessed.” Staff shared Six Word Stories, something used in their meetings, with this week’s topic being the bishop:

- God is never finished with us
- We are all saints and sinners
- Your best ministry is yet ahead
- Nothing better than canoe paddle friends
- Driving, better than flying any day
- Now can we get Monday off?
- Amazing grapes, how sweet the sound
- No back road is a mystery.

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Rev. Chrostowski presented the bishop with a piece of artwork by Vonda Drees, who also created the artwork for this year's Assembly.

The bishop received a road atlas and a colored pencil log truck, complete with sharpener.

The bishop returned with one more story – his new quest to be a truck driver, recounting when in school he decided he wasn't cut out to be a pastor. His advisor, Rev. Sheldon Tostengard, said "what the hell are you going to do, drive a bus? Can you fix anything? God wants you to be a pastor!"

He called on the synod to "Share your hopes with the new bishop – he will listen."

End of Session

Bishop Jeff Barrow declared, without objection, the conclusion of the business of the Assembly at 10:54 am.

Closing Worship

The Assembly worshipped at A.F. Siebert Chapel, with the Order for the Closing of the Assembly presented by Bishop Barrow, during a service led by Bishop-Elect Rev. Paul Erickson.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier
Secretary
Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA