

Minutes of the 2012 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31 – June 2, 2012

Thursday, May 31, 2012

The 2012 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly took place from Thursday, May 31, 2012 through Saturday, June 2, 2012 at the Country Springs Hotel Conference Center at 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, Wisconsin. The Assembly included a Ministry Fair and ethnic meal and a workshop on parliamentary procedure on Thursday afternoon.

Thursday evening's Opening Worship was preceded by recognition of Ms. Cecilia Gore, Executive Director of the Milwaukee Brewers Community Foundation, by Rev. Norene Smith and Bishop Barrow for the role played by the Foundation in supporting the building of a Habitat for Humanity house for Ms. Marquitta Smith near Hephatha Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. Hephatha's pastor, Rev. Mary Martha Kannass, citing Exodus 3, preached on the gift of support for Hephatha's ministry by many in the synod, which helped create Holy Ground around Hephatha. Rev. Joe Ellwanger also preached, sharing a message on "Holy Ground moments," based on his experience participating in the funeral of the victims of the church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963. He called for substituting "courage for caution," and looking at moments we may already have experienced that represent Holy Ground. Presiding was Rev. Dennis Jacobsen of Incarnation Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. The Incarnation Choir and praise dancers participated in worship, with singing and prayer by Mr. Gus Barnes.

Plenary I

Order for Opening of Assembly

Synod Bishop Jeff Barrow called the Assembly to order at 7:33 pm with the Order for the Opening of Assembly. The bishop welcomed special guests Bishop Peter Rogness and his wife Gerry, representative to the Assembly from the ELCA; former bishop the Rev. Paul Stume-Diers; Rev. David Larson, President & CEO of Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS); Ms. Lori Land, Director of Advancement for LSS; Ms. Lisa Hassenstab, Vice President of Advocacy for LSS; Mr. Jim Holmberg, Outreach-Resource Development Specialist for LSS; Rev. Paul Brinkman, Executive Vice President Advancement for LSS; Ms. Amy Johnson, Director for Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin; Ms. Rachel Wind, Regional Gift Officer at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; Rev. David Keller, President & CEO of Luther Manor; Rev. Larry Westfield, Regional Gift Planner for Lutheran Planned Giving of Wisconsin; Ms. Deborah Simonson Smith, Regional Manager for the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

The bishop reported that offerings received at worship services during the Assembly would be divided equally between Outreach for Hope and the ELCA's Malaria Campaign.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Synod Bishop Barrow called upon Mr. David Groenewold to give the report of the Credentials Committee.

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Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that in attendance by 6:00 pm, Thursday, May 31, 2012, were 126 rostered persons, 165 lay people, for a total voting membership of 291. Also present were 58 visitors for a total attendance of 349. Pastors asking to be excused are listed in the synod records. A quorum was present.

Adoption of Agenda

Following the report of the Credentials Committee Synod Bishop Barrow asked the Assembly to consider the adoption of the agenda as printed in the Synod Assembly Supplement (hereinafter "Supplement").

Assembly Action

SA12.05.01. Adoption of Agenda

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

Synod Bishop Barrow declared the agenda adopted.

Suspension of Rules

Rev. Jim Stein moved Suspension of the Rules to allow a motion honoring Mary Meyer.

Assembly Action

SA12.05.02. Suspension of Rules

The Assembly voted to suspend the Rules to allow a motion honoring Mary Meyer.

Recognition of Mary Meyer

Rev. Jim Stein moved a Special Order honoring Mary Meyer.

Assembly Action

SA12.05.03. Approval of Special Order Honoring Mary Meyer

The Assembly voted to approve a Special Order honoring Mary Meyer, and allowing for additional recognition of her throughout the course of the Assembly.

WHEREAS, Mary Meyer certainly deserves the title "well done good and faithful servant !" having faithfully served with a grace-filled caring spirit the members of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod of the LCA, the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the ELCA, its bishops, its rostered leaders and anyone who has walked through the door leading to the office for thirty-six years,

AND WHEREAS, Mary Meyer has, with the help of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and her family members, determined that she will no longer continue to serve as Synod Administrator to the Bishop's Office but will turn her life to other pursuits, interests and passions,

BE IT RESOLVED that Mary Meyer receive all the good gifts she deserves and which we can pour out upon her including naming this weekend: "The Mary Meyer Synod Assembly" and acknowledging how much we appreciate her service among us and for us with a standing ovation.

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Bishop Barrow announced that there would be Mary Moments celebrated from time to time.

Approval of Rules

Synod Bishop Barrow referred Voting Members to the proposed Rules of the Assembly as printed in the Supplement. There were no comments from the Assembly regarding the rules. Synod Bishop Barrow called for the vote on the Rules.

Assembly Action

SA12.05.04. Approval of 2012 Assembly Rules for Elections and Procedures

The Assembly voted to adopt the 2012 Assembly Rules for Elections and Procedures as presented.

Synod Bishop Barrow declared the Rules adopted.

Ms. Tracy Apps, the synod's Director of Communication, explained the technical details of the voting procedures to the Assembly. To demonstrate the new electronic voting system, Ms. Apps asked a series of sample questions to which voting member responded.

Appointments

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

Nominating Committee Report

Bishop Barrow called on Mr. Matthew Brockmeier, Chair of the Nominating Committee, to present the Nominating Committee report. Mr. Brockmeier informed the assembly of the procedure used for the selection of persons to the various positions to be filled. Mr. Brockmeier placed in nomination the following persons. Bishop Barrow called for nominations from the floor three times for each at-large Voting Member and Discipline Committee position. With no nominations from the floor for any category, and by unanimous consent, Bishop Barrow declared each category closed.

Nominated for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly

At-Large – Clergy (two positions open)

The Rev. Brian Alberti
The Rev. Roosevelt Morgan
The Rev. Dean Natterstad
The Rev. Barbara Rasmussen
The Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld
The Rev. Kris Totzke
The Rev. Vicki Watkins

At-Large – Lay Female, Person of Color (one position open)

Ms. Latonya Jordan

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Ms. Verenice Morgan

At-Large – Lay Male (two positions open)

Mr. Elijah Furquan
Mr. Lee Johnston
Mr. Jerry Koepke
Mr. Roger Lemnus
Mr. Nicholas Schoob

At-Large – Lay Male, Person of Color (one position open)

Mr. Gus Barnes
Mr. Isaiah Furquan
Mr. Jose Guerrero
Mr. Jerry Key

Kenosha/West Racine Cluster – Lay Female (one position open)

Ms. Carol Gillmore

Milwaukee Cluster 1 – Lay Male (one position open)

Mr. Will Robertson

Milwaukee Cluster 2 – Clergy (one position open)

The Rev. Donna Brown

Milwaukee Cluster 3 – Lay Female (one position open)

Ms. Susan Cyr

Milwaukee Cluster 4 – Lay Male (one position open)

Mr. Conor Williams

Lake Country Cluster – Clergy (one position open)

The Rev. Steve Blyth

Northern Lakeshore Cluster – Lay Female (one position open)

Ms. Esther Rusch

Northwest Cluster – Lay Male (one position open)

Mr. Paul Bedker

Racine Cluster – Clergy (one position open)

The Rev. Dana O'Brien

Waukesha Cluster – Lay Female (one position open)

Ms. Marilyn Schwanz Olson

Nominated for the Discipline Committee

Clergy (two positions open)

The Rev. Roosevelt Morgan
The Rev. Chuck Turbin

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Lay Female (one position open)

Dr. Joyce Caldwell
Ms. Shelia Schwarz

Lay Male (one position open)

Mr. Ed Burmeister
Mr. Gary Christianson

Report of Women of the ELCA

Synod Bishop Barrow called upon Ms. Betty Warber, President of the Synod Women's Organization, for a report on the work of the Women of the ELCA. Ms. Warber gave a brief history of the organization dating back to its founding in 19th century prison reform and abolition efforts. The organization took its current form at the time of the merger that created the ELCA in 1987.

She spoke of the work of the SWO, including 2,271 quilts made in only 12 reporting congregations in 2011, and funding supplied to the churchwide organization and for local efforts. Lutheran World Relief has challenged WELCA to create 500,000 quilts in 2012, which Ms. Warber said would be exceeded. She spoke of future events, including a gathering in July and a 25th anniversary celebration in October 2012, and described the organization's publication, Gather magazine.

Mary Moment

Rev. Kris Totzke took the floor to praise Mary Meyer's influence on her life and work, stating that she would not be in synod if not for Mary. Rapid action by Mary during Rev. Totzke's search for a call eleven years ago brought Rev. Totzke to Racine. She concluded by saying that she will always be grateful to Mary Meyer, saying that it was a blessing to be in this synod and a blessing to have been her pastor.

Cross+Generational Ministry Team Presentation

Ms. Kate Mattson and others from the Cross+Generational Ministry Team provided an overview of their approach and their work, which has been underway since January. She explained that that a cross-generational ministry is not the same as intergenerational ministry, and is meant to engage with people of all ages and with Christ at the heart of the mission. In working with congregations, they are recognizing that existing models have not been successful. The team is utilizing research and experience in an effort to unite all people to live out Matthew 28.

The Greater Milwaukee Synod Cross+Generational Ministry Team accompanies congregations in cultivating followers of Jesus by:

- Engaging congregations in Cross+Generational ministry.
- Equipping leadership with tools, theory, and Lutheran theology for excellence in ministry.
- Empowering youth and young adults to practice their God-given gifts in service to the Church & the world.

The desired result is equipping leadership; educating, empowering and exciting participants, with a strong Lutheran basis and the highest professional standards. The

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context for this is “living intentionally as a synod, not just as congregations.” In doing this, part of the process is to ask who is not present. A strategic plan is in process.

In closing, Ms. Mattson brought to the Assembly’s attention several events in coming months.

Mary Moment

Bishop Barrow read a tribute to Mary Meyer from Frederick Marx.

A video on the ELCA’s Malaria campaign was shown.

The Assembly recessed for the evening at 8:36 pm.

Friday, June 1, 2012

Plenary II

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 8:07 am, asking Rev. Chuck Brummond and Rev. Sandy Chrostowski to lead bible study. This included a video on the work of Nancy and David Slinde as missionaries to El Salvador, and an introduction of the Slindes to the Assembly. The remainder of the bible study session consisted of table discussions based on Isaiah 6:1-8, with sharing of God’s call and the gifts God has given to meet those calls.

Bishop Barrow announced that the Word of the Day is Committee, with quarters to be dropped into cups with each mention of the word. He also announced that as an outgrowth of the savings realized by the rostered leaders’ health assessments, the synod will sponsor a four-day event at Lutherdale in August with a focus on recharging and re-energizing.

Bishop Barrow introduced Ms. Kelly Culhane, a new St. Olaf College graduate who will work as a Young Adult in Global Mission in Malaysia. Following her remarks, the bishop reported that the synod will provide \$1,000 in support of this mission.

Mary Moment

Jan Camus was given the floor by Bishop Barrow to recount how when she was working at Fortress Church Supply, she was recruited by Mary to apply as receptionist and secretary at the synod office in 1988. She was interviewed by the whole staff, and grateful for Mary’s ongoing support and friendship. She said that Mary was there for her, teaching her new things, while being her friend. For all of this she expressed profound gratitude.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Synod Bishop Barrow called upon Mr. David Groenewold to give the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that in attendance by 8:00 am, Friday, June 1, 2012, were 130 rostered persons and 172 lay people, for a total voting membership of 302. Also present were 58 visitors for a total attendance of 360. A quorum was present.

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Motion to Suspend the Rules

Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld moved a Suspension of the Rules to allow the showing of a video on the 11x15 initiative at the time that Resolution #1 is considered.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.05. Approval of Motion to Suspend the Rules

The Assembly voted to suspend the Rules to allow the showing of a video on the 11x15 initiative at the time that Resolution #1 is considered.

Nominating Committee Report and First Ballot

Bishop Barrow invited Mr. Matthew Brockmeier to present the Nominating Committee report in advance of voting. Mr. Brockmeier explained that votes would be cast for all offices presented in the committee's report during Plenary Session I, and turned the floor back to the bishop to conduct the election. Using the electronic voting system, ballots were cast for each category. Bishop Barrow declared winners for results where a candidate received more than 50% of the vote. A total of 268 Voting Member participated in this ballot. These results were:

Elected as Voting Members of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly

At-Large – Lay Female, Person of Color (one position open)

Ms. Latonya Jordan 166 votes

Kenosha/West Racine Cluster – Lay Female (one position open)

Ms. Carol Gillmore 239 votes

Milwaukee Cluster 1 – Lay Male (one position open)

Mr. Will Robertson 238 votes

Milwaukee Cluster 2 – Clergy (one position open)

The Rev. Donna Brown 240 votes

Milwaukee Cluster 3 – Lay Female (one position open)

Ms. Susan Cyr 241 votes

Milwaukee Cluster 4 – Lay Male (one position open)

Mr. Conor Williams 236 votes

Lake Country Cluster – Clergy (one position open)

The Rev. Steve Blyth 233 votes

Northern Lakeshore Cluster – Lay Female (one position open)

Ms. Esther Rusch 243 votes

Northwest Cluster – Lay Male (one position open)

Mr. Paul Bedker 228 votes

Racine Cluster – Clergy (one position open)

The Rev. Dana O'Brien 233 votes

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Waukesha Cluster – Lay Female (one position open)
Ms. Marilyn Schwanz Olson 240 votes

Elected to the Greater Milwaukee Synod Discipline Committee

Clergy (two positions open)
The Rev. Roosevelt Morgan 242 votes
The Rev. Chuck Turbin 246 votes

Lay Female (one position open)
Dr. Joyce Caldwell 191 votes

Lay Male (one position open)
Mr. Gary Christianson 181 votes

Results for races where final selections were not made will be presented by Election Committee chair Rev. Kristin Nielsen at the appointed time for the second ballot during Plenary Session III.

Mary Moment

Ms. Marcia Carrier read a letter from Ms. Ellen Maxon praising Mary's civility, loyalty and wisdom.

Reference and Counsel Committee

Ms. Joy Harshberger, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, was invited by Bishop Barrow to present the committee's report. The committee recommends approval of Resolution 1 in support of the 11x15 Campaign for Safer and Healthier Communities. Voting Members were urged to read the Resolution before this afternoon's vote. There is also a brochure provided to Voting Members in their information packets, and a workshop at 10:30 am in room ELC1 on this resolution.

ELCA Representative Report

Bishop Peter Rogness was introduced to the Assembly by Bishop Barrow. He began his remarks by noting that it is nice to be back in Mary Meyer's synod, saying that Mary's retirement is the first real change to the synod since the creation of the ELCA. He asserted that bishops are eye candy, but that Mary has run the place all along. Mary was the first person chosen for the new synod's staff.

Bishop Rogness recounted that he spent 29 years in Milwaukee, which really became home. Even though he has returned to his original home in Minnesota, he said there is a homecoming feel to being back in Milwaukee and at the Assembly. He also noted that he was in office when Bishop Paul Stume-Diers came out of seminary, and when Bishop Barrow came to Milwaukee.

Bishop Rogness framed his report as a time to provide a clear sense that the church represents something that is beyond individuals or congregations. He framed his remarks as a reminder of what congregations are as part of as ELCA and, more broadly, why being part of a denomination still matters. He said that the Living Into the Future Together (LIFT) initiative bridges these two ideas.

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As to the basics of being part of the ELCA, he offered his thanks to the individuals and congregations making up an important part of something bigger. He noted that 55% of what is sent in to the synod in benevolence is forwarded to the churchwide office saying that this is what it is to be the body of Christ.

With this support, the ELCA is able to advance the work of God's people in 90 countries, with 245 missionaries serving around the world. The ELCA provides \$13 million in grants for refugees. Sixty new congregations (half in minority communities) were created, and 340 congregations are being supported in their planned renewal efforts. Another area of expertise, Bishop Rogness said, is that "we do disasters like nobody else." The Lutheran World Relief network is four times the size of comparable Catholic agencies, with one in fifty Americans touched by LWR's work annually. In education the ELCA supports eight seminaries and 26 colleges. These activities and organizations provide a glimpse of what happens and its impact, all of which is made possible because we have a life together.

But, Bishop Rogness continued, times are changing. The ELCA was born 25 years ago, and was very much like the predecessor bodies; well-established church bodies established in turn in the early 1960s. At that time things were going well for what Bishop Rogness said were churches with "rock-ribbed" support, with 25% of average congregational budgets going to the whole church. That percentage has been falling for 50 years, with the average now under 6% for the ELCA (and under 5% in GMS and 4% in the St Paul Synod). Early on new congregations could be planted ("if you build it they will come"). That is no longer the case. The number of dollars for mission development is the same, but not adjusted for inflation. This brings us, Bishop Rogness said, to the Living Into the Future Together (LIFT) initiative, which asks the questions "how are we going to do church" and "what can we do and what can we not do."

He went on to say that at the heart what we do together as a church takes place at the local congregation: The engine of the church is the local congregation. That's where the impact is – that's where the fuel comes from: Renewing and energizing through the local congregation.

What is needed, Bishop Rogness said, is a process to energize congregations in mission. Asking key questions, including "how do congregations think about what it is to be church together" and "why bother with denominations at all." With instantaneous communications it is easy to find mission efforts to support without involving the central church. This leads to more autonomy in decision making, with another aspect of the change being distrust of larger institutions.

The final question, Bishop Rogness added, is "why do we need this (the larger church)"? His answer is that being Lutheran is an asset in this day in age for theological, sociological and practical reasons.

Theologically, being Lutheran gives us an identity that means something. Being Lutheran carries with it indelible marks, names our identity, part of a larger Christian faith with more energy and consistency. This faith, held Bishop Rogness, is anchored in

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a conviction that the relationship with God is all God's doing, or God's grace. It is not dependent on our actions. And it is a loving God we have met in Jesus Christ, who meets us where we are. God's activity holds us.

This is the core of being Lutheran in these times. There is now, he said, a religious world increasingly polarized into absolutists and relativists.

The absolutists, Bishop Rogness claimed, are of the opinion that they "have the truth," and that if you're not part of them you simply don't have the truth. This leads to a huge chasm between "us" and "them," with very little room for questioning.

The other pole, relativists, work from a stance that all beliefs are equally valid, without being judgmental ("I have my beliefs and you have yours"). This, stated Bishop Rogness, represents a betrayal of any claim to truth, lacking any commitment to a sense of truth, leaving only "a faith in faith" but with nothing really mattering.

Summing up this reality, Bishop Rogness said that one pole has no room for questions, while the other pole leaves nothing to go by at all.

Being rooted in grace is an asset, he added. Lutherans do make claims to truth; the truth that God created the world, calling us into it, and promising that the Holy Spirit will be with us. This, he said, is a truth we can offer the world. But in offering that truth, we must use humility. We don't take credit for this, since we are not absolute and can never know all about God. God, at the core, is love and compassion. God is a God of grace who wills love and compassion for the whole of the human family.

Bishop Rogness went on to say that this is not based on right behavior or right doctrine. God may choose to reveal some of his grace in other ways to other people, perhaps with other forms of faith. God can choose to reveal something of the divine to others. At its heart, the Lutheran faith is grace: the word of hope, the word of love, the compassionate word that the world is desperate to hear.

Moving to an analysis of the practical nature of the church, he likened it to any other infrastructure people expect to simply be in place: highways, water or electricity. He said that such infrastructure is presumed to be there. In like fashion, the life of the church needs infrastructure, including especially trained pastor, with the church able to work toward integrity and other criteria for ministers. The most practical manifestation of this is connecting the needs of the congregation with the people on the roster. Without trained clergy, who would decide how to approach the act of worship, or lay the groundwork for ecumenical activity? The Lutheran church equips people and congregations to do ministry beyond what they can do by themselves. Synods are, he added, the connective tissue in the body of Christ.

Bishop Rogness said that the question then is refined to how congregations and individuals can effectively move beyond themselves. The church cannot be "just a private feel-good club." It must instead "live as the full body of Christ." The church can help millions of people in development work, finding what it is to be God's people in this place. This is what the church together can accomplish. It is not just "part of the teeming

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billions in the world.” It is rather the transformative power of being more than just ourselves. Being together is the church.

“Being a church that matters matters,” he continued. “We are doing this across the country. Millions of Lutherans around the world are doing this. Tens of millions of lives are changed every day by our work.” Bishop Rogness urged that we “bless the whole world by being channels of God’s grace.”

He concluded with a Mary Moment, saying that “Mary’s work in the synod office was her call to ministry; an example of the living Gospel.”

Budget Presentation

Rev. Sandy Chrostowski provided an introduction to the proposed 2013-2014 budget by presenting a written narrative report to the Assembly, telling the story of how the synod’s funds are used. In doing this she explained that the continuing shortfalls in revenue limit the synod’s ability to support missional work.

Synod Treasurer Mr. Lee Johnston then presented the formal budget, including an overview of last year’s actual income and expenses and both the approved and revised budget for the current fiscal year. He explained that a review of last year (2011-2012) starts the process, which includes taking into account trends, especially in income, where there has been a continuing pattern of an annual drop-off of \$100,000. The budget process works to take into account that trend.

Despite that practice, the Synod Council had to review and revise the current fiscal year’s budget based on revised income expectations. The good news was that, in the last fiscal year there had been enough surplus funds to give an extra \$40,000 to the ELCA, moving the synod above the approved target of 55% of total revenue.

There were no questions of Mr. Johnston from the Assembly.

Bishop Barrow added that “together we can do so much more than we can do apart,” stating that at the synod office an effort has been made to spend less and get more, making more efficient use of available funds. He said that this is part of a larger effort to rebuild trust between congregations and institutions, with that trust allowing so much more to be done than what can be done alone.

Outreach for Hope Quilt Auction

The Rev. Jim Bickel introduced a quilt auction designed to raise funds for Outreach for Hope, a ministry founded 17 years ago by the synod as a way to give support to congregations and ministries that walk with the poor. Two auction packages were offered: one with a blue full-sized quilt, and the added attraction of the Bishop’s Painting Crew, who will paint the winner’s bedroom any color desired. The second package features a green and gold (Packer palette) queen-sized quilt, along with two tickets to the December 9th Green Bay vs. Detroit game.

The Rev. Elias Kitoi Nasari acted as auctioneer, exhorting the Assembly to view this as “not about buying, but about giving an offering to God.” The Assembly took him at his word, buying the first package twice (the first time for \$400; the second for \$350) and

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the second package twice as well (for \$700 and again for \$600), for a sale/offering total of \$2,050.

For the remainder of the morning, the Assembly turned its attention to workshops on a variety of topics.

Plenary III

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 1:02 pm. Bible study was led by Rev. Jim Bickel and Ms. Rhonda Hill, starting with a video highlighting the work of the Neighborhood Store in the Reformation Lutheran Church area of Milwaukee. Using donations, the store provides clothing and other items inexpensively, creating a piece of Holy Ground in its community. The bible study continued with readings from Exodus 3 and Acts 9, showing how God brought Moses to Holy Ground, but later, through Christ, made Holy Ground of Saul in transforming him from oppressor to advocate of the faith. The questions posed were to look at divine revelation, personal revelation and the nature of a calling, with revelation leading to liberation. A second video featured the journey of faith of Ezekiel Averhart of Cross Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, with reiteration of the idea of determining what the Holy Spirit calls us to do now.

Mary Moments

Bishop Barrow called Rev. Fran Odden to the podium for to present Mary with a life-sized autographed cardboard image of Brett Favre, noting that there may be some issues with the former hero's status. The bishop noted as follow-up that in his opinion the Minnesota Vikings are like the Book of Revelation: That it's not the book but the fans that are the problem. The Assembly moved on.

A second Mary Moment was provided by Ms. Lyn South, whom Mary introduced to an open position at Lake Park Lutheran Church 25 years ago. She expressed her gratitude, and said that since she is also retiring soon they can now go shopping together.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Synod Bishop Barrow called upon Mr. David Groenewold to give the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that in attendance by 1:00 pm, Friday, June 1, 2012, were 152 rostered persons and 188 lay people, for a total voting membership of 340. Also present were 61 visitors for a total attendance of 401. A quorum was present.

Second Ballot

Bishop Barrow conducted a second ballot for openings as Voting Members of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly that had not been filled on the first ballot. Using the electronic voting system, the following votes were held. Results will be provided during Plenary IV.

Nominated for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly

At-Large – Clergy (two positions open)
The Rev. Barbara Rasmussen

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The Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld
The Rev. Kris Totzke
The Rev. Vicki Watkins

At-Large – Lay Male (two positions open)

Mr. Elijah Furquan
Mr. Lee Johnston
Mr. Roger Lemnus
Mr. Nicholas Schoob

At-Large – Lay Male, Person of Color (one position open)

Mr. Gus Barnes
Mr. Jose Guerrero

Report of Synod Council

Synod Vice President Ms. Sue Cyr was invited by Bishop Barrow to report on the work of the Synod Council during the past year. She provided an overview of the Council's structure and meetings and introduced members of the Council. She noted that there is a summary of meeting proceedings on the synod's website.

Highlights from the last year were noted, including following the progress of the collective bargaining group formed as a result of discussion of Resolution 6 in 2011. The Council also followed Faithworks in Racine's development and approved an Operational Ethics Policy covering conflicts of interest and an Anti-Fraud Policy.

Of special note was working with Ms. Kate Mattson to increase the involvement of youth and young adults in the life and work of the synod. Ms. Cyr asked all youth and young adults attending the Assembly to stand and be recognized. Also of note for support of youth and young adult ministry activities was approval of the 50/50 This Is Not A Raffle fundraising effort.

Ms. Cyr reported that the work of the Council also included reports of ministries in meetings and discussion, and thanked congregations for their financial and emotional support of the work of the synod. She said that this work includes "an amazing range of things given to and supported," referring members of the Assembly to the list on the back of the financial narrative document.

Resolution 6 – Collective Bargaining Issue Report

Vice President Cyr then called on Rev. John Horner-Ibler and Rev. Lisa Bates-Froiland to report on their work to follow through on Resolution 6, action by the 2011 Assembly. They headed a special committee with the broad charge of finding the best way to live out the collective bargaining question through a larger discussion. Rev. Bates-Froiland briefly explained the work of the Frank Zeidler Center for Public Discussion, using a public conversation method which devised five key questions or approaches for consideration in public meetings held in public meetings attended by 92 participants.

These included questions to:

- Ask each person to express their personal connection to the issue

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- Ask what is at the core of the issue being discussed; what is at the core of the controversy
- Ask express costs and benefits to synod in making a public statement like Resolution 6

Connected conversation included:

- Following up on what someone else in group said, and finding a way to move the discussion forward
- Each group identifying one key item to share with the larger discussion group

The Rev. Horner-Ibler thanked the congregations which hosted these discussions, and reported that there was roughly a 50/50 split in opinion on the issue of collective bargaining for public employees. A majority were in opposition to the synod taking a stand, generally agreeing that the synod's priority should be to address people living in poverty.

He said that the public conversation format used in these gatherings was extremely valuable, and was a powerful expression of Christ's ministry of reconciliation that should be used in congregations and communities, allowing the Spirit to speak. He called it a job well done.

Rev. David Schoob moved acceptance and dissemination of the Resolution 6 task force's report. It was noted that this was an opportunity to use this process as a model for other situations involving similar conflicts.

Ms. Meredy Hase of Christ the King, Delafield, spoke in opposition to the motion, saying that while she appreciates the work of the task force, this motion is political. She asserted that this report was to focus on those most in need.

David Miller of Martin Luther Church, Milwaukee rose to speak in favor of the resolution, despite having been opposed to Resolution 6 last year. He said that we are so polarized that we don't know how to have a civil conversation. This process showed how to draw back from the issue and find a way to carry on offering a view of how to continue a civilized discussion, something the church should be doing.

Rev. Horner-Ibler rose to state his support for the motion.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.06 Motion to Accept and Disseminate the Report of the Resolution 6 Task Force

The Assembly voted to approve a resolution to "accept the report of the Resolution 6 Task Force with thanks and forward the information and process to the congregations of the synod and to the Office of the Governor and the leadership of the State Senate and Assembly with encouragement to carry on similar discussions across differences in hopes of developing a more life-giving vision of collective bargaining and justice in the workplace."

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Constitutional and Bylaw Amendments

Vice President Cyr called on Secretary Matthew Brockmeier to present amendments to the synod's constitution and bylaws that were recommended to the Assembly by the Synod Council. Mr. Brockmeier explained that some of the proposed amendments were recommended by action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly, with others meant to address technical issues or provide clarification to the existing documents. He gave a summary overview of the recommended changes, as published in the Supplement.

Mr. Bill Hamer of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Sheboygan Falls, moved Division of the Question, asking that bylaw provisions S7.22.01. and S7.22.02. be separately considered, based on his concern that the share of votes by clergy might exceed the 40% limit expressed in *S6.04. of the synod's constitution.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.07. Motion to Divide the Question

The Assembly voted against a motion to divide the question to allow separate consideration of bylaw provisions S7.22.01 and S7.22.02.

A question was raised as to whether the change to S10.06. would leave open the question of qualifications for specific positions. The answer was that it would not; that all elected positions carry their own requirements.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.08. Approval of Constitution and Bylaw Amendments

The Assembly voted to amend the Synod Constitution and Bylaws as follows (additions are underlined; deletions are ~~struck through~~ in the text):

S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.

- a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
- ~~b.~~ If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the Synod Council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ~~in cooperation with the Synod Council.~~

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

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S7.22.01. All retired ordained ministers, ~~retired~~ associates in ministry, ~~retired~~ deaconesses, and ~~retired~~ diaconal ministers who are retired, on leave from call, or designated as disabled and whose names appear on the rosters of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.

~~**S7.22.02** All ordained ministers on leave from call, all associates in ministry on leave from call or retired, all deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on leave from call or retired, and all diaconal ministers of this church on leave from call or retired, all of whose names appear on the rosters of this synod, shall have the privilege of voice but not vote at all meetings of the Synod Assembly.~~

S7.34. Unless otherwise specified in the bylaws, each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held during April, May, June, or July.

~~**S7.34.01.** A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly may also be held during April.~~

S8.23. In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the bishop, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop resumes full performance of the duties of the office.

S8.52. The terms of all officers shall begin on the September 1 following election, except as provided in S8.54. or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one ~~two~~ persons for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one ~~two~~ persons for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the ~~The~~ Synod Council shall nominate at least one ~~two~~ persons for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S10.06. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected ~~be a member in good standing on a roster of this synod, if an ordained minister, or to be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, if a layperson,~~ the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

S10.07. The composition of the Synod Council, the number of its members, and the manner of their selection, as well as the organization of the Synod Council, its additional duties and responsibilities, and the number of meetings to be held each year shall be as set forth in the bylaws.

S10.07.01. The Synod Council shall hold regular meetings at least three times each year. Special meetings may be called by the bishop, by the Executive Committee, or by a majority of the members of the Synod Council. The secretary shall cause notice of any meeting to be given to the members of the Synod Council stating the day, place,

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and hour of the meeting, and in the case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called. No business shall be transacted at a special meeting which does not relate to the purpose or purposes for which the meeting was called as stated in the notice of the meeting. Notice of a regular meeting shall be given in writing and shall be personally delivered or mailed to the members of the Synod Council at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Notice of a special meeting may be given in writing or by telephone and shall be given at least five days prior to the meeting. Any notice mailed shall be deemed to be given when deposited in the United States mail, with postage thereon prepaid, and addressed to the member entitled to notice. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

S12.01.01.A12. There shall be ten mission clusters in this synod which shall be constituted as set forth in Appendix 3, which is incorporated herein by reference.

S12.01.02.01. Each congregation of this synod shall belong to a mission cluster and shall be represented at meetings of such cluster. A congregation may change its membership from one mission cluster to another upon approval of the Synod Council, provided, however, that the Synod Council shall ensure that the mission clusters remain primarily geographic in nature. In the event of an approved change in a congregation's membership in a mission cluster, the Synod Council is hereby authorized to amend Appendix 3 to reflect such change.

S12.01.03.02. Each mission cluster shall:

- a. Select its own name.
- b. Prepare a mission statement.
- c. Choose leadership for planning.
- d. Provide regular opportunities for meetings, the exchange of ideas and concerns, and the nurturing of collegiality.
- e. Nominate persons from its cluster according to Appendix 1 & 2 to serve (1) on the Synod Council; and (2) to be a voting member of the Churchwide Assembly.

Mary Moment

Vice President Cyr ended her remarks with thanks to Mary Meyer for faithfully attending all Synod Council meetings for the last nine years, and for helping her as a fledgling vice president when her work began.

ELCA Representative Report

Bishop Rogness returned to the podium to present a video by ELCA Presiding Bishop Hanson, and to answer questions from the Assembly.

Bishop Hanson's video offered thanks for the prayers and financial support of Wisconsin synods, citing Martin Luther as a continuing inspiration for the work of the church. This work was highlighted in a series of vignettes of congregational and individual successes in extending the church's reach.

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These included a profile of First English Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio; the work of 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Roberta Gbowee and the Lutheran church in helping end Liberia's civil war; and the open arms and open door of Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria de Guadalupe in Irving, Texas. These stories reinforced the message that as members of the ELCA we know we are not alone; that the Lutheran Church has a very bright future, and that we are one body – one church.

Q&A with Bishop Rogness

Q. There is a dedicated staff at the synod, but are local pastors limiting their job descriptions?

A. Church life is changing. This is a question for Bishop Barrow to answer.

Q. What is ELCA position on pension equalization?

A. Pensions can be large and complicated. The Greater Milwaukee Synod put forward in the early 1990s a proposal to add to contributions a surcharge that would go into a pool to be distributed into packages for those serving at a below-average wage for that year. The plan is now a defined contribution plan.

Q. Catholics and others have expressed opposition to government restrictions such as mandates included in health care law provisions. Where do we stand on that?

A. Church-state relations are not clear cut: It is a matter of finding the right balance.

Q. What has the impact been of the ELCA's decisions on human sexuality and similar measures?

A. There has been an impact on relationships with other church bodies. But it is at the level of tensions with some of them, and has not been church-dividing. Our fundamental identity as Lutheran Christians is more profound than any issue-related divisions that exist.

Q. Why are representatives of the ELCA urging synods in Minnesota to vote against the pending marriage amendment to the state constitution?

A. All five ELCA synods in Minnesota have voted to oppose amendment. There is recognition that the 2009 policy statements are structured to accommodate the fact that we are not all of one mind; that varying and contradictory positions are being held within the church. As a result, as the Lutheran community, if we desire to create space to minister to gay and lesbian Christians, we end up opposing this amendment because it shuts off one of the possible options for those to whom we minister. In St. Paul Pastor Brad Schmeling has been called to serve Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, the largest congregation in the city, The Southeastern Synod's Discipline Committee urged reconsideration of policy after the 2007 trial in which he was removed from the ELCA's roster of leaders. What is the impact on the ELCA? This congregation interviewed many fine candidates, and judged that this pastor would best serve the needs of the congregation.

Bishop Rogness concluded this session by saying that "we as Lutherans are called to a public faith. We live in the world, and engaging issues a good thing.

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Report on In-House Evangelism (2011 Resolution 2)

Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, Rev. Paul Bulgerin, Rev. Karl Johnson and Rev. Sherman Martell reported on the In-House Evangelism initiative called for in 2011 Synod Assembly Resolution 2. This resolution asks us to plan to live out our baptismal calling to train ourselves and others to be evangelists.

A video (The Joys of Evangelism) was shown to highlight the fears and pitfalls surrounding evangelism. Task force members addressed the “Dreaded E Word,” by reiterating to the Assembly that it means, essentially, sharing the Good Word.

As a result of the Assembly’s action in 2011, the task force worked to come up with a plan to develop trained leaders for evangelism. While there is no catchy name yet for this initiative, it is an expression of Christ’s Great Commission.

The plan outlined for the Assembly will consist of four Sundays and four weekly sessions, developing a ministry plan for each participating congregation. The task force emphasized that this is not for dying congregations, or for congregations with Lone Ranger pastors. It cannot work with an approach of “we’ve never done it that way before.” What it requires for success is a willingness to give time and effort, and to undertake a serious self-assessment by the congregation. Team players will be essential; those who are willing to try something new and improved.

In implementing the plan, trained leaders will preach and work with congregations. Some of this work may be done by pastors or rostered staff, but there will be a significant role for Diakonia graduates, whose training is a natural fit with the needs and goals of the initiative.

What congregations will need to understand is that they will not be left to do this work alone. While there will be a nominal fee to cover travel expenses and materials, the goal is to make it affordable to all congregations who want to participate.

The larger goal is to enable individual Lutherans in congregations to share and be disciples. To accomplish this there must be support from church leaders.

The outline of the plan will be tailored to the participating congregation. The general four-week outline is as follows:

- **Week One** will consist of asking what we think of when evangelism is mentioned; how do we relate to God and to others; and how do we talk about sharing our faith.
- **Week Two** will include an awareness of Pentecost, where Jesus’ followers were ordinary people.
- **Week Three**, called “Dare to Share,” will teach opening one’s mouth and sharing with others. This will follow the example of children, who talk with love and passion and without fear. People will learn how to do this themselves: What to do to actually articulate faith. This will include developing a personal faith story.
- **Week Four** will focus on making the congregation a welcoming place by looking at ourselves as congregations and asking if the congregation is really visitor friendly.

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Next steps for the initiative include:

- “Putting our money where our mouth is,” with the bishop providing \$1,000 in seed money.
- Work to identify and recruit leaders, starting later this summer
- Train leaders, who will be sent out in pairs (pears?)
- Test drive the initiative
- Go back to the drawing board if need be

Resolution 1 Report – The 11 x 15 Campaign

The Rev. Joe Ellwanger was invited to present the 11x15 campaign, using a PowerPoint report. The main points of his presentation were that:

- Current incarceration policies in Wisconsin are ineffective, wasteful and unfair
- This is not a partisan issue – both parties have been engaged in making policy choices over the years that have brought us to the present condition
- These policies disproportionately affect members of minority populations

Rev. Ellwanger presented a comparison of the incarceration profiles of Wisconsin and Minnesota, states with similar demographics and, he said, very different outcomes. A community approach mandated in the 1970s in Minnesota means that, though the two states have almost the same crime rate, there are much higher criminal justice expenditures in Wisconsin.

He went on to say that the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion program, which is under development, looks at alternative mechanisms that offer, among other things, significant economic benefits. He promised that a response sheet would be provided at Saturday’s session, and noted that there are task forces working to make this happen. He ended the presentation by saying that “we know how to punish – we don’t know how to help people recover and become whole,” noting that there is a significant theological element to this question.

Bishop Barrow declared the Assembly in recess at 4:08 pm.

Saturday, June 2, 2012

Worship before the meeting of the Assembly was presided over by Rev. Richard Suerto of Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; with Bishop Jeff Barrow preaching; Mary Meyer serving as Assistant Minister; and Ken Wheeler of Cross Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, offering the Benediction. The accompanist was Dulcie Shoener of Bay Shore Lutheran Church, Whitefish Bay; Capitol Drive Lutheran Church Intern Tim Tahtinen and Friends performed music for Holy Communion; the Synod Assembly Choir was directed by James Edgar of Bay Shore Lutheran; the reader was Nancy Groethe, board member of Outreach for Hope; and the Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church Band performed.

Plenary IV

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 9:41 am.

Announcements

The bishop called the Rev. Matthew Short to the podium, where he thanked all involved in working to increase the involvement of youth and young adults in congregations and the synod. He said there would be no Word of the Day, and noted that the 50/50 This Is Not A Raffle drawing would be held soon.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Synod Bishop Barrow called upon Mr. David Groenewold to give the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that in attendance by 9:30 am, Saturday, June 2, 2012, were 156 rostered persons and 192 lay people, for a total voting membership of 348. Also present were 64 visitors for a total attendance of 412. A quorum was present.

Resolution 1 – 11 x 15 Campaign

Bishop Barrow asked Reference and Counsel Committee Chair Ms. Joy Harshberger to read the resolution as presented to the Assembly and move it for action.

All who addressed the Assembly on the question spoke in favor of adoption, citing factors including the advantages of rehabilitation strategies over prison time, success stories, and evidence of racial bias in the application of existing policies. There was also encouragement for additional engagement by congregations, especially sharing materials developed for this campaign.

A motion was made and seconded to move the previous question.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.09. Move the Previous Question

The Assembly approved a motion to Move the Previous Question.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.10. Resolution 1 – 11 x 15 Campaign

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 1 – 11 x 15 Campaign, as follows:
BE IT RESOLVED that the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the ELCA supports the 11X15 Campaign for Safer and Healthier Communities, and
RESOLVED that all congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod be encouraged to show the 11X15 Campaign power point presentation as part of their educational program, and
RESOLVED that congregational members be encouraged to participate in the various opportunities for involvement in the 11X15 Campaign.

The vote on SA12.06.10., taken electronically, was 224 in favor, 14 opposed.

Report of the Bishop – Bishop Jeff Barrow

In his report to the Assembly, Bishop Barrow highlighted themes from the written support available to the Assembly on the synod's website. Among the themes he addressed were these:

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- His belief that “visions are born in the heart of God, not in the human spirit, and are reflections of God’s vision,” and his corresponding efforts to have “the synod office work to unearth the great gifts that are in our congregations.”
- His commitment to the idea that supporting healthy leaders and healthy congregations are the two principle ways the synod can serve “the ones working with where God’s visions are planted and bloom.”
- Manifestations of the commitment to healthy leaders, including working with those going to seminaries, with retired clergy and with all in between, but also recognizing that those in the pews can be strong leaders as well. To this end events like the Congregational Leaders Event are held.
- The reality in promoting healthy congregations, “the other great task to which we are called for in the Greater Milwaukee Synod,” is framed by a huge shift in church life in the United States, pushed by changes in demographics, spirituality and loyalty to institutions. These challenges can be met with our assets as Lutherans, including compassion and practical experience in dealing with adversity for congregations.
- Dealing directly and forthrightly with congregations moving toward closing, and working with them to determine the best uses for their assets if they determine that the work of the church might be better served by using them to provide new or enhanced ministries that do not include continuation of a congregation without realistic prospects of continuing in its current form, adding that “we will pledge to do whatever we can to walk to the end of the road” and saying that he wants to have an “objective committee look at mission together regarding the use of assets.”
- Looking ahead to a time when the difficult choices made now may mean a healthier church than any of us can now envision – recognizing that decisions about property now will “fund the next great mission of the church.”
- Calling on congregations to be clear in their missions: Being able to state the congregation’s purpose in a few words.
- Being welcoming, and really evaluating whether the congregation really is welcoming.
- Looking at ways to work with other congregations, perhaps not in merger, but in strengthened mission. This can be especially true in looking at the needs of the larger community, as Redeemer Lutheran Church in Milwaukee has done or Christ the King and Cross of Life in Brookfield are now doing.
- Looking at whether facilities are an asset and or a liability in the life of a congregation, and having a discussion on this every year.
- Benevolence allows congregations to extend their missions, through such efforts as campus ministry.
- The bishop would prefer to be trusted to being liked; trusted that the synod is the best place to share our common mission.
- Mary Meyer will be missed, but good people are in place to pick up her work.
- Welcoming rostered leaders new to the synod.

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At the conclusion of his report, Bishop Barrow and Ms. Kate Mattson of the synod staff drew winners for the 50/50 This Is Not A Raffle, for which \$7,020 in tickets had been sold. The bishop spoke of the importance of raising up key ministries and helping support the 2012 Youth Gathering in New Orleans through this fundraising effort, which he said has exceeded the amount raised in typical synod appeals.

\$3,510, or 50% of the proceeds, will be provided to support youth attending the Gathering, through a yet-to-be-determined process most likely based on need. Three “winners” were chosen, each of whom can decide how to use 1/6 of the total pot, of \$1,170 each, with the money sent to either an ELCA congregation (in any synod) or to one of a select group of ministries supported by the Greater Milwaukee Synod. The “winners” were:

- Pastor Chuck Turbin
- Char Guiliani & Shelley Metzger
- Bayshore Lutheran Church, Whitefish Bay

Elections

Results of the second ballot were announced by Elections Committee Chair Rev. Kristin Nielsen, and were as follows, with winners indicated (* and **bold face**). There were 289 Voting Members participating in this ballot.

Voting Members of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly

At-Large – Clergy (two positions open)

The Rev. Barbara Rasmussen*	152 votes
The Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld	95 votes
The Rev. Kris Totzke*	172 votes
The Rev. Vicki Watkins	122 votes

At-Large – Lay Male (two positions open)

Mr. Elijah Furquan*	193 votes
Mr. Lee Johnston	105 votes
Mr. Roger Lemnus	93 votes
Mr. Nicholas Schoob*	146 votes

At-Large – Lay Male, Person of Color (one position open)

Mr. Gus Barnes	110 votes
Mr. Jose Guerrero*	171 votes

This concluded all election activity for the Assembly.

EO Team – Living Into the Future Together (LIFT)

Rev. Sandy Chrostowski, Rev. Karl Johnson and Rev. Sherman Martell gave a presentation on the LIFT initiative, with Rev. Chrostowski beginning with a **Mary Moment**. She said that about 20 years ago, when first assigned to this synod, Mary Meyer was the first person she talked to. The way she was treated, including a three-hour lunch with Bishop Rogness, was, to Rev. Chrostowski, a manifestation of wonderful compassion, embodied by the synod and Mary.

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The LIFT leaders provided key points about the basis for and outcomes of this process.

The LIFT initiative begins with these questions:

- What do you believe God is calling your congregation to be and do in your community?
- Could you see your congregation joining together with other congregations in your community to develop and carry out a mission plan in your community?
- In what kinds of networks are you participating within and across our synod that will engage people in creative approaches to ministry?

Making use of these guiding principles:

1. Mission planning involves Three Great Listenings: God, community, household of faith
2. Mission planning is relational and fosters partnerships.
3. Every congregation is uniquely gifted by God.
4. Mission planning pays attention to context.
5. Mission planning is a shared journey.
6. Mission planning is ongoing.

Effective Evangelical Congregations:

1. have a clear vision of God's mission, focused on Jesus Christ and the Great Commission
2. are centered on Jesus Christ to make disciples
3. are deeply involved in Bible study and prayer
4. have inspiring worship that is connected to the needs and resources of the people in the community and congregation
5. empower their lay leaders to use their spiritual gifts
6. invite, welcome, and integrate newcomers effectively
7. engage the needs of the community and world
8. have courageous, passionate, and contextual leaders who see themselves as witnesses to Jesus Christ
9. are able to deal openly and productively with change and conflict
10. recognize the need for joy, love, and community in those around them
11. reach out to children & youth in their community
12. work for justice and community transformation

Congregations are left with these questions to explore:

- What study/prayer/action has begun already in your congregation?
- How do you already see God at work in the community around you?
- How has scripture informed your understanding of God's activity?
- How is your congregation already engaging in God's activity in the community?
- How has your congregation involved others partners e.g. ecumenical, synodical, churchwide and community?
- How is leadership being multiplied and equipped?

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The LIFT team ended their presentation by asking the Assembly to take a short time to review a handout that had been distributed, to have a discussion, and to leave resulting forms as they leave the Assembly.

Budget

The proposed 2013-2014 budget, which was reviewed earlier in the Assembly, was put forth for approval as a recommendation from the Synod Council.

There being no apparent discussion, it was moved and seconded to move the previous question.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.11. Move the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to approve a motion to Move the Previous Question.

Assembly Action

SA12.06.12. 2013-2014 Synod Budget

The Assembly voted to approve the proposed 2013-2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod budget as presented.

Closing of Assembly

Bishop Barrow concluded the Assembly with thanks to the former bishops for blessing the gathering, and presented the Order for Closing of Synod Assemblies.

The Assembly adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:32 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier
Secretary
Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA