

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA

Report of the Secretary

Report of the Synod Council for 2022-2023

Overview

This report summarizes actions taken by the Synod Council and the Executive Committee of the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America since the 2022 Synod Assembly through March 2023.

Copies of the complete minutes of both the Synod Council and Executive Committee are available from the Synod Secretary, Matthew Schlake-Kruse (secretary@gmselca.org) or the synod office (mary.romskog@gmselca.org);

Actions referred to in this report are preceded by two or four letters (SC for Synod Council and ECSC for Executive Committee) and a series of two-digit numbers separated by decimal points. The first two numbers identify the year, the next two identify the month of the meeting in which the action was taken, while the final numbers identify the order of the actions.

Beginning in 2022, the ELCA Office of the Secretary provided guidance that the last numbers should run consecutively through the entirety of the year. Thus, the coding for 2023 Synod Council Actions runs consecutively, even if occurring in different months.

Actions that are purely administrative in nature, such as approval of minutes or acceptance of reports, are not included in this report.

Synod Council

Meetings

The Synod Council met 5 times since the 2022 Synod Assembly; with regular meetings held on 12 May 2022; 21 July 2022; 17 November 2022; 19 January 2023; and 16 March 2023.

Membership

The membership of the Synod Council, as of 30 April 2023 includes the following:

Conference voting members include: **Jerry Key, Vickie Stretz, The Rev. Matthew James, Edwin Aparicio, and The Rev. Denise Mbise.**

At-large members include: **Rose Dotson, The Rev. Kevin Kretzmann Farrar, José Andrés Guerrero, Amber Davis, The Rev. Kevin Beebe, and Steven Hartfield.**

Youth and Young Adult Members include: **Lucas Short and Jacob Guerrero**

Officers of the Synod are **The Rev. Paul Erickson, Bishop; Vice President Joyce Caldwell, and The Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse, Synod Secretary.** **Bob Reinders** is serving as Acting Treasurer while **The Rev. Karen Pahl** has been called as interim financial administrator in the Synod Office. **Treasurer Pahl** will return to her seat as Treasurer at the conclusion of her interim appointment.

As of 30 April, the North Conference Seat (lay female) is vacant. **Jenny Brandt** resigned from this seat on the Synod Council during 2023.

Council Action

SC 22.07.47. Appointment of Synod Council Member

The Council voted to appoint Lucas Short (Holy Cross, Menomonee Falls) to fill the open Youth Synod Council seat immediately, for a term ending in May 2023.

Council Action

SC 22.07.48. Approval of Synod Council Conference Nominee

The Council voted to approve the nomination of Jerry Key (Reformation, Milwaukee) as the Central Conference Synod Council Member, completing the term through 2025 vacated by Robert Gee (Capitol Drive, Milwaukee), effective immediately.

Council Action

SC 22.11.75. Appointment of Interim Synod Treasurer

The Council voted to appoint Robert Reinders as Interim Synod Treasurer, effective 17 November 2022.

Executive Committee

Meetings

The Executive Committee met 6 times since the 2022 Synod Assembly with regular meetings on 2 May 2022; 11 July 2022; 12 September 2022; 7 November 2022; 9 January 2023; and 13 March 2023; and a special meeting on 20 May 2022. The Executive Committee often makes recommendations to the Synod Council, which then serve as motions during the meetings of the full Council.

Minutes of the Executive Committee meetings were made available to members of the Synod Council prior to the next Council meeting.

Membership

The Executive Committee includes the Synod's Officers—Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer—and three other members of the Synod Council elected annually by the Council.

Council Action

SC 22.07.59. Election of Executive Committee Members

The Council elected Rose Dotson, The Rev. Matt James, and Steve Hartfield to serve one-year terms on the Executive Committee, effective 1 September 2022.

Committees and Task Forces

Membership

The leaders of the Synod Council's committees and task forces are listed on the synod's website at <http://milwaukeeelca.org/who-we-are/committees/>.

Reports

The Council received regular reports from staff program directors and from affiliated organizations and committees, as well as detailed reports from Bishop Paul Erickson.

Staff reports normally include those from the Assistants to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, Congregations in Mission, and Anti-Racism and Missional Leadership. Other reports are typically made by Outreach for Hope, Reconciling in Christ, the Women of the ELCA, the Anti-Racism Team, the Healing Network, and Lutheran Campus Ministry. Intermittent reports were provided by **Sonja Wolfe**, who recently concluded a six-year term on the ELCA Church Council.

Finance

Treasurer's Reports were reviewed and accepted by the Council at all regular meetings.

Actions regarding Synod Budget and Finances

Council Action

SC 22.05.40. Amendment to Motion

The Synod Council approved amending the motion brought forth by the Executive Committee, so that all designated funds (\$74,325.22) from the closure and building sale proceeds gifted by Abiding Savior, Milwaukee would be designated to the Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal.

Council Action

SC 22.05.41. Disbursement of Designated Funds

The Synod Council approved disbursing all designated funds (\$74,325.22) from the closure and building sale proceeds gifted by Abiding Savior, Milwaukee to the Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal.

Council Action

SC 22.07.55. Disbursement of Undesignated Funds

The Synod Council approved disbursing \$19,605 from the Mark Olson Estate Bequest to the Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal.

Council Action

SC 23.01.08. Disbursement of Equipping the Saints Funds

The Council voted to disburse the following funds from Equipping the Saints Campaign based upon 2022-year-end giving: \$65,000 for Innovation Grants; \$65,000 for Outreach for Hope Collaboration Grants; \$35,000 for Lutheran Campus Ministry; \$35,000 for Leadership Grants for BIPOC/LGBTQIA+ individuals; \$55,000 for Rostered Minister Leadership Grants; and \$42,528.45 as a tithe to Lutheran Social Services; ELCA Innovations Fund; Diocese of Meru; and Lutheran Synod of El Salvador.

Council Action

SC 23.03.21. Transfer of Funds to Cover Budget Deficit

The Council voted to use funds from the St. Andrew's Ministry Funds and additional Salary Retention Funds to cover the 2022-2023 Budget Shortfall.

Council Action

SC 23.03.22. Amendment of 2023-24 Synod Budget

The Council voted to amend the 2023-24 Synod Budget to reduce the percentage allotted to ELCA Mission Benevolence to 45% of income.

Actions Regarding Congregations

Council Action

SC 22.07.57. Acknowledgment of Congregational Dissolution

The Council voted to acknowledge the congregation Peace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, has ceased functioning as a congregation and has dissolved; and to authorize Bishop Paul Erickson to take all necessary steps to register this dissolution with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the State of Wisconsin.

Council Action

SC 23.01.06. Initiation of Synod Administration

The Council voted to approve initiating the process of Synod Administration (under S13.25.) for Wellington Park Lutheran Church; appointing up to six trustees at a future meeting to administer the affairs of the congregation; and establishing a goal of selling the congregation's properties and closing by 31 December 2023.

Council Action

SC 23.03.24. Approval of Synod Administration & Administrative Committee

The Council voted to transfer of decision-making power for Wellington Park Lutheran Church to Synod Administration and to authorize the bishop to select individuals to serve on the Administrative Committee.

Actions Regarding Property

Council Action

SC 22.07.56. Receipt of Property

The Synod Council approved receiving the ownership of the building formerly housing Capitol Drive Lutheran Church—3970 N. 54th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin—pending the congregation's vote to transfer the property and the drafting of a lease agreement by the Synod Attorney.

Council Action

SC 23.01.05. Initiation of Property Reclamation

The Council voted to approve initiating the process of reclaiming ownership of the property formerly belonging to St. Peter's Lutheran Church and the Kujichagulia Lutheran Center, having determined that the property is being used for purposes that are incompatible with the mission and purposes of the Synod. *Motion carried by roll call vote; 7 in favor; Schlake-Kruse and Reinders opposed; Mbise and Dotson abstained.*

Executive Committee Action

ECSC 23.03.15. Approval of Gift-in-Kind

The Executive Committee voted to return Synod-owned burial plots at Arlington Cemetery, Milwaukee, as gifts-in-kind.

Actions Regarding Ministries

Council Action

SC 22.05.39. Authorization of Synod Authorized Worshipping Community

The Synod Council approved the authorization of "Be Still," Wales, Wisconsin, as a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, under the leadership of Tracy Gingrass, an approved candidate for ministry in the ELCA.

Council Action

SC 22.05.44. Approval of SAWC Constitutional Amendments

The Council voted to approve the revised Constitution and Bylaws of Breaking the Chains Church, Milwaukee, a Synod Authorized Ministry of the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

Continuing Resolutions Approved or Modified

Council Action

SC 23.03.26. Continuing Resolution Amendment

The Council voted to rescind and strike Continuing Resolution S7.21.A22., which had been enacted to give extra Synod Assembly voting members to attain a legal lay/rostered balance in 2022.

Actions Regarding Synod Initiatives

Council Action

SC 22.05.42. Authorization of Authentic Diversity Audit

The Council voted to authorize the Synod Council Executive Committee to enter into an agreement for an Authentic Diversity Audit for the Greater Milwaukee Synod, for an amount not to exceed \$60,000.

Executive Committee Action

ECSC 22.05.18. Approval of Contract

The Executive Committee approved entering into contract with Gold Enterprises, LLC, for an amount not to exceed \$60,000, to lead an Authentic Diversity Audit of the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

Council Action

SC 22.07.58. Authorization of Letter to Luther Seminary

The Council voted to authorize a letter from the Synod Council to the leadership of Luther Seminary, encouraging the Seminary to become a Reconciling in Christ institution.

Council Action

SC 22.09.65. Declaration of Welcoming Synod Status

Whereas called to such action by 2017 Resolution 3, The Council voted to declare the Greater Milwaukee Synod a Welcoming Synod for immigrants, refugees, and those seeking asylum.

Council Action

SC 23.01.09. Approval of ETS Granting Process

The Council voted to approve the Innovation Grant Process for funds from the Equipping the Saints Appeal, as proposed and carried out through Outreach for Hope.

Council Action

SC 23.01.10. Approval of ETS Granting Process

The Council voted to approve the Leadership Grant Process for funds from Equipping the Saints Appeal as proposed by the Leadership Grant team.

Council Action

SC 23.03.23. Approval of ETS Granting Process

The Council voted to approve the Innovation Coaching Grant Process for funds from the Equipping the Saints Appeal, as proposed and carried out through the Synod Mission Table.

Council Action

SC 23.03.30. Ratification of Mt. Meru Coffee Project Bylaw Changes

The Council voted to ratify bylaw changes proposed by the Mt. Meru Coffee Project, changing the project's fiscal year to begin 1 January from 1 February.

Council Action

SC 23.03.32. Reception of Mt. Meru Coffee Project Annual Report

The Council voted to receive, with gratitude, the 2022 Annual report of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project.

2023 Synod Assembly—Actions and Recommendations

Executive Committee Action

ECSC 23.03.12. Recommendation of Synod Assembly Offering Recipients
The Executive Committee voted to recommend to the Synod Council designating the 2023 Synod Assembly Offering to the Ken Wheeler Scholarship Funds.

Council Action

SC 23.01.12. Appointment of Synod Assembly Starting Time
The Council voted to approve modifying the starting time of the 2023 Synod Assembly to 2:00 p.m. on 2 June 2023.

Council Action

SC 23.01.13. Recommendation of Synod Assembly Deadlines
The Council voted to approve recommending the deadline for all resolutions and memorials for consideration at the 2023 Synod Assembly as 31 March 2023.

Council Action

SC 23.01.14. Recommendation of Synod Assembly Deadlines
The Council voted to approve recommending the deadline for Synod Assembly registration as 12 noon on 19 May 2023.

Council Action

SC 23.03.17. Approval of Consent Agenda
The Council voted to approve the following items from the consent agenda as presented, including...approval of Voice and Vote at the 2023 Synod Assembly for The Rev. Muriel Otto, on the roster of the United Church of Christ, serving at Unity, Brookfield; and The Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays, a pastor of the United Methodist Church, serving on Synod Staff.

Council Action

SC 23.03.25. Recommendation of 2024-25 Synod Budget to Synod Assembly
The Council voted to recommend the proposed 2024-25 Synod Budget to the 2023 Synod Assembly for approval.

Council Action

SC 23.03.27. Recommendation of Synod Assembly Rules
The Council voted to recommend the 2023 Synod Assembly Rules to the Assembly for approval.

Council Action

SC 23.03.28. Recommendation of Synod Assembly Agenda
The Council voted to recommend the 2023 Synod Assembly Agenda to the Assembly for approval.

Council Action

SC 23.03.29. Recommendation of Recommended Amendments to the Synod Constitution and Bylaws to 2023 Synod Assembly
The Council voted to recommend that all Recommended Amendments to the Synod Constitution (as approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly) be approved by the Synod Assembly.

Personnel

The Synod Council regularly addressed personnel action, including synod calls, status changes for rostered leaders, other appointments, and review and action on personnel policies.

Council Action

SC 22.07.53. Commission of Policy Statement Revision

The Council voted to act by revisiting, revising, and adopting new Synod policy statements related to misconduct, discipline, and call status, to be completed by the 2023 Synod Assembly.

Council Action

SC 22.09.67. Recommendation of Compensation Guidelines for 2023

The Council voted to recommend the 2023 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers as presented, with a 4% cost-of-living increase and step increases for experience and/or merit.

Council Action

SC 23.03.33. Approval of Scholarship Fund Policies

The Council voted to approve the recommended guidelines and policies established by the Candidacy Committee to share the Abiding Savior Scholarship Funds.

Actions Regarding Synod Calls

Council Action

SC 22.05.37. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Germán Novelli, called to Interim Ministry at Ascension, Milwaukee; effective 12 May 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.07.50. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Steve Rutter, called to Interim Ministry at Lake Park, Milwaukee; effective 6 June 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.07.51. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. John Berg, called to Interim Ministry at Our Savior's, Oconomowoc; effective 1 July 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.07.52. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Karen Pahl, called to Interim Ministry at Mount Olive, Mukwonago; effective 1 August 2022.

The Rev. Karen Pahl abstained from voting.

Council Action

SC 22.09.62. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Larry Harpster, called to Interim Ministry at All Saints, Wales; effective 6 September 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.09.63. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Lynn Erickson, called to Interim Ministry at Holy Trinity, West Allis; effective 19 September 2022.

Bishop Paul Erickson abstained from voting.

Council Action

SC 22.11.69. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Jennifer Arnold, called to Interim Ministry at Galilee, Pewaukee; effective 7 November 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.11.70. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Karen Pahl, called to Interim Ministry as Financial Administrator of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, effective 1 November 2022.

The Rev. Karen Pahl abstained from voting.

Council Action

SC 22.11.70. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Eric Silberschmidt, called to Interim Ministry at Trinity, Kenosha; effective 1 July 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.11.71. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. David Rebey, called to specialized ministry as Pastor, Breaking the Chains Congregation, effective 1 January 2023.

Council Action

SC 22.11.72. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Dean Willich, called to Interim Ministry at Lakeside, Kenosha; effective 1 November 2022.

Council Action

SC 23.01.02. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Sheila Rawn, called to Interim Ministry at Mt. Pleasant, Racine, effective 1 October 2022.

Council Action

SC 23.01.03. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, called to Interim Ministry at Mt. Olive, Mukwonago, effective 15 December 2022.

Council Action

SC 23.03.18. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Casey Sugden, called to Interim Ministry at Ascension, Milwaukee effective 1 October 2022.

Council Action

SC 23.03.19. Approval of Synod Call

The Council voted to approve a Synod Call for The Rev. Bradley Brown, called to chaplaincy at Commonheart Hospice, Milwaukee, effective 10 January 2023.

Approval of On Leave from Call Status

Council Action

SC 22.07.49. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including... approval of standard On Leave from Call Status for The Rev. Tom Smith, effective 7 June 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.09.61. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including...approval of standard On Leave from Call Status for The Rev. Krista Zimmerman, effective 23 September 2022;

Council Action

SC 22.11.68. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including... approval of retroactive On Leave from Call Status for The Rev. Joshua Graber, dating from 1 January—8 March 2020 (correcting an end-of-call date error).

Council Action

SC 23.01.01. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including...approval of continuing On Leave from Call Status for The Rev. David Dragseth; The Rev. Paul Ihlenfeld; The Rev. Adam Moreno; The Rev. Tom Smith; The Rev. Kelly Taylor-Schaus; and The Rev. Mark Thompson; and approval for Bishop Erickson to request On Leave from Call extensions through the Conference of Bishops for The Rev. Amanda Christensen; The Rev. Kirsten Hedlund; The Rev. Chad Kline; and The Rev. Richard Suero.

Approval of Retired Status

Council Action

SC 22.05.36. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including...approval of Retired Status for The Rev. Scot Ruffatto, effective 1 May 2022; The Rev. Jay Thorson, effective 1 June 2022; and The Rev. Roy Nelson, effective 1 July 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.07.49. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including...approval of Retired Status for The Rev. Jay Ford, effective 1 August 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.09.61. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including...approval of Retired Status for The Rev. Jim Lynch, effective 1 October 2022; and Deacon Douglas Krekling, effective 1 September 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.11.68. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including...approval of Retired Status for The Rev. Robert Suhr, effective 1 January 2023 and The Rev. Paula Ramcke-Wilke, effective 1 December 2022.

Council Action

SC 23.03.17. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve the following items from the consent agenda as presented, including.... approval of Retired Roster status for The Rev. Paul Ihlenfeld, effective 1 March 2023.

Approval of Disability Status

Council Action

SC 23.03.17. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve the following items from the consent agenda as presented, including... approval of Disability Roster status for The Rev. Steve Kuhl, effective 1 December 2022.

Approval of Appointments and Nominations

Executive Committee Action

ECSC 22.05.18. Appointment of Churchwide Assembly Member

The Executive Committee approved the appointment of Todd Beutin (St. Luke's, Greendale) as a substitute voting member to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, filling the seat vacated by the resignation of Robert Gee (Capitol Drive, Milwaukee).

Council Action

SC 22.05.36. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including ratification of the appointment of Jay McDivitt and Danette Braun (Kingo, Shorewood) to the Candidacy Committee, to 4-year terms, effective 1 May 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.05.43. Ratification of Outreach for Hope Board Members

The Council voted ratify the appointment of the following individuals to three-year terms on the Board of Outreach for Hope: Tim Knutson (Martin Luther, Milwaukee); Dale Landgren (St. John's, Brookfield); Stephen Marsh (Reformation, Milwaukee); and Julie Starks (St. Stephen the Martyr, Greendale).

Council Action

SC 22.05.45. Appointment of Replacement Voting Members to Churchwide Assembly

The Council voted to appoint Charlotte Linberry (they/them) (Lake Park, Milwaukee) as a replacement Voting Member for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, filling the seat vacated by Elaine Disbro, no longer able to attend.

Council Action

SC 22.11.68. Approval of Consent Agenda

The Council voted to approve items from the consent agenda as presented, including...ratifying the appointment of Deacon Douglas Krekling to a four-year term on the Candidacy Committee, effective 1 December 2022.

Council Action

SC 23.01.15. Approval of Lutheran Campus Ministry Board Members

The Council voted to approve the selection of the following individuals to positions on the board of Lutheran Campus Ministry: Catherine Mode Eastham; Linda Isnard; The Rev. Carolyn Sellers-Rizzo; The Rev. Matt James; and Cory Wanek.

The Rev. Matt James abstained from voting.

Council Action

SC 23.03.31. Ratification of Mt. Meru Coffee Board

The Council voted to ratify the members of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project Board: Walt Chossek (President); Rick Frowein (Vice President); Patti Nelson (Secretary); Tori Mallak (Treasurer); Andy Peterson (Financial Secretary); Fred Meyer; The Rev. Paul Erickson; and The Rev. Kevin Beebe.

Employment, Compensation, and Personnel Policies

Executive Committee Action

ECSC 22.05.15. Approval of Background Check Parameters

The Executive Committee approved the completion of background checks, with individual consent, for pre-identified candidates for Bishop and subsequent nominees, including: Background Referencing, Credit Reporting, Motor Vehicle Reporting, National, State, and County criminal background checks, Social Security Trace, Sex Offender Search, and a civil litigation statement.

Bishop Erickson abstained from voting due to potential conflict of interest.

Council Action

SC 22.09.66. Recommendation of Staff Benefit Plans

The Council voted to provide health care benefits through Portico Benefit Services at either Silver+ or Gold+ levels, subject to each employee's discretion.

Executive Committee Action

ECSC 22.09.24. Consent for Transitional Pay

The Executive Committee gave consent to the Bishop to offer transitional pay for The Rev. Jennifer Arnold.

Council Action

SC 22.11.73. Approval of Invitation to Extended Service

The Council voted to approve an Invitation to Extended Service to The Rev. Afi Dobbins- Mays, called to Synod Ministry as the Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity; effective 5 December 2022.

Council Action

SC 22.11.76. Approval of 2023 Synod Staff Housing Allowances

The Council voted to approve the designation of the following amounts of salary for Rostered Leaders as Housing Allowance, as allowed under IRS Guidelines: The Rev. Paul Erickson, The Rev. Kristin Nielsen, The Rev. Karen Pahl, The Rev. David Rebey, and The Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays.

Council Action

SC 23.01.07. Increase of Synod Staff Salaries

The Council voted to enact a 3% increase for all Synod Staff Salaries for 2023 (which falls within the approved 2023-2024 budget). *Bishop Erickson abstained from voting.*

Council Action

SC 23.01.11. Revision of Synod Personnel Policies

The Council voted to update the Synod Personnel Policies to include sabbatical leave for non-rostered members of the Synod Staff.

Bishop Erickson abstained from voting.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse, Synod Secretary

Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
2022 Synod Assembly Minutes
We Love All: Creating Communities of Welcome

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

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

The 2022 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly was held in hybrid fashion on 20-21 May 2022. In-person voting members and guests attended at the Italian Community Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Virtual voting members participated through Zoom Technologies, with voting for all voting members carried out through the Lumi platform. Prior to the Assembly, New Voting Member Orientation and Budget Hearings were held on 18 May 2022.

Friday, May 20th, 2022: Assembly Day 1

I. Orientation and Introduction to the Synod Assembly

At 4:00 p.m. on 20 May 2022, an orientation session for all voting members was led by **Bishop Paul D. Erickson**. Voting members and guests were briefed on COVID protocols during the Assembly and given opportunity to familiarize themselves with Lumi Voting Platform and other technology used during the Assembly.

Bishop Erickson offered thanks to **Mary Romskog**, Assembly Manager; **Phil Smith**, Registrar and administrative wizard; and **Robyn DiGiacinto**, Communications Specialist. He then proceeded to a brief overview of Robert's Rules of Order and the proposed Assembly Rules related to floor debate.

II. PLENARY 1

Bishop Paul Erickson convened the Assembly and called Plenary Session One to order at _____ p.m.

A. Opening of the Assembly

Deacon John Weit, ELCA Executive for Worship and Assembly Musician, led the Assembly in singing the hymn, "God Welcomes All," from the ELCA Hymnal Supplement *All Creation Sings*.

Bishop Erickson acknowledged the Assembly's gathering on the lands of Indigenous Peoples of North America, specifically the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Odawa (Ottawa), Fox, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sauk and Oneida peoples, calling the Assembly to learning and exploration about the painful history and ways to restore justice to these communities.

The Assembly gathered in prayer and shared in the Liturgy for the Opening of a Synod Assembly. **Bishop Erickson** declared the Assembly in session in the name of the triune God at 5:07 p.m.

B. Introductions and Welcome

Bishop Erickson reflected upon this year's Assembly Theme: "We Love All: Creating Communities of Welcome," noting it completes the three-Assembly cycle focused on the Synod Mission Statement, "We follow Jesus, form communities, and love all."

The Rev. Yehiel Curry (Metropolitan Chicago Synod), The Rev. Anne Edison-Albright (East Central Synod of Wisconsin), and The Rev. Felix Malpica (LaCrosse Area Synod), ELCA Synod Bishops from Region 5 present for the Election of the Synod Bishop were introduced to the Assembly.

C. Assembly Appointments

Bishop Erickson guided the Assembly to a listing of committees appointed by the Bishop for the Synod Assembly: Credentials, Reference & Counsel, Nominations, and Elections. He also thanked and introduced **Matthew Brockmeier (St. Paul's, Random Lake)**, Synod Assembly Parliamentarian.

<u>Synod Assembly Action</u>	<u>Approval of Assembly Appointments</u>
SA22.05.01.	
The Assembly approved the appointments of the Credentials Committee, Elections Committee, Reference and Counsel Committee, Nominations Committee, and Parliamentarian.	
	<i>Adopted by Unanimous Consent</i>

D. Adoption of Agenda

Bishop Erickson presented the proposed Assembly Agenda, recommended for approval by the Synod Council. He noted within each Plenary Session, the chair may choose to adjust the order of items in order to accommodate the Assembly Schedule around meals, breaks, and other firm deadlines.

<u>Synod Assembly Action</u>	<u>Approval of Agenda</u>
SA22.05.02.	
The Assembly approved the 2022 Synod Assembly Agenda as presented.	
	<i>Adopted by Unanimous Consent</i>

E. Approval of Rules and Procedures

Bishop Erickson directed the Assembly to review the recommended Rules and Procedures for the 2022 Synod Assembly, recommended for adoption by the Synod Council. Noted before the Assembly were proposed rules (a) limiting all floor speeches to three (3) minutes; (b) limiting debate to three speakers for and three against particular motions; (c) describing the process for the election of a Synod Bishop.

<u>Synod Assembly Action</u>	<u>Approval of Rules and Procedures</u>
SA22.05.03.	
The Assembly approved the 2022 Synod Assembly Rules and Procedures as presented.	
	<i>Adopted by Unanimous Consent</i>

Bishop Erickson relinquished the chair to **Lori Fedyk**, ELCA Treasurer and Churchwide Representative, to preside over the Election of a Bishop.

F. First Ballot for Bishop

1. Review of Process

Synod Vice President Joyce Caldwell (Faith, Cedarburg) provided the Assembly with a brief overview of the process set forth in Fall 2021 by the Synod Council, which was guided by *2009 Synod Assembly Resolution 4 - Advance Process For Identifying Potential Nominees For Synodical Bishop* (SA.09.05.14.). In the fall of 2021, Synod Gatherings were held both online and in the six conferences. These conversations helped to raise important themes and led to thinking about new questions of potential bishop candidates in challenging times. The Synod Council in January and March 2022 approved the process for the Election of a Synod Bishop.

2. Introduction of Bishop's Election Committee

Vice President Caldwell also introduced and thanked the members of the Bishop's Election Committee: **The Rev. Vicki Watkins (Village, Milwaukee) and Vickie Stretz (St. Olaf, Rubicon), Co-Chairs. Dan Christianson (Atonement, Muskego); Chuck Ellingson (Cross, Milwaukee); Jerry Key (Reformation, Milwaukee); Charlotte Linberry (Lake Park, Milwaukee); and The Rev. Beth Ann Stone (Mt. Pleasant, Racine).**

Co-Chair Stretz directed the Assembly to the Bishop Election Committee Report in the Assembly Book and thanked those for their work in the process leading up to and during Synod Assembly.

3. Review of Voting Process

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk guided the Assembly through the process and details of the Election. She noted this is both an election process and a call process, where we trust in the Holy Spirit.

Fedyk offered an overview on the role and responsibilities of the Synod Bishop. Quoting Dietrich Bonhoeffer, she noted that the bishops are "sound and loyal in faith and life, and who properly carry out their ministry in the community of faith." Bishops preach, teach, and administer the sacraments. They are primarily responsible for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this Synod, its congregations, and its ministers of Word and Sacrament & Word and Service. While remaining a pastor and servant leader, the specific roles given to Synod Bishops are contained within the ELCA Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions. Beyond the technical roles, **Fedyk** noted the importance of listening, praying, and guiding with hope for bishops within this church, especially as we find ourselves in confusing and fast-adapting times.

The election process for Synod Bishop is governed by the Synod Constitution. **Treasurer Fedyk** noted that individuals must be on the ELCA Roster as Ministers of Word and Sacrament. She walked through the details for each of the five possible ballots as set forth in the Synod Constitution.

4. Report of the Credentials Committee

The Rev. Matthew Schlake Kruse (Adoration, Greenfield), Synod Secretary, presented the first report of the Credentials Committee. As of 5:20 p.m., there were 322 credentialed and eligible voting members.

5. Instructions, Song, and Prayer

Charlotte Linberry (they/them) (Lake Park, Milwaukee) instructed the Assembly on the specifics of the First ballot on the Lumi platform. Before Voting Members cast their first ballot for Bishop, **Deacon Weit** led the Assembly in the Hymn, “Come Holy Spirit.” **The Rev. Vicki Watkins (Village, Milwaukee)** led the Assembly in prayer.

6. First Ballot For Bishop

The Synod Assembly voted in the First Ballot for Bishop, using the Lumi platform. **Treasurer Fedyk** declared voting closed at 5:55 p.m.

*ELCA Treasurer Fedyk returned the chair to **Bishop Erickson***

G. Nominations Committee Report

Secretary Schlake Kruse read the Nominating Committee Report before the Assembly.

There are open seats for one lay male and one lay female (inclusive of nonbinary individuals) and two Rostered Ministers to serve 6-year terms on the Discipline Committee. As of the first Nominations Committee Report, no nominations had been received for lay members; **The Rev. Heidi Borkenhagen (Trinity, Cedarburg)** has been nominated as one of the Rostered Ministers on the Discipline Committee.

There is also one partial term on the Synod Council: an at-large lay female seat expiring in 2025. As of this first Nominations Committee Report, 2 individuals had been nominated for this role: **Rose Dotson (Cross, Milwaukee)** and **Pat Faherty (LC of the Resurrection, Pewaukee)**.

The Nomination period for all seats presented remains open until 9:00 a.m., Saturday 21 May 2022.

H. Introduction of Assembly Guests

Bishop Erickson invited greetings from **Jennifer Prinz**, Portico Benefit Services Regional Representative, who shared a brief video message from the Portico team. The video focused on Paul’s word to the Galatians: together we share the burdens of the Body of Christ.

Richard Wehrs of the ELCA Mission Investment Fund (MIF) addressed the Assembly. He shared a video highlighting the MIF’s ministry and invited voting members to a dessert reception following Plenary Session Two.

I. Closing and Announcements

Bishop Erickson declared that Plenary Session One was concluded, and the Assembly in Recess until the Keynote Banquet at 6:11 p.m.

III. Dinner and Keynote Address

The Assembly gathered for dinner and a Keynote Address given by **Krish O’Mara Vignarajah**, President and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). LIRS is the largest faith-based national nonprofit dedicated exclusively to serving immigrants and refugees. **O’Mara Vignarajah’s** remarks connected the history of LIRS, the Lutheran legacy of welcome in the United States, and the importance of LIRS’s work in our current world.

A. History of LIRS

For over 80 years, LIRS has helped protect those fleeing persecution, welcoming more than half a million migrants and refugees into the United States. The work of welcome started back in 1939, when LIRS was founded during the Second World War to assist in the resettlement of Lutherans persecuted by the Nazi regime. The first decades of the organization were dedicated primarily to WWII-displaced people, including tens of thousands of Hungarians, Estonians, ethnic Germans, and others fleeing Soviet control.

In the late 1950s, however, the organization's focus started to shift—befitting Lutheranism's own immigrant roots, LIRS (then just LRS) began to embrace a more inclusive vision of welcome. Through a new model emphasizing the role of the congregation in resettlement, LIRS began resettling Cubans fleeing Fidel Castro's regime during the Cuban Refugee Airlift, followed by more than a thousand refugees from China and Uganda.

In 1975, global events caused the rapid growth of LIRS's ministry—staff numbers skyrocketed from just 4 to more than 100 employees serving nearly 16,000 refugees from Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon. In the 1990s, LIRS helped restore a sense of home to those displaced by war, conflict and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans; In the 2000s, LIRS and congregations began welcoming the “Lost Boys and Girls” – young Sudanese refugees who had been separated from their families after fleeing civil war.

In the ensuing decades, LIRS has continued this legacy of compassion by welcoming newly arrived refugees from Syria, Haiti, Burma, Tibet, Thailand, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and beyond. **O'Mara Vignarajah** gratefully thanked the leadership of synod congregations and the millions of Lutherans who have been leaders in the work of welcome. “The ELCA is truly one of the, if not the, most welcoming denominations for new Americans. That's something we should all be proud of,” she reflected.

Amid the ever-changing situation at the Southern Border of the United States, LIRS has seen its work expanded, too, to serve immigrants and asylum seekers across the country as they work to unify them with their families. In 2018, LIRS was one of only two organizations responsible for reuniting families after the family separation crisis.

And now, we find ourselves in the midst of parallel crises, serving tens of thousands of those fleeing from Afghanistan and Ukraine and all those seeking safety within our borders. The legacy of service for LIRS continues to grow and expand. Today, our work takes many forms: including refugee resettlement: from picking refugee families up at the airport to assisting them in finding jobs, enrolling their children in school, and taking English classes; mental and physical healthcare for immigrants who cross the border; care for unaccompanied children; advocacy on Capitol Hill to promote fair, humane immigration policy; and working with faith communities such as this synod's congregations to spread the word of welcome and offer opportunities for congregations and communities to better understand the lives of our refugee and immigrant brothers and sisters.

O'Mara Vignarajah shared a brief video highlighting LIRS's participation in a network supporting Ukrainian refugees.

B. A Lutheran Legacy of Welcome

O'Mara Vignarajah noted that throughout the history of LIRS all, congregations have been essential to the work of welcome. She shared a personal reflection about her

gratitude for the hospitality the Lutheran community has extended to her—and what a joy and blessing it has been to inherit this exceptional legacy of welcome as President and CEO.

O'Mara Vignarajah shared of the first-person impact of Lutheran welcome shared with her in her many encounters in this ministry. “I’ve heard stories from many Lutherans who remember hosting a Vietnamese family or helping a young person from Sudan begin a new life. When we began to welcome our new Afghan neighbors, people of faith were among the first to answer the call, setting up apartments, providing much needed cell phones and laptops, and providing a warm welcome and safe place to land for families who had been through so much.”

Looking at the state of the organization today, ELCA Lutherans remain the largest supporters of LIRS—from participation in annual programs to community sponsorship, as donors, and as champions for refugees and immigrants nationwide. “LIRS owes so much to the Lutheran commitment to welcome the stranger, which has been central to both our mission and our success over the decades. Lutherans have been there every step of the way—and now, your support is more essential than ever.”

C. Meeting the Moment

Reflecting on the many global crises involving re-settling and ever-changing populations, **O'Mara Vignarajah** noted that this is a particularly pivotal moment. Worldwide, there are currently 84 million displaced people – more than ever before in known human history. In the last two years, it feels as if the world (and LIRS’s world) has moved from crisis to crisis: The Covid Pandemic; The U.S. Retreat from Afghanistan; the war in Ukraine; and climate crisis and global displacement.

O'Mara Vignarajah presented tangible impacts of what LIRS is doing in response to these very issues. **LIRS has helped** welcoming more than 10,000 Afghans since the fall of Kabul; in partnership with **Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan**, 838 of these refugees have resettled in Wisconsin, including 379 in Milwaukee, and 1,731 in Michigan.

Resettlement is also in full swing in partnership with **Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan**. Volunteers have hit the ground running, working on apartment setup, provision of basic needs, school enrollment, employment assistance, and connections to mental and physical healthcare. A Welcome Center is forthcoming for resettled refugees in Detroit, and Advocacy continues to influence and support legislation, including the Afghan Adjustment Act.

O'Mara Vignarajah said while LIRS is doing all these things, “We’re Not Doing It Alone.” The organization has received more than 100,000 volunteer applications; warehouses full of donations; and countless offers to help, where ordinary citizens have answered the call, helping LIRS furnish homes and stock pantries, driving our new Afghan neighbors to appointments, and stepping up to be that first friend and community tie. She noted that in a significant way, churches have been stepping up – and they can serve a major role in welcome, relying on their strong community relationships and presence in convening service and justice work. Focusing on congregational efforts to educate, advocate, and sponsor, **O'Mara Vignarajah** preached, “Lutherans can help us

change the narrative. Immigration and refugee resettlement do not have to be a partisan issue. The commitment to ‘welcome the stranger’ as outlined in scripture, and Christ gives the essential directive to ‘love one another’”

O’Mara Vignarajah provided positive impact stories that lift up the human aspect of immigrants and refugees—Seeing people as people, not simply numbers or headlines, sharing humanizing stories, and understanding that we are a nation of immigrants. She noted the following data:

- The 23 million immigrants working in healthcare, agriculture, food services, and other critical industries make up nearly 20% of the essential workforce.
- Multiple studies have shown that immigrants tend to be younger, work for longer, and boast higher birth rates.
- In 2014 alone, immigrants contributed \$328.2 billion in taxes, including \$32.9 billion in Medicare taxes and \$123.7 billion in Social Security taxes.
- Immigrants play a key part in entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation. Research shows they are 80% more likely to become entrepreneurs and are more likely to pay their employees higher wages.
- Immigrants represent 38% of Nobel Prizes won by Americans, 43% of Fortune 500 company founders, nearly 30% of practicing physicians and surgeons, and nearly a quarter of all medical and computer scientists.

D. Now is the Time: Summation and Incarnation

O’Mara Vignarajah concluded her remarks by noting that “immigrants and refugees make America stronger—so we must do everything we can to support and empower them. Right now, we not only have the opportunity to help immigrants and refugees in crisis, but to rebuild our refugee and immigration systems. We believe that now is the time to create a system that is nimble and can withstand crises while recognizing the dignity of all people and fulfilling our moral and legal obligations to those fleeing persecution.”

O’Mara Vignarajah shared her own immigrant narrative, migrating with her parents from Sri Lanka amid civil war and violence. Arriving as strangers on foreign soil, she remembered, “We were welcomed by the community in our new hometown of Baltimore. It was then that the meaning of Matthew 25 took on a very personal meaning— ‘For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.’”

Reflecting on the warm welcome given to her parents, together with the opportunity to plant roots in this country, **O’Mara Vignarajah** sees her parents becoming educators “opening a path for me to stand here before you today. I went from that apartment to Yale, to Oxford, and eventually to the White House, and today I stand before you as the only female CEO of a refugee resettlement agency. I have a beautiful four-year-old daughter named Alana, and her life will be easier because my parents’ lives were hard. To me, that is the American dream. And that was what called me to this work—and why I invite you to join Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in making that dream possible for immigrants and refugees around the world.”

IV. Worship

The Assembly gathered in for Worship using music and liturgy from the new hymnal supplement, *All Creation Sings*. **The Rev. Marilyn Miller (Cross, Milwaukee)** delivered the sermon based on the alternate gospel for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, John 5:1-9. Using the image of the man stuck on the mat for 38 years, she challenged the assembly to notice what factors are keeping the church on the mat. Trust in God, called to help one another within the church from the many things holding us down from reflecting Jesus' call to mercy, love, and justice.

Offerings were shared with **LIRS**. The Assembly shared in Holy Communion and was sent forth with God's blessing and peace.

V. PLENARY 2

Bishop Erickson reconvened the Assembly for Plenary 2 at 8:35 p.m., receiving the results of the First Ballot for Bishop.

Bishop Erickson then relinquished the chair to ELCA Treasurer Fedyk.

A. Results of First Ballot for Bishop

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk called upon **Bishop Election Co-Chair Watkins** to announce the results of the First Ballot for Bishop.

RESULTS OF BISHOP ELECTION BALLOT ONE:

Number of Votes Cast: 310

Number of Legal Votes Cast: 302

Number of Votes Needed for Election (75%): 227

The Rev. Paul Erickson

182

The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López

81

The Rev. Jennifer Arnold

7

The Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland

4

The Rev. John Holm

3

The Rev. Marilyn Miller

3

The Rev. Matthew Short

3

The Rev. Kevin Farrar

2

The Rev. Kristie Jaramillo

2

The Rev. Doug Andersen

1

The Rev. Kevin Beebe

1

The Rev. Chris Marien

1

The Rev. Asher O'Callaghan

1

The Rev. Nic Peñaranda

1

The Rev. Tom Pietz

1

The Rev. Harvard Stephens

1

The Rev. Casey Sugden

1

The Rev. Greg Van Dunk

1

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk proceeded to announce the deadline for withdrawals for nominated individuals would close at 7:30 a.m., Saturday, 21 May 2022.

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to Bishop Erickson.

B. Closing and Announcements

The Assembly sang the hymn, “Go to the World.”

At 8:39 p.m., **Bishop Erickson** declared Plenary 2 Closed and the Assembly in Recess until 8:30 a.m., Saturday 21 May 2022. A dessert reception was held for Assembly Voting Members and Guests.

Saturday, May 21st, 2022: Assembly Day 2

VI. PLENARY 3

A. Welcome and Announcements

Bishop Erickson called the Assembly to order at 8:30 a.m.

Deacon Weit introduced the Assembly to hymn “Jesu, tawa pano,” from *All Creation Sings*.

Bishop Erickson welcomed **Bishop Elias Kitoi Nasari** of Diocese of Meru, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. This year, the 25th anniversary of the Greater Milwaukee Synod/Diocese of Meru Partnership will be celebrated.

Bishop Kitoi brought greetings of peace and shalom from the Diocese of Meru to the Assembly. The Diocese consists of 59 parishes, 80 pastors, 200 congregations, more than 100 evangelists and parish workers, and 100,000 members. He shared his gratitude for the partnership of the Mt. Meru Coffee Project, which he described as “a way of proclaiming justice.” He offered specific thanks for the support of leadership through Equipping the Saints Appeal, which resulted in formal Leadership Training. He prayed God’s blessings for this Assembly, its deliberations and decisions. He also Invited prayer for Diocese’s equivalent to the Synod Assembly in August.

Quoting James 5:16: “*Therefore, siblings, let us pray for each other, so that we may be healed. For the prayer of the righteous person is powerful and effective,*” **Bishop Kitoi** encouraged the Assembly to **continue** walking together in this partnership, “for alone we fall apart.” **Bishops Kitoi and Erickson** exchanged gifts with one another on behalf of the Diocese and the Synod.

Bishop Erickson presented the latest totals on the Synod Assembly Offering. More than \$6,000 was received at worship; combined with pre-Assembly offerings of \$4,000, the current total is close to \$10,000. This is halfway to the bishop’s goal of \$20,000.

B. Devotion

The Rev. Bill Beyer (Grace, Thiensville) led the Assembly in devotions, based on the story of Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and Jesus in John 11:28-44. Sharing his own personal story of coming out as an older man, he reflected on the metaphor of a “cold dark tomb of shame and denial.” He encouraged the Assembly to ponder what sorts of tombs and stench surround us, what parts of ourselves do we bury behind a stone or wrap in strips of cloth.

Tables were given time to discuss the following questions: What are the kinds of things people keep in? How might one be in a tomb? In the closet, buried, hidden? How can we as a community recognize these unspoken needs?

The Rev. Beyer concluded his devotion by highlighting the abundant love and grace of Jesus' abiding presence, noting Paul's phrase in Romans 8:37, "we are more than conquerors through God, who loves us."

Bishop Erickson then relinquished the chair to ELCA Treasurer Fedyk.

C. Second Ballot for Bishop

1. Review of Voting Process

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk offered a brief review of the voting process. Ballot 2 will contain all individuals who received legal votes on Ballot 1 and did not withdraw their names from the process before the deadline. 75% of legal votes on Ballot 2 are necessary to be elected Bishop. If there is no election, prior to Ballot 3, nominees will be invited to share five-minute speeches.

Fedyk reminded the Assembly an update on withdrawals, noting that four individuals would be listed on Ballot 2. Their names will appear in descending order of votes received on Ballot 1: **The Rev. Paul Erickson, The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López, The Rev. Asher O'Callaghan, and The Rev. Harvard Stephens.**

2. Report of the Credentials Committee

The Rev. Matthew Schlake Kruse (Adoration, Greenfield), Synod Secretary, presented the second report of the Credentials Committee. As of 8:00 a.m., there were 355 credentialled and eligible voting members.

3. Instructions, Song, and Prayer

Deacon Weit led the Assembly in the Hymn, "Come Holy Spirit."

The Rev. Char Guiliani (Incarnation, Milwaukee) led the Assembly in prayer.

4. Second Ballot for Bishop

The Synod Assembly voted in the Second Ballot for Bishop, using the Lumi platform. **Treasurer Fedyk** declared voting closed at 9:21 a.m.

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to Bishop Erickson.

D. Welcome from Lutheran Social Services

Sarah Halstead of Lutheran Social Services brought greetings and welcome to the Assembly on behalf of LSS President and CEO Héctor Cólón. She noted that one story already bearing fruit from the Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal was the generous gift given from the campaign to support Afghan Refugee Resettlement.

Reflecting on the Ukrainian practice of decorating Easter eggs, **Halstead** compared the relative difference in "rejoicing in the good news of the resurrection" amid Russian the invasion led to a mix of different Easter emotions. She noted that at present, LSS has been able to welcome three times the number of refugees under the Biden Administration and gave thanks for the ongoing support of the Synod and its congregations.

E. Presentation of the 2023-2024 Synod Budget

Synod Treasurer The Rev. Karen Pahl presented the Budget to the Assembly. Budget

hearings were held with 40 voting members on Wednesday 18 May. She noted the Assembly rules require a balance if there are any amendments which would increase the proposed Budget. The Budget is recommended for approval by the Synod Council.

Pahl reported that contributions are budgeted at a giving level of \$1.7 million, reflecting past giving to date. Congregational Intent Letters have been the primary data used to shape the proposed budget to forecast future contributions. Congregational mission support has been decreasing year over year at a steady pace.

Pahl offered her thanks for the offerings shared with the Synod and to the Equipping the Saints (ETS) Campaign. She noted that some ETS monies have been added to the budget—to support the hiring a new equity organizer, yet the staffing line of the budget remains unchanged pending further conversation around staffing and how best to bring a new person on board.

Pahl drew the Assembly’s attention to the Total Synod Revenues, forecast at \$1.896 million for 2023-2024. She noted that a number of partnerships continue to receive their gifts in proportion to the actual revenues received. The proposed budget keeps ELCA Mission Support at 50% of revenues and Lutheran Campus Ministry at 6% of the budget. A total of \$1.13 million is shared with ministry partners.

The Assembly then received details about expenses proposed in the 2023-2024 budget. **Treasurer Pahl** highlighted data on expenses related to Administration and noted that at Budget Hearings earlier in the week, questions were asked regarding compensation of Synod Staff. She noted that Synod Guidelines for congregations were approved by the Synod Council recommending a 5% increase for cost of living; the Synod Council amended the budget (as it is authorized to do between Synod Assemblies) to give Synod Staff a 3% cost of living increase. The proposed budget before the Assembly provides for a 1% cost-of-living increase for Synod Staff going forward.

Treasurer Pahl noted the Synod Council has recommended this budget with an intention of keeping the proposed deficit as small as possible. Last year, the Synod finished its fiscal year with a \$91,000 deficit; looking to the future, Payroll Protection Plan monies and other reserves will not offer as much flexibility in running deficit budgets.

The Rev. Lindsey Beukelman (All People’s, Milwaukee) sought clarification as to the cost-of-living percentage vis-à-vis other experience-based salary guidelines and advocated paying the Synod Staff at the same rate recommended in the Synod Guidelines.

Bishop Erickson then relinquished the chair to ELCA Treasurer Fedyk.

F. Report of the Second Ballot for Bishop

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk called upon **Bishop Election Co-Chair Vickie Stretz (St. Olaf, Rubicon)** to announce the results of the Second Ballot for Bishop.

RESULTS OF BISHOP ELECTION BALLOT TWO:

Number of Votes Cast: 328

Number of Legal Votes Cast: 328

Number of Votes Needed for Election (75%): 246

The Rev. Paul Erickson	207
The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López	104
The Rev. Asher O’Callaghan	6

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk declared no election had taken place. She noted that before the third ballot, biographical information forms for all nominees will be provided as soon as possible. Five -minute speeches from nominees will precede voting on Ballot 3.

*ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to **Bishop Erickson**.*

G. Greetings from Lutheran Planned Giving of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

Cynthia Halverson, Director of Lutheran Planned Giving in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan brought greetings to the Assembly. She highlighted the work she does throughout the region, meeting with individuals and congregational leaders to plan for the wise distribution of their assets, often through the ELCA Foundation.

At 9:52 a.m., Bishop Erickson the Assembly in Recess until 10:10 a.m.

H. Hymn

Deacon John Weit led the Assembly in the hymn “Blessed Assurance” to conclude the morning coffee break. **Bishop Erickson** declared the Assembly back in session at 10:12 a.m.

I. Equipping the Saints (ETS) Campaign Report

Vice President Joyce Caldwell, in her role as ETS Campaign Manager, accompanied videos highlighting the progress with details about the next stages of the Mission Appeal.

A video beginning the report highlighted the partnership between **All People’s, Milwaukee** and **St. Olaf, Rubicon**. St. Olaf Lutheran Church members **Steve and Vickie Stretz** shared testimony of why they chose to give and the impact of their congregational partnership, which has been strengthened by the ETS stewardship process.

Caldwell introduced a second video highlighting the main themes of the Mission Appeal: Innovation Collaboration, and Leadership, and noting that this appeal is already working to help form the church God needs us to become. **The Rev. Lindsay Jordan (St. Luke’s, Waukesha)** shared testimony of his congregation’s tithe to the Appeal from their capital campaign; a representative from the **Hope Center** shared the impact of the gifts already received from St. Luke’s in their ministry partnership.

The campaign prospectus sets goals of \$1.2 million for Innovation and Collaboration, including grants for partnership with Outreach for Hope, staffing support, and tithes to the ELCA’s Holy Innovation Fund and Lutheran Social Services. \$1.1 million will be earmarked for Leadership, including funding for a Racial Equity Organizer, fundraising and development training for Lutheran Campus Ministry, and a missional tithe to global companion synods in El Salvador and Tanzania.

To date, \$817,980 of the \$2.3 million campaign goal has been pledged or given. This marks 35.6% of the goal. More than \$489,000 has already been received, and gifts continue to funnel in. **Caldwell** thanked congregations and other sources who have already make significant gifts and invited voting members to encourage their congregations to participate in the process, which includes stewardship training from **The Rev. Mike Ward** of GSB Consultants, who are also part of the appeal leadership.

Caldwell proudly announced that the first missional tithe has been distributed from gifts received in 2021—Lutheran Social Services Refugee Resettlement, the Diocese of Meru, and Lutheran Church of El Salvador have already received gifts from the appeal. She thanked all those for giving and lifted up training sessions for Pastors and Council Presidents in July 2022.

Caldwell introduced volunteer leaders coordinating various teams as part of the appeal, and invited a brief testimony from **The Rev. Marilyn Miller (Cross, Milwaukee)**. She shared a reflection on the parable of the Widow’s Mite and the Treasury, and set forth a call to action—that each congregation might seed our work together as the Greater Milwaukee Synod. She challenged voting members to find a way to participate in this life-changing work and encouraged 100% of congregations to make any contribution to the campaign.

J. Credentials Report

Secretary Schlake Kruse presented the third report of the Credentials Committee. As of 10:44 a.m., there were 356 credentialled and eligible voting members. Responding to a question in the Zoom chat, he clarified that the credentials report did not include a subdivision of the house into the categories of rostered ministers and lay voting members. This calculation takes place through the registration process, and as of the Assembly’s onset, the proportion of lay and rostered voting members had achieved the legal requirements needed for the Assembly.

K. First Common Ballot (Synod Council & Discipline Committee)

Secretary Schlake Kruse presented the nominees for open seats on the Discipline Committee and Synod Council as a part of the First Common Ballot.

Discipline Committee At Large Lay Female (One Nominee)

Leigh Anne Muller, Lake Park, Milwaukee

Discipline Committee At Large Lay Male (One Nominee)

Jeffrey Kehoe, Messiah, Twin Lakes

Discipline Committee At Large Rostered Minister (2 seats, 3 Nominees)

The Rev. Heidi Borkenhagen, Trinity, Cedarburg
The Rev. Sarah Stobie, Bay Shore, Whitefish Bay
The Rev. Casey Sugden, Christ the Servant, Waukesha

Synod Council At Large Lay Female (Partial Term) (2 Nominees)

Rose Dotson, Cross, Milwaukee
Pat Faherty, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee

Having presented the nominees, **Bishop Erickson** led the Assembly in the voting process for each position. The Chair used the process of unanimous consent to elect nominees running unopposed. The Lumi Voting system was used for contested elections.

Synod Assembly Action **Election to Discipline Committee**
SA22.05.04.
 The Assembly elected **Leigh Anne Muller (Lake Park, Milwaukee)** to a six-year term on the Discipline Committee
Elected through Unanimous Consent

Synod Assembly Action **Election to Discipline Committee**
SA22.05.05.
 The Assembly elected **Jeffrey Kehoe (Messiah, Twin Lakes)** to a six-year term on the Discipline Committee
Elected through Unanimous Consent

Synod Assembly Action **Election to Discipline Committee**
SA22.05.06.
 The Assembly elected **The Rev. Heidi Borkenhagen (Trinity, Cedarburg)** and **The Rev. Sarah Stobie (Bay Shore, Whitefish Bay)** to six-year terms on the Discipline Committee
Elected through Lumi Voting Platform

**Voting Results: Discipline Committee—
 At-Large Rostered Minister (Vote for 2)**

565 total votes cast;

The Rev. Heidi Borkenhagen	221 votes
The Rev. Sarah Stobie	182 votes
The Rev. Casey Sugden	162 votes

Synod Assembly Action **Election to Synod Council**
SA22.05.07.
 The Assembly elected **Rose Dotson (Cross, Milwaukee)** to a partial-term as an at-large member of the Synod Council, completing a vacated term through 2025.
Elected through Lumi Voting Platform

**Voting Results: Synod Council—
 At-Large Lay Female**

295 total votes cast

Rose Dotson	204 votes (69.15 %)
Pat Faherty	91 votes (30.85%)

L. Report from the ELCA

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk brought greetings from the Churchwide Organization of the ELCA. While the world has gone through extreme change over the past 2+ years, she noted “the gospel has not changed, and people are continuing to look for meaning, purpose, and belonging.”

She thanked the Assembly for its mission support of \$934,000 in 2021, among the top ten synods in mission support. She noted the ELCA Churchwide Organization received \$40.6 million in Mission Support in 2021, and encouraged voting members to reference the *Stories of Faith in Action* bulletin for shareable stories on how gifts to the ELCA are furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fedyk lifted up the continued growth and strong support for ELCA World Hunger—whose expenditures increased by \$2 million in 2021, now sharing more than \$21.3 million in support for food security, agricultural income generation, health and housing, human rights and gender work, education, migration support, and peacebuilding both in our country and throughout the world. She offered thanks for the individuals who identified their gifts to ELCA World Hunger as coming from a part of the Greater Milwaukee Synod. These gifts in 2021 totaled \$336,370.

Highlighting the ways ELCA programs and projects intersected with the Synod, **Fedyk** noted Domestic Hunger and Big Dream Grant Recipients (**Cross, Milwaukee Hephatha, Milwaukee, Racine Vocational Ministry, and Reformation, Milwaukee**); the Synod’s Authorized Worshipping Communities; participants in ELCA Strategic Funding and Congregations Lead Initiative, and Global Mission ministers and Young Adults in Global Mission leaders who are connected to the Synod.

The Assembly received video greetings from **Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton**, whose message was rooted in Paul’s letter to the Romans. Since it is not up to human beings to be righteous in the eyes of God, the good news we embody is that “we receive forgiveness of sin through the love of God.”

Eaton’s message noted the 500th anniversary of the Luther Bible, translated into the language of the people and distributed through the growth of the printing press. Noting the need to tell the “old, old story in a new way, the gospel hasn’t changed, even if the world has.” By meeting the world and people all around looking for meaning, belonging, and love, the Presiding Bishop encouraged voting members to consider how to speak the vocabulary of the church in culturally relevant and radical ways. She focused upon the ELCA’s Future Church Initiative, which aims to engage one million new, young, diverse individuals with the gospel by 2023.

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk concluded her report by highlighting examples of Holy Innovation across the church, asking for prayers and blessings for the seminarians engaged in preparation for ministry in this church, and presenting new aspects of the ELCA’s work that can be shared with local congregations. She shared her thanks for members of this Synod serving the Churchwide expression and the work of **Bishop Erickson** and the Synod Staff.

Bishop Erickson presented **Fedyk** with a gift on behalf of the Synod.

***Bishop Erickson** relinquished the chair to **ELCA Treasurer Fedyk**.*

M. Third Ballot for Bishop

1. Review of Voting Process

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk and Charlotte Linberry (they/them) gave a brief introduction to the process for five-minute speeches preceding the third ballot. Nominees will speak in a pre-drawn order for up to five minutes each. They were invited to reflect on the following prompt: *Talk about a difficult time when things didn't go right and how you responded.*

2. Speeches from Nominees

A. The Rev. Paul Erickson

The Rev. Erickson addressed the assembly, noting that while it is easy to focus on *what* and *how* we might do things, he prefers to center himself on *why* we do this work. “We organize our work so that more people will come into life-changing relationships with Jesus Christ.” Rather than being about personal fulfillment, leadership, to Erickson, is about Jesus: “making sure God’s love is known and experienced in concrete ways. Every person is worthy of love just as they are. People are capable of loving others. It’s our job to help them figure out how to do that.”

One of the practices he has used is asking folks leaving a synod event to share what has helped them feel energized, connected, and hopeful. He feels called to a second term in the Office of Bishop. What keeps him feeling energized is the people of the Synod: pastors, deacons, and members. He noted the tough challenges over recent years and the need to focus on what really matters and the similarities we share in common. He reflected on the need for dismantling patriarchy and racism and other things that plague us too often without space for public discourse, with hope the church can be a place for conversation. He also shared his energy is buffeted by knowing he is not alone in this work. “Knowing I’m surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses...that it what gives me hope.”

The Rev. Erickson noted “things haven’t gone as we planned. We’ve fallen short. Reflecting theologically, he professed when we buy into the illusion that we think we are in charge, this is what happens. As bishop, he has come to realized there are many situations where there are no good options left. He shared his process for sorting through and figuring out “what is the best path forward that focuses on the goals that we have.”

In closing, **The Rev. Erickson** noted he intends to keep listening: to God, to each other, and to the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit has got this. God has got this. The Holy Spirit is in the room and God ain’t done with us yet. And God’s not done with me yet, either.”

B. The Rev. Harvard Stephens

The Rev. Stephens addressed the Assembly via Zoom. He shared his happiness for the opportunity to address the Assembly and for the many great friendships he has throughout the Synod.

The Rev. Stephens noted that throughout history the church has marked time and shown faith, hope, and love are alive and well.

Reflecting on the upcoming baptism of his great-grandson, Jeremiah, he proffered, “This will all work out with him, too!” There is something good unfolding in us—what we feel as God’s children—something making all things new. He wants his great-grandson to experience the past have given way to the future that God has promised us; to witness to what God is doing in this moment, not just having the words right or the doctrine pinned down.

He noted one of the mistakes he’s made—a mistake of ego—is the failure to appreciate the young leaders who preceded him, the leaders who came before him and made room for him. “There’s no success without succession.” Referencing Exodus and the story of Jethro, he noted “you’ll wear yourself out if you don’t know how to share leadership. We need to be able to follow the Holy Spirit and let this great work to rest on all our shoulders.”

Referencing recent violent events and hate in Buffalo, New York, **The Rev. Stephens** concluded his remarks, noting “In Christ, I am a new creation. This is not the end of our story.”

C. The Rev. Asher O’Callaghan (he/him)

The Rev. O’Callaghan addressed the Assembly via zoom, noting he only recently found out he was nominated. He currently serves as Associate to the Bishop in the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin.

The Rev. O’Callaghan expressed his gratitude for considering him as a nominee; yet, he shared he has discerned this would “not be a good fit for me and the life of my family.”

He used the remainder of his time to share why he is excited about the church in the present moment and to pray for the Synod amid the Bishop Election. “I pray for you amid the election happening right now. Deliver and liberate us, O God, from the institutional issues; help us to have brave and difficult conversations, that you help us enter into your life.”

His prayer concluded with an invocation for ongoing reform of Christ’s church and for help to discern and carry out God’s will.

D. The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López

The Rev. Townsend de López thanked the Assembly for the opportunity to stand and speak as a nominee for Bishop. Describing herself as having the leadership and passion of a “Holy Spirit girl,” she described her discernment as important because a “change in our long history in the same leadership” means it felt important for her to “take a plunge at something different in such a time as this.

She reflected on the prompt of deficit and described hers as “continual because of the body I’ve been born into. I’ve had to prove two or three times that I’m good enough.” Noting her growth in learning how to listen better, she has come to realize for a long part of her life, “it was more important to be understood,” but now it is more important to learn to listen. **The Rev. Townsend de López** described how her experience in

diverse situations (economically, culturally, and linguistically) have been vital in her learning along the way.

Thinking about the lessons learned in her home congregation, **Cross Lutheran**, she professed everything starts with Word and Sacrament, and my church helped me understand what diverse and just stances look like. Standing up for formative changes and justice and faith wasn't comfortable; yet the things we learned in church were lived out beyond the congregation.

The Rev. Townsend de López concluded her remarks with how her experiences continue to shape her ministry. "As I'm exposed to different, we try to focus on the community suffering the most. We understood what deep relationship with the larger church looks like. "More than 30 years of partnership have helped me grow up in relationships, to go deeper in places sacred and vulnerable." She hopes the bridge between urban and suburban congregations is the future of our church—living into the hope of an accompanying God. "Part of who we are is getting the other stuff out of the way—we can be angry about a whole lot, but we can't sit in that anger"—we channel it into finding one accord.

3. Report of the Credentials Committee

Secretary Schlake Kruse presented the fourth report of the Credentials Committee. As of 11:00 a.m., there were 356 credentialled and eligible voting members.

4. Instructions, Song, and Prayer

Treasurer Fedyk stated the requirements for election on Ballot 3. 2/3 of legal votes cast are necessary for election. The three individuals with the most legal votes will appear on Ballot 4, which will be preceded by a period of questions and answers with each individual nominee.

Deacon Weit led the Assembly in the Hymn, "Come Holy Spirit."

Dan Roepke (Advent, Cedarburg) led the Assembly in prayer.

5. Third Ballot For Bishop

The Synod Assembly voted in the Third Ballot for Bishop, using the Lumi platform. **Treasurer Fedyk** declared voting closed.

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to Bishop Erickson.

N. Welcome from Interfaith Conference and Wisconsin Council of Churches

The Rev. Kerri Parker, Wisconsin Council of Churches, and **Pardeep Singh Kaleka**, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, greeted the Assembly. **Bishop Erickson** thanked them for their unifying focus and for the key role they both played during the 2019 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee; they received gifts on behalf of the Synod.

Kaleka reflected on the dignity of home. He found it a beautiful reflection of our world and country that a Sri Lankan woman and Punjabi Sikh were allowed to speak at a Lutheran Gathering, and thanked the Assembly for the "Dignity of Opportunity." He shared his own journey to this work—responding against hate after his father and fellow

Sikhs were murdered in a hate crime in their place of worship. “Together, he noted, our interreligious commitment requires we do this work.” The past years have revealed further hate, division, and disparities that interfaith dialogue can help us in processing. He noted his gratitude to **Redeemer, Milwaukee**, the new home of the Interfaith Conference offices, which feel like sanctuary. “God is still speaking. May we move forward together and share the dignity of sanctuary.”

The Rev. Parker described the work of the Wisconsin Council of Churches to the Assembly. “We’re an institution of institutions; we’re not built to be nimble.” After 75 years of working for church unity, the WCC has gathered itself to do together what is more challenging to do alone. They were greatly involved in coordinating and leading the COVID response from many denominations throughout the pandemic.

Comprised of churches in twenty-one Christian traditions, the WCC shows for the diversity of the life of faith in our state. She thanked the Greater Milwaukee Synod for its engagement in ecumenical ministry. “We’re in the ministry of courage, justice, and holy imagination. We hope when you think of the WCC you think of support.”

Bishop Erickson relinquished the chair to ELCA Treasurer Fedyk.

O. Report of the Third Ballot for Bishop

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk welcomed Bishop’s Election Committee Member **Chuck Ellingson** to present the results from Ballot 3 for Bishop.

RESULTS OF BISHOP ELECTION BALLOT THREE:

Number of Votes Cast: 328

Number of Legal Votes Cast: 328

Number of Votes Needed for Election (66.666666%): 219

The Rev. Paul Erickson	188
The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López	127
The Rev. Asher O’Callaghan	0
The Rev. Harvard Stephens	12

Treasurer Fedyk noted there was no election. The top three nominees will appear on the Fourth Ballot. Before the 4th Ballot, each of the three nominees will answer questions provided by the Bishop’s Election Committee. They will receive 2 minutes to respond to each question and 14 total minutes of response time. Each nominee will be sequestered unless it is their turn to speak.

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to Bishop Erickson.

P. Concluding Items

The Rev. Parker shared a prayer for lunch.

Bishop Erickson declared Plenary 3 closed at 12:19 p.m. The Assembly stands in recess until 1 p.m.

VII. PLENARY 4

A. Gathering and Opening of Plenary 4

Bishop Erickson reconvened the Assembly and declared Plenary 4 in session at 1:07 p.m.

Deacon John Weit led the Assembly in singing “*Commonwealth is God’s Commandment*” from *All Creation Sings*.

B. Devotions

The Rev. Char Guiliani (Incarnation, Milwaukee) (they/them) led the Assembly in devotions based on John 11:28-44; Mary and Martha before Jesus arrives at the tomb. After reading the text, they shared their personal narrative. “After retirement from law enforcement and 25 years on the job—I was in my tomb. I was living a double life. I had made up a boyfriend who could never make the parties.”

Guiliani recalled that in 2001, an ended relationship help them remove the cloths and realize, “I am God’s good creation. We are called to unbind those who have been stuck in tombs not of their own making.” They invited table-mates to discuss the following prompts. “*How can we as a community of faith unbind those who are coming out??*” *Are you afraid to love yourself?*

Concluding their devotion, **Guiliani proclaimed**, “God created us to be loved first—even before we can love someone else. We all have our “things.” Embrace yourself—you are a beloved child of God.”

Bishop Erickson relinquished the chair to ELCA Treasurer Fedyk.

C. Fourth Ballot for Bishop

1. Review of Question and Answer Protocols

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk gave a brief introduction to the process for questions and answers preceding the fourth ballot. Nominees will speak in a pre-drawn order and answer 7 questions. They received six of the seven questions during the lunch break. One question will be asked extemporaneously during the session. Each nominee has two minutes to respond to each question—fourteen minutes in all.

Questions will be asked by **The Rev. Vicki Watkins** and **Dan Christianson** from the Bishop Election’s Committee. The nominees not being questioned will be in seclusion. **The Rev. Stephens** will not be on Zoom when others are answering.

2. Questions and Answers with Nominees for Bishop

(reflected as near to verbatim as possible)

A. The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López

1. How would you describe the role of synod Bishop?

The bishop functions as the CEO of our Synod organization; they should be a representation of our Synod, an advocate and pastor to lay leaders and clergy. If they do not feel comfortable in the realm of finances, they should have people with those skills entrusted to those tasks. The bishop must be relational and not bureaucratic, since we are a faith

institution. The Bishop should strive to be equitable and inclusive in our Synod's representation—what we see is who we are.

2. Every leader juggles calls to multiple roles in their life. How do you manage the competing calls in your life?

Proclaiming the gospel keeps me on my toes; yet I don't do this alone. In my own context, it takes a village. I am often pulled in many different directions. Working alongside our Church Council President—I have come to realizing how important it is to tend to the relationships around you. Sharing the work is a part of everyday life—a two way street. I have often found myself doing what some would call “menial stuff,” like cleaning the bathrooms. I strive to work in a way where we do the work of church together. It's not top down to dictate who does what.

3. Our synod has stated a goal of being more inclusive: how do you live our your commitment to making the church a more diverse and multicultural place?

I live out my commitment to diversity in the body and life I show up in. These values have shaped decisions I've made about my life—I chose the neighborhood we live in because I wanted to be in a place inclusive of all income levels. Working among multiple cultures is where I live and breathe. I am deeply aware of what it means to be other and inclusive of different kinds of people. Part of that is making sure that we start with relationships defining ourselves as people of God. I hope we can remain mindful of what Jesus disrupted.

4. How would you support candidates who are BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ in our Synod?

I have supervised a number of pastoral interns at Cross Lutheran; we continue to receive interns with beauty and quality that others have decided aren't worthy of a good call. Lesbian, transgender, heterosexual, and everything else in between. We have many wonderful candidates coming into our synod. We often decide what we think we need rather than the gifts of those who are before us. God has already selected the right pastors and deacons for us: we need to be open to those who are put before us. The way we do assignment now needs to change. We need to start with gifts and skill sets instead of sex or gender. Looking at candidacy committee, I hope we can learn about our internal biases and get those in check to be more faithful to the process and to candidates.

5. Some feel isolated from the synod structure. How would you build a more connected synod?

I believe we could be more intentional about how we relate. I would like the bishop and assistants to work with Conference deans and meet with conferences to understand what things are most important. How do congregations arrive at the reality of isolation? How do we hear one another? The process needs to keep happening on a more regular basis,

taking account of what needs to change. We need to avoid filtering things through others. Let's stop othering each other; let's be more creative about how we share strengths—to make ourselves better connected.

6. What gives you hope about the future of our church?

To connect to last night's sermon, we the church continue to carry around a mat, even when we have been healed. We are limping around and put up our own barriers. What would it be, not just to be unbound, but to be free to be proclaimers of the gospel?

Many of us have our own kids who don't want to go to our church—is it hypocrisy? Is it the box we put ourselves in? Why do we continue to construct things in the way we always have? Let's go for it. Let's take some risks and be courageous. Where do we want to be in the next five or six years?

7. Name a bible story or verse meaningful to you—why is it meaningful?

I love what it says in Galatians—the part about neither Greek nor Jew. Those identities are the things that have got us caught up. For me, we need to understand that we cannot be enslaved to that which has us held down; to the violence that is a part of all our lives. These are the things impeding us from being the church we claim to be. We must look at what's enslaving us. What's stopping us from putting labels on one another?

We need to be honest about our past, but also courageous to say—this church has wonderful rhetoric, but practically struggles in living things out. To be reminded in scripture that all human being are all God's children—that is my hope today. Whatever your favorite bible verse is, I think this is hardest one for us to accomplish.

B. The Rev. Paul Erickson

1. How would you describe the role of synod Bishop?

It's a big job. I am the Synod's pastor, but I also lead a really good staff. I'm proud of the staff we've assembled—the team we are engaging in the work of the Synod.

Another part is being a pastoral presence in the Synod in places of pain, agony, frustration. When I speak, I am a public voice and have used my body and shown up where I can knowing I'm arriving in the midst of other swirling emotions.

The bishop is the administrator—that role often means leading, guiding and supporting leaders and congregations. When I step back what really is most important is how do we lift up our values in this time and invite more people into relationships with Jesus Christ.

2. Every leader juggles calls to multiple roles in their life. How do you manage the demanding and competing calls in your life?

I am called to be a parent, a sibling, a child. We have many holy and sacred vocations. Practically, our kids are adults and gone now; this gives

me freedom to focus my time and energy on this work—sometimes too much time. The love of my wife, Lynn, keeps me grounded and humbled and makes me a stronger person every single day. I trust the Holy Spirit to ground and center me so that I can be a serving presence to others. God is good. Claimed by God, I am set free to love and serve the world.

3. Our synod has stated a goal of being more inclusive of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+: how do you live our your commitment to making the church a more diverse and multicultural place?

I have a lot to learn, especially showing up and creating spaces so others can claim their own identity and the fullness of their own identities. Every week as a synod staff, we have been reading and discussion what it mean to be an antiracist church. How does this impact our work going forward?

I am excited about engaging this and making changes. Our engaging in an Authentic Diversity Audit will take stock of who we are as a church and synod. I am committed to that work in my own life; I recognize that any space I enter, I am the point of privilege. I continue to listen when it is important for me to be quiet and let others lead.

4. How would you support candidates who LGTBQIA+ are BIPOC in the process in our Synod.

Working with candidates, I think we've made progress in supporting LGBTQIA+ pastors in our synod. I am hopeful that the answers we receive from the audit, though hard, will help us make progress. I am hopeful it can assess what gets in the way of our being inclusive and authentically diverse. This likely means organizing the resources so that those who pay less or wait long have financial support. We need to move forward to challenge the imaginations of congregations—remembering that Jesus didn't look like us in the first place.

5. Some feel isolated from the synod structure? How would you develop relationships with congregations and leaders to build a more connected synod?

When I was first elected bishop, I went on a listening campaign to the ten clusters. I heard from many it was transformative to reconnect to the synod. From those session of that came Synod's Mission, Values, and Practices Statement; from that came Equipping the Saints.

Covid was a challenge that made maintaining those connections hard. We were, as a Synod Staff, more connected with rostered ministers during COVID. Yet, it has been hard not to be with folks in person. I want to resume the listening. Coming back from the past two years, how do we work together and discern God's call into the future?

6. What gives you hope about the future of our church?

This is an amazing synod. Ministry is happening all the time, all over the place. I see ministry happens through all of you—the hands and feet of Jesus. I want to recognize the holy vocation of the laity.

What gives me hope is that it's Jesus made real in word and sacrament, alive and kicking us through the Holy Spirit. I have felt that presence and known the power of the Spirit to transform me and congregations and the system. I believe God will keep pushing us to be what God needs so that all people can dwell in the love of God in Jesus Christ.

7. Name a bible story or verse meaningful to you—why?

I think the story of Paul coming to Lydia. The people have a plan. It didn't work. And yet they didn't blame themselves. Was this Satan? No. The Holy Spirit prevented us from preaching the gospel.

As we explore what comes next, we can learn to experience failure as full of Agape. God will show up in the next step. We seek to follow the Spirit where the Spirit leads. This text challenges me every single day. Plans are good, but the Holy Spirit is more powerful.

C. The Rev. Harvard Stephens

1. How would you describe the role of synod Bishop?

I am honored to be a part of this discussion. We are blessed to have a tradition based on trust. Throughout scripture, the people that God sends are entrusted to proclaim the liberating news of the Holy Gospel. Bishops represent that trust.

The bishop is the sign that we are supporting and entrusting the mind and the voice of the faith of someone the Spirit has moved us to set apart to give a certain kind of order to the life we share in Christ.

The Bishop is “Pastor to the Pastors.” An ecumenical officer at the highest level. A Critical voice in the public church. And always a person in the name of Christ, in whom we have put our trust.

2. Every leader juggles calls to multiple roles in their life. How do you manage the demanding and competing calls in your life?

All of us as God's people are enriched by the complexities of faithful living. Jesus' parables remind us we have to step outside of the worship space in order to seek reconciliation with someone we've offended; someone who offended us. The Holy Spirit has come to make that a priority.

Ministries also require personal sacrifice. We can never neglect the people outside the church God has put in our lives to support us. We must take time to call them loved, dear, and beloved.

I strive to find balance in self-love and self-care. There are many ways to say, “Your faith has made you whole.” Our personal well-being is an appropriate priority. All these are signs that Christ is in us.

3. Our synod has stated a goal of being more inclusive of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ individuals; how do you live out your commitment to making the church a more diverse and multicultural place?

The world is already multicultural. God expects us to speak many languages for friendship, justice, giving peace a chance, and healing. These acronyms are not the end of the work, but point us to the world as God has made it. The Spirit has equipped us to overcome bias, prejudice, and hatred that are central features of our society.

Being church means we are achieving a person-to-person and community-to-community connection enriched by genuine compassion. We need to challenge the words of those who only want acrimony and suspicion to prevail.

I remember negro entrances and colored drinking fountains. The signs were always attempts to regulate us and our lives. To make us feel we would not be safe. The same is true for LGBTQIA folks.

4. How would you support candidates who LGBTQIA+ are BIPOC in the process in our Synod?

The system we use has its flaws. We have begun to expose the flaws that manipulate the system.

One strategy is to employ mentors to develop faith leaders; to help teach and learn what good judgment looks like. Invite them to be around people who can show leadership.

We must dialogue—and use unlikely resources, thinking outside of the box that we find ourselves in.

This means speaking the truth in love and taking responsibility for alternative path.

5. Some in our synod feel isolated from the synod structure. How would you develop relationships with congregations and leaders to build a more connected synod?

I went to a lot of camps, and I'm reminded of the camp song, "The more we get together, the happier we'll be." Sometimes people need an invitation to be among others and break the pattern. We need to take responsibility to make things safe for them.

Are we as a Synod in a safe space to share our wounds? Sharing our stories means we have to provide a safe space. I'm reminded of "The Solace of Fierce Landscapes." Where are the places we go that are unsharpened. Looking at the actual geography of the synod, where are they looking to find wholeness and peace? The first step is recognizing those who are disconnected.

6. What gives you hope about the future of our church?

It's two words: God's promises. This all rests on the promises of God. From that, God's promises leads into other things that give me hope.

There are gifts that open up for all of us: more ecumenical and interfaith activities. We can learn from others' experiences of grace.

This is the future church coming to the presence of God. Our God forgives sins, heals wounds, and fixes the mess we can make of our lives. That grace makes us whole. It gives me hope. I don't want to take for granted what the Holy Spirit is doing.

7. Name a bible story or verse meaningful to you—why?

The story of woman at the well is meaningful to me. It was the lectionary text right when COVID hit—talk about social distancing. It is a story about exactly what was happening in our world. We could not be with everybody else.

Jesus breaks the isolation. In the depths of what they share—we now see ourselves in that kind of hope. There will come a time when we'll see such wonderful things, where what's happening now won't matter a bit. The woman becomes the messenger—"I'm not mad Jesus told me everything. I found grace out there by that well."

3. Review of Election Process

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk walked the Assembly through the steps for the fourth ballot. Any nominee receiving 60% of legal votes cast will be elected; if no nominee receives enough votes, the two nominees who received the most votes will move on to the fifth ballot.

4. Report of the Credentials Committee

Secretary Schlake Kruse presented the fifth report of the Credentials Committee. As of 1:00 p.m., there were 363 credentialed and eligible voting members.

5. Instructions, Song, and Prayer

Deacon Weit led the Assembly in the Hymn, "Come Holy Spirit."

Dan Christianson (Atonement, Muskego) led the Assembly in prayer.

6. Fourth Ballot For Bishop

The Synod Assembly voted in the Fourth Ballot for Bishop, using the Lumi platform. **Treasurer Fedyk** declared voting closed.

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to Bishop Erickson.

D. Vice President's Report

Synod Vice President Joyce Caldwell presented the Report of the Vice President. She inquired of voting members: *Where have you seen God at work?* She shared that recently, she started to look around at see and hear the vibrant reality of God at work in creation. Spring was just exploding. See the variety of flora and fauna. We can regularly see God in the wonder, beauty, and diversity of nature. Reflecting the diversity of creation she noted also shapes who we are to be as church—as God's beloved community.

1. Fall Conference Gathering Reflections

In a wide of age, race, size, gender orientation, identity, nationality, ability, etc. we as a synod have before us God’s glorious vision of diversity. This vision—of who we are to be and the tensions of living into that reality were the strongest recurring themes in the Synod gatherings held this this fall. Over 180 individuals reflected on who we are as the synod, how well we’ve lived into the mission, and where we’ve struggled. Highlighting the report from these Conference Gatherings, **Caldwell** noted equity and justice were listed as the most important value and practices of the Greater Milwaukee Synod; yet, depending on geography, there were distinct differences in what commitments to equity and justice looked like. We are not of one accord on how we name racial inequality and systemic and covert racism throughout our synod.

Caldwell noted how our Synod’s commitment to equity and justice stood in tension with the lack of fully embracing the presence of leaders who aren’t white, straight, or cisgender. “We don’t always practice what we preach.” While this Synod has a long history of Anti-Racism and Reconciling In Christ work, those who participated in the Fall Gatherings also acknowledged the ongoing struggle to fully live into those identities.

2. Anti-Racism and Inclusion Work

Caldwell gave thanks for the ongoing commitments of many leaders who have accompanied the Anti-Racism and RIC Teams from their inception. They continue to lead planned events, dialogue, and share resources. These are lifelong journeys that our faith requires.

Caldwell referenced previous Assembly resolutions which call the Synod to consider changes to its life, policies, governing documents and more. She shared her hope that the Authentic Diversity Audit will help measure the Synod and its progress toward a more authentic reflection of God’s creation.

Referencing our own experiences of race and sharing definitions related to “systems of oppression,” **Caldwell** connected the challenges and opportunities ahead of this synod to the call of the prophet Jonah. “We as a church are in the belly of the whale. Like Jonah, we have heard God’s call but find it too hard and aren’t ready to be part of the call for repentance and change. The Spirit is willing, our courage is weak.”

Caldwell drew attention to the recent actions of the Synod Council in passing a Continuing Resolution formally authorizing and supporting Anti-Racism and Reconciling In Christ teams. This had not been set forth in the Synod’s Governing Documents, but was carried out only in practice. “We are continuing as a Synod Council to work toward accountability,” she noted.

Part of the formal authorization involves appointing new leaders to these important ministry teams. **The Rev. Char Guiliani** will serve as lead of the Synod RIC team; a newly forming Racial Justice team first gathered on May 3 and is continuing to decipher and discern the work of that team over the next months.

“Race and gender swirl around us, impacting people’s lives,” **Caldwell** reflected. “We return to the question of God’s vision for God’s people. How are we living into God’s beloved community and where are we falling short?” She shared a brief overview of the Authentic Diversity Audit, to be carried out by Gold Enterprises, LLC. They will not only provide us with outside perspective on where the Synod is on the spectrum of an Anti-racist organization, but also will present and lead with of strategies and steps for change management. Their focus on systems of change led us to choose their firm to do this work. She also noted that the Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal will provide

funds to hire a racial equity organizer as assistant to the bishop—helping us all grow in our collective understanding toward racial equity and the full inclusion of all people.

Caldwell concluded her remarks with a personal testimony. “I also grew up in the church. And still, I must sometimes squint to see God at work in the church. It makes me squirm to see and know where we have fallen short. Listening to stories of pain, betrayal, and other racially motivated mass shootings. I believe we live and die daily in baptismal waters. I trust God’s vision of Beloved Community. And if we squint, we can see God at work, pointing us to where we need to go.”

Bishop Erickson relinquished the chair to ELCA Treasurer Fedyk.

E. Report of Fourth Ballot for Bishop

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk called on **Jerry Key (Reformation, Milwaukee)** to present the results of the fourth ballot for Bishop.

RESULTS OF BISHOP ELECTION BALLOT Four:

Number of Votes Cast: 323

Number of Legal Votes Cast: 323

Number of Votes Needed for Election (60%): 194

The Rev. Paul Erickson	178
The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López	83
The Rev. Harvard Stephens	62

Treasurer Fedyk declared there was no election. The Assembly proceeded to the Fifth Ballot for Bishop.

F. Fifth Ballot for Bishop

1. Report of the Credentials Committee

Secretary Schlake Kruse presented the sixth report of the Credentials Committee. There remained 363 credentialed and eligible voting members.

2. Instructions, Song, and Prayer

Deacon Weit led the Assembly in the Hymn, “Come Holy Spirit.”

The Rev. Vicki Watkins (Village, Milwaukee) led the Assembly in prayer.

3. Fifth Ballot For Bishop

The Synod Assembly voted in the Fifth Ballot for Bishop, using the Lumi platform. **Treasurer Fedyk** declared voting closed.

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to Bishop Erickson.

G. Reference and Counsel Report

Lisa Schulte (Resurrection, Pewaukee) presented a brief summation of the work of the Reference and Counsel committee prior to the Assembly. She read the resolved clauses of the one memorial and one resolution before the Assembly.

1. Proposed Memorial #1: Climate Action

Be it RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to instruct ELCA Advocacy to continue to call upon the United States of America to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, to generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the ELCA churchwide organization to equip and encourage congregations, synods, and associated ministries to advocate that the United States of America reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030, generate 100% of its power from clean renewable sources by 2035, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request the ELCA Churchwide organization to encourage congregations and synods to advocate, for a just transition away from greenhouse gasses where at least 40% of the funding goes towards projects that directly benefit Indigenous, Black, People of Color, and communities impacted by poverty that bear a disproportionate cost of pollution and climate change already; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage congregants, rostered ministers, and bishops to further educate themselves to the urgency of the climate emergency both locally and globally as well as to the local and global opportunities a just transition will create, ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage rostered ministers and bishops to lift up loving our neighbor in response to the climate emergency through their preaching at least once a month; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to invite the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, across all three expressions, to set the goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the ELCA Churchwide organization to make a plan to reduce its greenhouse gasses by 2030, or sooner, by making the necessary energy efficiency improvements to their building, sourcing electricity from clean sources, incentivizing the electrification of the vehicles they reimburse mileage for, and working on partnerships to offset emissions generated from flights with providers of righteous offsets; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022

Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the ELCA Church Council to authorize the development of resources and the hiring of staff to educate the ELCA church body about the importance of reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and to help our ministries achieve these goals; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to instruct the Mission Investment Fund to prioritize supporting congregations seeking assistance in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and to encourage the Mission Investment Fund to create resources to help congregations in communities disproportionately bearing the cost of pollution and climate change to make such investments; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct ELCA Churchwide Organization to provide a report to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly and subsequent assemblies, assessing the progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Submitted by: Pastor Jonathan Barker and the Council at Grace Lutheran Church, Kenosha

2. Proposed Resolution #1: Resolution Supporting Educators and the Teaching of Information Relating to Racism and Inclusivity

Be it RESOLVED, that the Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod draft a public statement advocating against the prohibition of controversial issues related to race, gender, and sexuality in schools and other educational settings; and be it further

RESOLVED that this statement be sent to the Wisconsin State Assembly, Senate, Office of the Governor, and Office of the Superintendent of Public Education; and be it further

RESOLVED that this statement be sent to all congregations in the synod, calling on all those who embrace this vision to work with local schools, local government, school boards, and state government leaders to support that controversial topics continue to be taught and discussed; and be it further

RESOLVED that in an accompanying letter sent from the Bishop to congregations, members be invited to discuss these issues together and seek ways to practice justice and inclusion.

Submitted by: The Church Council of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend.

H. Equipping the Saints Videos

The Assembly viewed videos highlighting the work supported by the Equipping the Saints Mission Appeal. Videos featured **Rhonda Hill** and her organization **Race and Faith**'s work with Synod congregations and youth regarding anti-racism and TACOS, a joint youth ministry endeavor among congregations in Sussex.

Bishop Erickson relinquished the chair to ELCA Treasurer Fedyk.

I. Report of the Fifth Ballot for Bishop

ELCA Treasurer Fedyk invited Vickie Stretz of the Bishop Election Committee to present the results of the Fifth Ballot for Bishop. She thanked the technology team; floor pages; and members of the Bishop Election Committee for their hard work ahead of and throughout the Assembly.

RESULTS OF BISHOP ELECTION BALLOT FIVE:

Number of Votes Cast: 315

Number of Legal Votes Cast: 315

Number of Votes Needed for Election (50%): 158

The Rev. Paul Erickson 215

The Rev. Michelle Townsend de López 100

<u>Synod Assembly Action</u>	<u>Election of Synod Bishop</u>
SA22.05.08.	
The Assembly elected The Rev. Paul D. Erickson to a six-year term as Synod Bishop.	
<i>Elected through Lumi Voting Platform</i>	

J. Remarks from the Re-Elected Bishop

Bishop Erickson thanked the Assembly and Bishop Election Committee. His remarks reflected his willingness to continue doing the hard work in leading the Synod. “I am grateful for your trust and don’t take it for granted. I will try to be a better bishop. I am certain sure that God is ahead of us, Jesus is with us, and the Holy spirit will blow us forward into God’s future.”

*ELCA Treasurer Fedyk then returned the chair to **Bishop Erickson**.
Bishop Erickson then relinquished the chair to **Vice President Caldwell**.*

K. The Report of the Bishop

Bishop Erickson began his report to the Synod with gratitude for the good and important work we’ve done together. He thanked each of the Synod Staff members and invited them to join him on the dais to be introduced and thanked by the Assembly. He then invited the three Assistants to the Bishop to share brief reflections on their work as it engages with the Assembly theme: We Love All—Creating Communities of Welcome.

The Rev. Matthew Short, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, reflected on the word evangelism. Noting that the good news is not just for us, he lifted up that God’s grace is a gift accessible to everyone. He shared highlights from leading Synod congregations in the Faithful Innovations program and excitedly previewed a new tool the Synod will have access to use in learning more about congregational contexts. Mission Insite is a collection of demographic data and tools that offer information and can lead us into deeper relationships within the church and in our neighborhoods. Reflecting on the role of called evangelists in the Synod’s global companion in Tanzania,

he encouraged voting members to lift up the “everyday evangelists” among their communities of faith.

The Rev. Kristin Nielsen, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission, explained her work with congregations in transition and the function of the Mission Exploration Team. She noted that times of transition can be full of blessing—including active learning, forward movement, and space to determine core values. She shared with the Assembly her Top Ten List for Congregations in Transition. 1. Share the Load; 2. Ask lots of questions; 3. Trust the Spirit is in the Process; 4. You are not falling apart, you are just experiencing change; 5. Pray, Pray, Pray; 6. Have fun—Play!; 7. Ambiguity is uncomfortable but can be pivotal; 8. Honor differences in communication styles and ways of knowing; 9. Love is at the Center of the Gospel; Welcome is at the Heart of Community; 10. You got this...God is with you.

The Rev. Jennifer Arnold, Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership, reflected especially on her role as the staff liaison with the Anti-racism Team. She noted the many ways this work has impacted and blessed her. “I know I have gained a deeper understanding of racism and its impact on people who are white. This is a life-long process; I have been changed along the way. Exploring privilege is holy work; necessary work; it is our work.” She encouraged the Assembly to pause and wonder where these ism’s come from, and to consider how we might help tear them down, rather than building them up.

Bishop Erickson shared insights on the perpetual and growing amount of congregational transitions, especially after the pandemic. Over the previous year, thirteen congregations completed their call processes. Five individuals were ordained to ministry fourteen new Rostered Ministers began serving congregations in the Greater Milwaukee Synod. He introduced all new ministers to the Assembly.

Bishop Erickson lamented the deaths of many faithful pastors and deacons who joined the church triumphant in the past year. He led the Assembly in a prayer of thanksgiving and commendation.

Bishop Erickson honored congregations and Rostered Ministers celebrating anniversaries this year. A special gathering will allow for a formal celebration with those congregations and leaders.

Concluding his report, **Bishop Erickson** thanked the Assembly for its trust in the Spirit’s call to continue service to the Synod. “We have a future,” he noted, “because we have a future in God.”

*Vice President Caldwell returned the chair to **Bishop Erickson**.*

L. Action on the 2023-2024 Synod Budget

Treasurer Pahl moved the adoption of the 2023-2024 proposed Synod Budget.

The Rev. Lindsey Beukelman (All People’s) moved the following amendment: **To amend the proposed budget, increasing compensation and employee benefits by 3% and decreasing Mission Support to roughly 49.25%, a balanced change of \$12,980.** The motion was seconded.

Beukelman spoke to her amendment, noting the imperative of justly compensating our Synod Leaders. “As rostered ministers, we lean on Synod Staff to advocate for us in our congregations for just wages. We need to start putting money where our mouth is.

Ronald Siske sought clarification as to the location of the changes in the Budget document.

Synod Assembly Action Amendment to Synod Budget

SA22.05.09.

The Assembly approved amending the proposed 2023-2024 Synod Budget: increasing compensation and employee benefits by 3% and decreasing Mission Support to roughly 49.25%, a balanced change of \$12,980.

Approved through Unanimous Consent

Synod Assembly Action Approval of 2023-2024 Synod Budget

SA22.05.10.

The Assembly approved the amended 2023-2024 Synod Budget.

Approved through Unanimous Consent

L. Action on Proposed Bylaw and Constitutional Changes

Secretary Schlake Kruse moved the adoption of proposed amendments and changes to Synod Bylaws S7.22.01.; S7.22.02.; S7.22.03; S10.07.01.; and S11.02.01.

Synod Assembly Action Approval of Amendments to Synod Bylaws

SA22.05.11.

The Assembly approved amendments and changes to Synod Bylaws S7.22.01.; S7.22.02.; S7.22.03; S10.07.01.; and S11.02.01.

Approved through Unanimous Consent

Secretary Schlake Kruse then moved the adoption of proposed amendments and changes to Synod Continuing Resolutions S6.03.B15.; S7.21.A22.; S8.22.A13.; and S10.01.B12.

Synod Assembly Action Approval of Amendments to Synod Continuing Resolutions

SA22.05.12.

The Assembly approved amendments and changes to Synod Continuing Resolutions S6.03.B15.; S7.21.A22.; S8.22.A13.; and S10.01.B12.

Approved through Unanimous Consent

M. Action on Memorials and Resolutions

Reference and Counsel Chair Schulte presented Memorial and 1 and Resolution 1 for Assembly Action.

1. 2022 Memorial 1: Climate Change

The Rev. Jonathan Barker (Grace, Kenosha) moved the memorial for consideration. The motion was seconded. Speaking in favor of the Memorial, **The Rev. Barker** noted this is a “Here I Stand” moment in the climate emergency. International scientists have indicated climate action must be taken now to prevent great catastrophe. More than half the world’s people are highly vulnerable; heat waves are more likely; and our neighbors across the world are bearing the brunt of the impacts. As a Christian body proclaiming love for neighbor, we must declare where we stand as a denomination. Now is the time to live well, reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions, and act boldly.

The Chair attempted to use unanimous consent to take action on the motion, but unanimous consent was not given by the Assembly.

Synod Assembly Action Memorial to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly
SA22.05.13.

The Assembly approved memorializing the ELCA Churchwide Assembly regarding climate change as presented in Synod Assembly Memorial 1.

*Approved through vote on Lumi Platform
Yes: 162 votes; No:32 votes; 18 abstentions.*

2. 2022 Resolution 1: Resolution Supporting Educators

The Rev. David Schoob (Trinity, West Bend) moved the Resolution for approval. The motion was seconded. **The Rev. Schoob**, speaking in favor of the resolution, noted his congregation has been studying critical race theory. The congregation, he reflected, recognized institutional racism as something we need to struggle with as a church and as a synod. Our history—painful as it is—is at the root of these issues, and is being stopped from being taught in public schools.

The Rev. Schoob noted this is now expanding to issues of LGBTQIA+ inclusion. “We can’t move forward in justice if we don’t talk about these things. We are a church of ethical deliberation, and have much to add to the public discourse of these issues.” He further commented that our commitment to partnership demands the church be the conscience for those in earthly authority.

The Rev. Kipp Zimmermann (St. Stephen the Martyr, Greendale) spoke in favor of the resolution, noting the statement stands in favor of those who feel helpless.

Synod Assembly Action Approval of Resolution 1: Supporting Educators

SA22.05.14.

The Assembly approved Resolution 1, regarding Synod support for educators as presented.

*Approved through vote on Lumi Platform
Yes: 183 votes; No:18 votes; 9 abstentions.*

3. 2022 Memorial 2: Review and Revision of “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust”
The Rev. Char Guiliani (Incarnation, Milwaukee) moved to suspend the rules to address and consider a second memorial that was submitted after the deadline. The motion was seconded. **Bishop Erickson** noted suspension of the rules requires a 2/3 vote of the Assembly.

Synod Assembly Action Suspension of Assembly Rules

SA22.05.15.

The Assembly approved suspending the Assembly Rules to allow for consideration of a memorial regarding review and revision of the ELCA Social Statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.”

Approved through Unanimous Consent

The Rev. Guiliani then moved the following memorial submitted by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Reconciling in Christ Team with support from the Central Conference. The motion was seconded.

RESOLVED that the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at its 2022 Churchwide Assembly to authorize a review of the Social Statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” revising it to reflect current church understanding, church policy, civil law and public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender non-conforming couples.

There was no discussion of the proposed memorial.

Synod Assembly Action Memorial to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly

SA22.05.16.

The Assembly approved memorializing the ELCA Churchwide Assembly regarding revisions to the ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality as presented in Synod Assembly Memorial 2.

Approved through Unanimous Consent

N. Closing Prayer and Installations

Vice President Caldwell led the Assembly in a liturgy for the re-election of a Synod Bishop, based on the Isaiah 52 text: “How beautiful are the feet of the messenger who announces peace.” She then prayed for **Bishop Erickson** in renewing his commitment to his call as Bishop and to the Synod.

Bishop Erickson led newly elected individuals in a liturgy honoring their service, based on Romans 12:4-8. He then led the Assembly in the Order for the Closing of an Assembly.

O. Adjournment

Bishop Erickson declared Plenary 4 completed and the Assembly adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Matthew Schlake Kruse, Synod Secretary

