

Minutes of the 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 30 – June 1, 2013

Thursday, May 30, 2013

The 2013 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly took place from Thursday, May 30, 2013 through Saturday, June 1, 2013 at the Country Springs Hotel Conference Center at 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, Wisconsin. The Assembly included a Ministry Fair and ethnic meal and several workshops on Thursday afternoon.

In Thursday's worship, Synod Bishop Jeff Barrow shared a message woven from the Gospel of Luke and the songs of Jerry Jeff Walker, calling for the synod to be open to the power of resurrection, and to "walk in the power of a living God." He was joined in praise by Pastor Amy Becker, presiding; Pastor Alexander Jacobs, assisting; the Burmese Karen Choir of Waukesha and a praise band. Worship ended with the Order for the Opening of Assembly.

Plenary I

Order for Opening of Assembly

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 7:33 pm. The bishop welcomed special guests former Presiding Bishop Herb Chilstrom; Ms. Mikka McCracken, Program Director, ELCA World Hunger Appeal – Constituent Engagement and Interpretation; Ms. Amy Johnson, Director of the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin; Ms. Allison Beebe, Campaign Assistant for ELCA Malaria Mission Advancement; Mr. Samson Kiware, doctoral candidate at Marquette University; Mr. Curtis Peterson, Circulation Marketing Manager for *The Lutheran* magazine; Mr. Jim Holmberg, Outreach-Resource Development Specialist for Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan; and Dick Bruesehoff, Portico Services Benefits Coordinator. The bishop also offered special thanks to the planning team for the Assembly.

He noted that the synod had collected \$87,000 and allocated another \$25,000 toward its goal of providing \$250,000 to the ELCA's Malaria Campaign, and had reached its health survey goal, yielding \$47,000 in savings for the current fiscal year.

Report of the Credentials Committee

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

Mr. Groenewold reported that in attendance at the opening of the Assembly on Thursday, May 30, 2013, were 116 rostered persons and 176 lay people, for a total voting membership of 292. Also present were 52 visitors for a total attendance of 344. A quorum of voting members was present.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Assembly Action

SA13.05.01. Adoption of Agenda

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

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Bishop Barrow declared the agenda adopted.

Appointments

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

Approval of Rules

Bishop Barrow referred Voting Members to the proposed Rules of the Assembly as printed in the Supplement, calling for a vote to approve as recommended.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.02. Approval of 2013 Assembly Rules and Procedures

The Assembly voted to adopt the 2013 Assembly Rules and Procedures as presented.

The bishop declared the Rules adopted.

Electronic Voting Tutorial

Synod Director of Communication Ms. Tracy Apps provided a brief tutorial on the synod's electronic voting system. It was established through sample questions that blue was the most popular color among voting members (with a plurality, not a majority) and that most people were having fun.

Nominating Committee Report

Bishop Barrow called on Nominating Committee Chair Ms. Debra Kohler to present the committee's report. Ms. Kohler began by thanking members of the committee for their service, and giving special thanks to those who have agreed to answer the call to service by standing as nominees. She placed in nomination those persons listed below, with Bishop Barrow calling for nominations from the floor three times for each position nominated by the committee. No nominations were made from the floor, and Bishop Barrow declared each category closed by unanimous consent.

Nominated for Greater Milwaukee Synod Vice President

Lay Male or Female – Full Term through August 2019

Mr. Al Van Lith

Mr. Scott Manske

Nominated for Synod Council

At-Large – Lay Male – Partial Term through August 2015

Mr. Jerry Key

Mr. Greg Wajerski

Mr. Grant Youngquist

Nominated for the Consultation Committee

Clergy – Two Openings – Full Term through August 2019

Rev. Carol Hegland

Rev. Karl Nelson

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Nominated for Synod Council

Kenosha/West Racine Cluster – Lay Female
Ms. Sue Schmidt-Decker

Milwaukee Cluster 2 – Clergy
The Rev. Paula Canby

Northern Lakeshore Cluster – Lay Male
Mr. Tom Gauthier

Northwest Cluster – Clergy
The Rev. David Schoob

Racine Cluster – Lay Female
Ms. Marge Puntarec

Nominated for the Nominating Committee

Milwaukee Cluster 3 – Clergy – Full Term through 2016 Synod Assembly
The Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld

Waukesha Cluster – Clergy – Partial Term through 2015 Synod Assembly
The Rev. Steve Kersten

Nominated for Greater Milwaukee Synod Treasurer – Full Term through August 2017
Mr. Lee Johnston

Nominated for Synod Council – Young Adult Representative – Full Term though August 2017

Mr. Jonathan Barker

Report of Synod Council

Ms. Susan Cyr took the podium for her final report as synod vice president, having served for eight years. She told the Assembly that she was much more confident in her public speaking now, and that she is “here because I enjoy speaking with you and being with you; you are my dear friends in Christ.”

She cited some of the “really cool things” the Synod Council has done this past year, including its November retreat where the synod’s Operational Ethics and Anti-Fraud policies were presented to committees, and where there was also a presentation by the Anti-Racism Team and a discussion on marketing the cool things the synod does. She said we “don’t boast as much as we should or share as much as we should.”

Other things highlighted were Ms. Kate Mattson’s work to increase youth participation, the new Model Financial Control Bylaws for Congregations and getting to better know the work of the synod’s ministries through reports from and conversation with synod staff.

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Her wishes for the synod include, with a nod to Rev. Paul Mittermaier, the idea that words matter enough that we should not talk about “the synod” or “the ELCA,” but rather “our synod” and “our ELCA.” She also called for closer collaboration between synod committees, task forces and the Council.

Ms. Cyr included thanks and recognition for members of the Council, for the synod staff, past and present, for her husband and family, and for her boss Peter, who gave her the time she needed when she needed it to accomplish the work of vice president, and to those assembled for allowing her to serve on the Council for ten years, eight of them as vice president.

At the close of her report, Bishop Barrow presented Vice President Cyr with a certificate in recognition of her service to the synod.

Opening Address – Former ELCA Presiding Bishop Herb Chilstrom

The bishop then introduced Former Presiding Bishop Herb Chilstrom, who gave the opening address.

Bishop Chilstrom began by telling the Assembly that, ever since Bishop Barrow’s election, he has been in his prayers, since bishops, as much as anyone, are the “congregation” of the presiding bishop. He also spoke of his local connections, with two sets of great grandparents settling in Waukesha in the early days of Wisconsin statehood. This led into his first foray into the question “why?”

Like his great grandparents, and others in his family in succeeding generations, the Lutheran church until the mid-20th century was delineated as much as anything by ethnicity. The Swedes on the east side of Pine Lake and the Norwegians on the west side shared, without really sharing, a single faith.

In roughly 1960 the first wave of coming together across ethnic lines took place, with mergers that created both the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America. This convergence was rekindled with the creation of a commission to work toward the development of a new Lutheran church in 1982.

“Why did we feel compelled to come together? We felt we cannot live without each other. We believed that we shared in common salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.”

With Jesus as Savior central to our beliefs, and agreement on the sacraments, the key disagreements became 1) where to have the headquarters, and 2) what to call the new church. After flirting (briefly?) with the idea of Milwaukee, the headquarters was placed in Chicago, and the name ended “in America,” rather than “of the USA,” which was seen as limiting and exclusive, especially for Caribbean congregations.

The name also included “Evangelical”, making a statement not about politics, but about Christ at the center of the church, and “the Good News as our herald.” The new, old church was “bold and forthright in standing up for human rights and the liberty of all people.”

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Returning to the local, Bishop Chilstrom spoke of a vote in Waukesha in 1849 on the question of whether to permit African-Americans to live here, with a strong vote in favor, leading to disparagement by those opposing abolition of slavery.

This tradition continued, Bishop Chilstrom said, giving him great pride in the strong positions taken by the ELCA since its inception, with issue after issue brought up by synods. He said that “even though it is costly to take stands” he is “proud to be part of that church.”

Another important characteristic of the ELCA, he continued, was the idea of connections between synods: the companion synod program, where visits between synods enrich the church. In a related area, Bishop Chilstrom said that mission work has changed dramatically over time, and that while there are still many missionaries around the world, missionaries from elsewhere are now coming here to learn and then returning to their homelands to share their faith.

Moving into another realm of “why?”, Bishop Chilstrom asked “why it is that we as a church have such a hard time struggling to find the means to support our congregations, synods and the ELCA”?

In framing this question, the bishop spoke of finding new ways to hear the Gospel (propelled to bible camp by the prospect of girls attending, but being transformed in his understanding of the Gospel). From this understanding ultimately came a desire to tithe, and the knowledge of “what a joy it is to share with other people.”

“It is,” he said, “time to begin taking sharing seriously in the Lutheran church,” calling on those assembled to “take the step of making a tithe, and inviting others to join us.”

Bishop Chilstrom concluded his remarks by offering to autograph two of his books, including his autobiography dealing with the formation of the ELCA, with all proceeds going to the New Testament Studies Program at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, which has thus far received about \$65,000 in support from these book sales. He reminded the Assembly of the ELCA’s original vision statement, “The vision of the ELCA is to be a church so deeply and confidently rooted in the Gospel of God’s grace that we are free to live our lives joyfully in witness and service.”

Malaria Research – Mr. Samson Kiware

Mr. Samson Kiware was introduced to address the Assembly on his research to combat malaria. He is completing his doctoral research at Marquette University, in the field of computational sciences, having received a degree from Carthage College in computer science and mathematics. His research is being done in his home country, Tanzania, where he had contracted malaria. He framed his work as a way to give back, in part in appreciation for the Malaria Campaign in the Meru Diocese.

Mr. Kiware said that nets are effective, but not sufficient, and that complementary techniques need to be developed and put in place. His work includes building a database with mosquito counts, while testing possible methods of combating them. This includes putting insecticides on walls where mosquitos light, the idea being that they will

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carry the poison back to the nesting sites, killing their offspring. As these techniques are tested, he is looking at mathematical models to take them into the field.

Mr. Kiware introduced his advisor from Marquette, Dr. George Corliss, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and a voting member of the Assembly from All Saints Lutheran Church in Wales, Wisconsin. He also emphasized how individuals can help, through prayer, learning about the campaign, inviting others to learn, and providing financial support. He applauded those he'd already talked to who want to be supportive.

Following Mr. Kiware's presentation, Bishop Barrow urged those present to set a goal of at least \$1,000 per congregation which, with what has already been collected, would be enough to meet the synod's goal of raising \$250,000 in three years in support of the Malaria Campaign. The bishop said that "it's so easy – we can do this – we can do this this year if you want!"

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Synod Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier was asked to give the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee, which met on May 14th to review all properly submitted resolutions and memorials. Mr. Brockmeier reported that six resolutions had been submitted and reviewed.

The committee recommended "not approving [the Resolution to Revise Structure of Clusters] as stated, but instead recommends the creation of a task force to review the status and future structure of the synod's clusters."

Recommended for adoption were the remaining five resolutions, as follow:

- Resolution on the Use of Funds from the Sale of Greater Milwaukee Synod Church Properties
- Establishment of a Refugee Resettlement Task Force
- Accompaniment, Awareness-Raising and Advocacy for the People of the Holy Land
- In Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity
- Resolution on Compensation Guidelines

Following announcements, the Assembly recessed for the evening at 8:47 pm.

Friday, May 31, 2013

Plenary II

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 8:02 am. The morning began with *Morning Song*, devotions led by Rev. Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow including hymns they composed. The bishop noted their retirement, thanking them for their service to the church and looking ahead to good service in new ways.

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A “video commercial” for Outreach for Hope followed, featuring Queen’s Bicycle Race as the soundtrack in promoting the next Family Bike Ride fundraiser, scheduled for Saturday, September 7, 2013 at St. Bruno Parish in Dousman.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold gave the report of the Credentials Committee, reporting that in attendance by 8:00 am, Friday, May 31, 2013 were 118 rostered persons and 195 lay people, for a total voting membership of 313. Also present were 57 visitors for a total attendance of 370. A quorum was present.

ELCA Representative Report

Ms. Mikka McCracken, a self-proclaimed “zealot” in sharing the story of ELCA World Hunger, greeted the Assembly on behalf of Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and the synod’s partners in ministry at the ELCA. She said that two words in her title, engagement and interpretation, were the focus for her remarks.

“The question of ‘why’ is so much a part of my story that it’s like breathing,” McCracken said, beginning with “why am I so passionate about the ELCA and my work?”

The youngest of five sisters, born in rural South Korea in the 1980s, she was adopted by American parents at the age of six months. Her birth father, a tenant rice farmer who could not make ends meet and was hoping for a son, could not support her, in part because of the impact of Structural Adjustment Programs, fiscal policies and agreements implemented by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Several threads in her life led to where she is now, including being the “multi-cultural representative” in her synod in northern Minnesota, and studying political science and peace studies. Her desire to understand and act on “what keeps the poor poor and the rich rich” informed this journey.

While she said she “could be working for any aid organization,” the aspect of faith embodied in the Lutheran approach to these issues was compelling for her. She said that “as Lutherans, the question has already been answered,” in that “we are justified by grace through faith in God,” or, to put it another way, we are “set free by grace.”

What, then, are we to do with the gift of freedom? “God did not intend us to be alone; he needs us to be together, not just among ourselves.” This “compels us outward.”

Hence “the question why we are together as church, and what should we be about?”

“Christians,” who are free through grace, are free to serve, and “are called to lives of service.” Or again, it is a question not of why, “but how could we not?” live into the “daring confidence of God’s grace.” Her fervent belief is that we “can end poverty and hunger.”

The ELCA, Ms. McCracken said, is “boldly called to participate,” adding that this call includes the Greater Milwaukee Synod and this Assembly. The expression of this during the ELCA’s 25th anniversary year is “Always being made New,” from Paul’s second

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letter to the Corinthians, where in 5:17 he says “[s]o if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”

She called the ELCA “a church deeply rooted, grounded yet resilient and reformed.” This resilience and deeply rooted action extends to last year’s Youth Gathering in New Orleans, a history of service work, and “God’s work, our hands Sunday,” which will be September 8th this year. Ms. McCracken noted that a toolkit and t-shirts are available on the ELCA’s website.

Included in her report was Presiding Bishop Hanson’s [video presentation](#) for synod assemblies, where he calls on those viewing to root themselves in the story of the ELCA. “We have a story to tell. We are four million disciples of Jesus, living out God’s baptismal calling. We are 10,000 congregations, 65 synods and dozens of churchwide ministries. Together we boldly participate in God’s work in the world, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Following the video, Ms. McCracken, building on what she called “continued evidence that we are called,” urged congregations to develop plans to “build capacity for evangelical witness and service in the world to alleviate poverty and to work for justice and peace.” The ELCA, she said, will accompany congregations on this journey.

Part of the ELCA’s work to build that capacity last year was the creation of 58 new congregations or ministries. In recent years, such starts in the Greater Milwaukee Synod have included Atonement West and Racine’s Parroquia Emaus, a “social justice congregation driven by community, not by membership.”

In addition to new ministries, there were 168 renewal congregations in the ELCA, seven of those in this synod (Kingo, Unity, Peace, Faith/Santa Fe, Cross, Ascension and Hephatha in Milwaukee).

Building capacity, Ms. McCracken said, is also evident in WLCM world hunger, which raised \$18.5 million in 2012. This synod raised \$294,500 for world hunger and \$150,000 for disaster response. Efforts by ELCA World Hunger include “Feet in the Streets,” a GMS-based ministry.

The ELCA Malaria Campaign, she said, is also making a difference. While the cost is still horrific, with one child dying of malaria every 60 seconds, this represents an improvement since the start of the campaign, when one child died every 45 seconds. “We are”, Ms. McCracken said, “making a difference, and doing so as church.”

“Enough is enough,” she continued. “No person should have to die from a preventable, treatable disease. Malaria is a medical injustice, and God calls us to fight this.”

Of the 650,000 who die of malaria every year, 90% die in Africa, where the ELCA has companions in eleven countries. The ELCA’s work includes prevention (nets, insecticides and environmental issues); treatment (access to medication, clinics and rapid diagnostic tests) and education (preaching, teaching and singing).

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What is our role, Ms. McCracken asked? Through our gift of abundance, we can raise awareness in congregations and raise money.

She urged those assembled to keep up the good work, and provided information on the Churchwide Assembly, which will be in Pittsburg from August 12th through 17th. The work of that Assembly will include action on the ELCA's Social Statement on Criminal Justice; elections for secretary and presiding bishop, and working on the ELCA's 25th anniversary campaign, which is designed to provide additional funding for congregations, rostered leaders, young adults, global ministries, World Hunger and the Malaria Campaign. If the campaign is approved, it will strive to add \$190 million in support of these goals over five years beginning next year, providing the "capacity to do leading-edge transformative work."

While mission support now supports several of these missions, including 199 seminary scholarships, 56 young adults involved in world service, and 235 missionaries, more could be done.

Thanking all for the work being done, Ms. McCracken said that hope addresses the question of "Why?", which is answered with "confidence in God's grace" wherein we are "called to mission in service to the world."

Bishop Barrow thanked Ms. McCracken, saying we are "blessed to know Mikka."

Budget Presentation

Treasurer Mr. Lee Johnston brought the Assembly's attention to budget information included in the Supplement and to additional information, including background, in the packet of materials given to voting members. Keeping with the theme of Why?, Treasurer Johnston explained that the budget becomes "how do we do the 'why'."

He thanked the congregations of the synod who allowed the synod to "meet statements of intent." This "helps fund the mission of our synod, of our ELCA, of our mission in our world," he continued.

One of the challenges for the new budget cycle is the end of funding for Youth and Family Ministry support after nine continuous years of support. These funds are being compensated for through an increase in funding from the synod's operating budget. Even with this change, Mr. Johnston said that the synod anticipates meeting income and expense needs for the 2014-2015 budget cycle.

There were no questions from the floor.

Mr. Johnston thanked Mr. David Groenewold, the synod's Director of Finance, and Rev. Sandra Chrostowski, Director of Evangelical Mission, for "getting congregations to know the importance of this budget." Bishop Barrow added his thanks, saying that "no one is getting rich. So many gave extra at the end of the last budget year. Thanks for stepping up to the plate."

After a brief break, the bishop welcomed another guest to the Assembly, Mr. Tom Heinen, Executive Director of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee. He then

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turned the podium over to the two nominees for synod vice president, each of whom had up to five minutes to address the Assembly.

Presentation of Vice President Nominees – Mr. Scott Manske

The first nominee to speak was Mr. Scott Manske, a member of Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. He works as Comptroller for Milwaukee County, and has been a Sunday School and confirmation teacher for his congregation.

Mr. Manske said that as a Midwestern Lutheran, he is “happy to help out when needed, but not looking for glory or praise.” As an accountant by trade, he continued, he thought it appropriate to present himself in terms of liabilities and assets.

Under liabilities, he said that he “took a break from church for a while” and that he is older, sometimes impatient, and had not been a member of the Council. He added that he is an accountant, works in government, and has become a politician, concluding his liabilities by saying that he sometimes thinks only of himself, and doesn’t always look for help.

Among the assets he cited were that he dedicates himself to what he does, that he is a long-time Lutheran (“except for the time in-between”), has taught Sunday School and confirmation for ten years, is a hard worker, and, since he has to work with politicians, has to try to arrive at compromises and find “a way to work together.”

Married for 27 years with two children, he said that his Lutheran credentials included eating Lutefisk and Stollen, and having a Norwegian Lutheran mother from Stoughton and a German father from Milwaukee. He ended by saying that he hopes that his “assets will complement the assets already on the Council.”

Presentation of Vice President Nominees – Mr. Al Van Lith

The second nominee to speak was Mr. Al Van Lith, a member of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa. He works as Senior Project Manager for Tushaus Computer Services, and has served on his Congregation Council, as both Vice President and President, and as a Sunday School teacher.

While stating that he had not had Lutefisk, he did say that he had been at St. Matthew’s for 18 years and has a daughter attending St. Olaf College, in addition to his service on both the congregation and synod councils. He added that he also serves on the boards of directors of the Elmbrook Education Foundation and the Lutheran A Cappella Choir of Milwaukee, and appears in community theatre productions.

Mr. Van Lith asked “Why? Why vice president? Why bother?”, answering that he enjoys being part of the church, and has seen great things during his two years on the Synod Council, including Anti-Racism growing and prospering and the impact of the synod. In looking at the church, “there is a lot of change.”

But, he said, “we have to change; we are no longer our parents’ church; we have to grow with the change.” He went on to say that pastors are the CEOs of their congregations, and that there is now a need to market the church and to create “a church that people want to go to.” He expressed optimism that “we can grow as a

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church; we can have that change,” ending by referring to an earlier reference to a bonsai tree, stating that “the church is that bonsai tree” and that he wants to be the one to trim the tree and its roots, and “to be that soil” that allows the tree to grow.

First Ballot

Bishop Barrow called for voting members to cast votes, using the electronic voting system to cast separate ballots for each open office. Votes were recorded on the electronic system, with reports of the results to be provided at a later time.

Resolution 1 – Resolution to Revise Structure of Clusters

The first resolution, which was submitted by All Peoples Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Resolution to Revise Structure of Clusters

Whereas, Milwaukee has been identified as one of the most racially segregated cities in the nation; and

Whereas, Patterns of economic division in our region mirror our racial reality; and

Whereas, The gift of a geographically small synod allows for stronger connections; and

Whereas, There are strong partnerships that exist across geographic, racial, and economic boundaries throughout the synod; and

Whereas, Current clusters are only suggestive of geographic boundaries; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That current clusters work to dissolve by Synod Assembly 2015; and

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council and staff, with the cluster deans, the Anti-Racism Committee and other synodical leaders move to reestablish non-geographic clusters; and

RESOLVED, That these new clusters intentionally reflect the diversity of our synod; and

RESOLVED, That synod bylaw S12.01.01 be amended to remove "provided, however, that the Synod Council shall ensure that the mission clusters remain primarily geographic in nature"; and

RESOLVED, That new clusters are recommended to the synod by March 5, 2014; and

RESOLVED, That the planners create a mechanism for feedback from the entire synod prior to and at Synod Assembly 2014; and

RESOLVED, That new clusters are adopted and affirmed at the 2015 Synod Assembly.

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Mr. Elijah Furquan, member of All Peoples Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, stated “an initial wish for the clusters to reflect the cultural diversity of the synod” which, he continued, they currently do not.

Rev. Karl Nelson (retired), of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Sheboygan Falls, moved an amendment to remove all resolves and in their place state:

“RESOLVED, That the Synod Council create a task force to address the structure of clusters.”

This was seconded. In support of his motion Rev. Nelson said that this is a complex issue for which a task force is needed. He also noted that while the clusters made sense when they were created, they did not seem to function well anymore.

Rev. David Schoob, Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend, moved an amendment to Rev. Nelson’s amendment, as follows:

“**RESOLVED**, That a task force be created accountable to the whole of the Synod Council to review the status and future of synod clusters. The task force will be established by the whole Synod Council, and must fairly represent the lay/clergy balance, male/female balance, people of color/white people balance, urban/suburban balance, and also represent other-abled and the gay, lesbian, bisexual community. This team will work with staff, Synod Council, Anti-Racism Team and other synod leaders and resources. The task force will present a report to the 2014 Synod Assembly with recommendation for action for the Assembly to act on.”

This was seconded. Rev. Schoob noted that this amendment reflected the need for clarity in the charge to the proposed task force. Rev. Alexis Twito, Pastor of Capitol Drive Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, spoke in support of Rev. Schoob’s amendment, saying that in the racially segregated Milwaukee area, partnerships between congregations add strength.

Mr. Dave Chappell proposed an additional amendment to include the creation of a mission statement and a structure to the charge of the task force. This amendment was seconded. In response to this amendment there was a comment that the more we require the task force to do, the more time will be spent doing the work.

A motion was made and seconded to close debate.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.03. Adoption of Motion to Close Debate

A motion to close debate was approved on a voice vote.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.04. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to approve the motion substituting the following language for the language of the first amendment (amendment by Rev. Karl Nelson):

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“RESOLVED, That a task force be created accountable to the whole of the Synod Council to review the status and future of synod clusters. The task force will be established by the whole Synod Council, and must fairly represent the lay/clergy balance, male/female balance, people of color/white people balance, urban/suburban balance, and also represent other-abled and the gay, lesbian, bisexual community. This team will work with staff, Synod Council, Anti-Racism Team and other synod leaders and resources. The task force will present a report to the 2014 Synod Assembly with recommendation for action for the Assembly to act on.”

The vote on this motion was 229 in favor, 60 opposed.

There was a motion from a voting member from Bethania Lutheran Church, Racine, to restore the fourth resolved statement from the original resolution, which read:

“RESOLVED, That synod bylaw S12.01.01 be amended to remove "provided, however, that the Synod Council shall ensure that the mission clusters remain primarily geographic in nature"

A statement in favor of this restoration was based on the idea that it would clear the way to re-align the clusters. Rev. Sherman Martell, Pastor of Luther Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Allis, asked whether this was really just a geographic issue.

Rev. Chuck Brummond, Director of Rostered Leadership for the synod, spoke in opposition to the motion to restore, asserting that the “task force can include such a recommendation,” and that keeping the current bylaw provision would not be a barrier to any action resulting from the task force recommendations.

Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, pending as Interim Pastor for Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenosha, asked that the question of the restoration of this Resolved Statement be separated from the current question.

A vote was taken on the motion to amend by restoring the original fourth resolved statement.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.05. Rejection of Motion to Amend

The Assembly voted to reject a motion to restore **“RESOLVED**, That synod bylaw S12.01.01 be amended to remove "provided, however, that the Synod Council shall ensure that the mission clusters remain primarily geographic in nature" to the resolution.

The motion to amend was defeated by a vote of 171 to 91.

Rev. Steve Jerbi, Pastor of All Peoples Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, spoke for the resolution, reiterating that “this is the only resolution without a financial impact,” and that this should be more than just a group of pastors meeting to discuss the outcome. He added that all have a vested interest in this question.

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An amendment to the amended motion was presented to add the following statement to the resolution,

“RESOLVED, That the task force in its charter include a vision and mission statement.”

Assembly Action

SA13.05.06. Rejection of Motion to Amend

The Assembly voted to reject the amendment to add “**RESOLVED**, That the task force in its charter include a vision and mission statement” to the resolution.

The motion was defeated by a vote of 142 against, 140 in favor.

Following the vote a voting member claimed that their voting machine had malfunctioned. It was ruled by the Parliamentarian that a Motion to Reconsider would be in order, but only if brought by a voting member who voted against the motion (the prevailing side). No such motion was made.

A motion was made and seconded to close debate.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.07. Adoption of Motion to Close Debate

A motion to close debate was approved on a voice vote.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.08. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to approve the motion substituting the following language for all Resolved statements in the original resolution:

“**RESOLVED**, That a task force be created accountable to the whole of the Synod Council to review the status and future of synod clusters. The task force will be established by the whole Synod Council, and must fairly represent the lay/clergy balance, male/female balance, people of color/white people balance, urban/suburban balance, and also represent other-abled and the gay, lesbian, bisexual community. This team will work with staff, Synod Council, Anti-Racism Team and other synod leaders and resources. The task force will present a report to the 2014 Synod Assembly with recommendation for action for the Assembly to act on.”

The vote was 238 in favor, 45 opposed. The motion carried.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.09. Adoption of Resolution 1

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 1 as amended in Assembly Action SA13.05.08.:

Resolution to Revise Structure of Clusters

Whereas, Milwaukee has been identified as one of the most racially segregated cities in the nation; and

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Whereas, Patterns of economic division in our region mirror our racial reality; and

Whereas, The gift of a geographically small synod allows for stronger connections; and

Whereas, There are strong partnerships that exist across geographic, racial, and economic boundaries throughout the synod; and

Whereas, Current clusters are only suggestive of geographic boundaries; therefore, be it

“RESOLVED, That a task force be created accountable to the whole of the Synod Council to review the status and future of synod clusters. The task force will be established by the whole Synod Council, and must fairly represent the lay/clergy balance, male/female balance, people of color/white people balance, urban/suburban balance, and also represent other-abled and the gay, lesbian, bisexual community. This team will work with staff, Synod Council, Anti-Racism Team and other synod leaders and resources. The task force will present a report to the 2014 Synod Assembly with recommendation for action for the Assembly to act on.”

The vote was 227 in favor, 61 opposed.

Motion to Suspend the Rules

Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld made a motion to Suspend the Rules in order to consider the related question of amending the synod's bylaws to remove "provided, however, that the Synod Council shall ensure that the mission clusters remain primarily geographic in nature" from S12.01.01.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.10. Rejection of Motion to Suspend the Rules

The motion to suspend the rules, requiring a 2/3 vote in favor, failed on a vote of 157 in favor (54.9%) and 129 opposed.

Resolution 2 – Resolution on the Use of Funds from the Sale of Greater Milwaukee Synod Church Properties

The second resolution, which was submitted by the Waukesha Cluster and co-sponsored by Milwaukee Clusters 1 & 2, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Resolution on the Use of Funds from the Sale of Greater Milwaukee Synod Church Properties

Whereas, Monies have been made available from the sale of ELCA congregations that have closed in our Greater Milwaukee Synod; and

Whereas, These monies are the fruit of generous stewardship given to further Word and Sacrament ministries over the course of many generations; and

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Whereas, It is very possible that there will be future monies made available by the sale of church properties and buildings in the years to come; and

Whereas, The Scripture calls us to be good stewards of our resources for the sake of God's Kingdom; and

Whereas, We believe in the future of a healthy and faithful Church; and

Whereas, We worship the God who brings forth new beginnings; and

Whereas, There is currently no system in place to care for the existing and future resources that may be available for such new beginnings; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council be directed to develop a policy and procedure to handle the proceeds from the sale of property that will identify

- how to receive and hold these monies
- how to discern, evaluate and select new, creative ministry opportunities that may be funded from these monies in order to bless and grow God's Church in bold ways; and

RESOLVED, That this Assembly give thanks for the years of faithful ministry and faithful stewardship dedicated to God through the people of St. Andrew Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Waukesha.

Rev. John Horner-Ibler, Pastor of Cross of Life Lutheran Church, Brookfield, and Dean of the Waukesha Cluster, spoke on behalf of the second resolution. His remarks centered on the importance of recognizing the source of the resources in question, and "encouraging the Synod Council to have a consistent process for the future."

A motion to amend was made and seconded to add "**RESOLVED**, That this Assembly give thanks also for the years of faithful ministry and faithful stewardship dedicated to God through the people of the former Redeemer Lutheran Church on Milwaukee's south side" following the third Resolved statement in the resolution as submitted.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.11. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to add "**RESOLVED**, That this Assembly give thanks also for the years of faithful ministry and faithful stewardship dedicated to God through the people of the former Redeemer Lutheran Church on Milwaukee's south side" following the third Resolved statement in the resolution as submitted.

The vote on this motion was 157 in favor, 129 opposed.

Rev. Greg Van Dunk, Pastor of Atonement Lutheran Church, Muskego, moved to amend the resolution by adding "**RESOLVED**, That the Synod Council introduce to congregations exploring the end of life options for missional closing and disbursement of assets." The proposed amendment was seconded and voted on.

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Assembly Action

SA13.05.12. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to add “**RESOLVED**, That the Synod Council introduce to congregations exploring the end of life options for missional closing and disbursement of assets” to the proposed resolution.

The vote on this motion was 243 in favor, 37 opposed.

Ms. Esther Rusch, member of Faith Lutheran Church, Cedarburg, and of the Synod Council, moved to add “**RESOLVED**, That the task force conclude its work within one year, reporting to the 2014 Synod Assembly.” The proposed amendment was seconded and voted on.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.13. Adoption of Amendment

The Assembly voted to add “**RESOLVED**, That the task force conclude its work within one year, reporting to the 2014 Synod Assembly.”

The vote on this motion was 278 in favor, 11 opposed.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.14. Adoption of Resolution 2

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 2 as amended in Assembly Actions SA13.05.11., SA13.05.12. and SA13.05.13.

Resolution on the Use of Funds from the Sale of Greater Milwaukee Synod Church Properties

Whereas, Monies have been made available from the sale of ELCA congregations that have closed in our Greater Milwaukee Synod; and

Whereas, These monies are the fruit of generous stewardship given to further Word and Sacrament ministries over the course of many generations; and

Whereas, It is very possible that there will be future monies made available by the sale of church properties and buildings in the years to come; and

Whereas, The Scripture calls us to be good stewards of our resources for the sake of God’s Kingdom; and

Whereas, We believe in the future of a healthy and faithful Church; and

Whereas, We worship the God who brings forth new beginnings; and

Whereas, There is currently no system in place to care for the existing and future resources that may be available for such new beginnings; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council be directed to develop a policy and procedure to handle the proceeds from the sale of property that will identify

- how to receive and hold these monies

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- how to discern, evaluate and select new, creative ministry opportunities that may be funded from these monies in order to bless and grow God's Church in bold ways; and

RESOLVED, That the task force conclude its work within one year, reporting to the 2014 Synod Assembly; and

RESOLVED, That the Synod Council introduce to congregations exploring the end of life options for missional closing and disbursement of assets; and

RESOLVED, That this Assembly give thanks for the years of faithful ministry and faithful stewardship dedicated to God through the people of St. Andrew Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Waukesha; and

RESOLVED, That this Assembly give thanks also for the years of faithful ministry and faithful stewardship dedicated to God through the people of the former Redeemer Lutheran Church on Milwaukee's south side.

The Assembly recessed for lunch at 11:13 am.

Plenary III

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 12:59 pm with a greeting, followed by devotions led by Rev. Richard Suero, Lead Pastor of Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, Milwaukee. When the devotions were concluded the Assembly viewed a "video commercial" for Campus Ministry.

Included in the video were a number of positive attributes of Campus Ministry from the students' perspective, including it being supportive of them, finding ways to accept others and to be accepted, being able to reflect on their college experience, and to grow in faith and to see oneself in the future. Other comments included Campus Ministry building a great group of friends, increased appreciation and gratitude, and great food. Rev. Rachel Young Binter, Campus Pastor at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, likened the Corner House at UWM to a house church; an ancient church where students could explore their faith and ask deep questions as she walks with people who are trying to figure out who they are.

Bishop Barrow called Campus Ministry a blessing when the video concluded, reminding the Assembly that the Greater Milwaukee Synod has made a significant commitment to supporting Campus Ministry, beyond what many synods have done.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that in attendance at 12:30 pm, Friday, May 31, 2013, were 138 rostered persons and 209 lay people, for a total voting membership of 347. Also present were 63 visitors for a total attendance of 410. A quorum was present.

Second Ballot and Election Results

Bishop Barrow announced the results of the first ballot (* **declared elected**):

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Vice President

Mr. Al Van Lith 137

Mr. Scott Manske* 142

Synod Council – At-Large – Lay Male

Mr. Jerry Key 121

Mr. Greg Wajerski 43

Mr. Grant Youngquist 85

No Election

Consultation Committee – Clergy (Two Openings)

Rev. Carol Hegland* 263

Rev. Karl Nelson* 262

Synod Council – Kenosha/West Racine Cluster

Ms. Sue Schmidt-Decker* 264

Synod Council – Milwaukee Cluster 2

The Rev. Paula Canby* 260

Synod Council – Northern Lakeshore Cluster

Mr. Tom Gauthier* 261

Synod Council – Northwest Cluster

The Rev. David Schoob* 244

Synod Council – Racine Cluster

Ms. Marge Puntarec* 267

Nominating Committee – Milwaukee Cluster 3

The Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld* 264

Nominating Committee – Waukesha Cluster

The Rev. Steve Kersten* 268

Treasurer

Mr. Lee Johnston* 260

Synod Council – Young Adult Representative

Mr. Jonathan Barker* 265

Action on Budget

The budget, as presented, was called for a vote by Bishop Barrow.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.15. Approval of Budget

The Assembly voted to approve the Greater Milwaukee Synod's budget for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2015 as presented, with total contributions and support (income) of \$2,196,500 and total ministries (expenses) of \$2,221,080.

The budget was approved by a vote of 247 in favor, 4 opposed.

Second Ballot

Bishop Barrow then conducted a second ballot using the electronic voting system for Synod Council, At-Large Lay Male, since no nominee received 50% of votes cast.

Bishop Barrow announced the results of the second ballot (*** declared elected**):

Synod Council – At-Large – Lay Male

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Mr. Jerry Key 146*

Mr. Grant Youngquist 110

Resolution 3 – Establishment of a Refugee Resettlement Task Force

The third resolution, which was submitted by Ascension Lutheran Church, Waukesha, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Establishment of a Refugee Resettlement Task Force

Whereas, Wisconsin congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies have been involved in sponsoring refugees since 1974, beginning with families and individuals fleeing conflicts in Southeast Asia; and

Whereas, In the past three years, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) through Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) has welcomed over 500 refugees from many countries, including Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, and Sudan; and

Whereas, The 2003 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee passed CA03.05.10 **Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers**, which includes “To call on congregations and individuals to support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and consider sponsoring a refugee family, asylum seeker, or unaccompanied child.”; and

Whereas, The consistent witness of scripture urges welcome and hospitality for the stranger and outcast (e.g. Matthew 25:35); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That a Refugee Resettlement Task Force is formed whose purpose will be to

- Raise awareness of refugee needs,
- Encourage congregations to consider co-sponsorship of arriving refugees,
- Facilitate communication between service providers (LSS and LIRS), volunteers, and the refugee communities,
- Be a voice for those who often have no voice in our society; and

RESOLVED, That congregations and individuals of the Greater Milwaukee Synod lift up in prayer and action the needs of all displaced people.

Mr. Ron Czischke, member of Messiah Lutheran Church of Twin Lakes, expressed the hope that this resolution did not limit communication between service providers only to Lutheran service providers.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.16. Adoption of Resolution 3

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 3 as presented:

Establishment of a Refugee Resettlement Task Force

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Whereas, Wisconsin congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its predecessor bodies have been involved in sponsoring refugees since 1974, beginning with families and individuals fleeing conflicts in Southeast Asia; and

Whereas, In the past three years, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) through Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) has welcomed over 500 refugees from many countries, including Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, and Sudan; and

Whereas, The 2003 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee passed CA03.05.10 **Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers**, which includes “To call on congregations and individuals to support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and consider sponsoring a refugee family, asylum seeker, or unaccompanied child.”; and

Whereas, The consistent witness of scripture urges welcome and hospitality for the stranger and outcast (e.g. Matthew 25:35); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That a Refugee Resettlement Task Force is formed whose purpose will be to

- Raise awareness of refugee needs,
- Encourage congregations to consider co-sponsorship of arriving refugees,
- Facilitate communication between service providers (LSS and LIRS), volunteers, and the refugee communities,
- Be a voice for those who often have no voice in our society; and

RESOLVED, That congregations and individuals of the Greater Milwaukee Synod lift up in prayer and action the needs of all displaced people.

The vote on this resolution was 251 in favor, 11 opposed.

Resolution 4 – Accompaniment, Awareness-Raising and Advocacy for the People of the Holy Land

The fourth resolution, which was submitted by Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Accompaniment, Awareness-Raising and Advocacy for the People of the Holy Land

Whereas, The prolonged Israeli occupation of and ongoing illegal Israeli settlement in the West Bank remain obstacles to peace and cause a great deal of suffering for Israelis and Palestinians; and

Whereas, The ELCA rejoices that our Palestinian brother in Christ, Bishop Munib Younan, is president of the Lutheran World Federation, and gives thanks for our special relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy

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Land (ELCJHL) that is marked by mutual love and concern for lasting peace and justice; and

Whereas, The *Peace Not Walls* campaign of the ELCA is focused on Accompaniment, Awareness-raising and Advocacy as three aspects of engagement in response to the situation in Israel-Palestine; and

Whereas, The 2011 Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution supporting positive investment in Palestinian goods and services and commending the “ELCA Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens” to its members, congregations, synods and agencies; and

Whereas, The 1995 ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God’s World*, reminds us that bringing about peace with justice is the work of the church, and in support for just political structures “[acknowledges] that the responsible use of sanctions may on occasion be the most effective and least harmful measure to lead states to stop oppressing their people...”; and

Whereas, On October 5, 2012, 15 US Christian leaders, including ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, signed a letter urging Congress to “undertake careful scrutiny to ensure that our aid is not supporting actions by the government of Israel that undermine prospects for peace”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this synod support the work of *Peace Not Walls* and our sisters and brothers in the ELCJHL through advocacy work that asks members of Congress and the current Administration to do everything in their power to bring about peace with justice for the people of Israel and Palestine;

RESOLVED, That this synod encourage members of our church to listen to the cries of our Palestinian sisters and brothers through study of the *Kairos Palestine* document; to visit the region to speak directly with Israelis and Palestinians; and to seek resources like those provided by *Peace Not Walls* that have up-to-date, reliable information about the situation;

RESOLVED, That this Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to commit to socially responsible economic practices by 1) developing and implementing for the ELCA social-criteria investment screens that pertain specifically to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; 2) urging members with money invested in Portico to make individual choices about how their retirement funds are invested, so as to avoid supporting companies that benefit from the occupation; 3) encouraging individuals to invest in Palestinian economic endeavors and to boycott products and services provided by companies that benefit from and support Israel’s occupation of Palestine; and

RESOLVED; That this synod declare this year one of *Accompaniment With the People of the Holy Land*, 1) promoting the observation of the 24th day of each month as a worldwide day of prayer and solidarity with the ELCJHL; and 2)

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forming a synod-wide committee to coordinate education, consciousness raising and action to promote *Accompaniment With the People of the Holy Land*.

Rev. Jonathan Jacobs, Pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, spoke to the resolution presented by his congregation. He said that last winter the congregation explored the issues facing Palestine, noting among other things that the Christian population is dwindling in Palestine. Working with information from the Lutheran church in Palestine, the congregation was disturbed by “the conflict between those claiming to be children of Abraham,” and found the current apartheid system to be intolerable. The question became “how can we support the work of those who follow Jesus in the Holy Land?” In conversations with leaders of Peace Not Walls and other leaders in Palestine the congregation came to the conclusion that until the question of Palestine “is solved, the entire region will continue to suffer,” and that we must “use our influence to push our country to join our brothers and sisters in Palestine.” They were told that the bishop from Palestine said that “in making this statement, we become peacemakers with them.”

Rev. Paul Bulgerin, Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Grafton, said that he supports the resolution, but is concerned by language on boycotts and by language regarding “to what level this is taken to, both in investment for Israel and for Palestine.”

Rev. Grant Quever, Interim Pastor for the Greater Milwaukee Synod, stated that he has “no reservations about this resolution.” He continued by saying that “without peace in the Holy Land, there will be no peace in the world. What difference would this have made for the wars that have been fought? The Palestinian Christian population has been oppressed.”

Assembly Action

SA13.05.17. Adoption of Resolution 4

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 4 as presented:

Accompaniment, Awareness-Raising and Advocacy for the People of the Holy Land

Whereas, The prolonged Israeli occupation of and ongoing illegal Israeli settlement in the West Bank remain obstacles to peace and cause a great deal of suffering for Israelis and Palestinians; and

Whereas, The ELCA rejoices that our Palestinian brother in Christ, Bishop Munib Younan, is president of the Lutheran World Federation, and gives thanks for our special relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) that is marked by mutual love and concern for lasting peace and justice; and

Whereas, The *Peace Not Walls* campaign of the ELCA is focused on Accompaniment, Awareness-raising and Advocacy as three aspects of engagement in response to the situation in Israel-Palestine; and

Whereas, The 2011 Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution supporting positive investment in Palestinian goods and services and commending the

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“ELCA Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens” to its members, congregations, synods and agencies; and

Whereas, The 1995 ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God’s World*, reminds us that bringing about peace with justice is the work of the church, and in support for just political structures “[acknowledges] that the responsible use of sanctions may on occasion be the most effective and least harmful measure to lead states to stop oppressing their people...”; and

Whereas, On October 5, 2012, 15 US Christian leaders, including ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, signed a letter urging Congress to “undertake careful scrutiny to ensure that our aid is not supporting actions by the government of Israel that undermine prospects for peace”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this synod support the work of *Peace Not Walls* and our sisters and brothers in the ELCJHL through advocacy work that asks members of Congress and the current Administration to do everything in their power to bring about peace with justice for the people of Israel and Palestine;

RESOLVED, That this synod encourage members of our church to listen to the cries of our Palestinian sisters and brothers through study of the *Kairos Palestine* document; to visit the region to speak directly with Israelis and Palestinians; and to seek resources like those provided by *Peace Not Walls* that have up-to-date, reliable information about the situation;

RESOLVED, That this Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to commit to socially responsible economic practices by 1) developing and implementing for the ELCA social-criteria investment screens that pertain specifically to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; 2) urging members with money invested in Portico to make individual choices about how their retirement funds are invested, so as to avoid supporting companies that benefit from the occupation; 3) encouraging individuals to invest in Palestinian economic endeavors and to boycott products and services provided by companies that benefit from and support Israel’s occupation of Palestine; and

RESOLVED; That this synod declare this year one of *Accompaniment With the People of the Holy Land*, 1) promoting the observation of the 24th day of each month as a worldwide day of prayer and solidarity with the ELCJHL; and 2) forming a synod-wide committee to coordinate education, consciousness raising and action to promote *Accompaniment With the People of the Holy Land*.

The vote on this resolution was 208 in favor, 51 opposed.

Resolution 5 – In Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

The fifth resolution, which was submitted by the Reconciling in Christ Ministry Team, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

In Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

Whereas, It is currently legal in 29 states to discriminate in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation, and in 34 on the basis of gender identity; and

Whereas, Employees should be judged on the quality of their work and nothing more; and

Whereas, Legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for a broad religious exemption, has been introduced in every Congress since 1994; and

Whereas, The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 1397/S. 812) is an example of such legislation; and

Whereas, The ELCA's Social Statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* states that "While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues", including;

- 1) Support for "legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services",
- 2) Calling upon "congregations and members of this church to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection",
- 3) Advocating for "public policies that support and protect families", and
- 4) Attending to the need for "equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity" in that "[s]uch individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse"; and

Whereas, The 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial by approximately an 80% majority to endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and to affirm advocacy "in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation" (see CWA resolution CA97.06.29); therefore, be it

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon Congress to take up and pass legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synodical bishops, clergy, and other church leaders to speak publicly in support of legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis

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of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge lay leaders to make this Assembly's position and the ELCA's position known to their Members of Congress in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate.

Rev. Barbara Rasmussen, retired, stated that the Reconciling in Christ Ministry Team is "wholeheartedly behind" this resolution.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.18. Adoption of Resolution 5

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 5 as presented:

In Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

Whereas, It is currently legal in 29 states to discriminate in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation, and in 34 on the basis of gender identity; and

Whereas, Employees should be judged on the quality of their work and nothing more; and

Whereas, Legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for a broad religious exemption, has been introduced in every Congress since 1994; and

Whereas, The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 1397/S. 812) is an example of such legislation; and

Whereas, The ELCA's Social Statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* states that "While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues", including;

- 1) Support for "legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services",
- 2) Calling upon "congregations and members of this church to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection",
- 3) Advocating for "public policies that support and protect families", and
- 4) Attending to the need for "equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity" in that "[s]uch individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse"; and

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Whereas, The 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial by approximately an 80% majority to endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and to affirm advocacy “in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation” (see CWA resolution CA97.06.29); therefore, be it

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon Congress to take up and pass legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synodical bishops, clergy, and other church leaders to speak publicly in support of legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and

Resolved, That this Assembly memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge lay leaders to make this Assembly’s position and the ELCA’s position known to their Members of Congress in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate.

The vote on this resolution was 237 in favor, 30 opposed.

Resolution 6 – Resolution on Compensation Guidelines

The sixth resolution, which was submitted by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council, was presented to the Assembly for its consideration:

Resolution on Compensation Guidelines

Whereas healthy leaders are essential to the mission and ministry of congregations and ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran in America; and

Whereas, Portico Benefit Services is a ministry of the ELCA that “designs benefits that invite rostered leaders and lay employees to live well for life. For Lutherans, this means stewarding gifts of mind, body, and spirit for the sake of the world.” (Portico Website, “About Us”); and

Whereas, In the past, Portico Benefit Services (formerly ELCA Board of Pensions) has offered one primary health coverage for all members; and

Whereas, Portico Benefit Services proposes to offer four different healthcare plans for 2014 in which two of those plans will shift a significantly larger share of costs to plan members (rostered and lay employees); and

Whereas, The Compensation Guidelines of the Greater Milwaukee Synod exist to guide congregations in planning appropriate compensation and benefits to care for leaders in this church; and

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Whereas, The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in April approved a resolution “to endorse as a benchmark the proposed health care plan option that approximates the current level of benefits provided by the ELCA health plan, and to encourage congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, other ELCA-related organizations, and other interested persons to advocate for selection of this plan option”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That, in order to maintain the current level of health benefits for our rostered leaders, the Synod Council edit this synod's compensation guidelines to reflect that ELCA health plan option that most closely resembles current ELCA-Primary health coverage for its rostered leaders; and

RESOLVED, That synod staff apply this recommendation when working with call documents.

Rev. Brad Brown, Pastor of North Cape Evangelical Lutheran Church, Franksville, began by referring the Assembly to Portico’s brochure, which contained information on four health plan options beginning in 2014. He said that these plans were developed because of pending competition from the Health Exchanges that are to be created. The main point of the resolution, he said, is to keep the proportionate share of costs paid by clergy and by congregations roughly the same, in order to “discourage congregations from putting a greater burden on the families of rostered leaders.” He added that it is “also important that we think of the mission of our churches to be about ministry, with healthy leaders who are not burdened by finding ways to pay for health care,” while also providing “greater chances for mobility in the call process, keeping cost considerations lower as part of that calculus.” Rev. Brown noted that clergy now pay 18% of the plan costs, with 82% paid by congregations. The resolution would in effect encourage use of the proposed “Gold Plan,” which would have clergy pay 20%. Other plans would require clergy payments of 30% or 40%.

Rev. Ron Matter, retired, asked how Portico’s new plan offerings affect retired clergy.

In response, Bishop Barrow said that this is meant for compensation guidelines, with Rev. Brown adding that there are no anticipated changes for retired clergy, with these plans meant for those actively serving.

Assembly Action

SA13.05.19. Adoption of Resolution 6

The Assembly voted to adopt Resolution 6 as presented:

Resolution on Compensation Guidelines

Whereas healthy leaders are essential to the mission and ministry of congregations and ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran in America; and

Whereas, Portico Benefit Services is a ministry of the ELCA that “designs benefits that invite rostered leaders and lay employees to live well for life. For Lutherans, this means stewarding gifts of mind, body, and spirit for the sake of the world.” (Portico Website, “About Us”); and

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Whereas, In the past, Portico Benefit Services (formerly ELCA Board of Pensions) has offered one primary health coverage for all members; and

Whereas, Portico Benefit Services proposes to offer four different healthcare plans for 2014 in which two of those plans will shift a significantly larger share of costs to plan members (rostered and lay employees); and

Whereas, The Compensation Guidelines of the Greater Milwaukee Synod exist to guide congregations in planning appropriate compensation and benefits to care for leaders in this church; and

Whereas, The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in April approved a resolution “to endorse as a benchmark the proposed health care plan option that approximates the current level of benefits provided by the ELCA health plan, and to encourage congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, other ELCA-related organizations, and other interested persons to advocate for selection of this plan option”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That, in order to maintain the current level of health benefits for our rostered leaders, the Synod Council edit this synod's compensation guidelines to reflect that ELCA health plan option that most closely resembles current ELCA-Primary health coverage for its rostered leaders; and

RESOLVED, That synod staff apply this recommendation when working with call documents.

The vote on this resolution was 253 in favor, 10 opposed.

Bishop Barrow said that he was thankful for this resolution.

11x15 Campaign

The floor was given to Rev. Mark Thompson, Pastor of Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, Glendale, to begin the report on the 11x15 Campaign. Rev. Thompson explained that he is on the board of directors of Project Return, which was started more than 30 years ago at Cross Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, to “walk with ex-offenders.”

Rev. Thompson asked members of the Assembly to stand, first if they knew someone who has been incarcerated; second if they knew someone unable to get treatment for an addiction, and third if they knew someone unable to get treatment for mental illness. With nearly all members having stood, he asked members to discuss at their tables why it is important to discuss the 11x15 Campaign.

Following those discussions, Rev. Thompson laid out the case that incarceration practices now continue to show both a great disparity in penalties (much harsher, for instance, for crimes likely to be committed by people of color) and the connection to a history in America of attempting to break down the families of people of color, beginning with slavery, moving through Jim Crow and segregation, continuing in welfare policies, and now in incarceration, where Milwaukee has the largest percentage of incarceration

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of men of color in America. He urged members to “talk to elected officials about inconsistencies in incarceration,” and also to “talk about fiscal responsibility to them,” but most of all to keep in mind the words of Isaiah and Luke to “proclaim release to the captives.”

Rev. Joe Ellwanger, retired, then took the floor, first providing a recap of the 11x15 Campaign, which seeks to bring Wisconsin’s prison population down to 11,000 by 2015, in the process aiming to make individuals whole and communities safer.

He said that the focus of the program, Treatment Alternative Diversion (TAD), allows low risk, nonviolent individuals to opt for treatment, with ongoing accountability before a judge, as an alternative to prison. He also said that some choose jail, “because it can be tough to take treatment and confront one’s demons.”

Rev. Ellwanger reported that, following the Synod Assembly’s strong vote in support of the 11x15 Campaign last year, there has been movement, with the Wisconsin Legislature’s Joint Committee on Finance recommending last week, with bi-partisan support, an increase in funding for the TAD program from \$1 million to \$2.5 million. He said that the budget hasn’t yet passed, and asked members to contact their legislators to encourage passage of this funding (and if possible, an additional increase to \$5 million).

He concluded his report with a success story for someone he’d worked with before and after leaving prison, stating that “we need desperately to change how the system works, to say to leaders that this simply isn’t right.” He cited a 68% success rate for TAD programs, and added that “we’ve come a mighty long way in getting politicians on both sides of the aisle to address this issue. I just want to encourage you to keep on keeping on.”

Following announcements, and prayer for the family of Darius Simmons (a 13-year old shot to death by his neighbor last year), Bishop Barrow declared the Assembly in recess at 2:50 pm.

Saturday, June 1, 2013

Rev. Vicki Watkins, Chaplain at Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital, Milwaukee, presided over Saturday morning worship, with Rev. Matthew Short, Pastor of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Slinger, preaching. Assisting in worship were Mr. Elijah Furquan; Rev. Phetsamone Vannavong, Pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; Rev. Marilyn Miller, Pastor of Cross Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; Dr. Abe Caceras, and other musicians, ushers and communion servers.

Plenary IV

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 9:27 am.

Announcements

The bishop began by saying that while synod staff certainly misses, and still calls Mary Meyer, Mary Romskog and Kate Mattson “have been such a blessing” in preparing for the Assembly. He thanked them, with applause from the Assembly.

Turning his attention to the just-concluded worship, he said “Matt Short, you were great! We can all be jealous, or we can want to be a better preacher.”

Video Commercial – In-House Evangelism

In the video, Rev. Amy Becker, Associate Pastor of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee, strongly encouraged participation in the In-House Evangelism program, saying that it is wonderful, and it is “great to explore these issues.”

Report of the Credentials Committee

Mr. David Groenewold reported that in attendance on Saturday, June 1, 2013 were 138 rostered persons and 209 lay people, for a total voting membership of 347. Also present were 64 visitors for a total attendance of 411. A quorum was present. Mr. Groenewold also reported on offerings from Thursday’s worship, at which \$1,576.26 was given in support of the Malaria Campaign. The bishop thanked Mr. Groenewold, and encouraged congregations again to consider raising at least \$1,000 toward the Malaria Campaign.

Report of the Bishop – Bishop Jeff Barrow

Beginning with introductions of clergy who are new to the synod since the last Assembly, Bishop Barrow elaborated on the written report provided to members of the Assembly. Among the highlights, the bishop spoke again of the imminence of change, something he said he’d been keenly aware of since he heard the news of President Kennedy’s assassination while at school. In the current context, he said that “the church is changing,” something we must acknowledge with a nod to the passing generation, but without looking at what we leave behind. “We have to drop all this stuff that isn’t important.” He expressed gratitude for the theme of why we gather, but added that we “can’t just show up and have the church go on.”

The bishop spoke of “the passion that brings us together, gathering around scripture.” In particular he said it had been a privilege to teach in the Diakonia program, with the opportunity to gather around the work, and study, and understand what it means to be a Christian. He “saw how hungry we are to hear and to share God’s word, and to know what it means.” He encouraged others to look into Diakonia, which is “where the church is and where it is going.”

He added that there are so many ways to gather around scripture, but “most of us come to scripture apologetically.” The young, he said, are “looking at the story of the living God, not just a collection of harsh rules,” continuing that he hopes “we can become increasingly passionate about gathering around scripture.”

Moving to the idea of accompaniment, or walking with others, the bishop said that “this is how we authentically get into what the Bible tells us,” opining that “bishops should ‘major’ in something,” with World Hunger being his major. With thanks to Mikka McCracken and her colleagues, he noted that “hunger is not just about full stomachs, but also the hunger for human dignity.” and that dealing with hunger cannot be successful if the hungry become objects of condescension.

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Speaking of his recent trip to Chiapas, Mexico, with a group organized through the Mexican Association for Rural and Urban Transformation (AMEXTRA), an ELCA partner ministry, the bishop addressed the dichotomy of it being a rich agricultural area where the people keep getting poorer and poorer and poorer. The focus on cash crops, with unfavorable land contracts that take land out of production for food for the people of Chiapas, the use of seeds that cannot be replanted for crops in future years, and the use of numerous pesticides no longer allowed in the United States, have all contributed to the problems of poverty and hunger.

World Hunger, by contrast, is not simply about sending food, “but about walking with people; not dependent on our condescending benevolence.” He said that we “cannot just drop Amos out of the canon,” but “must include justice.”

“Advocacy is also a strong part of our Lutheran heritage,” according to the bishop, citing the importance of remembering anniversaries, like the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, so that we can be reminded “of the historic struggle against racial segregation,” with “Dr. King’s call to white churches to help in overcoming oppression.” He noted that many of the clergy now retiring “had lives shaped by the civil rights movement.”

He framed the issue of advocacy as being beyond political polarization, praising State Senators Glenn Grothman (R) and Lena Taylor (D) for working closely with each other in opposition to the rent-to-own business which, he said, “preys on people who are very vulnerable.” He also urged people to be better at thanking public officials when they do the right thing, and added that things like the environment and incarceration are not political issues, but biblical ones. These issues, he said, “can divide, but can also bring forth the best of us, calling all of us to greater responsibility.”

Bishop Barrow called for “healthy churches,” with “clear boundaries but good relationships” between clergy and their congregations. Not hearing pastors say they love their congregations, or congregations say they love their pastors, causes him concern, he said. “In a church that is desperate to change, this is important.”

In closing, the bishop spoke of the need for the young and the old to share in the rebirth of the church, in a time when “some are not satisfied being full of themselves anymore, tired of their own affluence, hungry for the Gospel.” We must, he ended, be “grateful for the church that we have, and more grateful for the church that we can become if we dare.”

Video Commercial – Young Adult Mission Trip to New Orleans

Bishop Barrow noted that such trips can build lifelong friendships, and a commitment to mission, reiterating that the synod is itself committed to continuing support for Youth and Family Ministry following the end of the grants from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation. The Assembly then viewed the video.

Open Forum

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In that the scheduled work of the Assembly concluded ahead of schedule, Bishop Barrow invited members to make brief statements to the Assembly about their work or concerns.

Rev. Richard Peterson, Pastor of Faith/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, expressed concern about the synod's lack of resources for and commitment to outreach, saying that he had a vision of Bishop Barrow standing tall, looking strong with hands spread. His earlier vision, of a strong Latino presence at Faith/Santa Fe, had come true, he said.

Rev. Chuck Ruehle, retired, spoke of returning from three weeks with the Meru Diocese, visiting all six secondary schools there. He invited members of the Assembly to accompany the schools of the diocese, especially in their quest for science equipment "to help the students become strong leaders." He urged that members share information with their congregations.

Mr. Mike Herold, Synod Council member, stated that "this has been a very moving assembly," and that "the world needs what we have to offer. He said that the Diakonia program is important, that it's been good to have youth here sharing stories, and that he hopes that all have found something they can do. He ended his remarks by saying that Reconciling in Christ is particularly important to him as the parent of a gay child.

Rev. Marcia Carrier, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Hartford, "loves the powerful richness of the voices that sing here," something not always as strong in congregations. She said that churches need to see the videos the Assembly saw, and brought forth a question from discussion, "Why is it that I feel so uncomfortable sharing my faith with my friends?" "If we can address this," she said, "we will be a better church."

Rev. Ron Matter, a retired hospital chaplain, thanked the bishop for raising pastoral care as an issue, and noted that different gifts lead to different calls, in his case into hospital ministry.

Mr. Elijah Furquan, member of All Peoples Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, wanted to "bring to everyone's attention" the "multi-cultural church" that worshiped earlier in the morning. This vision of church can bring more youth into the church, youth to whom the church is no longer attractive. "Church is boring; we don't need to find God here anymore, we find God outside." He called on the church to "relinquish some control, give us some responsibility," without being afraid to let the young make mistakes. Not doing this will lead, he said, to what Dr. King called "a weak and ineffectual church."

Mr. Jerry Schmidt, member of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend, spoke of the Mt. Meru coffee project, which he said has thus far seen nearly a million dollars go to coffee growers in Tanzania. He urged members to find sign-up sheets for the golf outing for Mt. Meru Coffee, which will help fund a micro-loan program for farmers and a program to address the problem of fractures for farmers at hospitals in Tanzania.

Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, Senior Pastor at Jackson Park Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, spoke of the "us versus them" image from Pastor Short's sermon,

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inviting people “to look at breaking down walls of racism” with the Crossroads Anti-Racism training scheduled for September.

Ms. Maria Bruno, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Oconomowoc, spoke about youth who do care about God and our church, a church with a great future.

Rev. Paul Bulgerin, Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Grafton said “when we pass a resolution, let’s follow through. Evangelism was passed two years ago, the program was developed, and only one congregation has used it. We need volunteers who want to be trained and need congregations to say we’d like to have this, let’s keep this in our hearts and minds.”

Ms. Linda Moore, member of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, spoke of being a Diakonia student graduating in two weeks. She said it was “multi-generational, multi-racial, a powerful experience helping form what will happen in [my] retirement.”

Ms. Loretta Brockmeier, member of St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Random Lake, said that “as Christians we are walking in history,” with “issues the same as the early church: greed and abuse of power are still there.” In 1684, she said, the bishop of Boston spoke of what hard times exist when children are denied their basic needs. More recently Sissela Bok has written of fear giving permission for violence, with society being divided through fear, and dealing with “the violence of austerity, of hunger, of serfdom, of incarceration, of stereotyping and of poverty.”

Ms. Ellie Schmidtke, Director of Family Ministries at Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls, and Board of Directors of Crossways Camping Ministries, noted that “summer camps are wondering how to fill beds each week,” She urged those listening to provide support and involvement for getting the young to both Crossways and Lutherdale, noting that the camps are open year-round, and that a recent legacy gift has increased from two to 22 the number of camping scholarships available. She also said that Crossways offers day camps, both at its site and at churches that want to sponsor week-long day camps.

A member asked how many congregations have Twitter or Facebook accounts, asserting that “if we want to reach youth, we need to be on Twitter,” and urging members to consider what Elijah Furquan said earlier about youth disengagement.

Rev. Pres Hoffman, Pastor of St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Milwaukee: “I love my congregation, and am determined to love them as no one has loved them before!”

Rev. Andy Feters, Pastor of St. Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waukesha, is “proud to be here, part of this synod.” He recommended the book “A Good Time to Be the Church” by former ELCA Presiding Bishop George Anderson, which he said addresses the same issues of unknowns and fear facing the church today.

A member of Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, shared the news that “great things are happening at Unity: everyone evangelizes,” there is a “soup kitchen, open door closet, medical care, and we are making disciples of Jesus.” There is a pilot

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program called Urban Unity, with a new project later this year to help others tell their stories.

Ms. Leah Midgardan, Adoration Evangelical Lutheran Church, Greenfield, spoke of being part of a delegation to Tanzania, and to activity with a homeless ministry done with the Presbyterians. She welcomed members to join Adoration in a forthcoming fundraising walk.

Rev. David Schoob, Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, West Bend, said “I do love my congregation! I know they love me; that makes ministry possible, we do ministry together!” I am “surrounded by their passion and care, and embraced in doing mission within the synod. Thank you; I do love all of you and this church.”

Rev. Richard Warber, retired, spoke about the synod’s stewardship committee, and how this has been a “tremendous year for financial support,” with the “first three months of this year the best start in ten years in mission support.” He thanked congregations, of which 75 are up-to-date on giving, with 55 ahead of schedule, and urged members to “give your offerings before you go on vacation.”

Rev. Kristin Nielsen, Pastor of Good Shepherd Trinity Church, Milwaukee, addressed the combined ministry of her Lutheran/Presbyterian congregation. We are “trying to let the spirit move – there is a call, a coming together.” She said that this is not just about survival, but rather about being “open to how God has been calling us. There is one staff, one ministry, one budget,” all of which are “a gift, a blessing and hard work.”

Mr. Jose Guerrero, member of Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, and a Voting Member of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly, said that he loves his congregation, which is “struggling financially,” but which has opened the door to Hmong and Latino ministry in a way that has “filled the soul with the Holy Spirit.”

A member of Florist Avenue Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, reported on programs for children and youth, and a June 8th Father’s Day picnic, with hot dogs, hamburgers, chips and games to which all are welcome.

Ms. Jackie Cook, Intern at Greater Milwaukee Synod, expressed thankfulness for the synod’s leadership, pastors and staff.

Closing of Assembly

Bishop Barrow concluded the Assembly following collection of evaluations through the electronic voting system, with the Order for Closing of a Synod Assembly.

The Assembly adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:13 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier
Secretary
Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA