

North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
May 20-22, 2018
Lansing Conference Center and Radisson Hotel
Lansing, Michigan

“Signs of the Spirit”

Sunday, May 20, 2018

The Opening Worship service was held at University Lutheran Church in East Lansing beginning at 7:00 PM. Our Churchwide representative, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, preached and Bishop Satterlee presided. Since this was Pentecost Sunday, Presiding Bishop Eaton stressed that as a church working for diversity all must feel welcome and needed – each in his own tongue and culture. Bishop Satterlee officially opened the assembly using the Opening Litany for Synod Assemblies at 8:15 PM.

Acknowledgements and Thank You

Bishop Satterlee thanked University Lutheran for hosting the assembly this evening. He also acknowledged and thanked the Worship team led by Pastor Rachel Laughlin for leading worship throughout the assembly. Members of the team include: Pr. Rheanna Goodrich, Pr. Jennifer Michael, Pr. Doug Ogden, Pr. Kristina Truhan, Pr. Travis Wilson, Pr. Haley Vay Beaman, Ms. Peggy Burns, and Dr. Emily Heidrich.

Introductions

Presiding Bishop Eaton

Bishop Satterlee introduced Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and welcomed her to the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. Presiding Bishop Eaton is the fourth presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She will address the assembly on Monday morning, May 21, participate in town hall meetings on Monday, and preside at the Closing Eucharist on Tuesday morning, May 22.

New to the Synod

Bishop Satterlee called on the Rev. Sarah Friesen-Carper, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational and Leadership Excellence, to introduce the interns and rostered ministers who are new to the synod since the 2017 assembly.

Interns:

Ms. Katherine Rodriguez – Settlement/Gowan
Mr. Cody Blust – First/Muskegon

Rostered Ministers:

Pastor Haley Vay Beaman – University/East Lansing

Pastor Jim Couser – retired
Pastor Nan Dehnke – St. John/Baroda
Pastor Darryl Larson – retired
Pastor Marilyn Robinson – Resurrection/Saginaw
Pastor Jean Smith – St. John/Lake City
Pastor Ken Sheck – Grace/Hastings

General Announcements

Bishop Satterlee reminded the Assembly that additional resolutions must be submitted by 9:00 PM this evening, additional nominees for any position must be submitted by 10:15 AM tomorrow – you must have permission from the nominee and be prepared to provide written biographical data like that of the other nominees. Registration will reopen at 7 AM tomorrow at the Lansing Center, and all remaining activities related to the assembly will take place at the Lansing Center.

He noted that the Morning Eucharist will be led by First Call Pastors at 8 AM with the first plenary session beginning at 9 AM.

Reception in Honor of Bishop Eaton

The Assembly was declared to be in recess following the announcements to attend the reception sponsored by Samaritas honoring Presiding Bishop Eaton in the Fellowship Hall of University Lutheran Church.

Monday, May 21, 2018

Plenary Session 1

Following Morning Worship led by First Call Pastors, Bishop Satterlee called the first plenary session to order at 9:00 AM. He reminded the assembly that he cannot see them so he has lookouts helping him. He also thanked the Rev. Bob Linstrom for serving as parliamentarian at previous assemblies. He asked that voting members be mindful of time and move expeditiously between sessions since the agenda is very tightly packed.

Bishop Satterlee introduced the Rev. David Sprang, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission, who announced that synod youth gathering shirts are available at the registration desk. Bishop Satterlee reminded the voting members that any announcements for the entire assembly must be submitted to Pr. Sprang in a legible format.

Credentials Committee Report – 8:30 AM Count

The Rev. Kjersten Priddy, chair of the Credentials committee, reported that as of 8:30 AM May 21, 96 Clergy Voting Members (51 male and 45 female) and 164 Lay Voting Members (69 male and 95 female) are registered. The percentage breakdown is 37% Clergy and 63% Lay. With a total of 260 voting members, a quorum of 131 is necessary for transaction of business. There are 21 visitors registered.

SA18.05.01

To receive the report of the Credentials committee.

Adopted by Voice vote

Assembly Rules and Procedures

Mr. Connor Ashley, Parliamentarian, presented the Assembly Rules of Procedure found on page 9 of the Assembly booklet. He also walked the assembly through the Procedural Tips and Voting Instructions found on page 10 of the Assembly booklet.

SA18.05.02

To adopt the Assembly Procedures as printed on page 9 of the Assembly book.

Adopted by Voice vote

Assembly Agenda

Bishop Satterlee presented the Assembly Agenda found on pages 11-13 in the Assembly booklet. He noted that there have been some updates since the booklet was published – 1.) Consideration of Resolution A – 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women will be at 4:00 PM today with the other resolutions; 2.) One Mission Moment has been eliminated from this plenary session because of time; and 3.) The message from Portico Financial Services will be part of the midday program.

SA18.05.03

To adopt the Assembly Agenda with the updates noted by Bishop Satterlee.

Adopted by Voice vote.

Bishop Satterlee thanked Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek for preparing the Assembly book.

Ms. Tanya Demots, representative from Quizdom, led the voting members in a short orientation to the hand-held voting machines that we will be using during the assembly.

Synod Council Action Item – Deletion of Bylaw S8.51.01.

Bishop Satterlee called on Pr. Doug Ogden to present the bylaw change recommended by Synod Council. This change and the rationale of the Synod Council are found on page 99 of the Assembly book.

SA18.05.04

The Synod Council of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod recommends to the 2018 Synod Assembly the synod bylaw S8.51.01. noted above be stricken from the constitution of this synod. Persons holding such offices will be required to stand for re-election to that office as specified in:

***S8.51. The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be:**

- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.**
- b. The vice president; and secretary of this synod shall each be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected.**

Some still seemed to think that “term limit” and “term length” were interchangeable and that led to discussion on this change centered on changing the number of terms from two to three rather than eliminating the bylaw. Feelings expressed ranged from having no term limits can lead to someone serving for too long to each election essentially provides the possibility of a term limit.

A motion was presented to modify the bylaw.

SA18.05.04A

To modify the motion to amend Bylaw S8.51.01. to increase the number of terms for the Vice-president and Secretary to three consecutive terms.

Yes – 127; No – 109

Adopted

With the assembly thinking that they had changed the number of terms allowed a vote was taken on the proposed recommendation from the Synod Council

Vote to adopt the proposed constitution change considering the declaration that the vote to change the number of terms passed.

Yes – 145; No – 100

Not Adopted

Post Plenary Note: This action will be addressed again in Plenary 2 this afternoon.

Report of the Nominations Committee

Bishop Satterlee introduced the Rev. Brian Schneider-Thomas, chair of the Nominations committee, to present the slate of nominees. He reminded the assembly that if additional nominations are being presented the nominee must have given permission and the nominator must be prepared to present the necessary biographical data. Any positions with nominations from the floor will have voting delayed until the second ballot to allow the assembly time to review the biographical data. Each position will be individually announced, and nominations will be closed for each group – Synod Council and Churchwide Assembly - at the end of the group.

Synod Council Positions

Lay Female Ms. Linda Wicander

Lay Male Mr. Tim Lundgren
Mr. David Marquette
Mr. John Nelson
Mr. Bill Trevarthen

Clergy Female The Rev. Jessica Hahn

Clergy Female The Rev. Betsy Kamphuis
The Rev. Marilyn Robinson

Person of Color/Primary Language other than English

Ms. Christine Mwanyika
Mr. Abraham Mach

Mr. Nayamukora Christophe Maganza

Young Adult: Ms. Faith Barnett

Youth, Male: Mr. David Latshaw

Youth Female: Ms. Makenna Dawson
Ms. Marissa King

SA18.05.05

To close nominations for Synod Council.

Adopted by Voice vote

Churchwide Assembly Positions

Clergy Female The Rev. Rachel Laughlin
The Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas

Clergy Male The Rev. Dennis Smith
The Rev. Andreas Teich

Lay Female Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek
Ms. Diane Madej
Ms. Carolyn Peterson

Lay Male Mr. Jon Ferguson
Mr. John Nelson
Mr. Rich Weingartner

Youth/Young Adult Female: Ms. Makenna Dawson
Ms. Katie Schneider-Thomas

Youth/Young Adult Male: Mr. Connor Ashley

Person of Color/Primary Language other than English - Female
Ms. Christine Mwanyika
The Rev. Marilyn Robinson

Person of Color/Primary Language other than English - Male
Mr. Nayamukora Christophe Maganza
Mr. Paul Mawut

SA18.05.06

To close nominations for Churchwide Assembly.

Adopted by Voice vote

Election of Nominees to the ELCA Church Council

Bishop Satterlee announced that ELCA Secretary, the Rev. W. Chris Boerger, has determined that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod will have a Female Clergy member on the Church Council. This assembly will nominate two pastors, one of whom will be elected by the Churchwide Assembly in 2019 to serve a six-year term starting September 1, 2019. The motion being presented to the assembly comes from the Synod Council and cannot be modified – this is a yes or no vote. He called on Vice-President Schlesinger to present the motion on behalf of the council.

SA18.05.07

To recommend the 2018 North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly approve the following Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Female) to move forward to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly ballot to represent the North/West Lower Michigan Synod on the ELCA Church Council starting in September 2019: the Rev. Joan Oleson and the Rev. Kjersten Priddy.

Adopted by Voice vote

First Ballot for General Election

The members of the Elections Committee, the Rev. Christina Bright-chair, Mr. C.J. Clark, and the Rev. Dana Hendershot, were recognized and thanked by Bishop Satterlee. He announced that Pr. Bright will give the results and he will declare when there is an election. At this point he requested a motion to combine all positions with a single nominee into a single voice vote as we have done in the past two years. An affirmative vote is a vote for election.

SA18.05.08

To cast a single vote for all uncontested positions – Synod Council: Lay Female, Clergy Female, Young Adult-Female, Youth-Male, and Churchwide Assembly: Youth/Young Adult Male.

Adopted by Voice vote

Bishop Satterlee called on Pr. Bright to lead the assembly in prayer prior to voting.

Synod Council Positions

Lay Female Ms. Linda Wicander
Elected by Voice vote

Lay Male	Mr. Tim Lundgren	77
	Mr. David Marquette	48
	Mr. John Nelson	44
	Mr. Bill Trevarthen	70

Mr. Lundgren and Mr. Trevarthen will appear on the second ballot.

Clergy Female The Rev. Jessica Hahn
Elected by Voice vote

Clergy Female	The Rev. Betsy Kamphuis	128
	The Rev. Marilyn Robinson	111
	The Rev. Betsy Kamphuis is elected	

Person of Color/Primary Language other than English

Ms. Christine Mwanyika	113
Mr. Abraham Mach	72
Mr. Nayamukora Christophe Maganza	53

Ms. Mwanyika and Mr. Mach will appear on the second ballot.

Young Adult: Ms. Faith Barnett
Elected by Voice vote

Youth, Male: Mr. David Latshaw
Elected by Voice vote

Youth Female: Ms. Makenna Dawson	100
Ms. Marissa King	135
Ms. King is elected	

Churchwide Assembly Positions

Clergy Female The Rev. Rachel Laughlin	135
The Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas	107
Rev. Laughlin is elected	

Clergy Male The Rev. Dennis Smith	102
The Rev. Andreas Teich	137
Rev. Teich is elected	

Lay Female Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek	92
Ms. Diane Madej	72
Ms. Carolyn Peterson	75

Ms. Bossenbroek and Ms. Peterson will appear on the second ballot

Lay Male Mr. Jon Ferguson	57
Mr. John Nelson	66
Mr. Rich Weingartner	122
Mr. Weingartner is elected	

Youth/Young Adult Female: Ms. Makenna Dawson	89
Ms. Katie Schneider-Thomas	149
Ms. Schneider-Thomas is elected	

Youth/Young Adult Male: Mr. Connor Ashley
Elected by Voice vote

Person of Color/Primary Language other than English - Female

Ms. Christine Mwanyika	87
The Rev. Marilyn Robinson	154

Rev. Robinson is elected

Person of Color/Primary Language other than English - Male

Mr. Nayamukora Christophe Maganza	142
Mr. Paul Mawut	92
Mr. Maganza is elected	

Following the voting, Bishop Satterlee declared the assembly to be in recess until 10:45 AM.

ELCA Churchwide Representative: Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Bishop Satterlee introduced Presiding Bishop Eaton who began by thanking the assembly for our support – we send 50% of all undesignated mission support on to Churchwide. This support is visible within the synod through renewing congregations in Muskegon, Battle Creek, and Niles. She stressed Ecumenical Relations using “We are church, We are Lutheran, We are church together, We are church for the sake of the world.”

- Church – How are we different from the American Cancer Society or other groups that people join? Now that we’ve been set free by God’s grace, what are we going to do?
- Lutheran – It’s not easy to tell others about our faith
- Together – Conferences, ELCA, Lutheran World Federation, Cooperation
- World – We cannot keep the Good News to ourselves

She continued by stating that we exist in a conflicted state where everything is political. The call for the whole church is to determine how we live and work together – agree to disagree but do not say the person is disagreeable. She stated that it is not contrary to Lutheran belief to be engaged outside the walls of the church.

She stated that she is often asked 1.) Her biggest dream – live and serve as if the resurrection really happened and be joyful about it; 2.) Is there room for more than one religion – the Statement of Interreligious Relations will be presented at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; 3.) Her personal greatest joy – looking forward to becoming a grandmother and Synod Assemblies; and 4.) Her greatest accomplishment – if she could get people to fall in love with church again, study the Bible and love it.

Two videos were shown during her presentation “ELCA Future Directions” and “Grace – Uniquely Lutheran Understanding”. These are available on YouTube and are well worth viewing again.

Credentials Committee Report – 11:15 AM Count

The Rev. Kjersten Priddy, chair of the Credentials committee, reported that as of 11:15 AM May 21, a total of 269 voting members have registered. This includes 103 Clergy Voting Members (54 male and 49 female) and 166 Lay Voting Members (71 male and 95 female). The percentage breakdown is 38% Clergy and 62% Lay. A quorum of 135 is necessary for transaction of business. There are 24 visitors registered.

SA18.05.09

**To receive the report of the Credentials committee.
Adopted by Voice vote**

Second Ballot for General Election

Bishop Satterlee reminded the assembly that Pr. Bright will announce the results and he will announce when an election has taken place. He then called on Pr. Christina Bright to lead the assembly in prayer prior to beginning the second voting session.

Synod Council Positions

Lay Male	Mr. Tim Lundgren	134
	Mr. Bill Trevarthen	110
	Mr. Lundgren is elected	

Person of Color/Primary Language other than English

	Ms. Christine Mwanyika	150
	Mr. Abraham Mach	96
	Ms. Mwanyika is elected	

Churchwide Assembly Positions

Lay Female	Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek	144
	Ms. Carolyn Peterson	97
	Ms. Bossenbroek is elected	

Mission Moment

A video highlighting the home in Gladwin that serves people with disabilities was shown prior to the Rev. Nic Schillack addressing the assembly. He referred the members to his report on pages 83-86 of the Assembly book. Commenting on the video, Pr. Schillack stated that we should celebrate differences and rejoice in them. He also stated that Samaritas has enabled about 60 children yearly to attend Stony Lake Camp. Samaritas is the current name of the organization that began in 1934 as Lutheran Charities and became Lutheran Social Services of Michigan prior to being renamed Samaritas.

Announcements

Bishop Satterlee called on the Rev. Chrysanne Timm, Assistant to the Bishop for Synod Life, to explain what was planned for the two hours covering lunch and the town hall conversations with Presiding Bishop Eaton and Bishop Satterlee. Rev. Timm stated that the assembly was to divide by conference into two groups – one to meet with the bishops and one to have lunch while hearing from our Mission Partners. These groups will then change places half way through the designated period.

Pr. Timm introduced Pr. Sprang who reminded attendees that hearing assistance devices are available if needed. He also reminded the assembly to visit the display room if they had not yet done so.

Pr. Timm led the assembly in prayer before we moved to our designated group.

Town Halls with Presiding Bishop Eaton and Bishop Satterlee

During these informal meetings the bishops answered questions from the voting members covering a wide range of topics. Due to the limited amount of time allotted, the questions could not be answered in depth but did serve to provide insight for the bishops into areas of concern for their members in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. The questions that were submitted could be grouped into the following classifications:

- Evangelism
 - What do you say about using the name “evangelical” given its “loaded” connotation these days? How do we separate “evangelical” Christians from Fundamentalists?
 - In light of the atmosphere today, any suggestions for reaching out to the unchurched (2nd and 3rd generation) who are comfortable not knowing Jesus and Christians?
 - In this time of change, how does the church connect with Gen-X and younger who have different perspectives, needs and commitment levels?
 - In New Orleans (CWA 2016), I was excited by the relationship with AME Zion. But when the ELCA goals were released, they told us how bad we are at evangelism but had no goals about race or evangelism. What are our hopes in race and evangelism?
 - The National Indian Board was dropped around the Lutheran merger. What ministries or supportive efforts are being made by the ELCA to relate to Native peoples?
 - How do we love others in a world that worships capitalism and shuns any connections to religion? How do we make an impactful difference to those who are in need?

- Pastoral Education
 - What are we doing for Christian Education and Continuing Education for Rostered Ministers and Lay Leaders? Any development underway here?
 - The majority of our pastors are white and male. How do we get beyond this?
 - With the need for more pastors in the ELCA, what changes are underway in the educational process to use the internet to allow for more online education that will better allow people who cannot relocate to better serve as future pastors in their own communities?
 - Hot button - clergy shortage. However, there are >100 LGBT clergy open to a call now. How do we address this?

- Luther
 - Reformation - How do we get people to consider Lutherans as “good” Christians when our history has some bad examples? Can we get beyond our ID with certain Lutheran traditions?
 - Do you have anything in writing regarding the viewpoints of Luther in regard to church & state and related issues?

- Congregations

- What is the ELCA doing to merge the many small congregations into fewer, but larger parishes? E.G., Lutheran churches in the Lansing area – most of them are struggling.
- Church Polity - “Struggling congregations can only afford a first call pastor” but they do not have the experience to deal with the issues of a struggling congregation. Has the ELCA looked at the model for placing pastors in this scenario?
- As church we look to others to solve our problems, as a society we seek our personal comfort level. When we walk into a place where people are not like us and we are not welcome, we will not come back. Welcoming is important. Any thoughts?
- Personal
 - How do you view classical disciplines: prayer, silence, bible study, tithing?
 - Do you find time for scripture reading daily?
 - How important is quiet time for you?
 - Any advice for first time pastors?
 - Any resources for bible studies?
 - We are all to use our gifts to the glory of God. Outside of your leadership roles, how do you use your gifts in your home congregations and/or communities or beyond?
 - Cable religion channels – do you watch any for self-study? To see what others are saying? Any thoughts on an ELCA channel?
- General
 - We’re in the midst of the surge of the #METOO movement. In a highly hierarchical organization as the church, are there procedures in place such that the instances of abuse/discrimination/mistreatment can be reported without fear of suppression or recrimination?
 - “God fearing” in America is disappearing. Any comments?
 - There are more youth killed in schools than those killed in the military last year – what is the ELCA doing here?
 - In a world of technology, how do you keep youth in small, rural communities involved in Church?

Mission Partners and Lunch

During this portion of the mid-day schedule, members ate lunch and listened to presentations from many Mission Partners. These included:

- Living Waters Ministries – C.J. Clark
- Portico – Pr. Cathy Schibler
- ELMM – Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek
- Open Hearts, Open Church – Ms. Diane Madej and Pr. Jessica Riviera-Walker
- Publicly Engaged Church – Pr. Ken Ponds
- Synod World Hunger Team – Pr. Erick Johnson
- Synod Bridge Builders Team – Pr. Larry Foster
- Disaster Response – Pr. David Sprang

Plenary Session 2

Credentials Committee Report – 2:00 PM Count

Bishop Satterlee called this session to order at 2:30 PM and called on Pr. Kjersten Priddy to update the Credentials committee report as of the 2:00 PM close of registration. Rev. Priddy announced that there has been no change in the count so the 11:35 count of 269 voting members stands. Count remains at: Clergy – 103 (54 male and 49 female) – 38%, Lay – 166 (71 male and 95 female) – 62%. The quorum is set at 135 for transaction of business. There are 24 visitors registered.

SA18.05.10

To receive the report of the Credentials committee.

Adopted by Voice vote

Reconsider the Constitutional Bylaw Update

At this point a request to reconsider the Synod Council motion to eliminate term limits was presented. This takes precedence over the report of the Vice President scheduled to be presented at this time. The request was made to correct errors in the process used in Plenary #1 – 1.) The motion to change bylaw S8.51.01. from two terms to three terms was not valid because bylaw updates must come from the Synod Council; 2.) Bylaw changes require a 2/3 majority vote for approval – the earlier vote was 145 Yes and 100 No for an approval percentage of 59%; and 3.) The assembly thought they had passed this change and voted down the motion from the Synod Council, but this action was not done in accordance with the constitution. In order to reconsider the motion, a person voting in favor of the previous motion would need to move it – this was done.

SA18.05.11

To reconsider the motion to eliminate term limits.

Yes – 160; No – 55

Adopted

With the request to reconsider being approved the original motion was again presented to the assembly. Voting members had the opportunity to speak on this motion with most favoring approval stating that it is very difficult to get people to commit to a term on congregation councils let alone serving on the Synod Council. The best way to manage term limits during the synod assemblies is through the nomination and election processes.

SA18.05.12

The Synod Council of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod recommends to the 2018 Synod Assembly the synod bylaw S8.51.01. noted above be stricken from the constitution of this synod. Persons holding such offices will be required to stand for re-election to that office as specified in:

***S8.51. The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be:**

- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.**
- b. The vice president; and secretary of this synod shall each be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected.**

Yes – 164; No – 73

Adopted

This bylaw has been deleted by a margin of 69% Yes to 31% No.

Report of the Vice President

Bishop Satterlee introduced Ms. Sandy Schlesinger, synod Vice President, for her report. After introducing the synod council members, she highlighted some of the actions that the council has undertaken this year. The agreement on the process to be used for the bishop election at the 2019 Synod Assembly was a strategic focus of the council since the process is required to be announced at the assembly this year. Other items of strategic action included Compensation Guidelines for 2019 developed after reviewing current guidelines used by other synods in our region; support of Bishop Satterlee's initiative to develop and implement a detailed policy and practice for Synodically Authorized Ministry within the synod; approval of designating offerings from special services of ordination and installation to address Clergy Seminary Indebtedness - a new synod initiative; new policies, plans, and resources including the North/West Lower Michigan Disaster Plan, an Anti-Harassment Recommendations and Resources Policy, and the North/West Lower Michigan Grant Award and Restricted Fund Policy. Her complete report is found on pages 56-59 of the Assembly book.

The Synod Council considered two options for the bishop election at the 2019 Synod Assembly – 1.) when the incumbent bishop is eligible and available to serve another term, the election will be by ecclesiastical ballot without a “Potential Nominee” pre-identification process; and 2.) if there is not an eligible incumbent bishop, the Synod Council will partner with the Conference Deans and other Synod Leaders to facilitate a “Potential Nominee” pre-identification process based on the process used for the 2013 bishop election. Bishop Satterlee has stated that he is open to serving another term if elected; therefore, the Synod Council will charter a Bishop Election Committee to facilitate the election process at the 2019 Synod Assembly using the constitutionally required ecclesiastical ballot process as was done for the 2007 bishop election.

Sandy presented the 2019 Synod Compensation Guidelines that the assembly will consider in Plenary #3 on Tuesday, May 22. The council is recommending a 2% increase in base salaries for Clergy and Deacons for 2019 based on the U.S. Cost of Living Increase recommendation for 2018. Included in the recommendations are options for non-financial compensation when a congregation is unable to meet guidelines; however, these are to be used for a short-term (2 to 3-year period) as the congregation works toward meeting the guidelines. These guidelines will be voted on during Plenary #3 tomorrow morning.

SA18.05.13

To receive the report of the Vice President

Adopted by Voice vote.

Report of the Bishop

Vice President Schlesinger introduced Bishop Satterlee for his report. His written report is found on pages 17-35 of the Assembly book. In his oral report, Bishop Satterlee used church historian Alan Kreider's concept of “*ferment*” to review the spread of the gospel within the synod explaining that it takes time for results to be seen but there are drops along the way that show *fermentation* is working. He highlighted five “drops” that he has collected as this fermentation is taking place.

- Developments – Pr. Sarah Friesen-Carper has determined that it is time for her to complete her ministry on synod staff and Pr. Rosanne Anderson will join the staff from July 2018 through August 2019. A new synod desk will be established at St. Luke in Grand Rapids where Pr. Anderson will be one day a week.
- Direction – Bishop Satterlee identified four areas of action within this topic
 1. Mission Support is up 3% in 2017 and targeted giving has also increased. Pr. Sprang observed that it has been at least 6 years since giving has been at this level. We have a mission plan and it has been supported by the congregations of the synod. Thank You!
 2. Call Process requires a lot of time to match the right leader to the right congregation. We are currently at the lowest point of congregations in this process (17 with open calls) since he became bishop in 2013. During the Bishop’s first term (since September 2013), 80 call and contract processes have been completed (about one every three weeks). Interest in the synod is growing but there are still more full-time calls than there are pastors to fill them. Seminary graduates this year total 118 to assign to 256 first-call congregations across the 65 synods. Bishop Satterlee reminded everyone that sometimes all they need to do when they see someone with gifts for ministry is to say “I think you should consider becoming a pastor.”
 3. Clergy Stress among rostered ministers in our synod is high compared to the average across the ELCA according to data from Portico. The current political climate forces pastors and deacons to walk a “tightrope” when the same sermon receives criticism from both ends of the political spectrum. This adds to normal family concerns and can lead to a feeling of isolation that in turn leads to questioning whether their service has any meaning. Bishop Satterlee reminded the assembly of the promise made by members of the congregation at the service of installation – to receive them as messengers of Christ, pray for them, help and honor them for the work’s sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ.
 4. Size matters in strengthening connections. Bishop Satterlee noted that included with his report is information he developed showing how congregations of varied sizes relate to the synod. He has also included a summary of congregations’ membership and worship attendance based on the annual parochial reports. This is an interesting study for people to review.
- Debt – Rostered minister indebtedness limits the congregations that a pastor can serve. Our synod attorney, Dawn Brackmann, has been gathering information on ways we can help defray debt directly related to seminary education. The next two steps in the process are 1.) determining the approach that works best for us, and 2.) beginning to raise money for this purpose. Bishop Satterlee welcomes leaders to assist him in this endeavor and will propose a model for the synod to the Synod Council. He encouraged congregations to follow the Synod Council’s lead and designate offerings from services of ordination and installation to this fund. Hopefully the first awards will be made at the 2019 Synod Assembly.
- Disability – One half of the assembly offerings are designated to the ELCA Disability Ministries within the ELCA Always Being Made New Campaign. Bishop Satterlee reiterated that when he was elected bishop in 2013 the fact that he is legally blind went largely

unnoticed. He stated that our church has much work to do in ministry to people with disabilities because this is a very small part of the church's agenda and it may not even show up within a congregation's sphere. Societal issues have taken precedence over disability ministry. He thanked the assembly and referred to his election as a prophetic act, a sign of the Holy Spirit, especially for those with disabilities who need a sign of hope.

- Discernment –Bishop Satterlee described the process to decide whether he would be available to serve another term as the bishop of North/West Lower Michigan as “good, hard, holy work.” He engaged in this process early this year since he needed to announce his intentions at this assembly. After talking with his family, synod leaders, staff and other bishops he made the decision to be available to serve another term as bishop. Now it will be up to the Voting Members at the 2019 Assembly to discern the direction the synod will go as we move through the election process.

Bishop Satterlee noted that we all need “Signs of the Spirit” to keep going and they are all around us. He referred to a hymn for the answer to what the next six years will bring:

The Church of Christ in every age
Beset by change but Spirit led,
Must claim and test its heritage
And keep on rising from the dead.

At the end of his report, he received a standing ovation from the assembly.

SA18.05.14

To receive the report of the Bishop.

Adopted by Voice vote

Report of the Treasurer and Presentation of the 2019-2020 Budget

Mr. Dan Carter, Treasurer of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, presented the financial results for the 2017-2018 fiscal year and noted that the auditors had given a “clean” report. He reported that only 11% of our expenses are used for general administration expenses leaving 89% for programs. Mission Support increased by 3%.

As constitutionally required he also presented the proposed budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. This will be brought before the assembly in Plenary #3 tomorrow morning for their approval. It is an aggressive budget but one that is necessary to meet the needs of fully serving the members of the synod.

SA18.05.15

To receive the report of the Treasurer.

Adopted by Voice vote.

Report of the Reference & Resolution Committee

Bishop Satterlee introduced the Rev. Betsy Kamphuis, chair of the Reference & Resolution committee, to present the three resolutions for assembly consideration.

Resolution A – 50th Anniversary of Women’s Ordination

The first Resolution to be presented has been modified by the Reference & Resolution committee to include a beginning an identifying phrase (“Moved, to transmit the following memorial to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA.”) that this memorial is to be sent to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The updated resolution will read as follows:

RESOLUTION A – MEMORIAL ON THE ELCA’S
50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

“Moved, to transmit the following memorial to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA.”

Whereas, the ELCA rejoices in the actions of our predecessor church bodies, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, when in their national conversations in 1970, they voted to ordain women; and wishing to express our profound gratitude for the many and varied gifts ordained women have contributed to God’s mission in this church; and

Whereas, research has revealed some progress but also significant disparities for women, especially for women of color, in the areas of preparation for ministry including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles and debt following seminary education (<http://searchelca.org/Pages/Results.aspx?k=45th+anniversary+of+women%27s+ordination>); and

Whereas, the church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; therefore, be it

Resolved, that all synods in their 2020 assemblies include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and be it further

Resolved, that we call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women, especially women of color, access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, and develop strategies of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024; and be it further

Resolved, that our seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods, and congregations highlight women preachers, teachers, and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women’s ordination has brought to our church.

Submitted by,

The Publicly Engaged Church Table

A request was presented to grant permission for the Rev. Kit Kleinhans to address the assembly on this resolution.

SA18.05.16

To allow the Rev. Kit Kleinhans to address the assembly on Resolution A.

Adopted by Voice vote

SA18.05.17

To adopt Resolution A with the addition of the introduction from the Reference and Resolutions Committee – “Moved, to transmit the following memorial to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA.”

Adopted by Voice vote

Post Assembly Memorial as edited by Churchwide

50th anniversary of the ordination of women

North/West Lower Michigan Synod (6B) [2018]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in the actions of its predecessor church bodies, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, when, in their national conventions in 1970, they voted to ordain women, and wishing to express profound gratitude for the many and varied gifts ordained women have contributed to God’s mission in this church; and

WHEREAS, research has revealed some progress but also significant disparities for women, especially for women of color, in the areas of preparation for ministry including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women, especially women of color, access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, and develop strategies of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024; and
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women’s ordination has brought to our church.

Anticipated Memorial Implementation Analysis

Memorial Title: 50th anniversary of the ordination of women

Anticipated financial implications of memorial if adopted for:

Churchwide Organization

- None

Synods

- None

Congregations

- None

Anticipated staff or personnel implications of memorial if adopted for:

Churchwide Organization

- None

Synods

- None

Congregations

- None

Resolution B – On Gun Violence & Assault Weapons

The Reference & Resolutions committee updated the third Resolved to request that the ELCA Church Council “establish an ELCA task force” rather than “consideration of the request for establishing an ELCA task force”.

The updated resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION B – ON GUN VIOLENCE & ASSAULT WEAPONS

Whereas, the Pastoral Letter from the ELCA Conference of Bishops on March 4, 2013 begins: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more;”

Whereas, in that Pastoral Letter the bishops write: “In the Large Catechism, Luther says, ‘We must not kill, either by hand, heart, or word, by signs or gestures, or by aiding and abetting.’ Violence begins in the human heart. Words can harm or heal. To focus only on guns is to miss the depth of our vocation. Yet, guns and access are keys to the challenges we face;”

Whereas, mass shootings (3 or 4 people shot or killed at a time) occur in homes, communities, businesses, schools, and places of work and worship at the rate of more than one per day; police officials and studies emphasize the effectiveness of criminal background checks for all gun sales in significantly lowering gun violence frequency; background checks are not currently required for private gun sales; nearly 800,000 people are on the American Terrorist Watch List and over 2,000 have been allowed to purchase weapons; and the ELCA has since 1989 urged synods and congregations to address gun violence; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the North/West Lower Michigan Synod reaffirm that the ELCA social policy does not reject gun ownership or the recreational activities associated with guns as morally wrong, but at the same time reaffirm this church’s commitment to addressing the broad issues of violence in

society through worship, education, service, advocacy, and ongoing moral deliberation as called for in the 1994 social statement on “Community Violence” and the 2013 Conference of Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Violence; and be it futher

Resolved, that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod encourage bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate with members of Congress and state legislators this church’s long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales, and also communicate this church’s sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013; and be it further

Resolved, that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod request that the Church Council, in consultation with staff of the Churchwide organization, establish an ELCA task force to organize actions consistent with ELCA policy that addresses gun violence prevention as adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in August 2016.”

Submitted by,

The Publicly Engaged Church Table

SA18.05.18

To adopt Resolution B as modified by the Reference & Resolutions committee.

Bishop Satterlee informed the assembly that this change will result in a cost of approximately \$250,000 to the churchwide organization. With this information assembly members felt that keeping action within the synod as identified in the first two “Resolved” paragraphs was a better course of action at this time.

SA18.05.18A

To delete the third “Resolved”.

Yes – 152; No – 89

Adopted

Vote on modified Resolution B.

Yes – 186; No – 53

Adopted

Resolution B as updated by the Assembly action reads as follows:

RESOLUTION B – ON GUN VIOLENCE & ASSAULT WEAPONS

Whereas, the Pastoral Letter from the ELCA Conference of Bishops on March 4, 2013 begins: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more;”

Whereas, in that Pastoral Letter the bishops write: “In the Large Catechism, Luther says, ‘We must not kill, either by hand, heart, or word, by signs or gestures, or by aiding and abetting.’ Violence begins in the human heart. Words can harm or heal. To focus only on guns is to miss the depth of our vocation. Yet, guns and access are keys to the challenges we face;”

Whereas, mass shootings (3 or 4 people shot or killed at a time) occur in homes, communities, businesses, schools, and places of work and worship at the rate of more than one per day; police officials and studies emphasize the effectiveness of criminal background checks for all gun sales in significantly lowering gun violence frequency; background checks are not currently required for private gun sales; nearly 800,000 people are on the American Terrorist Watch List and over 2,000 have been allowed to purchase weapons; and the ELCA has since 1989 urged synods and congregations to address gun violence; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the North/West Lower Michigan Synod reaffirm that the ELCA social policy does not reject gun ownership or the recreational activities associated with guns as morally wrong, but at the same time reaffirm this church’s commitment to addressing the broad issues of violence in society through worship, education, service, advocacy, and ongoing moral deliberation as called for in the 1994 social statement on “Community Violence” and the 2013 Conference of Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Violence; and be it further

Resolved, that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod encourage bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate with members of Congress and state legislators this church’s long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales, and also communicate this church’s sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013.

Submitted by,

The Publicly Engaged Church Table

Resolution C – On Environmental Stewardship

The Reference & Resolutions committee updated the resolution to correct the grammar at the end of the resolution (replace “; and be it further” with a period). The resolution now reads:

RESOLUTION C – ON ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Whereas, human caused climate change and pollution present grave and urgent threats to God’s good creation and to the well being of humans and of our fellow creatures; and

Whereas, we are tasked by God to be faithful stewards of creation and to be loving neighbors to those impacted by the wounding of creation; and

Whereas, many people and organizations have joined to reduce the damage we humans are inflicting on the environment to lessen the impacts of climate change and pollution, therefore, be it

Resolved, that each congregation and baptized member of this Synod be encouraged to make a prayerful, informed assessment of how they are currently involved in the brokenness and the healing of the environment; and be it further

Resolved, that each congregation and baptized member be encouraged to identify and commit to specific steps that they will take to diminish their role in climate change and pollution and how they will participate in working towards effective ways to address both their causes and impacts.

Submitted by,

Environmental Stewardship Task Force; including
Kim Winchell, Linn Kracht, Ellen Schoepf, John Burow, Laurie Swanson, John Schleicher, and Erick Johnson

SA18.05.19

To adopt Resolution C as corrected by the Reference and Resolutions committee.

The Environmental Stewardship Task Force presented a proposed update to the Resolution.

SA18.05.19A

To add a third resolved submitted by the Environmental Stewardship Task Force that reads as follows:

“And be it further resolved that the Environmental Stewardship Task Force provides each congregation of the NWLM Synod with resources to assess its level of awareness of and response to the crisis of climate change. Congregations will be invited to submit a written response including additional steps they are considering. The ESTF will endeavor to offer appropriate encouragement and support to those wishing to take next steps.”

Adopted by Voice vote

SA18.05.19B

To remove the grammatical correction from the Reference & Resolutions committee.

Adopted by Voice vote.

Vote on modified Resolution C.

Yes – 220; No – 20

Resolution C as updated by the Assembly action reads as follows:

RESOLUTION C – ON ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Whereas, human caused climate change and pollution present grave and urgent threats to God's good creation and to the well being of humans and of our fellow creatures; and

Whereas, we are tasked by God to be faithful stewards of creation and to be loving neighbors to those impacted by the wounding of creation; and

Whereas, many people and organizations have joined to reduce the damage we humans are inflicting on the environment to lessen the impacts of climate change and pollution, therefore, be it

Resolved, that each congregation and baptized member of this Synod be encouraged to make a prayerful, informed assessment of how they are currently involved in the brokenness and the healing of the environment; and be it further

Resolved, that each congregation and baptized member be encouraged to identify and commit to specific steps that they will take to diminish their role in climate change and pollution and how they will participate in working towards effective ways to address both their causes and impacts; and be it further

Resolved, that the Environmental Stewardship Task Force provides each congregation of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod with resources to assess its level of awareness of and response to the crisis of climate change. Congregations will be invited to submit a written response including additional steps they are considering. The ESTF will endeavor to offer appropriate encouragement and support to those wishing to take next steps.

Submitted by,

Environmental Stewardship Task Force; including
Kim Winchell, Linn Kracht, Ellen Schoepf, John Burow, Laurie Swanson, John Schleicher, and Erick Johnson

Rev. Kamphuis acknowledged and thanked the members of the Reference & Resolutions committee for their work in reviewing and presenting the three resolutions. Members of the committee included: the Rev. Kristina Truhan, the Rev. Bill Uetrict, Ms. Linda Wicander, and Mr. Connor Ashley, Parliamentarian.

Greeting from Mission Partner

Bishop Satterlee introduced Dr. Kit Kleinhans, Dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University. Dr. Kleinhans brought greetings from the seminary and acknowledged that Trinity has placed an intern at First Lutheran in Muskegon. She asked the assembly to encourage potential seminarians to check out Trinity Seminary, to support the seminary both as a synod and individually, and to keep the seminary in our prayers. The church, world, and theological education are changing.

Mission Moment - Video

The video "South Sudan: A New Church for a New Century" was shown.

Announcements

Prior to recessing for the afternoon, Bishop Satterlee reminded the assembly that dinner will be served at 6:30 PM and will include recognitions of anniversaries and staff. The day will close with Evening Prayer led by pastors on the retired roster of the synod. He again introduced Pr. Sprang for additional announcements that included an update on the Flint Water Crisis – churches are providing water and if you wish to contribute send your contributions to either the Synod or to Salem Lutheran in Flint; a reminder of the Stewardship Retreats; and a request for the retired clergy to gather at the registration table.

Dinner

The Rev. Sarah Friesen-Carper led the assembly in the Doxology prior to tables being individually released for the buffet dinner.

Recognitions and Anniversaries

Ordination Anniversaries

- 5 Years** The Rev. Haley Vay Beaman
 The Rev. Jessica Hahn
 The Rev. Zachary Nelson
- 15 Years** The Rev. Joan Herbon
 The Rev. Scott Torko
- 25 Years** The Rev. Peggy J. Adams
 Deacon Virginia L. Wheeler
- 35 Years** The Rev. David M. Blank
 The Rev. Richard A Moe
- 50 Years** The Rev David Mann
- 55 Years** The Rev. Donald W. Herdman
 The Rev. Rodney E. Hill
 The Rev. Paul A Kehnle
 The Rev. Reinhold Markwart
 The Rev. Frederick G. Overdier

Congregation Anniversaries

- 50 Years** Peace Lutheran Church, Charlotte
- 75 Years** Trinity Lutheran Church, Midland
- 100 Years** Bethany Lutheran Church, Rockport

Lay Ministry Program Graduates

Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek announced that Charles Douglas Luther from Trinity Lutheran Church in Frankfort completed the program requirements during this year. She referred the assembly to her written report on page 73 of the Assembly book and thanked the congregations, professors, mentors and Board of Governors who guide the program.

Recognition of Deans

Grand Rapids Conference Pastor Julie Schneider Thomas

Bay Conference Pastor Emily Olsen

Capital Area Conference Pastor Gary Bunge

Kalamazoo Conference Pastor Kjersten Priddy

Stony Lake Conference Pastor Doug Ogden

Sunrise Conference Pastor Chrisy Bright

Traverse Conference Pastor Rosanne Anderson

Recognition of Synod Staff

Pastor Roseanne Anderson Interim Assistant to the Bishop

Margie Bauer Financial Administrator

Rebecca Bossenbroek Present role as Administrator of our Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry Program . Wednesday Rebecca begins as our financial administrator.

Dawn Brackmann Synod Attorney

Pastor Sarah Friesen-Carper Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational and Leadership Excellence

Sarah Holland Executive Assistant to the Bishop– *In absentia*

Cathy Satterlee Driver to the Bishop

Chelsey Satterlee Director of Communication

Pastor David Sprang Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission

Sue Sprang Synod Storyteller

Ann Stavros Office Manager and Staff Support

Pastor Chrysanne Timm Assistant to the Bishop for Synod Life

Presentation of Mission Support Check

A \$33,000 representative check was presented to Presiding Bishop Eaton to highlight the increase in mission support from the North/West Lower Michigan Synod in 2017.

Recognition of Pastor Sarah Friesen-Carper

Bishop Satterlee introduced Pastor Joan Oleson, a member of the Synod Council Executive Committee to thank Pastor Sarah Friesen-Carper on our behalf.

In Third John and we read, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 1:4).

Whether we name your children Micah and Stellan, first call pastors, congregations in transition, congregational leaders desiring to grow spiritually, or the youth of this synod, we thank you for the joy that you have taken and the joy that you have shown in walking with us in the truth.

Christopher Laughlin video

The Rev. Christopher Laughlin addressed the Assembly via video from Ft. Leonard Wood and thanked them for their support while he has been serving as Chaplain. The weekly shipment of cookies and the prayers were very much appreciated.

Recognition of Margie Bauer

Bishop Satterlee introduced Bishop Emeritus Gary Hansen to thank Margie Bauer. The author of Hebrews writes, "Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

Margie, more than being a faithful steward of our finances, especially in these last years you have been a faithful steward of our history. When circumstances have seemed new or uncertain, you have reminded us of God's faithfulness in the past and urged us to hold unwaveringly to the confession of our hope. We thank you for your faithfulness and witness that was always the spirit of your service.

Announcements

Bishop Satterlee reminded the Assembly that checkout at the Radisson is at 11:00 AM and voting members will need to checkout prior to the Closing Eucharist. The Assembly was invited to attend a Wine Tasting in the Governors Parlor on the 11th floor of the Radisson. Pr. Sprang did not have any additional announcements.

Evening Prayer

The day closed with Evening Prayer led by ministers on the retired roster of the synod. The service included the Laying on of Hands with individual blessing by several of the retired rostered leaders.

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

Plenary Session 3

Bishop Satterlee called this session to order at 8:30 AM and called on the Rev. David Sprang for any announcements that are pertinent for the assembly this morning. Rev. Sprang thanked the technology group for their work during the assembly, reminded communion assistants for the closing eucharist to meet with Pr. Ogden during the break, reminded those who brought posters to remove them before the closing service, and conveyed the thanks of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force for passing Resolution C – On Environmental Stewardship.

Credentials Committee Report – 8:30 AM Count

Bishop Satterlee called on Pr. Kjersten Priddy to update the Credentials committee report as of the 8:30 AM close of registration. Rev. Priddy announced that the count remains at 269 voting members and includes: Clergy – 103 (54 male and 49 female) – 38%, Lay – 166 (71 male and 95 female) – 62%. The quorum is set at 135 for transaction of business. There are 24 visitors.

**To receive the report of the Credentials committee.
Adopted by Voice vote**

Adoption of the 2019-2020 Budget

Bishop Satterlee again introduced Mr. Dan Carter for presentation of the 2019-20 fiscal year budget for action by the Assembly. He announced that the original budget as found in the Assembly book had an error in the amount shown on line 42 for the Worship Committee (\$55,000). The figure was corrected (\$2,500). Anyone who printed this early needs to update the figure in their printed copy.

SA18.05.21

To adopt the 2019-2020 budget as presented.

When asked about the implication of the new tax structure, Mr. Carter stated that the itemization for charitable contributions will go away for many but that he doesn't know how this will impact giving. He stated that we have a goal, current trends are stable, and we need to increase income to meet the program goals of the synod. There was a comment that stated the budget is unrealistic when looking at the actual from the previous fiscal year. A request to increase the contribution to Trinity Lutheran Seminary was brought to the assembly.

SA18.05.21A

To increase the allotment to Trinity Seminary in the 2019-20 budget to \$30,000.

Yes – 59; No – 161

Not Adopted

Vote on budget as presented.

Yes – 195; No – 28

Adopted

In view of the questions and concerns being raised Bishop Satterlee stated that we need to revisit how the budget is presented to the assembly next year.

Adoption of the 2019 Synod Compensation Guidelines

Bishop Satterlee introduced Vice President Schlesinger who again presented the 2019 Compensation Guidelines for discussion and approval by the Assembly. A summary of the comparison between the synods in this region is found on page 58 of her report or in the full document on the synod website. The Synod Council is recommending a 2% increase in the base salary for pastors and deacons within the synod. We compare favorably with the other synods in the region – neither at the bottom nor at the top until a pastor reaches 30 or more years of ministry (we are at the top across the region for pastors with 30+ years of service).

SA18.05.22

To adopt the North/West Lower Michigan Synod 2019 Compensation Guidelines as presented.

A question was asked regarding how we compare to other denominations and Vice President Schlesinger responded that this has not been analyzed. Our analyses have focused on other ELCA synods in our region.

Vote on original motion.

Yes – 221; No – 4

Adopted

Mission Moments - Videos

Videos presented included Presiding Bishop Eaton’s Leadership Initiative, Living Waters Ministries, and Disaster Response including Hurricane Sandy, Migrants and Refugees, and Earthquakes in Nepal. Lutherans come first and stay longest.

Announcements

Bishop Satterlee reminded voting members to return their voting devices and obtain their receipt to avoid being charged for the device. He also asked that badges be returned to Ann Stavros. The 2019 Synod Assembly will be held at the Comfort Inn & Suites in Mt. Pleasant, MI from Thursday, May 16, 2019 through Saturday, May 18, 2019. Thanks were expressed to University Lutheran Church for hosting the opening service, to Presiding Bishop Eaton for being with us, and to Avery Riggs and Katie Butler for providing childcare. He asked the assembly to join him in thanking Ann Stavros and Dr. Chrysanne Timm for their work in organizing the Assembly. The Closing Eucharist will be held at 10:30 AM since we are ahead of schedule.

Closing Worship

Following a short break, the assembly gathered for Closing Worship with Presiding Bishop Eaton presiding and Bishop Satterlee preaching. We need to trust enough in what Jesus would have us do to abandon the concept of Worth, Rank, and Power – these are not part of a coeternal and coequal Trinity.

Bishop Satterlee led the voting members in the “Litany for Closing of the Assembly” at the end of the worship service.

The Assembly closed at 11:40 AM.

Post Assembly Note:

Offering Update:

The total offering for the two worship services was \$9,270.93. The distribution of these funds will be \$4,635.46 for the ELCA – Always Being Made New (Disability Ministries) and \$4,635.47 for the North/West Lower Michigan Disaster Relief Fund.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine E. Allen
Secretary, North/West Lower Michigan Synod