

SYNOD ASSEMBLY
La Crosse Area Synod, ELCA
Meeting of June 14-16, 2019

MINUTES

PLENARY SESSION ONE

Friday, June 14, 2019

The Assembly was called to order by Bishop Jim Arends at 7:00pm, Friday, June 14, 2019, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

A quorum being present, the Bishop welcomed voting members and guests and introduced this year's theme, "Walk, Love, Do."

Rev. Joanne Richmond (Our Savior's pastor) gave a greeting.

Bishop Arends **welcomed guests** of the Assembly who will be with us during the weekend. Rev. Felix Malpica will be this year's Assembly musician. Mary Campbell, Program Director for ELCA AMMPARO, will be leading a workshop and preaching. Prayers were offered for The Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger who was unable to join us due to illness. Rev. Jeff Barrow was also introduced as Interim Director of Sugar Creek Bible Camp.

The first Walk. Love. Do. video was shown.

Rev. Amanda Schultz Garcia led worship, with Kris Stauffacher leading Dwelling in the Word and Bishop Arends preaching.

Bishop Arends recited the "**Litany for Recognition of Anniversaries and Retirements**" and made specific note of the following:

- 5th ordination anniversary of Rev. Joseph Iverson
- 10th ordination anniversary of Revs. Dawn Lindberg, Anna Sorenson, and Jean Schmidt
- 20th ordination anniversary of Rev. Daniel Wollman
- 25th ordination anniversary of Revs. Marvin Jonasen, Kent Johnson, Steven Meyer, and Jeffrey Ruetten
- 30th ordination anniversary of Revs. William Horn and Dennis Snider
- 40th ordination anniversary of Rev. Christine Hallemeier
- 50th ordination anniversary of Revs. Steven Fossum and Ronald Nordin
- 55th ordination anniversary of Revs. Howard Larsen, Peter Peterson, and Clair Whitmore
- 60th ordination anniversary of Rev. Charles Hulsether
- 75th anniversary of Bethany Lutheran Church, Mauston, WI

Rev. Anne Hokenstad presented the graduates of the **Synod School of Theology**. They are Gretchen Jacobson, Vernetta Moe, and Elise Hynek.

Bishop Arends explained how worship offerings during the Assembly meetings would be distributed. Friday to a choice of designated Synod ministries, Saturday to the budgeted mission of the synod, and Sunday to whatever is designated by the assembly.

The assembly recessed at 8:42pm.

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Saturday, June 15, 2019

The Assembly was called to order at 8:15am.

North Conference Dean Rev. Kary Jonas led worship.

Rev. Barbara Bruneau gave a report on the Socks and Underwear Drive. Any monetary contributions received this weekend will be sent to Lutheran Disaster Relief.

Greetings were received from our companion synod, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, The Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod (also in assembly this weekend), and the Southeastern Synod (our U.S. partner synod). Bishop Arends shared greetings from our companion synod in Peru and their new president, Rev. Adita Torres.

Bishop Arends introduced other guests who are attending this year's Assembly. He invited everyone to visit their displays during their time at the Assembly.

Steve McDougal introduced the **Synod Council**. Members leaving the council this year were Khris Kleba and Mike Lusk. They were thanked for their service and presented with certificates.

Pr. Libby Howe introduced members of the **Assembly Planning Committee** and thanked them for their service.

SA 2019.1 - To adopt the agenda as presented (Attachment 1) and the Rules of the Assembly (Booklet pp. 4-5)

MSC

Pr. Barbara Bruneau was introduced as this year's Assembly **Parliamentarian**.

Bishop Arends introduced Khris Kleba (Synod Treasurer) for the **Treasurer's Report** and the second reading of the 2019 Revised Budget and the 2020 Proposed Budget (Attachment 2). Khris is stepping down as Treasurer and he was presented with a "thank-you" gift.

Bishop Arends introduced Linda Dahl for the **Report of the Nominating Committee**. Linda reviewed the Election Ballot (Attachment 3), noting the offices where no nominations were made.

Vice President Steve McDougal introduced Bishop Jim Arends for the **Report of the Bishop** (Attachment 4 and assembly book pp. 13-14).

UPDATES to Assembly Book:

1. New Ministers to Synod:
 - a) Rev. Cheryl Matthews, Christ Lutheran, Arcadia
 - b) Rev. Adam Arends, North Beaver Creek, Ettrick, to begin this summer
2. In the Candidacy Process, additions:
 - a) Elise Hynek
 - b) Michelle Engh
 - c) Rev. Alyssa Weaver was ordained, June 1; now serving in Iola, Wis.

3. Clergy Transferred: Should be Rev. David Hendrickson, not Henderson
4. Changes Within Our Synod:
 - a) Rev. Carrie Anderson, also part-time chaplain, Bethel Home & Services, Viroqua
 - b) Rev. Neal Solomonson, retired
 - c) Rev. Kyle Svennungsen, transferring to Bratislava, Slovakia

Vice President Steve McDougal explained the process of **Election of a new Bishop**. The process will begin soon and the election will be held at the 2020 Assembly.

Pr. Ben Morris talked about **Common Ground Lutheran Campus Ministry**. This ministry is looking for 200 people that will pledge to donate \$20 a month for one year. The money is to be used for ministry expansion at UW-L, Western Technical College and Viterbo.

Rev. Jeff Barrow gave a Sugar Creek update. A new Director has been chosen and will be announced on July 1.

The **Report of the Registrar** was received: 209 voting members present – 55 clergy and 154 lay; 58 visitors, guests and volunteers.

The Assembly recessed at 10:30am, for a break, and reconvened at 10:45am.

Pr. Kent Johnson gave us a follow up on last year's resolution to Protect the Human Rights of Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation.

Jonah Denson led the Assembly in Dwelling in the Word.

Bishop introduced Héctor Colón, Pres/CEO, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan for his greeting to the synod.

Bishop introduced Mary Campbell, ELCA Program Director for AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy Representation and Opportunities) as our ELCA Rep for the **Report of the ELCA**. Her report included a video greeting from the ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

The Assembly recessed for lunch at 12:00pm.

PLENARY SESSION THREE

The Assembly reconvened at 1:15pm.

The Bishop asked for suggestions for the ministry that would receive Sunday's offering. Suggestions were AMMPARO, Lutheran Disaster Relief for flooding, and Lutheran Campus Ministry-La Crosse.

SA 2019.2 To split Sunday's offering between three ministries: AMMPARO, Lutheran Disaster Relief for flood relief, and Lutheran Campus Ministry. **MSC on unanimous voice vote.**

East Conference Dean Pr. Mark Kvale led worship with Pr. Libby Howe preaching.

Bishop Arends introduced **The Rev. Dr. Craig L. Nesson (professor at Wartburg Theological Seminary and author) who gave the Keynote Address.**

The Assembly recessed at 3:00pm for break, afternoon workshops (see Workshop flyer, attachment 4), and the evening banquet which was hosted by the Mission Support Committee.

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Sunday, June 16, 2019

The Assembly was called to order by Bishop Jim Arends at 8:30am, Sunday, June 16, 2019, at the UW-La Crosse Student Union.

Bishop Arends introduced Pr. Libby Howe who gave the **Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission**. She updated us on the progress of the Agile Church program. We have 8 congregations and 10 coaches participating. She informed us that 35 of our congregations increased their mission support contributions from 2017-2018. And 34 congregations have increased their 2018-2019 mission support pledges.

The **Report of the Registrar** was received: 236 voting members present – 45 clergy and 191 lay; 21 visitors, guests and volunteers.

Elections – Three nominees were added to the ballot. Bon Garcia from Trinity in Cashton and Kathleen Sumrall from Trinity in Sparta were nominated to the Church in Society Committee. Brent Sweno from North Beaver Creek was nominated to the Evangelism and Outreach Committee. The ballots were collected to be counted.

Bishop introduced a video from Portico Benefit Services.

Budget – The 2019 Proposed Revised Budget and the 2020 Proposed Mission Support Budget were discussed. Bishop Arends offered a prayer for the budget.

SA 2019.3 To adopt the 2019 Revised Mission Budget, the 2020 Mission Budget (Attachment 2), and the 2020 Minimum Salary Guidelines (Attachment 5). **MSC**

Announcements were given, including announcement of dates for 2020 Synod Assembly as June 12-14 to be located in La Crosse. The assembly then recessed for a break, reconvening at 10:15 a.m.

Bishop thanked West Conference Dean Rev. Karyn Bodenschatz for presiding over today's worship.

Carol Glaman led us in Dwelling in the Word.

Bishop called on Connie Scharlau of the **Reference and Counsel Committee** to introduce resolutions.

RESOLUTION R1 – RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ELCA HUNGER MINISTRY

SA 2019.4 WHEREAS, data from the United Nations and the World Bank show that more than 821 million people, or almost 11% of the people in our world, are hungry and 17.5 % of all the children in the world live in poverty, and

WHEREAS, even though the world had seen a dramatic drop in the percentage of hungry people since 2014, the number of undernourished people in the world has been on the rise, and

WHEREAS, latest statistics indicate that the hungry and those living in poverty, are more vulnerable to natural disasters, human conflicts, homelessness, disease, shortened life span, and a host of other disadvantages, and

WHEREAS, ELCA World Hunger responds to hunger and poverty in the United States and throughout the world by addressing root causes through a comprehensive program of relief, education, advocacy, sustainable development, and community organization and networking so that people are connected to the resources they need to lift themselves out of poverty; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the assembly encourage each synod congregation to take time on a regular basis throughout the year to call awareness to the problem of hunger, and be it

RESOLVED that each congregation set aside at least one Sunday each year to reflect on caring for those who are hungry, and to bring an awareness of the work and ministry of ELCA World Hunger in 65 countries as well as the United States, and be it

RESOLVED that each congregation appoint at least one representative to serve as a Hunger Leader, and that the World Hunger Subcommittee provide appropriate resources and training to the congregations and Hunger Leaders, and be it

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod in assembly affirm the three-year goal (from 2018 to 2020) of giving \$600,000 to support the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and encourage synod congregations to set appropriate goals to reach this common goal.
MSC on Unanimous Voice Vote

RESOLUTION 2 – RESOLUTION ON POOR PEOPLE’S CAMPAIGN

SA 2019.5 WHEREAS members of the ELCA “are freed in Christ to serve, love and care for our neighbor, and in this work we strive to ensure that all people have a livelihood that is sufficient to meet their basic needs and is sustainable in creation;” [i] and

WHEREAS members of the ELCA, “believe God is calling us into the world to serve together,” and “through our direct service, we aid immediate needs before us,” and “through our advocacy work, we impact systemic, long-lasting change;” [ii] and

WHEREAS in 1967-68, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders built a coalition called the Poor People’s Campaign organized across barriers of race to work “against dehumanization, discrimination and poverty wages in the richest country in the world;” [iii] and

WHEREAS in 2018, 50 years after Dr. King, the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival arose from years of organizing and listening, and it declares that the “centrality of systemic racism in maintaining economic oppression must be named, detailed and exposed empirically, morally and spiritually;” [iv] and

WHEREAS the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is “committed to lifting up and deepening the leadership of those most affected by systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation and to building unity across lines of division;” [v] and

WHEREAS the ELCA Social Statement on The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective states the ELCA “is committed to defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, to advocate justice, to work for peace, and to care for the earth in the processes and structures of contemporary society;” [vi] and

WHEREAS at least one hundred and thirty-two other national, regional, and local organizations have signed on as endorsing partners of The Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, including ELCA full communion partners: the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod in assembly support the Poor People’s Campaign and encourage its congregations and members to participate in the organizing, advocacy, and actions of the campaign.

MSC on Unanimous Voice Vote

The report of the ballot was presented:

Kris Stauffacher, Synod Treasurer
Bryce Griffin, Synod Council, South Conference Lay
Linda Raap, Synod Council, East Conference Lay
Lynn Joholski, Church in Society Committee, Lay at Large
Irene TenEyck, Church in Society Committee, Lay At Large
Bon Garcia, Church in Society Committee, Lay at Large
Lori Lowell, Mission Support Committee, Lay at Large
John Wilkinson, Mission Support Committee, Lay at Large
Rev. Joanne Richmond, Church in Society Committee, West Conference Clergy
Carol Glaman, Church in Society Committee, East Conference Lay
Jane Morken, Church in Society Committee, West Conference Lay
Brent Sweno, Evangelism and Outreach Committee, North Conference Lay
Rev. Joe Iverson, Evangelism and Outreach Committee, North Conference Clergy
Rev. Jean Schmidt, Evangelism and Outreach Committee, West Conference Clergy
Laura Cunliffe, Evangelism and Outreach Committee, West Conference Lay
Rev. Dawn Lindberg, Lutheran Youth Leading Evangelism Committee, East Conference Clergy Advisor
Rev. Yvonne Marshall, Lutheran Youth Leading Evangelism Committee, South Conf Clergy Advisor
Jessica Zinniel, Lutheran Youth Leading Evangelism Committee, West Conference Lay Adult
Rev. Dan Wollman, Mission Support Committee, South Conference Clergy
Nancy Luckasson, Mission Support Committee, South Conference Lay
Joseph Myren, Mission Support Committee, East Conference Lay
Terry Lee, Mission Support Committee, West Conference Lay

Rev. Ben Morris reported that 34 people had signed up to support the 20 for 200 campaign at Common Ground Lutheran Campus Ministry.

Worship continued with Mary Campbell preaching.

Bishop Arends led the **Commissioning of the People** for everyone that was just elected to positions in the Synod.

The Assembly concluded with worship and communion and adjourned at 12:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Dahl, Secretary

ACTIONS

SA 2019.1 Adopting the agenda and rules of the Assembly

SA 2019.2 To split Sunday's offering between three ministries: AMMPARO, Lutheran Disaster Relief for flood relief, and Lutheran Campus Ministry.

SA 2019.3 To adopt the 2019 Revised Mission Budget, the 2020 Mission Budget (Attachment 2), and the 2020 Minimum Salary Guidelines (Attachment 5).

SA 2019.4 Adopting "Resolution in Support of ELCA Hunger Ministry" (See above for full text)

SA 2019.5 Adopting "Resolution on Poor People's Campaign" (See above for full text)

Attachment 1 – Agenda (three bulletins, one for each day of assembly)

Attachment 2 – Proposed Budget

Attachment 3 – Elections Ballot

Attachment 4 - Workshop Flyer

Attachment 5 – Bishop’s Report
Attachment 6 – 2020 Salary Guidelines