

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

The 2018 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly took place on Friday, May 31, 2019 and Saturday, June 1, 2019 at the [Italian Community Center](#), 631 East Chicago Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Friday's agenda included an orientation session, a dinner featuring an address by Rev. Emmy Kegler, Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Northeast Minneapolis and founder and editor of Queer Grace, an online encyclopedia for LGBTQ and Christian Life, and worship including the Order for the Opening of Assembly, but no plenary sessions.

Saturday, June 1, 2019

Plenary I

Call to Order

Bishop Paul Erickson called the Assembly to order at 8:30 am. Rev. Steve Bogie, Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse, and Phil Smith led the Assembly in singing "Let the Whole Creation Cry."

Welcome

Presenting the Assembly theme "For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table," the bishop welcomed those present, saying that "we hope to lift up ways that we can live out the radical welcome that the Gospel calls us to embody."

He noted changes to the format and length of this year's Assembly, the increase in the number of Voting Members, and the generational characteristics of the membership. There will be intergenerational bingo throughout the day, along with cross-generational conversations during brief breaks.

Bishop Erickson called for not just a place at the table, but a voice at the table.

The bishop also reported that the total offering from the worship service Friday evening was \$2,114.68, including what was given through Text to Give, which the bishop encouraged members to continue using through the Assembly. This offering supports [Reconciling in Christ](#) ministry and programs.

He then introduced Pastor Adam Moreno, of Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Kenosha, to lead devotions.

Devotions

Pastor Moreno spoke of challenging what we have done, and what we know, and what we think we know, in order to grow and thrive as God's people. He recalled being introduced to new ways of looking at theology in seminary, something that deepened his faith. He also learned to look at the Cross+generational perspective. He asked that members lift up the church's innate intergenerational nature, and understand that Cross+generational ministry is different from having an intergenerational gathering. Cross+generational ministry is "an intentional emphasis on encouraging interaction and ministry with and between people of all generations and recognizing the equality of all in the eyes of God and the church." This is ministry, he said, it is not a program. "All are united through the Cross of Christ." He cited the notion of the wonder of the child and the wisdom of the elder, but said this can really work in any direction. We can all learn from one another, no matter our age. He also asked members to be aware of the voices

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

missing from the conversation. “Your voice is needed – the Assembly needs your full participation today.”

Introduction of Planning Team and Special Guests

Bishop Erickson then introduced the Assembly Planning Team, consisting of Assembly manager, Mary Romskog; Rev. Bill Beyer, Robert Gee, Hazel Griffen, Char Guiliani, Paul Hoffman, Rev. Lindsay Jordan, John Mahoney, Rev. Tom Pietz, Tom Schaffer, Michael Schaner, Rev. Tim Tahtinen, and Kelli Zellinger.

The first special guest introduced was Jennifer Prinz, Regional Representative for [Portico Benefit Services](#) for ELCA regions 4 and 5. Ms. Prinz shared a video and brief comments.

The video highlighted the purpose of Portico in supporting those who serve, with brief profiles of ministries assisted. Ms. Prinz thanked the members of the Assembly for their ministries. She spoke about spiritual practice, and invited members to get more information at the Portico table outside the Assembly hall.

The bishop then introduced [Héctor Colón](#), Executive Director of [Lutheran Social Services in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan](#), who addressed the Assembly.

Mr. Colón affirmed LSS’s mission, reporting that last year it served 39,000 people in Wisconsin. Ninety-one percent indicated they had improved their quality of life with help from LSS. As government funding shrinks, LSS is asking for support. There will be a fundraising effort in the fall.

Now on staff is new Church Relations Liaison Sarah Halstead. Quoting Galatians 6:9, “So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up,” Mr. Colón asked for prayers for the staff, for their continued ministry, for the organization, and for him to be guided by the Holy Spirit in his work.

Other introductions included Rev. Cindy Crane, [Director of Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin](#); Stephen Knowles, Assembly Parliamentarian; Matthew Brockmeier, Synod Secretary; and Joyce Caldwell, Synod Vice President.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Bishop Erickson called on Lee Johnston, chair of the Credentials Committee, to give the committee’s first report.

Mr. Johnston reported that in attendance at the Assembly at the opening of the first plenary session on Saturday, June 1, 2019, were 129 clergy and 229 lay people, for a total voting membership of 358. Also present were 37 visitors for a total attendance of 395. A quorum of voting members was present, and lay members comprised more than the ELCA requirement of 60% of voting members.

Appointments

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

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

Assembly Action

SA19.06.01. Approval of Appointments

The Assembly voted to approve appointments to the Credentials, Elections, and Reference and Counsel Committees, and of the Assembly Parliamentarian, as printed in the Synod Assembly Booklet.

Assembly Orientation

Bishop Erickson gave an overview of information resources and voting procedures. He encouraged members to check out sponsorship displays in the lobby, noting that most of these displays have been moved to the Together in Mission event in February.

He emphasized the idea of a “shorter and more focused Assembly,” and encouraged feedback through a follow-up survey that will be sent to Voting Members next week. “Our goal is still for folks to feel more energized, connected, and hopeful at the end of the day.” He spoke of the Assembly’s role in guiding the work of the synod, and of Robert’s Rules of Order’s role in guiding the Assembly.

Adoption of Agenda

Bishop Erickson then called for a vote by the Assembly to approve the agenda as recommended by the Synod Council and printed in the Booklet, with the added reminder that, without objection, changes may be made in the order of business if required.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.02. Adoption of Agenda

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

Approval of Rules and Procedures

The bishop then reviewed the proposed Rule and Procedures and called for a vote by the Assembly to approve them, as recommended by the Synod Council and printed in the Booklet.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.03. Approval of 2019 Assembly Rules and Procedures

The Assembly voted to adopt the 2019 Assembly Rules and Procedures as printed in the Booklet.

Nominating Report

Bishop Erickson introduced Synod Secretary Matthew Brockmeier, who presented the nominating report. The bishop noted that there were still a number of positions for which there are no nominees, and asked members of the Assembly to consider service in those roles. All new nominations would need to be submitted by 10:30 am in order to be included on the first ballot, which would take place near the end of this plenary.

Nominations – Consultation Committee

Lay Male (one position – partial term now-8/31/2021)

Mr. Charles Lutz – Floor Nomination

Mr. Brent Mitchell – Floor Nomination

Clergy (two positions – full term 9/1/2019-8/31/2025)

Rev. John Brink – Floor Nomination

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

Rev. John Holm – Floor Nomination
Rev. Carol Jeunnette – Floor Nomination

Lay Female (one position – full term: 9/1/2019-8/31/2025)

Ms. Lisa Schulte – Floor Nomination
Ms. Nanette Smith – Floor Nomination

Lay Male (one position – full term 9/1/2019-8/31/2025)

No nominations

Nominations – Synod Secretary

All eligible (one position – full term 9/1/2019-8/31/2023)

Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse – Synod Council Nomination

Nominations – Synod Council At Large

At Large – Clergy (one position – full term 9/1/2019-8/31/2023)

Rev. Kevin Kretzmann Farrar – Advance Nomination
Rev. Karen Pahl – Advance Nomination

At Large – Lay Female (one position – full term 9/1/2019-8/31/2023)

Ms. Amber Davis – Floor Nomination
Ms. Alyna Romain – Floor Nomination

At Large – Lay Male (one position – full term 9/1/2019-8/31/2023)

Mr. Todd Beutin – Floor Nomination
Mr. José Andrés Guerrero – Floor Nomination
Mr. Joshua Hiatt – Floor Nomination
Mr. Richard Lisle – Floor Nomination
Mr. Brent Mitchell – Floor Nomination

Nominations – Synod Council by Clusters (full terms 9/1/2019-8/31/2023)

Lake Country Cluster – Lay Female

No Nomination

Milwaukee Cluster 3 – Clergy

Rev. Denise Mbise – Cluster Nomination

Milwaukee Cluster 4 – Lay Female

No Nomination

Waukesha Cluster – Lay Male Person of Color

Mr. Edwin Aparacio – Cluster Nomination

Nominations – Synod Council

Youth – Lay Person – Under 18 (one position – full term 9/1/2019-8/31/2021)

Ms. Sara Booher – Synod Council Nomination
Mr. Sidney Buchman – Floor Nomination

Budget Presentation

Synod Treasurer Tom Gauthier presented the proposed budget as recommended by the Synod Council, drawing attention to the budget rationale page in the Booklet.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

ELCA Report

Bishop Erickson introduced Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Assistant to the Secretary/Executive for OS Administration in the ELCA Office of the Secretary, who is serving as the ELCA's representative for the Assembly. He noted that she was able to fill in on less than 24 hours-notice for the scheduled ELCA representative.

"What's in a theme?", asked Deacon Rothmeyer. We are church; lifting up one of Bishop Eaton's four emphases for such a time as this, recalling the role of Esther in speaking out. Themes focus our attention, in order to gain greater meaning.

She suggested that the members of the Assembly combine the themes of the church and the Assembly: "we are church for such a time as this so that everyone born has a place at the table." As church, we create that place at the table, and lift up how our congregations create places at the table.

Continuing her remarks, Deacon Rothmeyer had a word of thanks to the members of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, who make a place at the table by sharing mission support to the synod. "Thank you for your generosity." She reported that the synod provided \$577,000 toward Campaign for the ELCA, the national church's five-year funding campaign.

ELCA World Hunger received \$23.5 million in 2018, including more than \$500,000 from this synod. Among the funds distributed by ELCA World Hunger and Domestic Hunger Grants was a grant to The Table in Milwaukee for an urban farmers training program.

Other funds support Lutheran Disaster Response, with activity in 2018 in 33 countries and in 19 American states. LDR received \$11.5 million in 2018, including \$176,000 from the Greater Milwaukee Synod.

Deacon Rothmeyer spoke about the ELCA's current strategic planning process, which has congregational vitality and leadership as priorities. ELCA leaders from this synod include Sonja Wolfe, who serves on the ELCA Church Council; Steve Knowles, Synod Attorney and participant in an ELCA attorney's association; and Rev. Matt Short, serving both the synod and the churchwide organization in his role as Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission.

She addressed the importance of lifting up future leaders, and spoke of the synod's voting members for the Churchwide Assembly, which is being held in Milwaukee in August, and the members of the local arrangements committee. Regarding the Churchwide Assembly, she said that among the important items for consideration were elections for presiding bishop and for ELCA secretary; a proposed social statement, "Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action"; the church's interreligious commitments; treatment of Ministers of Word and Service as clergy; and an apology for racism and slavery. She also gave thanks for the leadership of Synod Bishop Paul Erickson.

She then asked that Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's video report to assemblies be shown. The video had statistics on 2018 activity in the ELCA, framed by what we accomplish as church together.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

The video also addressed finding peace, even in a stressful time, through Christ. We are able to have difficult conversations with each other with honesty and openness. To be the presence and the peace of Christ. We have been called to be peacemakers and healing hands in the world.

Deacon Rothmeyer was presented with a gift from Alice's Garden.

Reference and Counsel Committee Report

Bishop Erickson invited Jeffrey Kehoe, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to present the Committee's report. Following Mr. Kehoe's report, which included a reading of all resolved statements from the five resolutions and memorials presented for consideration, there was a motion to suspend the rules to allow consideration of a new memorial addressing the arrest, detention, and deportation of refugees, framed in the context of the admonition on the treatment of strangers in Leviticus.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.04. Suspension of the Rules

The Assembly voted to suspend the rules to allow consideration of 2019 Resolution 6 – Memorial on Deportations.

The motion was carried with no opposition

Break

The Assembly recessed for a brief break at 10:28 am.

Reconvene

The Assembly reconvened at 10:44 am.

Music

Following the break, the Assembly sang the hymn "All Are Welcome."

Cluster Nomination Updates

The bishop reported that two clusters completed their nominating process for Synod Council seats during the break, and shared the results:

- Milwaukee Cluster 4 – Ms. Amber Anderson, Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Milwaukee
- Lake Country Cluster – Ms. Vickie Stretz, St. Olaf, Rubicon

Mission Investment Fund

The bishop introduced Rev. Richard Wehrs, Regional Manager of the [Mission Investment Fund](#), to address the Assembly.

Rev. Wehrs greeted the members, speaking of the immigrant experience in Lutheranism in the United States. The Mission Investment Fund has a 150-year history, having been formed as the Church Extension Fund by the general synod of its time to pool resources to help congregations build.

In 1869, its first year, it gave loans to four congregations totaling \$1,800 to build new buildings. The Fund now has about \$705 million in assets, with 917 congregations with outstanding loans. There are roughly 14,000 investors, including 4,000 congregations

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

and 10,000 individuals. Rev. Wehrs invited members to stop at the MIF table during the Assembly.

Lutheran Campus Ministry Video Report

The Assembly viewed a video presentation highlighting the work of Lutheran Campus Ministry on the Marquette University and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campuses.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Erickson turned the chair over to Joyce Caldwell for the duration of his report. Vice President Caldwell introduced the bishop.

The bishop said he is grateful for this call, in a world that needs the Gospel of love and reconciliation. "I am grateful for leaders like you, and for the delightfully talented staff" of the synod. He introduced staff, and recognized Synod Attorney Steve Knowles, who is retiring from that role at the end of September. He presented a gift for Steve, a print of The Ten Commandments ("rules," per Steve, also a former synod secretary) from the Saint John's Bible Fine Art Print Series.

He then called on the three Assistants to the Bishop to share reflections on their work in support of the synod.

Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Leadership, Rev. Jennifer Arnold, spoke of how the synod has been blessed in countless ways for the work that God has called us into, drawing particular attention to the annual Together in Mission event, held in February. This year, she reported, almost 300 people came together, with opportunities to see how much we have to offer one another. Together in Mission will take place again on Saturday, February 15, 2020, at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa.

Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations in Mission, Rev. Kristin Nielsen, talked about accompanying congregations through times of transition, times that are frequently full of high emotion and high anxiety. She pays special attention to the shift in power dynamics in congregations in transition, working with congregational leaders to create intentional space for as many voices as possible, making sure some voices are not overshadowed by louder voices. When there is an intentional invitation to everyone, she said, congregations will be better prepared for their new ministry, and the new ministry is likely to work better. To accomplish this, she said it is helpful to have guidelines on participation. These guidelines can be simple in form, but hard to live into. She emphasized again that it is critical to hear from everyone at the table. She continued by saying that there are often assumptions about what a rostered leader looks like; assumptions that limit who congregations will consider. The need, she added, is to "expand that vision," elaborating on how bringing together voices of different generations becomes a gift to accompany the congregation.

Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, Rev. Matt Short, "loves the theme of this year's Assembly," delving into the notion of how a table, especially a round one, can be an expanding circle where there is always room for another, with no one over another. Historically, he said, congregations have often viewed each other as competitors, but he said that now there is a new spirit, where congregations are "far better together." It is, he added, "more like Jesus than a bunch of nonprofits competing with each other." We gather to learn by doing, what we practice we become. He

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

reported on working with cohorts of congregations, including 14 congregations in Stewardship for All Seasons, “looking at a holistic approach to stewardship,” learning from each other, and Faithful Innovation, empowering lay members to erase the line between the church and the work. There are currently eight congregations walking through Faithful Innovation, with from four to six other congregations possibly creating a second cohort in the fall. All of this, he said, is “calling us to be the church together.”

Returning to the podium, Bishop Erickson shared the story of how last year roughly one-third of congregations in the synod were in pastoral transition. That is now down to 26 congregations. Twenty-seven transitions were completed in the last twelve months, with 20 of the newly placed pastors new to the synod’s roster. He said he is “grateful for your partnership in this transition process.” He highlighted three candidates for ordination at the Assembly.

He offered remembrance and prayer for eight rostered leaders who have died during the last year, and noted clergy and congregational anniversaries, which are included in the Booklet.

His key goal is to support, encourage and develop leaders in the life of our church.

The bishop discussed the staff retreat held earlier in the year, where a staff statement was created. It emphasizes:

- Work to connect (challenges far greater than we can do by ourselves, we need each other)
- Work to facilitate (call processes and other supports; trying not to determine outcomes, but keep the work on the right path)
- Work to inspire (ministry is hard, following Jesus is hard; organizing faithful communities is hard).

“Help us all remember that what we do matters.”

Finally, the bishop spoke briefly about the proposed synod-wide mission appeal, which will be presented shortly, noting its focus on innovation, rather than maintenance and support. “Whatever path we travel, there may be loss.”

Vice President Caldwell returned the chair to the bishop at 11:29 am, who promptly introduced her to give her report.

Vice President’s Report

“Once a year we gather; our work is visible and energizing,” began Vice President Caldwell.

The work of the synod council was reviewed. It is “a wonderful role.” She recounted that in 1987, as the ELCA was formed, she was a member of the first Synod Council (and knew Steve Knowles). The work was more visible at that time, she said, but the level of responsibility is no less now. That work includes providing guidance and direction.

She noted that there were two key areas of concern this year, which will be highlighted during the report. Next year, a primary focus will be the structure of mission clusters. All

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

of this work, she said, is to “reaffirm being God’s people,” as is the work “carried out by each of you in our congregations.”

After serving for two years as vice president, half of the Council she had gotten to know are leaving. She recognized departing members Mr. George Monis, Rev. Tim Tahtinen, Ms. Claire Zautke, Rev. Pamela Lange, Rev. Kevin Kretzmann Farrar, Rev. Lindsay Jordan, Mr. Jerry Key, Ms. Amber Davis, and Ms. Anja Logan, who were called forward and thanked by Joyce Caldwell and the Assembly.

She then recognized outgoing synod secretary Matthew Brockmeier, asking all in the Assembly who had worked with him on the Synod Council or the Reference and Counsel Committee, or whose congregations had worked with him to update their constitutions, to stand. Mr. Brockmeier was also presented with a print from the Saint John’s Bible Fine Art Print Series, his featuring words from John, Chapter 1, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” The scribe apologizes for any errors in this paragraph, as tears of gratitude obscure the page.

Continuing with her report, the vice president said that the long-standing synod mission statement has been revisited, with the review beginning with table conversations at last year’s Synod Assembly. The themes that came out of that first conversation included knowing Christ, building authentic community, treasuring diversity, and outreach and service.

The next step was a day-long Synod Council retreat in November, working with a first draft. The draft was then presented at February’s Together in Mission event, with revisions in a second draft considered by the Council in March. The second draft was shared online through May 9th; 57 comments were posted. With additional changes, the final draft, significantly different from the original, is presented to the Assembly.

Guiding principles are care and commitment of the synod, prayer, and the need to see and live a mission and vision in a far more expansive way. “The eyes of our heart enlightened” will lead us to carry out our values.

Acting on a recommendation from the Synod Council, which was moved by Vice President Caldwell, the Assembly voted on the Statement without further discussion.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.05. Approval of Mission, Vision, Values, Practices Statement

The Assembly voted to approve the Synod Mission, Vision, Values, Practices statement as presented:

The Greater Milwaukee Synod (bishop, staff, pastors, deacons, leaders, congregations, and ministries) embrace the following statements that express our common commitment to living into God’s vision for our world.

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

Our Mission: Following Jesus, forming communities, loving all.

Core Values:

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

- Curiosity. We believe that God is always up to something new, working to bring people together from diverse contexts to embrace life out of death, hope out of despair, and community over isolation. Our task is to wonder and explore as the Holy Spirit moves among us. (Acts 2:1-24)
- Courage. We believe that God is inviting us to explore new ways of being church, re-examining familiar structures, beliefs, and practices, that we might experience the rich and full life that God intends for all creation. (Isaiah 42:5-9)
- Compassion. We believe that Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves needs to guide everything we do as we form communities of grace, welcome, service, and justice. (Luke 10:25-37)
- Collaboration. We believe that, just as God walks with us in our journey of faith, God invites us to walk with and work with each other and with our neighbors in relationships of authentic mutuality and equity. (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Common Practices:

- Worship. We regularly respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation to meet God through Word and Sacrament, experiencing God's saving love in Christ and being sent into the world to share that love.
- Prayer. We ground all that we do in prayer, calling on God's Spirit to bless, strengthen, and shape us for witness and service.
- Listening. We seek to listen to and learn from God's Word, each other, our neighbors near and far, and the world around us, asking deep questions and being open to new voices and new perspectives.
- Invitation. We actively invite others into deeper relationships with Jesus, welcoming them into communities shaped by unconditional love and acceptance.
- Learning. We strive to be learning communities, committed to a deepening engagement with scripture and theology as well as training that equips us to live out our faith in the world and combat racism, poverty, injustice, and discrimination around issues of gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Generosity. We open our lives to the free sharing of ideas and resources with all, recognizing that everything belongs to God.
- Innovation. We know that the Church and our world is changing, and we need to take some risks and explore new ways of being faithful, building relationships, and organizing our life together.
- Leadership development. We support and encourage new people into leadership roles, focusing on those who have often been overlooked and undervalued.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

- Showing up. We live out our faith by engaging in service, action, and advocacy around issues of poverty, violence, racial equity, gender and gender identity, and injustice of all kinds.

The motion was carried with no opposition

Feasibility Study Report

Rev. Mike Ward of the consulting firm Gronlund, Sayther and Brunkow was introduced by the bishop. Rev. Ward has worked with Stewardship for all Seasons, and serves on the ELCA Church Council.

Recounting the history of his work on this project, Rev. Ward said that a pastors' advisory cabinet was convened in March, key leaders were identified, and interviews were conducted with 47 people, in addition to 78 survey responses received from Synod Assembly voting members. He considered this to be a thorough study.

The three original concepts embodied in the exploration were compassion (e.g. Outreach for Hope), leadership (including campus ministry and seminary students), and innovation (finding ways for congregational leaders to be more effective).

Among the particular findings was that there is a favorable opinion of the bishop and his staff.

Challenges identified included the reality that there are "at least two synods in the same geography," that partnerships must be enhanced, and that there is a need to equip and strengthen current leaders.

Key findings were that there is widespread support for congregational vitality and supporting leaders; a desire for innovation; and a need in the campaign to align Outreach for Hope and Lutheran Campus Ministry with innovation and partnership, rather than seeking simply to support their ongoing work.

The original concept also was to look at a campaign target of \$3.5 million. The findings supported a target range of \$2 million to \$2 ½ million instead, with the possibility that a higher goal could be attained.

People want, said Rev. Ward, for the synod to have a role working with congregations, with huge potential for support at the congregational level. One striking result was that support amongst rostered leaders was very strong, with the largest potential for rostered support in any synod with which Rev. Ward has worked. He noted that a stronger case can increase the campaign's potential.

He recommends launching a campaign, focusing first on case refinement, while also undertaking communication initiatives and campaign leadership recruitment.

"This is your opportunity."

Questions raised from the floor included timelines, including possible conflicts with other campaigns (Answer: there should not be significant overlap); the campaign timeline (Answer: launching a "quiet" campaign by November, with an approach to congregations in approximately 18 months, and a total duration of three years; and whether this question would be brought back to the next Synod Assembly (Answer: no,

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

approval today will authorize the Synod Council to take any necessary further actions). A final question was whether there was a preliminary notion of the case statement, with Rev. Ward answering that the focus would be innovation, to be able to lead the church of today and tomorrow, anchored in innovation and partnership. The Assembly then took action on the Synod Council recommendation to approve continued development of the Mission Appeal.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.06. Approval of Mission Appeal Development

The Assembly voted to approve the continued development of a synod-wide mission appeal, seeking to raise up to \$2.5 million dedicated to priorities articulated in a case statement that will be refined by fall of 2019 and approved by Synod Council.

Churchwide Assembly Volunteer Effort

Rev. Lindsay Jordan, and Sue Cyr, co-chairs of the CWA Local Arrangements Committee, shared the podium and a raft of CWA phrases to urge voting members to volunteer to assist with the Churchwide Assembly in August. There will be 1,600 people coming to Milwaukee, with a need to fill 600 volunteer activity slots. About 200 have been filled to date, so ample opportunities remain.

Resolutions

Bishop Erickson invited Jeffrey Kehoe, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to come to the podium.

Resolution 6 – Memorial on Deportations, which was submitted by Emaus ELCA, Racine:

WHEREAS, the Book of Leviticus reminds us that “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God”, and

WHEREAS, the policy of the government of the United States has moved from acceptance of refugees to harassment, detention and deportation; and

WHEREAS, the brutality of this policy has been visited directly upon Betty Rendón, a student pastor in this synod, and her family; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the United States government, policies that are in opposition to the Biblical teachings at the foundation of the church.

This memorial was moved and presented by Shawn Mitchell.

Initial comments included support for the timeliness of the memorial, and for the idea that this was consistent with the combined themes presented by Deacon Rothmeyer in

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

her remarks. Two speakers said “this is where the rubber hits the road” on a topic that has been the subject of consideration by previous Synod Assemblies.

The bishop asked members to refrain from applause during debate.

Additional comments addressed the shift in discourse in this country away from basic Christian beliefs, and how this memorial addresses that concern, and noting that this would be a good way to live out what is included in the just-adopted values statement.

Suggestions in debate included having practical ways to implement the intent of this memorial, teaming up with organizations already active in this work, and telling elected leaders that “we are unhappy with these current policies.”

A concern raised was that, while this was a timely matter, the language was unduly negative and adversarial, “nobody likes to be told that they are wrong.”

A response to this concern was that, while as Lutherans we are taught to obey the laws, “when the law is immoral, then the church should speak up and ask that our nation do a better job.”

Point of Order – A request that the parliamentarian speak to appropriateness of this memorial, since it came late. The bishop answered that the parliamentarian’s role is to advise him rather than respond to questions from voting members, but that this memorial was seen by the Reference and Counsel Committee prior to submission.

Continuing debate, there was a statement that “as a white church, we are good at making sure our words appease. We are past nice words,” adding that those who feel it is inflammatory are those who are comfortable, but that we must speak from the margins.

Rev. Kevin Penvose asked if the memorial can be amended, suggesting that he would like to see language drawn from the bishop’s statements on Betty Rendón’s case added to the Resolved statement.

Citing the Orders of the Day, the bishop suspended debate at 12:34 pm. He then called on those present to find “a reasonably friendly looking stranger, ideally from a different generation,” with whom to share a table grace, and then to proceed to lunch.

Saturday, June 1, 2019

Plenary II

Bishop Erickson called the Assembly to order at 1:30 pm.

Music

The Assembly sang “Behold, How Pleasant/ Miren Qué Bueno.”

Report of the Credentials Committee

Lee Johnston provided an updated report for the Credentials Committee, reporting that in attendance at the Assembly at the opening of the second plenary session on Saturday, June 1, 2019, were 135 clergy and 231 lay people, for a total voting

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

membership of 366. Also present were 38 visitors for a total attendance of 404. Lay voting members continued to exceed 60% of total voting membership.

Devotions

Devotions were shared by Carolyn Karl, using the Faith 5 Devotion, which incorporates sharing, reading, talking, praying, and blessing. She asked that members share using this system in groups of three or four, with at least two generations represented in each group.

First Ballot

Bishop Erickson called for the first ballot for those nominated for positions in the synod, requesting a single action to elect cluster-nominated Synod Council positions.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.07. Election of Nominees

Election as Voting Members for the Synod Council from clusters as presented:

- Lake Country Cluster – Ms. Vickie Stretz
- Milwaukee Cluster 3 – Rev. Denise Mbise
- Milwaukee Cluster 4 – Ms. Amber Anderson
- Waukesha Cluster – Mr. Edwin Aparacio

Voice vote

Ballots were then distributed to members, and collected for tabulation.

Action on the Budget

The 2020/2021 budget was moved for adoption by Synod Treasurer Tom Gauthier.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.08. Approval of Budget

The Assembly voted to approve the Greater Milwaukee Synod budget for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2021, as presented, with total contributions and support of \$1,971,500, and total ministries (expenses) of \$2,043,373.

Vote by show of cards.

Outreach for Hope Report

The Outreach for Hope report was presented by Maripat Monahan, OFH Advancement Director, and OFH board member Rev. John Bischoff. Ms. Monahan began by saying that “you’ve all been engaged in some important work – thank you for being present. It is most significant that we show up.” She asked members to “show up for your neighbors, to be present at the table.” There is room for all at the OFH table, working to support centers for hope in every community in the synod. She invited all to join in supporting OFH, which supports more than 20 ministries. “Hear stories of hope. Visit the Outreach for Hope table or the [website](#).”

Rev. Bischoff expanded on “a wonderful opportunity” to support OFH, the [12th annual Outreach for Hope Family Bike Ride](#). This is one of the major fundraisers for OFH, and will take place this year on Saturday, September 7th. There will be three rides; in Waukesha, in Ozaukee County, and a new ride in Kenosha. “We need your help. Ride. Volunteer. Ride about fun, family, fellowship, and fundraising.”

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

Cross+Gen Stretch Break

“The Beach Ball Challenge,” keeping all the beach balls in the air for 60 seconds, provided an active break.

Resolution 6 – Memorial on Deportations, – continued

Point of Order – Was there an amendment offered? Answer, not yet.

Rev. Kevin Penvose moved an amendment, incorporating additional language into the Resolved statement:

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the United States government, policies that are in opposition to the Biblical teachings at the foundation of the church and that congregation members in the ELCA are encouraged to communicate to their elected officials to: 1) Protect migrants, refugees and those fleeing violence; 2) Stop separating families; 3) Increase the number of refugees we are willing to accept from the current historically low numbers, and 4) Remove practices that create unreasonable and insurmountable barriers to those seeking asylum.

After an initial statement of support for the proposed amendment, citing the guidance provided in how to proceed with action, an amendment to the amendment was offered to the second numbered item in the list of proposed actions:

2) Stop separating immigrant or refugee families;

Debate on the proposed amendment to the amendment began with a statement against, “because of our propensity to label people,” followed by a succession of statements pro and con, centering on whether the issue needed further definition as an immigrant and refugee concern only.

The initial vote on the motion to amend the amendment, by card, was indecisive. Pages were called by the bishop to count votes.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.09. Approval of Amendment to Amendment

The Assembly voted to amend the proposed amendment to Resolution 6 – Memorial on Deportations, as proposed, adding the words “immigrant or refugee” to the second item in the proposed amended language.

This amendment was approved by a counted vote of 147 in favor, 138 opposed.

Discussion on Amendment as Amended

An action to include abused children in the language of the amendment was ruled out of order by the bishop, in that it was not germane to the original question.

A final comment in support noted that this was a great way to show leadership.

Rev. Karl Nelson moved the previous question.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

Assembly Action

SA19.06.10. Approval of the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to approve the Previous Question on the motion to amend Resolution 6.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.11. Approval of Amendment

The Assembly voted to amend Resolution 6 – Memorial on Deportations, as proposed:

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the United States government, policies that are in opposition to the Biblical teachings at the foundation of the church and that congregation members in the ELCA are encouraged to communicate to their elected officials to: 1) Protect migrants, refugees and those fleeing violence; 2) Stop separating immigrant or refugee families; 3) Increase the number of refugees we are willing to accept from the current historically low numbers, and 4) Remove practices that create unreasonable and insurmountable barriers to those seeking asylum.

Consideration of the original motion as amended included the idea that it is time “not just talk about, but time to do something,” followed by translated comments addressing fear of family separations and comments regarding how this memorial was consistent with the previously adopted values statement.

A motion was made to call the question.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.12. Approval of the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to approve the Previous Question Resolution 6 – Memorial on Deportations.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.13. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 6 – Memorial on Deportations, as amended:

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the United States government, policies that are in opposition to the Biblical teachings at the foundation of the church and that congregation members in the ELCA are encouraged to communicate to their elected officials to: 1) Protect migrants, refugees and those fleeing violence; 2) Stop separating immigrant or refugee families; 3) Increase the number of refugees we are willing to accept from the current historically low numbers, and 4) Remove practices that create unreasonable and insurmountable barriers to those seeking asylum.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

At Large – Youth, (full term – 9/1/2019-8/31/2021)

Ms. Sara Booher 202 – elected

Mr. Sidney Buchman 120

Total valid votes: 322 – Invalid votes: 2 – 162 needed to elect

Resolutions

Bishop Erickson invited Jeffrey Kehoe, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to return to the podium.

Resolution 1 – Memorial on Gun Violence Prevention, which was submitted by United Lutheran Church, Racine and co-sponsored by Kenosha and Racine Cluster members: Rev. Cindy Aasen, St. Paul's/Spirit Alive, Kenosha; Mr. John Anderson, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Racine; Rev. Johnathan Barker, Grace Kenosha; Rev. John Bischoff, United Lutheran, Racine; Mr. Karl Erickson, ELCA Outreach Center; Rev. Allison Johnson, Journey in Faith, Racine; Rev. Jim Lynch, St. Johns / Holy Nativity, Kenosha; Rev. Karen Pahl, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Racine; Rev. Sheila Rawn, St. Mary's, Kenosha; Rev. Harvard Stephens, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Kenosha; Rev. Beth-Ann Stone, Mt. Pleasant, Racine; Mr. David Ulrich, St. Mary's Kenosha; and Rev. Krista Zimmerman, Mt. Pleasant, Racine.

WHEREAS, the ELCA remains unalterably opposed to violence in our communities and committed to our Christian role as peacemakers; and

WHEREAS, mass shootings have continued to increase in the United States since the last Social Policy Resolution on Gun Violence Prevention was passed in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States failed to pass the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2018; and

WHEREAS, we have watched a rising wave of young people and parents in our country who are advocating for stricter gun regulation laws in order to create safe schools and safe neighborhoods, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage bishops, pastors, and Lutheran leaders to urge Congress and state legislatures to pass an assault weapons ban to replace the assault weapons ban that expired in 2004, this ban to include assault-like rifles and high-capacity magazines and to pass laws for strict background checks for all gun sales, including private sales; and to urge members of this church to contact their elected leaders through phone calls, letters, e-mails, and petitions, urging them to pass such legislation.

The resolution was moved and introduced by Rev. John Bischoff, who spoke of the frequency of shootings, leading to his researching the history of actions by the churchwide organization, going back to the 1994 social message on "Community Violence." He said we have an "obligation to name and denounce the idols before which people bow," and to advocate on this issue. He said the proposed memorial carefully addresses the issues of military-style weapons, while protecting the rights of those who own other types of guns.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

Additional statements addressed personal experience with gun violence, seeing the impact of gun violence, and participating in the national student walkout to protest gun violence, with an admonition “to work as the body of Christ to talk to legislators and government.”

There was also a statement against the resolution as written, saying that, while some gun accessories should be banned, the memorial represents taking rights away.

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke moved an amendment to add “deacons” to the Resolved statement.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.14. Approval of Amendment

The Assembly voted to amend Resolution 1 – Memorial on Gun Violence Prevention, as proposed:

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage bishops, pastors, **deacons**, and Lutheran leaders . . .

This motion was approved by a show of cards.

Consideration of the resolution as amended included the question of what kind of gun Jesus would own, and in what situation would Jesus use a gun.

Motion made to call the question.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.15. Approval of the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to approve the Previous Question on the motion to approve Resolution 1.

This motion was approved by a show of cards.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.16. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 1 – Memorial on Gun Violence Prevention, as amended:

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage bishops, pastors, deacons, and Lutheran leaders to urge Congress and state legislatures to pass an assault weapons ban to replace the assault weapons ban that expired in 2004, this ban to include assault-like rifles and high-capacity magazines and to pass laws for strict background checks for all gun sales, including private sales; and to urge members of this church to contact their elected leaders through phone calls, letters, e-mails, and petitions, urging them to pass such legislation.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

Resolution 2 – Resolution on the Opioid Crisis, which was Submitted by Clusters 1 and 2, Milwaukee (authors Rev. Molly Doreza, Bay Shore Lutheran & Rev. Joseph Ellwanger, Hephatha Lutheran), and co-sponsored: Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse, St. Paul's; Rev. Mary Martha Kannass, Hephatha Lutheran; Rev. Kevan Penvose, Unity Lutheran; Rev. Marilyn Miller, Lutheran Church of the Reformation; Rev. Mark Thompson, Breaking the Chains; Rev. Michelle Townsend de Lopez, Cross Lutheran; Rev. Dr. Lisa Bates-Froiland, Redeemer Lutheran; Rev. Alexis Twito

WHEREAS, Jesus sends us forth to “heal the sick” (Matthew 10:8); and

WHEREAS, as declared in its “Statement of Purpose”, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must “lift its voice in concord and work with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery and reconcile the estranged” (Section 4.03(f) of the ELCA Constitution); and

WHEREAS, every day, more than 130 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids (National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Opioid Overdose Crisis”, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>, revised Jan. 2019), causing misery for a vast network of victims and their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, the misuse of, and addiction to, opioids — including *prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl* — is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare, so much so that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total economic burden in the United States of prescription opioid misuse alone is \$78.5 billion per year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement (National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Opioid Overdose Crisis”, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>, revised Jan. 2019); and

WHEREAS, during the year 2017, there were 916 overdose-related deaths in the State of Wisconsin, more than twice the number of such deaths during the year 2010 (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, <https://www.wisconsin.gov/wish/opioid/data.htm>), including a four-fold increase in heroin deaths during that period of years (National Institute on Drug Abuse, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-summaries-by-state/wisconsin-opioid-summary>); and

WHEREAS, in the year 2017, the President of the United States directed his Administration “to use all appropriate emergency and other authorities to respond to the crisis caused by the opioid epidemic (Presidential Statement, August 10, 2017); and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Wisconsin created the Governor’s Task Force on Opioid Abuse (Executive Order #214, Sept. 22, 2016) and subsequently convened, in multiple locations, a Governor’s Faith-Based Summit on Opioids for pastors, priests, parish nurses, and others involved in faith-based community organizations confronting the prevention, intervention, recovery, and criminal justice consequences of the Opioid Crisis (Executive Order # 273, Jan. 19, 2018); and

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

WHEREAS, the churchwide organization of the ELCA declares, “The work God calls us to do in the world is never done alone or in isolation, and the churchwide organization plays a key role in developing and supporting a culture of interdependence, diversity and common mission across all expressions of the ELCA and its partners” (<https://elca.org/About/Churchwide>); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to respond to the opioid crisis by creating a Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse to advise how synod leaders and congregations can collaborate and form effective partnerships with state and local authorities and nongovernmental organizations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod appoint members of the Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse, to include Synod staff, pastors, and lay leaders (especially those with experience-based perspectives) and task a synod staff member with responsibility to support the Task Force; and be it further

RESOLVED, that participants in the Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse include those most vulnerable in this crisis — young people, people of color, people who identify among LBGTQIA+, people who have been in prison or jail, military veterans, and people from other groups that are disproportionately affected by this crisis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse encourage practical ways for rostered leaders and congregations to bring hope and healing to those affected by the crisis, and in so doing consider the actions suggested by the Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships in its Opioid Epidemic Practical Toolkit, including

- Hosting or connecting people to recovery programs and support groups (*Open Your Doors*)
- Providing educational opportunities that create understanding and encourage compassion (*Increase Awareness*)
- Offering training programs to build the capacity of communities to respond (*Rebuild and Restore*)
- Focused efforts on youth prevention (*Get Ahead of the Problem*)
- Joining substance-use prevention coalitions, so as to inform, connect, and strengthen efforts (*Connect and Collaborate*)

and help congregations to be informed about federal, state, and local resource available, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod to share this resolution with the presiding bishop of the ELCA and the appropriate staff people in the Domestic Mission Unit of the churchwide organization of the ELCA and to explore with them the formation of a churchwide task force that would provide information, networking, and support for ministries dedicated to combating opioid addiction and abuse.

The resolution was moved and introduced by Rev. Molly Doreza, retired as of today. She spoke of the loss of her son to fentanyl less than three years ago, the widespread devastation, human and economic, caused by opioids, and the need “to find safe places

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

at our congregations' tables for people in the thrall of opioids. Behind all the statistics are real people."

Deacon Ellie Schmidtke moved an amendment to add "deacons" to the second Resolved statement.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.17. Approval of Amendment

The Assembly voted to amend Resolution 2 – Resolution on the Opioid Crisis, as proposed:

RESOLVED, that the Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod appoint members of the Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse, to include Synod staff, pastors, **deacons**, and lay leaders . . .

This motion was approved by a show of cards.

An amendment was moved to add "Narcan" training programs "and Narcan to those who have been trained" to the third bullet point of the fourth Resolved statement:

- Offering **Narcan** training programs **and Narcan to those who have been trained** to build the capacity of communities to respond (*Rebuild and Restore*)

A statement was made against the amendment, saying that this is not the right place for specific resources.

An amendment to the amendment was moved to place "such as Narcan" after "training programs" and removing "Narcan" from before "training programs" in the amended wording:

- Offering **Narcan** training programs **such as Narcan** and Narcan to those who have been trained to build the capacity of communities to respond (*Rebuild and Restore*)

Rev. Doreza spoke against the amendment to amend, saying that the framework is for a larger strategy, and care needs to be taken in how to proceed.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.18. Rejection of Amendment to Amendment

The Assembly voted to reject the proposed amendment to the amendment to Resolution 2 – Resolution on the Opioid Crisis.

This amendment was defeated by card vote.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.19. Rejection of Amendment

The Assembly voted to reject the proposed amendment, as originally made, to Resolution 2 – Resolution on the Opioid Crisis.

This amendment was defeated by card vote.

The original, unamended resolution was then returned to consideration.

Motion made to call the question.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

Assembly Action

SA19.06.20. Approval of the Previous Question

The Assembly voted to approve the Previous Question on the motion to approve Resolution 2.

This motion was approved by a show of cards.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.21. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 2 – Resolution on the Opioid Crisis, as amended:

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to respond to the opioid crisis by creating a Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse to advise how synod leaders and congregations can collaborate and form effective partnerships with state and local authorities and nongovernmental organizations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod appoint members of the Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse, to include Synod staff, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders (especially those with experience-based perspectives) and task a synod staff member with responsibility to support the Task Force; and be it further

RESOLVED, that participants in the Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse include those most vulnerable in this crisis — young people, people of color, people who identify among LBGTQIA+, people who have been in prison or jail, military veterans, and people from other groups that are disproportionately affected by this crisis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Task Force on Opioid Abuse encourage practical ways for rostered leaders and congregations to bring hope and healing to those affected by the crisis, and in so doing consider the actions suggested by the Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships in its Opioid Epidemic Practical Toolkit, including

- Hosting or connecting people to recovery programs and support groups (*Open Your Doors*)
- Providing educational opportunities that create understanding and encourage compassion (*Increase Awareness*)
- Offering training programs to build the capacity of communities to respond (*Rebuild and Restore*)
- Focused efforts on youth prevention (*Get Ahead of the Problem*)
- Joining substance-use prevention coalitions, so as to inform, connect, and strengthen efforts (*Connect and Collaborate*)

and help congregations to be informed about federal, state, and local resources available, and be it further

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod to share this resolution with the presiding bishop of the ELCA and the appropriate staff people in the Domestic Mission Unit of the churchwide organization of the ELCA and to explore with them the formation of a churchwide task force that would provide information, networking, and support for ministries dedicated to combating opioid addiction and abuse.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Resolution 3 - Memorial on Increasing Participation and Awareness in Social Purpose Funds for All Portico Members, which was Submitted by Grace Lutheran Church, Kenosha) and the Kenosha/West Racine Cluster:

WHEREAS, that currently new Portico Benefit Services members are automatically enrolled in the ELCA 60e Balanced Fund; and

WHEREAS, according to an email sent by Portico to plan members on February 2, 2017 “about 45% of plan members have all of their ELCA Retirement Plan savings invested in the plans default fund, the ELCA 60 e Balanced Fund,”; and

WHEREAS, that some plan members who were automatically enrolled in the ELCA 60 e Balanced Fund have no preference for what plan they are enrolled in or do not know how to make an enrollment selection; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA 60e Balanced Fund is partially invested in alcohol, business practices that negatively impact community development, fossil fuels and business practices that degrade the environment, gambling, military weapons, pornography, and tobacco, and private prisons (including the companies that operate the private prisons that held immigrant children separated from their parents); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA already has created alternative funds, the eight ELCA Social Purpose Funds, screens (does not invest in) investments in alcohol, business practices that negatively impact community development, fossil fuels and business practices that degrade the environment, gambling, military weapons, pornography, and tobacco, and private prisons; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Purpose Funds positively invests in activities that promote: community development, affordable housing, sustainable forestry, women- and minority-owned businesses, and clean energy and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Purpose Funds are in alignment with our biblical tradition that encourages us to seek the welfare of our communities. (See Jeremiah 29:4-7); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Purpose Funds are in alignment with our biblical tradition that teaches us to love our neighbor. (See Luke 10:25-37); and

WHEREAS, Continuing Resolution 17.20.B11 of the governing documents of the ELCA states that “The Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the Board of Pensions shall receive advice and counsel from the churchwide organization and, within the context of fiduciary responsibility for ELCA assets, make appropriate recommendations to the board”; therefore, be it

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommend that Portico Benefit Services conduct a campaign designed to increase awareness of and participation in their Social Purpose investment funds by plan members, reporting annually to the ELCA Church Council on the status of this effort.

The resolution was moved and introduced by Rev. Jonathan Barker, who stated that roughly 45% of ELCA clergy benefit from child detention centers on the southern border. This is due to their participation in the default balanced plan, which contains a number of surprising investments, including alcohol, fossil fuels, gambling, pornography, tobacco, weapons, and private prisons (including the [GEO Group](#), a leader in detention centers). He is hoping for education to encourage participation in social purpose funds.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.22. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 3 – Memorial on Increasing Participation and Awareness in Social Purpose Funds for All Portico Members, as presented.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

With time until the scheduled end of the Assembly running short, the bishop asked whether voting members wished to extend the time remaining.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.23. Extension of Time Remaining

The Assembly voted to extend the time remaining in this plenary session by up to 30 minutes.

Resolution 4 - Resolution Encouraging Parental Leave Policies in Congregations,

which was submitted by Milwaukee Clusters 1 and 2 and co-sponsored by Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse, St. Paul's; Rev. Lindsey Buekelman, All Peoples; Rev. Alissa Kretzmann Farrar, Lake Park; Rev. Mary Martha Kannass, Hephatha; Rev. Donna Brown, Village; Rev. Kevan Penvose, Unity; Carolyn Karl, Kingo; Rev. Marilyn Miller, Reformation; Rev. Joseph Ellwanger, Hephatha; Rev. Mark Thompson, Breaking the Chains; Rev. Michelle Townsend de Lopez; and Rev. Dr. Lisa Bates-Froiland, Redeemer:

WHEREAS, all Christians are called to care for their family members and fellow members of the Body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church name care for one's family as a Christian's first vow, with precedence over any monastic or clerical vows (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XXVII:67-68); and

WHEREAS, the current Greater Milwaukee Synod Compensation Guidelines state, "Congregations are expected to provide for a paid parental leave of up to six weeks for the birth, adoption or pre-adoption placement of a child with full, salary, housing and benefits"; and

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

WHEREAS, The ELCA document, "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities for Ministers of Word and Sacrament Under Call" that is to be completed when a new call is issued states, under D. Agreement, item 6.

"Maternity/Paternity or Adoptive leave of ___ weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits (Recommended 6 weeks; 4 weeks minimum)" and

WHEREAS, The National Partnership on Women and Families reports that "parental leave allows new parents time to care for their children--giving them the best chance at a healthy start on life"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA draft of the "Social Statement on Faith, Sexism, and Justice" suggests: "Finally, this church needs to offer greater support for women's ministry and leadership in policies related to pregnancy, parental leave, and breastfeeding. Improved arrangements for ELCA rostered leaders and for employees of ELCA-related organizations and institutions should support these leaders and demonstrate this church's commitment to family"; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for all rostered ministers of the ELCA to have the support they need to respond to God's call to serve the church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod are encouraged to adopt policies providing eight weeks of parental leave with full salary, housing, and benefits for ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service, such leave to be available in connection with the birth, adoption, or pre-adoption placement of a child and such leave to be available without regard to the sexual orientation or marital status of the rostered ministers eligible for the leave and without regard to the cognitive or physical abilities of a child being welcomed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod staff be intentional in talking with call committees, congregation councils, and Mission Exploration Teams to encourage congregations in the Greater Milwaukee Synod to adopt parental leave policies in place prior to issuing any call(s); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod staff shall work with the synod attorney, in consultation with rostered ministers and lay leaders, to develop a model policy for parental leave that, upon approval by the synod council, will be made available to congregations in the synod for consideration and adoption.

The resolution was moved and introduced by Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse, who said she is happy to be the author of the resolution. She is looking to amend our synod guidelines on these issues, approaching this from a different perspective. Care for one another. Hope we will be bold in adopting this resolution.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.24. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 4 – Resolution Encouraging Parental Leave Policies in Congregations, as presented.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2019

Resolution 5 - Resolution to Support Humanitarian aid to Palestinians through the East Jerusalem Hospitals including Augusta Victoria Hospital, which was submitted by Milwaukee Clusters 1 and 2:

WHEREAS, we followers of Christ are called by God in our baptismal covenant to work for justice and peace on the earth; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 ELCA Advocacy Policy Priorities includes a commitment to "... work to build broad support for international development and humanitarian aid in Congress. Specifically, we will: • Advocate to bolster funding levels to international poverty-focused programs as appropriate in the International Affairs budget; • Oppose efforts by Administration or Congress to cut funds to these programs..."; and

WHEREAS, The United States Government has historically provided direct aid to the Palestinian Authority, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and other agents; and

WHEREAS, This aid was severely cut in 2018, and as a result of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act legislation enacted in 2018, which amends that Anti-Terrorism Act. The Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act as written may result in no aid being provided to the Palestinian people by the United States in the future and have a devastating effect on life-saving services affecting over 5 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; and

WHEREAS, One of the institutions directly affected by the cuts is Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), a program of the Lutheran World Federation, which is a center of medical excellence in East Jerusalem, providing specialty care for all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza that is not available in other hospitals; and

WHEREAS, For several years AVH and other East Jerusalem hospitals have been facing cash-flow problems because the Palestinian Authority has not been able to pay the bills of the patients which it refers to these hospitals, with total debt for the six hospitals at \$80 million as of March 1, 2019, with AVH debt of \$35 million; and

WHEREAS, in FY2017, \$25 million in US funding was appropriated by Congress for the hospitals but later repurposed by the Administration and therefore permanently lost to the hospital; and

WHEREAS, future funding is now in doubt because of restrictions placed on aid by the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, synodical bishops, and congregations and members of congregations, to request the President of the United States and all applicable legislators to restore the FY2018 funding to the East Jerusalem Hospitals, to continue funding at 2018 levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved, and to amend the

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 to remove legislative barriers to future funding of US humanitarian assistance to West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Rev. John Holm moved adoption of the resolution, moved an amendment to change from memorializing the Churchwide Assembly to speaking to the Greater Milwaukee Assembly, and spoke in favor of the proposed amended resolution. The motion to amend replaced the original Resolved statement:

~~RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, synodical bishops, and congregations and members of congregations, to request the President of the United States and all applicable legislators to restore the FY2018 funding to the East Jerusalem Hospitals, to continue funding at 2018 levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved, and to amend the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 to remove legislative barriers to future funding of US humanitarian assistance to West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.~~

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly urge congregations and members of congregations to support the ELCA's advocacy effort in support of restored funding for Augusta Victoria Hospital and other members of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network by urging the Administration to release the allocated funds for AVH and the others in the EJHN on a humanitarian basis to save lives, and by contacting the White House directly (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> or 202-456-1111) to urge that humanitarian aid to the West Bank and Gaza, especially assistance for the East Jerusalem hospitals, be released immediately and unconditionally to ensure ongoing care for cancer patients and others who need life-saving medical treatment.

There was no additional discussion on the motion to amend.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.25. Approval of Amendment

The Assembly voted to amend Resolution 5 – Resolution to Support Humanitarian aid to Palestinians through the East Jerusalem Hospitals including Augusta Victoria Hospital, as moved, replacing the Resolved statement.

This amendment was approved by a show of cards.

With no further debate, the amended motion went immediately to a vote.

Assembly Action

SA19.06.26. Approval of Resolution

The Assembly voted to approve Resolution 5 – Resolution to Support Humanitarian aid to Palestinians through the East Jerusalem Hospitals including Augusta Victoria Hospital, as amended:

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly urge congregations and members of congregations to support the ELCA's advocacy effort in support of restored funding for Augusta Victoria Hospital and other members of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network by urging the Administration to release the allocated funds for AVH and the others in the EJHN on a humanitarian basis to save lives,

Minutes of the 2019 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 31-June 1, 2019

and by contacting the White House directly (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> or 202-456-1111) to urge that humanitarian aid to the West Bank and Gaza, especially assistance for the East Jerusalem hospitals, be released immediately and unconditionally to ensure ongoing care for cancer patients and others who need life-saving medical treatment.

This resolution was approved by a show of cards.

Singing Like Lutherans

The Assembly joined in singing “Build Us Up, Lord,” and in Sending Service liturgy, including the installation of those elected to leadership positions and the Order for Closing the Assembly.

Announcements

The bishop asked for applause for the Assembly’s hosts, the Italian Community Center; for key staff Mary Romskog and Phil Smith; and “for everyone for hanging in to the end.” He reminded members that there will be an evaluation form sent out next week.

End of Session

Bishop Paul Erickson declared, without objection, the conclusion of the business of the Assembly at 3:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier
Secretary
Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA