

**Southeast Michigan Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Thirty-First Synod Assembly
May 17 – 18, 2019
Clarkston, Michigan**

Minutes

The Thirty-First Synod Assembly of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America convened at Calvary Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Michigan at 2:00 PM on Friday May 17, 2019.

PLENARY SESSION I - Friday, May 17, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Bishop Donald Kreiss called the Assembly to order for Plenary Session I at 2:00 PM and opened with The Order for the Opening of an Assembly. He thanked the members and staff of Calvary Lutheran Church for graciously hosting us. The Calvary staff gave a special welcome to the Assembly, which was followed by greetings from The Rev. Jonathan Heierman, Pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church/Clarkston. The Bishop welcomed the voting members to the Assembly and made announcements. He thanked the Mission Investment Fund for its financial support for the Assembly. He announced that offerings collected would go to Living Waters Ministries for scholarships for Bridge Builder Camp. He noted the deadline for late resolutions would be 5:30pm today.

QWIZDOM

The Bishop introduced Mr. Dana White from Qwizdom, who provided a brief orientation on the use of voting machines.

ADOPTION OF STANDING RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY

Bishop Kreiss explained the rules under which the Assembly operates.

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to adopt the Standing Rules of the Assembly as recommended by the Synod Council.

SA19.05.01 ADOPTED

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Bishop Kreiss presented the Agenda as proposed by the Synod Council.

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to adopt the Agenda as recommended by Synod Council.

SA19.05.02 ADOPTED

INTRODUCTIONS

The Bishop introduced the following people:

Mr. Albert Asfour, Shalom/Pinckney, Vice-President of the Synod
Mr. George Watson, St. Martin/Port Huron, Secretary of the Synod
LLM Valinda Vincent, Christus Victor/Dearborn, Treasurer of the Synod

Pr. Alex Steward Trinity/Richmond – Parliamentarian
Ms. Sonja Markwart, All Saints/Hartland, Synod Council

The Bishop introduced Pr. Elizabeth Friedman - Lord of Light and Lutheran Campus Ministry/Ann Arbor, Pr. Manisha Dostert/Christ Church Cranbrook, and Dr. Ryan Cumming/Zion, Chelsea and ELCA World Hunger Program Director, who would give Faith Talks throughout the Assembly.

The Bishop introduced our Churchwide Representative Sue Rothmeyer, who is a Minister of Word and Service (Deacon) and Executive for Administration in the Office of the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Bishop introduced the interns serving in our synod:

1. Kathi Boland – Immanuel/Ida - Trinity Seminary
2. Judd Delancey – Shepherd of the Lakes/Walled Lake – Trinity Seminary
3. Ken Grant – Genesis/Detroit – TEEM Candidate
4. Vera McEwen - Shalom/Pinckney – Luther Seminary
5. Michael Opfermann – Unity/Southgate - Trinity Seminary
6. Jeff Ogonowski – Iroquois Av. Christ/Detroit – Trinity Seminary

The Bishop also introduced Rostered Leaders new to our Synod since April 1, 2018:

1. Pastor Ken Greble, newly ordained and serving at Calvary/Clarkston and Lapeer
2. Pastor Branden Hunt, newly ordained and serving at St. Philip/Trenton
3. Pastor Alex Clark, newly ordained and serving at Emmanuel/Ypsilanti
4. Pastor Kirk Langset – from Upstate New York, now at St. Paul/Casco
5. Pastor Peggy Rose – from North/West Lower Michigan, now at Christ/Waterford
6. Pastor James Bischoff – from Indiana-Kentucky – now Retired

The Bishop introduced the individuals who will be serving as pages for our assembly.

1. Kathi Boland – Immanuel/W. Ida
2. Judd Delancey – Shepherd of the Lakes/Walled Lake
3. Vera McEwen – Shalom/Pinckney
4. Michael Opfermann – Unity/Southgate
5. Jeff Ogonowski – Iroquois Ave Christ/Detroit
6. Michelle Werner – Shepherd of the Lakes/Walled Lake

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Kreiss introduced Pastor Lindsey Anderson of Detroit Cooperative Church/Detroit and Pastor Paul Walters of Church of the Master/Troy, Co-Chairs of the Credentials Committee. The report of the Credentials Committee was as follows: As of 1:30PM May 17, 2019 a total of 220 persons had registered which included:

VOTING MEMBERS: 192 of which 66 (34.4%) were clergy (42 male and 24 female) and 126 (65.6%) were lay (58 male and 68 female). There were 3 Deacons and 28 visitors of whom were 3 clergy and 25 were lay. Of the aggregate voting members, 18 were Persons of Color or whose Primary Language is other than English and 2 were youth.

**SYNOD COUNCIL ACTION ITEM
BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

It was moved and supported to approve the following Bylaw amendments:

S7.21.04 A Licensed Lay Minister who is serving as the Pastoral Presence in a congregation of this synod shall have Voice and Vote at the Synod Assembly.

+S8.01. The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

S8.01.01. The Synod Council may, from time to time appoint an Assistant Secretary and /or an Assistant Treasurer. The term of office shall not exceed four years and there shall be no term limits. The Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer shall be voting members of a congregation of this synod. The Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer may be either a layperson or an ordained minister.

8.01.02 There shall be at least one person of color, or whose primary language is other than English, serving in the office of Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary or Assistant Treasurer. In the event of noncompliance of this provision at the election of these offices, those elections will be declared invalid. The election process will continue until this provision is fulfilled.

SA19.05.03 ADOPTED Yes 165, No 5

The Bishop announced that the Synod Council has appointed Mr. Daryl Hurley, a CPA and an African American as the Assistant Treasurer of the Southeast Michigan Synod.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE/NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

The Bishop invited Pr. Lauren Kirsh-Carr forward to present the Report of the Nominations Committee. She also acknowledged the other committee members: Pr. Jamey Authier of Faith/Shelby Twp, Pr. James Fogle of Celebration/Westland, Margie Reynolds of Zion/Ann Arbor, Pr. Kathy Tulman of Zion/Chelsea, and Rusty Ward of Christ/Monroe.

SYNOD VICE PRESIDENT

Paul Archer – Hope/Dearborn

The Bishop declared nominations for Synod Vice President closed.

SYNOD SECRETARY

Sonja Markwart – All Saints/Hartland

Krister Ulmanis – St. Paul/Grosse Pointe Farms

The Bishop declared nominations for Synod Secretary closed.

SYNOD COUNCIL:

Conference 4 - 3 year term (Elect 1)

Nadalie Brown - King of Kings/Shelby Township

Beth Paulo - Christ/Sterling Heights

Conference #5 - 3 year term (Elect 1)

Geraldine Udell – First English/Grosse Pointe Woods

Conference #10 - 3 year term (Elect 1)

Elizabeth Friedman – Lord of Light/Ann Arbor

Margaret Reynolds - Zion/Ann Arbor

The Bishop declared nominations for Synod Council closed.

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Male Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Jamey Authier – Faith/Shelby Township

David Hively - Christ/Monroe

Male Clergy –term expiring 2023 (Elect 1)

Nathan Allen – Holy Spirit/Grand Blanc

Alex Steward – Trinity/Richmond

Female Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Jill Heather – Emmanuel/Southfield

Lay Male – 6 year term (Elect 1)

George Evalt – Celebration/Westland

Lay Female – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Becky Huepenbecker – Christ/Monroe

Dawn LeVasseur – Faith/ Shelby Township

The Bishop declared nominations for Consultation Committee closed.

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Male Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Ken Greble – Calvary/Clarkston

Branden Hunt – St. Philip/Trenton

Female Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Greer Cherney – Amazing Grace/Warren

Heather Oberlin – St. Thomas/Grosse Ile

Lay Male – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Dale Eckart – Zion/Ann Arbor

Scott Pike – Our Saviour/Port Huron

Lay Female – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Janice Locke – St. John/Farmington Hills

The Bishop declared nominations for Discipline Committee closed. He then announced that nominations were complete for all positions.

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to close nominations for all positions.
SA.19.05.04 ADOPTED Yes 173, No 0

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to declare elected all those persons nominated to positions in which there were no contests.
SA.18.05.05 ADOPTED Yes 178, No 1

The Bishop declared the following persons duly elected:

SYNOD VICE PRESIDENT

Paul Archer

SYNOD COUNCIL:

Conference 5 - 3 year term (Elect 1)

Geraldine Udell – First English/Grosse Pointe Woods

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Female Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Jill Heather – Emmanuel/Southfield

Lay Male – 6 year term (Elect 1)

George Evalt – Celebration/Westland

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Lay Female – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Janice Locke – St. John/Farmington Hills

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTION ITEMS

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS

The Bishop asked Ms. Valinda Vincent, Treasurer of the Synod to present the report of the auditors for the year ending January 31, 2019.

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to adopt the Auditors report.
SA19.05.06 ADOPTED Yes 170, No 0

2021 BUDGET PRESENTATION

The Bishop invited Ms. Valinda Vincent, Treasurer of the Synod, to present an overview of the 2019 year end financials. She also presented the proposed 2021 budgets as recommended by the Synod Council.

FAITH TALK

The Bishop introduced Pr. Elizabeth Friedman, of Lutheran Campus Ministry and Lord of Light/Ann Arbor, who addressed the Assembly on her Faith Journey.

PARTNER MINISTRY ADDRESS

The Bishop introduced Ms. Patricia Hartig, who serves as the ELCA Regional Gift Planner for the Southeast Michigan Synod to address the Assembly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and ADJOURNMENT

The Bishop made a number of announcements. He then recessed Plenary Session I at 3:51 PM for a break. He reminded the Assembly that Plenary Session II would begin at 4:15 PM in the Sanctuary with Pre-Plenary music at 4:10 PM.

PLENARY SESSION II – May 17, 2019

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Bishop called Plenary II to order at 4:23 PM, which opened with song and prayer. He also made announcements.

PARTNER MINISTRY

The Bishop introduced Nicole McCarthy, Program Innovator for Living Water Ministries, to share a report on their activities.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Kreiss invited Pastors Lindsey Anderson and Paul Walters, Co-Chairs of the Credentials Committee to report on Assembly attendance, which was as follows:

As of 4:15 PM May 17, 2019 a total of 252 persons had registered which included:

VOTING MEMBERS: 219 of which 77 (35.2%) were clergy (48 male and 29 female) and 142 (64.8%) were lay (64 male and 78 female). There were 5 Deacons and 33 visitors of whom were 6 clergy and 27 were lay. Of the aggregate voting members, 21 were Persons of Color or whose Primary Language is other than English and 3 were youth.

FIRST BALLOT

The Bishop gave balloting instructions. Voting then took place. The nominees were:

SYNOD SECRETARY

Sonja Markwart
Krister Ulmanis

SYNOD COUNCIL:

Conference 4 - 3 year term (Elect 1)

Nadalie Brown - King of Kings/Shelby Township
Beth Paulo - Christ/Sterling Heights

Conference #10 - 3 year term (Elect 1)

Elizabeth Friedman – Lord of Light/Ann Arbor
Margaret Reynolds - Zion/Ann Arbor

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Male Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)

Jamey Authier – Faith/Shelby Township
David Hively - Christ/Monroe

Male Clergy –term expiring 2023 (Elect 1)

Nathan Allen – Holy Spirit/Grand Blanc
Alex Steward – Trinity/Richmond

Lay Female – 6 year term (Elect 1)
Becky Huepenbecker – Christ/Monroe
Dawn LeVasseur – Faith/ Shelby Township

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Male Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)
Ken Greble – Calvary/Clarkston
Branden Hunt – St. Philip/Trenton

Female Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1)
Greer Cherney – Hope/Farmington Hills
Heather Oberlin – St. Thomas/Grosse Ile

Lay Male – 6 year term (Elect 1)
Dale Eckart – Zion/Ann Arbor
Scott Pike – Our Saviour/Port Huron

The Bishop declared the First Ballot closed.

REPORT OF THE CHURCHWIDE REPRESENTATIVE - STATE OF THE ELCA

Bishop Kreiss introduced Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, who gave the report on the State of the ELCA. Her presentation included a video presentation by The Reverend Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE ON FIRST BALLOT

The Bishop asked Ms. Janet McBride of Abiding Presence/Rochester Hills to come forward to give the Report of the Elections Committee on the First Ballot. The results of the First Ballot were as follows:

SYNOD SECRETARY

6 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Sonja Markwart
(196 votes cast; needed for election 99)
Sonja Markwart – 127
Krister Ulmanis – 69

SYNOD COUNCIL

Conference #4 - 3 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Beth Paulo
(193 votes cast; 98 needed for election)
Nadalie Brown – 88
Beth Paulo – 105

Conference #10 – 3 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Elizabeth Friedman
(194 votes cast; 98 needed for election)
Elizabeth Friedman – 134
Margaret Reynolds – 60

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Male Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Jamie Authier
(192 votes cast; 97 needed for election)
Jamey Authier – 109
David Hively – 83

Male Clergy – term expiring 2023 (Elect 1): Elected: Alex Steward
(201 votes cast; 101 needed for election)
Nathan Allen – 100
Alex Steward – 101

Lay Female – 6 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Becky Huepenbecker
(188 votes cast; 95 needed for election)
Becky Huepenbecker – 96
Dawn LeVasseur – 92

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

Male Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Ken Greble
(197 votes cast; 100 needed for election)
Ken Greble – 119
Branden Hunt – 78

Female Clergy – 6 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Heather Oberlin
(200 votes cast; 101 needed for election)
Greer Cherney – 96
Heather Oberlin – 104

Lay Male – 6 year term (Elect 1): Elected: Scott Pike
(190 votes cast; 96 needed for election)
Dale Eckart – 84
Scott Pike – 106

FAITH TALK

The Bishop introduced Pastor Manisha Dostert, the Senior Associate Rector of Christ Church Cranbrook and a rostered member of the Southeast Michigan Synod to address the Assembly on her faith journey.

ADJOURNMENT

The Bishop made announcements and recessed Plenary Session II for Dinner at 6:01PM. He reminded the assembly to gather for Worship at 7:00PM followed by a special dessert reception to celebrate the Rise Up Campaign and recognize Synod Ministries.

WORSHIP

A Service of Evening Prayer was led by Vicar Kathi Boland. Readers were Pr. Alex Clark, Pr. Beth Birkholz, Vicar Michael Opfermann, Deacon Jill McKinney, Pr. Jonathan Heierman and Pr. Sarah Mayer-Flatt. Music was provided by Keith VanGoor, Sarah Altenburg and musicians from Calvary/Clarkson and around the synod.

CELEBRATION

Following worship, the Assembly gathered for a dessert reception to celebrate the success of the Rise Up Campaign, and to give thanks and celebrate years of service to the church for Synod Vice-President Al Asfour (8 years) and Synod Secretary George Watson (28 years). He also thanked Pastor Scott McKinney who served as director for the Licensed Lay Ministry program and Pastor Jan Marvar who served as director for Interim Ministry. The Bishop presented them with gifts in thanks for their faithful service.

PLENARY SESSION III – May 18, 2018

CALL TO ORDER AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Bishop called Plenary III to order at 8:32AM and opened with Morning Prayer led by Pastor Ken Greble of Calvary/Clarkston. The Bishop also made announcements.

PARTNER MINISTRY

The Bishop introduced Pastor Todd Mills, Director of Congregational Engagement and Advancement at Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University who greeted the Assembly.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Kreiss invited Pastors Lindsey Anderson and Paul Walters, Co-Chairs of the Credentials Committee to report on Assembly attendance.

As of 8:25 AM May 18, 2019 a total of 270 persons had registered which included:

VOTING MEMBERS: 234 of which 86 (36.8%) were clergy (53 male and 33 female) and 148 (63.2%) were lay (67 male and 81 female). There were 5 Deacons and 36 visitors of whom were 7 clergy and 29 were lay. Of the aggregate voting members, 21 were Persons of Color or whose Primary Language is other than English and 3 were youth.

SYNOD COUNCIL ACTION ITEM

ADOPTION OF 2021 BUDGET

The Bishop introduced Ms. Valinda Vincent, Treasurer of the Synod, who presented the 2021 Southeast Michigan Synod Operating Budget.

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to adopt the 2021 Operating Budget.

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt the budget.

SA19.05.07 ADOPTED Yes 163, No 2

The Bishop called on Ms. Valinda Vincent, Treasurer of the Synod, who presented the 2021 Southeast Michigan Synod Fund for Mission Budget.

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to adopt the 2021 Fund for Mission Budget.

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt the budget.

SA19.05.08 ADOPTED Yes 171, No 0

BISHOPS REPORT

The Bishop relinquished the Chair to Mr. Albert Asfour, Vice-President of the Synod, for the purpose of making the Bishop's Report to the Assembly. The Bishop addressed the Assembly.

Report of the Bishop 2019

Sisters and Brothers, Dear Friends,

Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

We borrowed the theme of our Assembly this year from the book of Hebrews; I expect that many of you have seen it often enough over the last couple of weeks that you could say it with me:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the conviction of things not seen.”

One of the reasons I like this description so much is that it does the very Lutheran thing of holding two opposing ideas close to each other. You know what I mean: Jumbo Shrimp; Act Naturally! As Lutheran Christians we preach “law and gospel”; we describe ourselves as “saint and sinner.” And by insisting that those opposing words sit next to each other, we get a deeper understanding of the particular reality we're talking about.

We find the same kind of word pairs in the verse from Hebrews. Describing faith we get the emotionally sturdy “assurance and conviction” on the one hand, and the much more delicate “things hoped for but not seen” on the other. At first glance we say that they don't seem to go together very well, but as we spend more time in study, reflection, and prayer we can see for ourselves that there is truth in the tension. It is the “both/and” nature of the thing that we need help in exploring, because to focus on one side of the equation without taking account of the other side means we won't come to the right answer.

Still with me?

I say all that by way of preface, because I want to organize my remarks this morning around a different word pair that some folks will find challenging at first, and that word pair is this: ***Synod Ministry***. Or, if you'll allow me, *“the ministry of the synod.”*

And I say that because I think there's truth in the challenge. Eight years into this call to serve as your bishop, I am still astonished by the incredible faithfulness, the extraordinary generosity, and the amazing dedication of lay and rostered members of this synod that empower us to proclaim the good news of Jesus crucified and risen for the sake of the world.

At the same time, and over that same length of time, I continue to be startled when I hear some of our folks talk about the “synod” as though it were a completely unnatural organization, made up of mostly mysterious, often hostile agents whose primary tasks are:

- 1) to block, frustrate or derail congregational initiatives and then,
- 2) to force unwary congregations to close in order to take all their money.

For those of you who are visual thinkers I invite you to consider “dementors” from the Harry Potter movie series, or a zombie from “The Walking Dead” series. Have you heard such talk, sisters and brothers?

So what I want to accomplish during this time together is to offer you a different and (I hope) deeper understanding of what “Synod Ministry” actually looks like, and then to talk with you about some of the remarkable things we are doing together for the sake of Christ and the church, no matter what you think a synod looks like.

Okay?

“What is the “Synod”?”

We can answer that in a couple ways.

1) The Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (to use our full name) is composed of the 11 counties of southeast Michigan.

2) SEMI has 109 worshipping communities affiliated with the ELCA located within that territory. Along with those communities we include the Lutheran Campus Ministry partnered with “Lord of Light” congregation on the campus of the University of Michigan, our congregations under development or redevelopment (such as: Salem, Flint; The Detroit Cooperative Church; King of Kings, Lake Orion; and St. Philip, Trenton) our mission congregations (such as: Grace in Action; Asian Indian Ministry at St. John, Farmington; Hope West in South Lyon; the SAWC in Lapeer; and our newest mission Micah 6 in Pontiac; our congregations that we share with our partners of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan (such as: Holy Faith, Saline; Spirit of Grace, West Bloomfield; and Mother of the Savior, Dearborn) and our unique relationship with the one Lutheran monastery in North America, St. Augustine’s House in Oxford. We also share the ministry that goes on through one of our partners, Living Water Ministry, at Stony Lake Camp in New Era, Michigan.

3) SEMI is also the baptized members and the friends of those congregations, approximately 30,000 strong, who call one of those worshipping communities their “church home.” That includes Synod staff, our rostered leaders: pastors and deacons, our Licensed Lay Ministers who do such fine work, the professional and support staff that keep our congregations and ministries going forward, our conference deans and directors, and all the faithful folk who turn out Sunday to Sunday to share the Good News of Jesus’ death and resurrection. ***Which means, dear sisters and brothers, that when we talk about the “Synod” we talk about ourselves. That is, the “Synod” is us.*** Us, dear friends, with all our gifts and graces, and all our faults and failings as well.

And I say all that because I want to be clear that just as the ministry you do with your Altar Guild, Men’s Group, WELCA, Youth Group, Choir or Quilters, your Evangelism or Property or Stewardship Committees, your Council, Leadership Team, Executive Committee, your deacons or your elders, just as all that ministry is a part of your congregation’s ministry, so too is the ministry of the congregations a part of the ministry of the Southeast Michigan Synod. We are all in this together and stronger because of it.

“What does a Synod do?”

So, if we are what a Synod is, can we talk about what a Synod ***does***? And since I’m going to assume that you have a pretty good idea of the kind of ministry that goes on in your congregation, the part I’m going to focus on is the ministry that happens primarily or exclusively out of the Synod Office.

First, in partnership with local leaders, we make sure as best we can that there is someone prepared and equipped to lead worship on Sunday mornings in each of our local parishes. In many of our congregations, that leadership is provided by your called and ordained pastor, but remember please that her/his call was arranged and facilitated by a member of Synod staff and your conference Dean. The person doing most of that work day to day is Pr. Lauren Kirsh-Carr, your Assistant for Congregational and Synodical Life.

If your congregation is being served by one of our talented and gifted interns, it is likely you will have worked with Pr. Sean Ewbank, our Director for Evangelical Mission. Also, be aware that interns from the Southeast Michigan Synod are supported and guided by our Director of Candidacy, Pr. Barry Osterbur, and the members of the Candidacy Committee, who work with our candidates in order to help shape and prepare them for rostered ministry.

If your congregation is being served by one of our dedicated and committed Licensed Lay Ministers, they will have interacted with Pr. Scott McKinney, outgoing Director for that ministry, the LLM Committee, me, and going forward, Pr. Kirsh-Carr.

If your congregation is in a period of transition, you can have worked with any one or combination of synod staff to ensure that there is dependable leadership on Sundays along with support for local leadership as a parish gets through the discovery and discernment that are a part of that process.

Behind all that, every member of synod staff serves as a resource to congregational leaders, rostered or lay. With Ms. Beth Fisher, your Assistant for Administration taking the lead, we answer questions about which forms to fill out and where to turn for help to solve a particular issue. We support leaders in time of uncertainty or struggle, we act as counselors, sounding boards, comrades and companions, as we work to strengthen the ministry that goes on in local congregations, and very rarely, provide discipline for those under call.

Second, we help facilitate and form ministry networks that support ministries beyond the local parish. So as a synod we help coordinate support for our campus ministry at the U of M, our camping ministry at Stony Lake through Living Waters, support for Trinity Seminary in Columbus and scholarships for our seminarians through our annual Bishop's Seminarian Fund request. We engage with Samaritas both at congregational and synodical levels.

We also work in partnership with our developing or ethnic-specific ministries: Grace in Action in Southwest Detroit, Mother of the Savior in Dearborn Heights, and an engagement with the Indian community in south Oakland County. We help support King of Kings, Lake Orion; St. Philip, Trenton; the Detroit Cooperative Church; and congregations in formation in Pontiac and South Lyon. Ms. Robin McCants, Assistant for Advocacy and Urban Ministry coordinates with Co-Dean Pastor Lindsay Anderson to support our evangelical witness in the cities of Detroit and Flint, as well as taking the lead with our communications and participation in matters of social justice.

And as we live into these interesting times to be the Church, members of your Synod staff are more and more engaged with questions surrounding the development of what we're calling "Area Ministry Strategies." As we are invited to consult, we have begun convening gatherings of local pastors and congregational leaders to talk and to imagine together what it might look like, and what it might mean, to deliberately and thoughtfully engage neighboring congregations in a mutual partnership. This kind of partnership would allow for congregations to share resources and perhaps even staff, maximizing resources and enabling congregations to remain active and vital in the communities where they are planted.

Besides those connections in our territory, the Synod also helps coordinate relationships with our international companions: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and the Mbulu Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, where 6 of us are heading later this month. I am very grateful for local leaders who are so committed to accompanying those ministry partners, and for the energy and engagement they put forth in order to keep those connections strong and vital.

Using that style of partnership as a model, in this next year it is my hope and intention to encourage, form or re-invigorate teams of folks who will gather in support and strength around other important relationships, specifically a team connected to Urban Ministry, Rural Ministry, and our Campus Ministry at Ann Arbor. Some of those teams are in place now, some of those teams are resting, and some of those teams will need to be created. I'd be delighted to talk with you if you're willing to be a part of what that is going to look like.

Third, as a Synod, we gather for various events, to serve various groups, to guide and govern our life together, and to be a part of the larger ELCA. Let me explain.

As a Synod, we gather once a year for Synod Assembly. You will have noticed this by now. Assembly is where we take on the business of the Synod, electing candidates to serve, endorsing a budget, making changes to our constitution or bylaws, adopting resolutions and sharing them with partners in the ELCA.

And there are other gatherings as well: Rostered Leaders and LLMs are invited to annual retreats with sisters and brothers from the other Michigan synods; meanwhile, folks in Candidacy, folks serving in their first calls, LLM's, and Conference Deans gather regularly to build connections, develop specific skills, and to share best ministry practices that enhance the life of the church. Every third year we take part in the National Youth Gathering, working with a number of dedicated volunteers and our Synod Youth Director, Ms. Lisa Jeffreys.

Synod Council meets every other month to oversee our mission and to set a path for the future. Members of Council (and we're electing some this assembly) are charged to provide advice and counsel, to act on behalf of and to represent the Synod in their conferences and congregations, and to share in the leadership of the portion of Christ's church given into our care. Council approves changes in roster status, extends call for synodical ministry, and in partnership with the Executive Committee: Bishop, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer (and as of this Assembly's action, Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer) develops budgets, policy, and strategies to accomplish Christ's mission in Southeast Michigan.

As a Synod we also identify and support the voting members elected from Southeast Michigan who will attend the Churchwide Assembly held every three years. This is one of those years, and so I'm looking forward to heading to Milwaukee this August with nine others from SEMI to deliberate and discern, to share and shape the life of the ELCA over the next three years.

Speaking of our Synod's participation in the life of the ELCA, Ms. Emilee LeBlanc from Hope, Dearborn has served on Churchwide Church Council, Mr. Todd Perkins on the ELCA's Committee on Discipline, and Mr. George Watson as a Hearing Officer. And in my role as your synod bishop, I also serve as the Chair of the Conference of Bishops' Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations Committee and as a co-chair of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee.

I know there is always a risk associated with lists, but I wanted at least to give you a broad sense of most of the tasks and responsibilities we carry out together through the ministry of the Synod.

So, if you're still with me after hearing about *"What the Synod is?"* And *"What the Synod does?"* I want to spend some time talking about *"How does the Synod do all that?"* Ok?

"How does the Synod do all that?"

The first answer to that question is "People!" There are a mixture of paid and volunteer staffers who take on those responsibilities out of love for the Church and our Lord Jesus Christ. That mixture includes Synod staff I've already named, along with Ms. Tracy Johnson who serves as our very efficient part-time bookkeeper. Then there are Deans, clergy colleagues who serve as conveners of their local conferences, assist in call and transition processes, and who offer advice and support for their colleagues as well as for me and other Synod staff members. Will you thank them with me as we run their names up on the screens? And as I mentioned before, we also are so grateful for the ministry of Pr. Barry Osterbur and Ms. Lisa Jeffreys, and Directors of Candidacy and Youth Ministry. Applause for their work, please.

The volunteers who help move our life together are far more numerous. They include the members of our Synod Council:

Synod VP: Al Asfour

Treasurer: Valinda Vincent

Secretary: George Watson

Serving as Assistant Secretary: Sonja Markwart

As well as Council Members serving from their particular conference or constituency:

Ms. Jo Ellyn Bernardin Conference 1

LLM Carl Bloom Conference 11

Pr. Jim Fogle Conference 8

Pr. Denise Grant Conference 5

Pr. Rick Hogan Conference 7

Ms. Chelsea Hutchens At Large

Pr. Bonnie Klos Conference 2

Ms. Shavaughn Joyce Conference 6

Pr. Joyce Partyka-Staib Young Adult

Dr. Margaret Reynolds Conference 10

Mr. Rusty Ward Conference 9

Pr. Kate Zwyicki Conference 3

Ms. Emilee LeBlanc Representative on the Churchwide Church Council

Synod Council is responsible for the governance of the Synod in between meetings of the Assembly, and also help form our ministry together through their service on various committees or task forces. Those committees and task forces include, but are not limited to:

BRRiCK

Campus Ministry

Candidacy

Diversity Task Force

ELCJHL

Finance

Hunger Task Force

Licensed Lay Ministry Board

Living Water Ministry

Mbulu

Samaritas Board

Trinity Seminary at Capital University Advisory Board

SEMI WELCA

The folks who serve on these committees and task forces really become the “boots on the ground” for the ministry of the Synod (that’s our ministry, dear friends) by sharing their time, their skills, their commitment and resources to accomplish the tasks entrusted or assigned to them. Applause and thanks, please?

Of course, these people need resources to do their jobs, and this is where I get to talk some about money, the dollars you send out from your congregation’s income to this ministry we share. You’ve already heard the comprehensive report from Synod Treasurer Valinda Vincent, but I want to give you some general impressions here and now.

I’m talking about the funding we use to do our work. You may know this money as “Benevolence” or “Mission Support” among the line items in your own congregation’s budget, and sometimes it becomes the line item easiest to cut when Congregation Councils are faced with hard decisions about how to balance a budget.

Having spent 18 years in the parish, I understand that reality, dear friends. Every member of your Synod staff understands that as well. And from time to time I think it’s important for us to acknowledge the obvious, just to make sure we’re all on the same page.

But there are a couple other things we should acknowledge as well:

1. General revenues across the Synod are in decline, while a significant number of our congregations are growing or holding their own, a significant number are also experiencing a reduction in revenue from year to year. That’s real.
2. Fixed costs are going up. That’s real, too. Salaries, health care costs, utilities and insurance get more expensive every year. I don’t expect that trend to reverse itself any time soon.
3. Not every member of every one of our 109 congregations is aware of what “Benevolence” or “Mission Support” goes to pay for in terms of what the Synod does. That’s one reason I’m presenting this report this way, so that together we have a better understanding of what we’re meant to accomplish together in terms of synod ministry.
4. And across the Synod, the average congregation gives 4.38% of their annual budget to support our synod ministry. Did you hear that, dear friends? 4.38%.

Hear me say these things also.

1. We are so grateful for your partnership and for the money you send in benevolence. We are especially grateful as well for the congregations in our synod whose significant commitment to mission support is simply part of their identity.
2. We are committed to being careful stewards of those dollars, recognizing them both as a sign of your trust and of your commitment to the ministry we share.
3. When one congregation makes a cut in its mission support, or cuts it altogether, another congregation bears the cost of that ministry.

And although you’ve already heard from our Synod Treasurer Valinda Vincent, I want you to understand that for the first time since 2013, we spent more money than we received in terms of our operating budget.

Let me explain. In Southeast Michigan we have two distinct and separate budgets.

A. *The Fund for Mission*, which is dedicated to helping support our mission congregations, our congregations under development or redevelopment, our synodically authorized worshipping communities, the salaries and benefits of the pastors or lay professionals who lead them, and our companion Synods. Those ministries also receive funding from our Churchwide partners in Chicago.

The funds for the Fund for Mission have come from the proceeds of the sale of property owned by the Synod as well as gifts from congregations whose time of active ministry has come to an end. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of congregational leaders who make the faithful decision to support new ministries from the resources that come with the sale of their buildings, and for their commitment to beginning a new chapter in the life of Christ's church even as another chapter comes to an end.

Through the Fund for Mission, we share approximately \$120,000 a year, and we expect to be able to meet this commitment in full for the next three years. We are in close communication with our mission congregations, and they know what we know about our resources and how long we expect them to last.

B. *The Operating Budget*, which represents our annual income from mission support or benevolence, covering the expenses of Synod staff salaries and benefits, rent, insurance and utilities, transportation, office expenses, as well as the support we give our ministry partners: Living Water, Campus Ministry, and Samaritas.

It is on the Operating Budget side where, for the first time since 2013, we have experienced a shortfall, and that's what I want you to know. This year we are able to make up that amount from reserves we have put aside from previous years' positive balances. But I need you to know that this is not a trend we can sustain over the long term and keep doing the kind of ministry we are doing together now.

So, and here is where I offer you my last question: ***What is the Synod doing about that?*** Or, to ask it differently: ***What are WE doing to strengthen congregations and leaders in order to strengthen not just our financial position but also our life together? What are WE doing about that?***

I want to share an answer in two parts. Part 1 is a nearly final report on the Rise Up! Campaign which has been a blessing to our life together. Part 2 is a much shorter conversation about what we are doing in SEMI to support, develop and create a variety of options for pastoral leadership in our congregations. I say "pastoral" leadership because I want you to know right away that I'm not just talking about our ordained pastors. Ok?

Part 1) Rise Up! Campaign

The most comprehensive answer I have to give you is a report of where we are right now with the Rise Up! Campaign. You have heard of this, right?

Conceived in 2016 and formally adopted by Synod Council in 2017, Rise Up! has been a comprehensive capital campaign designed to strengthen congregations and leaders throughout the Southeast Michigan Synod. Our lead consultant is Pr. Mike Ward, partner at GSB, who has become a partner in our ministry and a good friend along the way. You'll remember him as a presenter a couple of Synod Assemblies back.

Our financial goal for the campaign was to raise \$1.25M, and though we have not quite reached that number right now, I am absolutely confident we will reach that number in dollars and

pledges before the end of this year. I am so confident, in fact, that we celebrated the success of Rise Up! after dinner last night, and a good time was had by all. And while I'm speaking about that part of the campaign right now, let me thank you for your continued support and the pledges you have made. That is wonderful.

Rise Up! is comprised of 7 distinct goals and I want to get you up to speed with all of them. I also want you to know that you can go to our Synod website and pull down the Rise Up! tab in order to get a more detailed reporting of dollars raised and pledged, where we've spent those dollars, what we have learned and the goals of that campaign that are just now being put into action.

1. The Stewardship Initiative. We have been working with Pr. Mike Ward and a program called *Stewardship for All Seasons*. The original design was to develop three cohorts of 10 congregations who would work closely with Mike and Synod staff to create a culture of generosity. We have had such strong results with the Initiative that we have already brought on a 4th cohort and are open to putting together a 5th cohort after that. Congregations using *Stewardship for All Seasons* have reported solid to significant growth in giving and have shared some of their increase through their benevolence. I am grateful for everyone involved in that process.

2. The Tune In Process for Congregations. The *Tune In Process* has been facilitated by our partners at LEAD (Living Every Day As Disciples) and we just completed a LEAD training event at St. John in Farmington Hills that brought together more than 80 folks from 16 of our congregations. The *Tune In Process* gives congregations a road map and coaching that allows them to assess where their congregational resources overlap with the needs of the community in which they are planted. Some congregations have already chosen to go further with this process and make their own arrangements with LEAD, but the program is already providing benefits to the congregations taking part.

And while I'm speaking about the Tune In Process let me also share something with you about the folks from SEMI who have become part of this campaign by becoming coaches for this process. Coaches work individually with congregations in the Tune In Process, to keep them on track and accountable for the vision they've developed.

3. Grants to Congregations. We designed Rise Up! in such a way that once congregations engaged with the *Tune In Process* and committed to supporting the campaign, they would be eligible to apply for a micro-grant (between \$3500 and \$5000) from the Synod, intended to be used as a kickstarter toward developing a ministry identified through Tune In! We are just now reaching the point where congregations are far enough along in the *Tune In Process* that we will be offering grant applications for Rise Up! funds intended expressly for that use. These applications will be available online through our Synod website: www.semisynod.org, and pull down the tab for Rise Up! It is our intention to have this entire process in place by the time we start a new programming year this Fall, and we are both excited and hopeful to see how this grant-making process begins to shape our life together as we move forward.

4. Rostered Leader Mentoring. Over the last two and a half years as a part of Rise Up!, we have invited every rostered member (that's our pastors and deacons) of the Synod to become part of a mentoring group, and to take part in regularly scheduled gatherings with peers and a "senior" colleague. A couple of things to be aware of right from the start: a) "regular" looks different in different contexts, and b) some of our rostered colleagues have chosen to find support and connection through other means. The really important thing to know, however, and what I celebrate is that in groups where this initiative has been embraced, we have heard reports of the critical difference being connected can make in the health and vitality of congregational ministry and ministers.

I want to say thanks again for the rostered leaders who have agreed to serve as senior colleagues, and who have made a significant commitment to being available for consultation, support, prayer, and advice for other rostered leaders. And I want to say thanks as well for the colleagues who have made a commitment to being part of these groups, and to being open to learning and growing through a sharing of experience, best practices, and stories of the victories and the occasional and spectacular failures that are a part of parish ministry in this time in the life of the church.

It is my hope that as we move into the next phase of Rise Up, I will be able to be more personally engaged in mentoring colleagues, both to remain connected myself to the particular joys and challenges of parish ministry in 2019, but also to repay the gift that was given to me by mentors and friends when I started ministry here in Southeast Michigan 27 years ago.

5. Lay Leadership Development. In the time of the church in which we live and serve, congregations are increasingly dependent on the skill, commitment and time of lay leaders. Twenty-five years ago, many parishes had the financial resources available to pay church workers to carry out important aspects of parish life: Youth Ministry, Christian Education, staffing the Office, hospitality, and beginning new programs of community outreach, were often handled by talented lay persons who were also on the church payroll. That ministry model no longer applies to most of our congregations.

This fifth initiative associated with Rise Up! has been our commitment to providing a series of short but intense opportunities for members of the Synod to come together in order to acquire a set of basic skills around a particular aspect of ministry or congregational life. Our intention here is to ensure that recruits or volunteers are supported in their service, and to build connections between members and congregations engaged in similar types of programming or activities.

So, across the Synod and over the last three years, members of our congregation have spent Saturday mornings together learning how to start a community food pantry, how to write grant proposals for community outreach, raising awareness of legal issues facing congregations, best practices for church safety, just to name some. We have four events scheduled for this year, and so far have offered a total of 13 “Leadership Labs” as a part of Rise Up!. You can find out more about topics and dates when you visit the website, and registration for the Labs is free.

6. Tithing to the ELCA’s “Always Being Made New (ABMN)” Campaign. Some of you will remember that Rise Up! began to take shape not long after we heard about the ELCA’s 25th Anniversary campaign “ABMN.” I am convinced that taking part in the national effort is an important aspect of living out our connection to the wider church. But rather than starting another appeal for support, we made the decision early on to include a tithe from Rise Up! Our commitment is to send \$125,000 as our portion, though that number may increase as we move past our own \$1.25M goal. To date, and honoring that commitment, we have already sent \$46,575 to Churchwide as ABMN comes to its successful conclusion. You can find out more about the details of the ABMN at the ELCA’s website: go to ELCA.org and click on the link to ABMN.

7. Adding a Half-Time Position to Synod Staff. One of the things we realized early in the planning stages is that even though the Rise Up! Campaign has been greatly blessed and deeply supported by an astonishing number of volunteers, we also need a staff person to coordinate and administer the multiple and various aspects of it. We understood that to do this, and to do it well, we needed more help.

As the final initiative, therefore, we built into the campaign structure five years of funding for a half-time position, to ensure that the goals and projects that are part of Rise Up! would not fail or falter because of insufficient staff support. We've dedicated \$300,000 to that five-year, half-time position, an amount intended to cover not only salary and benefits, but also office support, travel, and the regular expenses associated with work that gets done in 109 congregations scattered over 11 counties.

Again, that \$300,000 is intended to be spread over 5 years, and is meant to cover all the staff costs associated with the execution of the campaign in SEMI.

However, since we put together our materials describing Rise Up!, I have come to understand that the way we described this final initiative led some people to believe that we were creating a position for a part-time Assistant to the Bishop who would make \$300,000 a year. This is not what we have done and not at all what we intended, and I sincerely apologize for the confusion and consternation some of you may have experienced when you read that in our materials.

If we had done such a thing, I promise you that I would have been first in line to apply. But we did not do that.

What we have done so far, though, is to increase Pr. Lauren Kirsh-Carr's position from .5 (a .5 position formerly held by Pr. Heather Oberlin working primarily with call process and candidacy and supported through the Synod's Operating Fund) to .75, so that Pr. Kirsh-Carr can be at least partially compensated for the large amount of work she has taken on as Rise Up!'s primary coordinator on Synod staff. The .25 increase in Pr. Kirsh-Carr's compensation comes from Rise Up! dollars committed to the campaign. Further, and during this fiscal year, we will move Pr. Kirsh-Carr's compensation forward to the .5 position described in the Rise Up! materials, with the rest of that increase also coming from Rise Up! dollars.

And as I end this Rise Up! report, let me offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has been a part of this significant effort that is already making a difference in our life together. I am honored by your partnership and so deeply grateful for the encouragement and support you have offered through your participation.

Part 2) Pastoral Leadership

The other part of the answer to the "***What are doing about that?***" question revolves around leadership, and who we--as a Synod--support those who bring the Good News.

Statistically speaking, most of us here today grew up in a Lutheran congregation served by a seminary educated full-time pastor who served that parish. Exclusively. As they worked toward their professional degree (a Master of Divinity or M.Div.) seminarians were supported by their spouses, their home congregations or by their denomination, and were expected to serve wherever the Church (with a capital "C") sent them upon graduation. The cost of attending seminary for three years along with a year of internship was heavily subsidized by the denomination as well. Most of these folks were first-career types, who could look forward to serving thirty years or more in the ministry. That system worked well for a generation of clergy and the congregations they served.

In 2019, I can tell you that almost all of that has changed. Radically Let's unpack that together.

Here in Southeast Michigan 68 of our 109 congregations are served by a full-time-seminary-educated Lutheran pastor. That means 41 of our congregations are served differently.

So we give thanks to God for clergy who come to full time ministry as a second or third career,
and for all the colleagues working less than full time,
For all our transitional pastors.
For our retired pastors willing to serve for a while.
For rostered deacons who serve congregations.
For clergy from our full-communion partners serving in Lutheran or federated congregations.
For our Licensed Lay Ministers who serve as pastoral presences.
For our seminarians serving in detached sites.

As a Synod, members of staff and a wide variety of committee members, local clergy, friends and family members work through all kinds of challenges, paperwork, financial arrangements, educational and constitutional provisions to support every type of pastoral leader. And let me tell you that this has become way more complicated than it was when I started serving in a parish, and still more complicated than when I started serving in this office, and I don't expect that trend to stop any time soon.

But this is a time for all of us to celebrate the Holy Spirit's insistence that the Church still has work to do, as well as the Holy Spirit's relentless call that keeps inviting Jesus' disciples not only to accept a role in pastoral leadership, but also to undertake the preparation to equip them to lead faithfully. I am strengthened, I am encouraged, and I find enormous hope as I work with our leaders of every generation, committed to the Good News and to serving God's people here in SEMI.

So let me end there, dear Friends, and let me thank you and give thanks to God for the opportunity and the privilege to serve as your bishop.

*Donald P. Kreiss,
Southeast Michigan Synod*

MOVED: It was moved and supported to receive the Report of the Bishop.
SA19.05.09 ADOPTED

Mr. Asfour then returned the Chair to Bishop Kreiss.

FAITH TALK

The Bishop explained that at this time we were to have heard from the Reverend Imad Haddad, a Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope - Ramallah in Palestine. Unfortunately, the United States government denied Pastor Haddad a visa. The Bishop asked Assistant to the Bishop, Sean Ewbank, to speak to the Assembly about the restrictions Palestinians face when trying to travel to the US.

The Bishop also noted that Pr. Betty Elena Rendon Madrid has been detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Pr. Rendon is from the Greater Milwaukee Synod. A prayer vigil was held for her on May 15, 2019. Her application for asylum was denied several years ago, and Pr. Rendon and her family are facing deportation.

ADJOURNMENT

The Bishop recessed Plenary Session III at 9:47 AM for a break, with a reminder to gather again for Plenary Session IV at 10:15 AM; music will begin at 10:05 AM in the Sanctuary.

PLENARY SESSION IV – May 18, 2019

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Bishop called Plenary IV to order at 10:22 AM and opened with prayer. He also made announcements.

PARTNER MINISTRY

The Bishop introduced Mr. Kent Peterson of the ELCA Mission Investment Fund who brought greetings to the Assembly.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Bishop Kreiss invited Pastors Lindsey Anderson and Paul Walters, Co-Chairs of the Credentials Committee to report on Assembly attendance, which was as follows: As of 10:15 AM May 18, 2019 a total of 271 persons had registered which included:

VOTING MEMBERS: 235 of which 86 (36.6%) were clergy (53 male and 33 female) and 149 (63.4%) were lay (68 male and 81 female). There were 5 Deacons and 36 visitors of whom were 7 clergy and 29 were lay. Of the aggregate voting members, 21 were Persons of Color or whose Primary Language is other than English and 3 were youth.

RESOLUTIONS

The Bishop introduced Pr. Sara Freudenburg, Chair - Trinity/Ann Arbor, Pr. Al Nelson, Retired, Pat Alsup – Revelation/Detroit, Pr. Julianne Smeck - St. Mark/Ypsilanti, George Watson - St. Martin/Port Huron, Pr. Jack Eggleston – Unity/Southgate, Sonja Markwart – All Saints/Hartland and Pr. Sean Ewbank, Synod Staff. Pr. Freudenburg then presented the report of the Resolutions Committee.

MOVED: It was moved and seconded to suspend the rules for the purpose of avoiding the reading of the Resolutions.

SA.19.05.10 ADOPTED

The report of the Committee on Resolution 2019-01 was as follows:

2019 Resolution-01

Affirmation of Welcome Language

Rationale:

An “Affirmation of Welcome” was adopted by a majority (233 yes, 141 no) of the 1992 Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly. This resolution resolved that “gay and lesbian people share with all others the worth that comes from being unique individuals created by God; and gay and lesbian people are welcome within the membership of our congregations upon making the same affirmation of faith that all members make; and as members of our congregations, gay and lesbian people are expected and encouraged to share in the sacramental and general life of their congregations and of this synod; and that this Assembly of the Southeast Michigan Synod encourages all of our congregations and ministries to adopt a similar resolution . . .”

A second resolution was adopted in 1996 that reaffirmed the 1992 action of our synod adopting the “Affirmation of Welcome” as well as the 1991 action of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly that “gay and lesbian people as individuals created by God are welcome to participate fully in the life of congregations of the ELCA.” While the spirit of both resolutions is as valid as when first adopted, times have changed as well as language in the intervening years. For example, the 1992

resolution directed the Southeast Michigan Synod to “inform Lutherans Concerned of this action.” The Southeast Michigan Synod thus became a “Reconciled in Christ” (RIC) synod of Lutherans Concerned along with five other ELCA synods and over 75 Lutheran organizations and congregations.

Lutherans Concerned/North America is now ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation. And, the program formerly known as “Reconciled in Christ” is now called “Reconciling in Christ” denoting that an “Affirmation of Welcome” is an ongoing and continuing process as opposed to one that is completed or finished by a vote. The RIC roster now exceeds 900 settings, including the Southeast Michigan Synod and 15 of our congregations/campus ministries, and the Lutheran seminary for our ELCA region in Columbus, Ohio. In order for the Southeast Michigan Synod “Affirmation of Welcome” to remain consistent and compliant with the more inclusive and expansive current RIC terminology of ReconcilingWorks, we must update our resolution language.

Language changes as God’s creation and our understanding of God’s creation continues to grow and expand in this world. Just as we are being made new, it is important we ask ourselves, “How are we walking with God through this changing world?” While the phrase “gay and lesbian people” was once thought to be all-encompassing, such words alone now fall short of conveying full diversity and inclusion for many. We are seeking to update our Synod’s welcome statement in order to employ the most helpful and inclusive language. This will ensure our siblings in Christ of all sexual orientations, gender identities, or gender expressions are invited and welcomed into the full life of the church. We are then free to share the love of Christ to ALL!

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod substitutes the phrase “Christians of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions” for the phrase “gay and lesbian people” wherever it appears in the 1992 adopted “Affirmation of Welcome.”

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod inform ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation of this action.

Submitted by:

Pr. Matthew Bode, Zion Ferndale
Pr. Lori Carey, Trinity Ann Arbor
Pr. Jack Eggleston, Unity Southgate
Pr. Sara Freudenburg, Trinity Ann Arbor
Pr. Elizabeth Friedman, Lord of Light Lutheran Campus Ministry
Pr. Paul Gateman, Zion Ferndale
Pr. Branden Hunt, St. Philip Trenton
Pr. Sharon Janot, Abiding Presence Rochester Hills
Pr. Jen Kiefer, St. John Dundee
Pr. Susan Lidums, Our Risen Lord Burton
Pr. John Meulendyk, Retired
Pr. Bart Muller, Retired
Pr. Monica Villarreal, Salem Flint
Pr. Rob Zahn, Hope Farmington Hills

The committee recommends this resolution.

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt Resolution 2019-1
SA19.05.11 ADOPTED Yes 174, No 8

Pr. Freudenburg then presented the report of the Resolutions Committee
The report of the Committee on Resolution 2019-02 was as follows:

2019 Resolution- 02

Parental Leave

Rationale:

Martin Luther described parenthood as “a special position of honor, higher than that of any other walk of life under it.” (“The Large Catechism,” *The Book of Concord*, Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Eds., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 200. 400.105.) This Church teaches that, ““Because parenthood is a vocation that women and men share, this church supports public and private initiatives to provide adequate maternity and paternity leaves, greater flexibility in the workplace, and efforts to correct the disparity between the incomes of men and women,” (ELCA Social Statement on Abortion p. 8). Further, the ELCA Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice (2017) states that we: “Seek, support, and advocate for resources for families and communities that empower parents, whether single or coupled, to nurture, protect, and provide for their household in ways that do not reinforce gender-based stereotypes. In particular, advocate for men to participate in all family roles associated with the home, caregiving, parenting, and nurturing,” (p. 47) However, this synod’s Minimum Compensation Guidelines provide only half as much time for paternity leave (4 weeks) as it does maternity leave (8 weeks.) (p13) Evening the amount of recommended leave for parents regardless of gender identity would reflect both this Church’s commitment to moving beyond gender-based stereotypes and support the strength and wellness of families in our synod.

Resolved, that this Assembly encourages the Bishop to ensure that in the 2020 Minimum Compensation Guidelines under “VI. Other Provisions” that the current section “Family/Parental Leave” be replaced with the following:

“C. Family/Parental Leave up to eight (8) weeks per birth or adoption of a child with full salary, housing and benefits for rostered leaders, lay professionals and support staff regardless of gender identity is recommended;” and,

Resolved, that the Bishop, Synod Staff and Conference Deans

1. encourage congregations and their leadership to include this section as part of compensation packages of all congregational employees; and,
2. encourage congregations to include this section in all Letters of Call as part of the compensation package of the called leader; and,

Resolved, that this Assembly encourages the Bishop with the assistance of Synod Staff and the Synod Compensation Task Force to develop a resource packet to be distributed to congregations that includes, but is not limited to, pulpit supply lists, Synod contact person to assist in finding people to provide the necessary emergency and/or short term interim coverage during leave, compensation guidelines for these people, and other helpful practices in order to make the providing of parental leave manageable and affordable.

Submitted by

Rev. David Hively (Christ, Monroe)

Rev. Scott Sessler (Emmanuel, Livonia)

Rev. Mark Fisher (Transfiguration, Fenton)

Rev. Robyn Kistemaker (St. Luke’s, Temperance)

Rev. Jennifer Kiefer (St. John, Dundee)

The committee makes no recommendation on this Resolution.

It was moved and seconded to approve this Resolution.
The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt Resolution 2019-02
SA19.05.12 ADOPTED Yes 173, No 7

Pr. Freudenburg then presented the report of the Resolutions Committee
The report of the Committee on Resolution 2019-03 was as follows:

2019 Resolution- 03

Immigration and AMMPARO

Rationale:

Biblical history begins when God calls Abraham to migrate from his own country to the land that God will show him. Sons of Jacob travel to Egypt seeking food to avoid starvation. Later his family is unified when the whole family migrates to Egypt to be with Joseph. Centuries later, because life under slavery and oppression was impossible, Israel is led by God to migrate from Egypt toward a land of milk and honey. Mary, Joseph and Jesus migrated from Israel to Egypt because their own land was no longer safe for them.

The presence of Lutherans in North America began with the migration of Lutherans from Europe who left their own countries because of wars or lack of economic opportunity. At the end of World War II one in every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or a displaced person sparking a new wave of Lutheran migrants to the U.S.

Over recent years thousands of migrant minors have come to the United States seeking opportunities or because their own countries have been unsafe. Often, they are forced to flee their communities because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The number of unaccompanied minors increased from 41,435 in 2017 to 50,036 in 2018.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) *Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) Strategy* (www.elca.org/ammparo) provides opportunities for synods, congregations and members of the ELCA to accompany minors and their families. Through the Guardian Angels Program twenty-seven members of the Southeast Michigan Synod have been trained and are now visiting the Immigration Court in Detroit on Thursdays when minors appear before immigration judges. At least one congregation has submitted application to the ELCA to become a *Welcoming Congregation*.

The needs and challenges of tens of thousands of migrant children who have fled for security and viability are immense. God, who accompanies us, calls us to welcome the foreigner and to welcome migrant minors in our midst and at our border.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod becomes an AMMPARO Synod that seeks to accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities; and

Resolved, that this Assembly encourages congregations to regularly pray for migrant minors and encourage congregational members to pray for them on Thursday mornings when members of the synod are with minors in the Immigration Court; and

Resolve, that this Assembly encourages congregations to become Welcoming Congregations that welcome, pray for migrant children and their families and refer persons as needed to medical, legal and pastoral resources.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Denise Benjamin, Christ the Redeemer Adrian
Pastor Lori Carey, Trinity Ann Arbor
Pastor Jack Eggleston, Unity Southgate
Pastor Elizabeth Friedman, Lord of Light Ann Arbor
Pastor Roger Harms, Retired, Trinity Ann Arbor
Pastor Jill Heather, Emmanuel Southfield
Pastor Sharon Janot, Abiding Presence Rochester Hills
Lynn Justusson, Peace Southfield
Pastor Bill Kirsh-Carr, Beautiful Savior Bloomfield Hills
Pastor Tim Larson, Peace Southfield
Pastor Scott Seeke, Holy Cross Livonia
Pastor Alex Steward, Trinity Richmond
Pastor Krister Ulmanis, Christ Sterling Heights

The committee recommends this resolution.

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt Resolution 2019-03
SA19.05.13 ADOPTED Yes 172, No 7

Pr. Freudenburg then presented the report of the Resolutions Committee
The report of the Committee on Resolution 2019-04 was as follows:

2019 Resolution- 4

Resolution for Increased Accountability in Cases of Sexual Misconduct

Rationale:

“Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known.” (Luke 12:2)

In 2007, Tarana Burke sparked the #metoo movement, which sought to bring light to incidents of sexual misconduct while also seeking to support the victims of said misconduct, particularly in underprivileged communities. This movement took off in 2017 with allegations against and revelations about highly visible individuals within society. The list of perpetrators also includes multiple public members of the church at large.

In light of the #metoo movement, how instances of sexual misconduct are handled is decidedly important to maintaining public trust so that the church can continue our faithful proclamation of the Gospel. As followers of Christ, we acknowledge that we are all broken people living in a broken world. We are called as the church, by virtue of our baptism, to act in ways that maintain the public trust so that our proclamation of the good news of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ can continue to be spread to all nations. This call includes creating safe spaces for victims where their stories can be heard and believed without fear of recrimination. We are also called to be a place where victims can find advocates to help them navigate what it means for perpetrators to have forgiveness while still being held properly accountable and called to repentance.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) clearly and explicitly renounces sexism and sexual misconduct in all its forms.

Further, we acknowledge all the ways in which we have been complicit, either explicitly or implicitly, in acts of sexual misconduct.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly call upon the Southeast Michigan Synod Council to commit to creating safe spaces for victims to be heard and believed without fear of recrimination. We also call upon the synod council to recommit to standards of accountability for perpetrators of sexual misconduct which are in line with “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and appropriate in relation to the offense.

Submitted by -

Pastor Jennifer Kiefer, St John Lutheran, Dundee
Pastor Ted Kerr, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Ida
Pastor Paul Walters, Lutheran Church of the Master, Troy
Pastor Rick Hogan, Faith Lutheran Church, Brownstown
Pastor Lindsey Anderson, Detroit Cooperative Parish, Detroit
Pastor Roland Troike, Retired, Dean of Conference 1
Pastor Kathy Tulman, Zion Lutheran, Chelsea
Pastor Justin Dittrich, St. Paul, Grosse Pointe Farms
Pastor Nik Schillack, Beautiful Savior, Bloomfield Hills
Rev. Joyce Partyka Staib, St. Peter's in St. Clair
Rev. Ken Staib, St. Peter's in St. Clair.

The committee recommends this Resolution.

It was moved and seconded to amend Resolution 2019-4 by the addition of a third Resolved paragraph as follows:

"Be it further resolved that the Southeast Michigan Synod Council is directed to update protocols for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct, which will be made available to Rostered Ministers and congregations, and be accessible on the synod website, by the 2020 Synod Assembly."

The Assembly then voted on the motion to amend Resolution 2019-04
SA19.05.14 ADOPTED Yes 182, No 2

It was moved and seconded to amend the second Resolve to replace the word “victims” with the word “survivors”. The RESOLVE will now read:

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly call upon the Southeast Michigan Synod Council to commit to creating safe spaces for survivors to be heard and believed without fear of recrimination. We also call upon the synod council to recommit to standards of accountability for perpetrators of sexual misconduct which are in line with “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” and appropriate in relation to the offense
SA19.05.15 ADOPTED Yes 171, No 7

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt Resolution 2019-04 as amended twice.
SA19.05.16 ADOPTED Yes 183, No 3

Pr. Freudenburg then presented the report of the Resolutions Committee
The report of the Committee on Memorial 2019-01 was as follows:

Memorial 2019-01

No Way to Treat a Child: Protecting the Human Rights of Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation

Rationale:

The ELCA has a long history of engagement with the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. In 2005, we established an initiative, “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land,” which seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land”. We have companion relationships with the six Palestinian Lutheran congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). We also have a strong history of supporting human rights and justice, reflected in our Social Statement “For Peace in God’s World” which commits us to promote respect for human rights, especially for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children”.

One of the many concerns related to the ongoing struggle between the Israel government and the Palestinians under occupation in Gaza and the West Bank has been the treatment of children held in detention by the Israeli Defense Forces. Israel operates two separate legal systems in the same territory—civilian courts for Israeli settlers and separate military courts for Palestinians that lack internationally accepted fair trial rights and protections. An estimated 500-700 Palestinian children are detained and prosecuted in military courts each year. After 52 years of Israeli military occupation the situation for children living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) continues to deteriorate, making children increasingly vulnerable.

This concern has been the focus of some legislative initiatives by the US Congress in the last few years. In November 2017, HR 4391, Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act was introduced in the House by Rep. Betty McCollum (MN). The ELCA Peace Not Walls initiative issued an Action Alert in December 2017, supporting the bill and asking for its passage. The bill was not considered by the House in that session, but similar legislation is anticipated in 2019.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request Presiding Bishop Eaton on behalf of the Assembly to urge the U.S. President, Secretary of State and Congress to call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; and ensure that operations are carried out in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request Presiding Bishop Eaton on behalf of the Assembly to contact the appropriate U.S. governmental officials, encouraging them to fully enforce US law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act to ensure that United States taxpayer funds do not support ill-treatment of Palestinian children.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request Presiding Bishop Eaton, Synodical Bishops and ELCA members to contact their members of Congress to support legislation that specifically prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used to violate the rights of Palestinian children, and requires the Secretary of State to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.

Submitted by
George Evalt- Assembly Voting Member from Celebration, Westland
Rev Mary T Duerksen: Pastor, Spirit of Grace
Rev Bonnie Klos: Pastor, St Paul, Port Huron
Rev Robert Walters: retired pastor

The committee recommends this Memorial.

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt Memorial 2019-01
SA19.05.17 ADOPTED Yes 172, No 9

Pr. Freudenburg then presented the report of the Resolutions Committee
The report of the Committee on Memorial 2019-02 was as follows:

Memorial 2019-2

Memorial for Increased Accountability in Cases of Sexual Misconduct

Rationale:

“Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known.” (Luke 12:2)

In 2007, Tarana Burke sparked the #metoo movement, which sought to bring light to incidents of sexual misconduct while also seeking to support the victims of said misconduct, particularly in underprivileged communities. This movement took off in 2017 with allegations against and revelations about highly visible individuals within society. The list of perpetrators also includes multiple public members of the church at large.

In light of the #metoo movement, how instances of sexual misconduct are handled is decidedly important to maintaining public trust so that the church can continue our faithful proclamation of the Gospel. As followers of Christ, we acknowledge that we are all broken people living in a broken world. We are called as the church, by virtue of our baptism, to act in ways that maintain the public trust so that our proclamation of the good news of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ can continue to be spread to all nations. This call includes creating safe spaces for victims where their stories can be heard and believed without fear of recrimination. We are also called to be a place where victims can find advocates to help them navigate what it means for perpetrators to have forgiveness while still being held properly accountable and called to repentance.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA reaffirm the actions of the 1989 Churchwide assembly by clearly and explicitly renouncing sexism and sexual misconduct in all its forms and acknowledging its continued impact on the church and the communities that we serve.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod calls upon the ELCA to offer up a statement of repentance of the ways in which we have been complicit, either explicitly or implicitly, in acts of sexual misconduct and then commits to higher standards of accountability for those who commit acts of sexual misconduct, by enacting the following:

- Encourage any future revisions of Vision and Expectations and Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline to be worded so they free and empower victims of sexual misconduct, who are either in candidacy or rostered, to come forward without fear of being removed from the candidacy process/roster or experiencing other forms of recrimination.

- Encourage the seminaries and colleges/universities of the ELCA to take steps to increase the visibility of Title IX policies and officers.
- Set up a system of reporting, that pertains to all institutions of the ELCA, that prevents confirmed incidents of sexual misconduct from being dismissed or hidden.

Submitted by -

Pastor Jennifer Kiefer, St John Lutheran, Dundee
Pastor Ted Kerr, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Ida
Pastor Paul Walters, Lutheran Church of the Master, Troy
Pastor Rick Hogan, Faith Lutheran Church, Brownstown
Pastor Lindsey Anderson, Detroit Cooperative Parish, Detroit
Pastor Roland Troike, Retired, Dean of conference 1
Pastor Kathy Tulman, Zion Lutheran, Chelsea
Pastor Justin Dittrich, St. Paul, Grosse Pointe Farms
Pastor Nik Schillack, Beautiful Savior, Bloomfield Hills
Rev. Joyce Partyka Staib, St. Peter's in St. Clair
Rev. Ken Staib, St. Peter's in St. Clair.

The committee recommends this Memorial.

It was moved and supported to amend the first bullet in the second Resolved to replace the word victims with survivors. The RESOLVED would now read:

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod calls upon the ELCA to offer up a statement of repentance of the ways in which we have been complicit, either explicitly or implicitly, in acts of sexual misconduct and then commits to higher standards of accountability for those who commit acts of sexual misconduct, by enacting the following:

- Encourage any future revisions of Vision and Expectations and Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline to be worded so they free and empower survivors of sexual misconduct, who are either in candidacy or rostered, to come forward without fear of being removed from the candidacy process/roster or experiencing other forms of recrimination.

SA19.05.18 ADOPTED Yes 174, No 4

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt Memorial 2019-02 as amended.

SA19.05.19 ADOPTED Yes 180, No 3

Pr. Freudenburg then presented the report of the Resolutions Committee

The report of the Committee on Memorial 2019-03 was as follows:

2019 Memorial- 03

Augusta Victoria Hospital

Rationale:

The United States Government has historically provided direct financial aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA), primarily through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and

to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Aid to both agencies was severely cut in 2018 by direct action by the Trump Administration and as a result of legislation enacted in 2018. The result of these actions could result in no aid being provided to the Palestinians by the United States in the future. This could have a devastating effect on life-saving services for over five million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

One of the institutions directly affected by the cuts is Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), a program of the Lutheran World Federation and a center of medical excellence in East Jerusalem, serving all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. AVH offers specialized care not available in other hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza.

For several years, AVH and other East Jerusalem hospitals have been facing cash-flow problems because the PA has been unable to pay the bills of the patients which it refers to these hospitals. In December 2018, the total debt for the six hospitals was \$80 M; for AVH alone it was \$38 M. Foreign aid from the US, the European Union and others have contributed financially to the PA to help them pay the bills to avoid a financial crisis, even collapse, of the hospitals. In FY2017, \$25M in US funding was appropriated for the hospitals. In September 2018, the Administration repurposed that funding along with another \$200 M for bilateral aid to the PA. That approved funding is now lost. Stated Administration policy, the need to comply with restrictions placed on aid to the PA by the Taylor Force Act, and the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 (ACTA) make future funding for FY2018 and FY2019 uncertain.

Compounding the direct aid cuts are similar cuts to UNRWA. US funding to UNRWA in FY2018 was only \$65 M, contrasted with \$359.3 M in FY2017. The US decision to end contributions could greatly affect UNRWA which provides education, health care, and other forms of humanitarian assistance for about 5.4 million Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle East. The US has been a major contributor to UNRWA since its establishment shortly after the 1948 Arab/Israeli War. US funding provided one-third of UNRWA's annual budget in 2017.

The impact of these cuts will be significant. Estimates by the providers indicate that the USAID cuts will prevent 140,000 individuals from receiving emergency food aid; 3,000 children and caregivers from receiving healthcare; up to 71,000 from receiving access to clean water; 800 children from receiving rehabilitation services for cerebral palsy; and 16,000 women from receiving clinical breast cancer treatment. Ending UNRWA aid puts at risk education for 525,000 children in 700+ schools, food assistance to 1 million residents in Gaza, and preventative public health in the refugee population.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, member Synods, and Congregations to petition the President and all applicable Legislators to restore funding to the East Jerusalem Hospitals in FY2018 and beyond and restore lost funds from FY2017, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, member Synods, and Congregations to petition the President and all applicable Legislators to restore funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in FY2018, and beyond, restoring lost funds from FY 2017, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved.

Resolved, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, member Synods, and Congregations to petition the President and all applicable Legislators to amend or repeal the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 in order to remove legislative barriers to future funding of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Authority.

Submitted by:

George Evalt, LLM: an assembly voting member from Celebration Westland

Rev Mary T Duerksen: Pastor, Spirit of Grace

Rev Bonnie Klos: Pastor, St Paul, Port Huron

Rev Robert Walters: retired pastor

The committee recommends this Memorial.

The Assembly then voted on the motion to adopt Memorial 2019-03
SA19.05.20 ADOPTED Yes 173, No 2

Thank you, Pastor Freudenberg.

PARTNER MINISTRY ADDRESS: PORTICO

The Bishop invited Ms. Barbara Debski to bring a message from Portico.

WELCA

The Bishop introduced Ms. Joyce Brooks, who spoke about the ministry of WELCA.

ADJOURNMENT

The Bishop led the Assembly in prayer and recessed Plenary Session IV at 11:54 AM for Lunch. He reminded them that we would gather for Plenary Session V at 1:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

PLENARY SESSION V – May 18, 2019

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Bishop called Plenary VI to order at 1:00PM and opened with song and prayer. He also made announcements.

FAITH TALK

The Bishop introduced Dr. Ryan P Cumming – Zion/Chelsea, the Program Director for Hunger Education with ELCA World Hunger, forward to address the Assembly.

ANNIVERSARIES OF CONGREGATIONS AND ROSTERED LEADERS

The Bishop expressed his pleasure at recognizing rostered leaders and congregations celebrating Anniversaries and significant events. Secretary Watson read the names while the Bishop handed out certificates and gifts.

The following Congregation was recognized. Representatives came forward to receive a certificate from the Bishop.

75 years – Christ /Waterford

Rostered Leaders celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Ordination or Consecration were invited forward:

25 years – Pr. Sherry Morrison

25 years – Pr. Sean Motley

The Bishop gave special recognition to the 50th Anniversary of Ordination being celebrated this year by:

50 years – Pr. Stanley J. Eckermann

50 years – Pr. Roland Schaedig

Mr. George Watson was recognized for 28 years of service as Synod Secretary and presented a certificate honoring his service by Deacon Sue Rothmeyer of the ELCA.

Bishop Kreiss and Secretary Watson also recognized the rostered leaders who retired during the preceding year with thanks for their faithful service and a presentation of certificates to:

Pr. Linda Golden

Pr. John Hitzeroth

Pr. John Negele

Pr. Gordon Peterson

Pr. Christine Veres

Deacon Judy Schlueter

Pr. Michael Walters

The Bishop noted that the following Rostered Leaders died during the last year. The assembly honored them with a moment of silence.

Pr. David Blake

Pr. Jerome Essinger

Pr. Don Neihaus

INSTALLATION

The Bishop asked the newly elected members of the Synod Council to come forward as well as those members who are continuing to serve and led the Assembly in the Rite of Installation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Bishop gave announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

The 31st Synod Assembly concluded at 1:53 PM with the Order for Blessing at the Close of the Assembly followed by the Closing Eucharist. The bishop announced next year's Assembly will be held at The Bluewater Convention Center in Port Huron on May 14 – 16, 2020.

WORSHIP

The Assembly concluded with a celebration of Holy Eucharist with Bishop Donald Kreiss Presiding and Preaching. Assisting Minister was Pr. Kate Zywicki, Calvary/Clarkston
The Lector was Pr. Jonathan Heierman, Calvary/Clarkston. Intercessions were led by Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, ELCA Churchwide Representative. Communion Assistants were: Pr. Jack Eggleston, Unity/Southgate, Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, ELCA, Ms. Robin McCants, Genesis/Detroit, Mr. George Watson, St Martin/Port Huron, Pr. Jonathan Heierman,

Calvary/Clarkston, Pr. Lauren Kirsh-Carr, SEMI Synod, Mr. Al Asfour, Shalom/Pinckney, Pr. Ken Greble, Calvary/Clarkston, Pr. Sean Ewbank, SEMI Synod, Pr. Kate Zywicki, Calvary/Clarkston, Pr. Beth Birkholz, Holy Cross, Livonia, Pr. Jamey Authier, Faith/Shelby, Pr. Paul Walters/ Church of the Master/Troy.

George C. Watson, Synod Secretary