



Conference of Bishops (COB) Overview
by Bishop David Zellmer
February 28 – March 7, 2017

Thursday, March 2

In the morning most of the regions met for candidate assignments to synods. Region 3 met at 10 am to 1:30 pm. In this Spring Assignment, there were 305 requests for first-call candidates across the church. Of the 146 candidates available, only 98 were available since the rest were restricted or administratively assigned. Region 3 needed 92 candidates. We received 19 candidates, but 2 of those were taken by restriction or administrative assignment, so only 17 were available. South Dakota Synod received 4 names.

In the afternoon the other committees of the COB met - Synodical and Rostered Leader Care, Academy, Bishop Formation, Roster, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, Global Mission Liaison, Theological and Ethical Concerns, Ministry Among People in Poverty, DM: New/Renewing Congregations, and DM: Leadership. Their reports will appear later.

We later enjoyed worship in the Lutheran Center Chapel which was a Joint Lutheran–Catholic Commemoration of the Reformation. The Service of the Word highlighted the Five Imperatives of the “From Conflict to Communion” document. Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as other ecumenical partners and guests, were present for the service. After worship we enjoyed dinner and conversation together.

Friday, March 3

After breakfast, we gathered for devotions led by Bishop Mark Holmerud who led us in Morning Prayer. There were periods of sustained silence for centering prayer in the service.

Bp. William Gafkjen, COB Chair, gave opening remarks and a welcome and set the stage for our work today.

Secretary Chris Boerger gave the Report of the Secretary. He updated the COB on proposed changes in the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Roster* that will be going to the April Church Council meeting. Significant changes include: 1) establishes that an average of 15 hours of work per week is required for a call to be issued; 2) establishes that those who are on the roster of retired ministers shall be reviewed every three years, with no action necessary if there are no recommended changes or possible removal from the retired roster with a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council if an individual is not using their retired status for the good of the church; 3) expands the provision for a pastor from a full communion partner serving a congregation of the ELCA to include voice and vote at a synod assembly if a Synod Council has established a process to do so; 4) provides that an exception to



the constitutional provision that requires “the initial call of a pastor be in a congregational setting for three years” will require Synod Council action based on the recommendation of the bishop and approved by the COB; 5) clarifies the starting date of a new call to be the day following the effective date of the termination of a previous call; 6) clarifies the issuing of term calls to synod interim pastors to note that if an interim pastor has not served in a congregation in twelve months, the call shall be terminated; and 7) removes the ability of a synod to request an extension of on-leave-from-call for a minister who meets the qualifications for retired status. The effective date of any changes would be upon adoption.

He reviewed the traditional reminder of the difference between Resolutions and Memorials as synod assemblies are approaching. Basically, any memorial that is passed by synod assemblies will not be acted upon until the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. If there is a need for more immediate action, a resolution from the Synod Council to the Church Council would be the appropriate action.

A proposed site and date for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly will go to the April Church Council meeting and be reported at that time. At this assembly elections will take place both for Presiding Bishop and Secretary.

An update on the Rostered Ministers Gathering was given by Rev. Kevin Strickland. Information can be found at <http://www.elca.org/en/Rostered-Ministers-Gathering/About> The event will be held on August 7-10, 2017, in Atlanta, Georgia at the Sheraton Downtown Atlanta. Early registration is March 1-May 31 at a cost of \$245 per person (includes meals, does not include lodging). Information on speakers, leaders, activities, etc. can be found at <http://www.elca.org/Rostered-Ministers-Gathering/FAQs> .

After a break, we heard a report on the ELCA Campaign by Pr. Ron Glusenkamp. The Campaign is at \$113.3 million, which is 57.3% (60% would be on par for the time period). The annual theme in 2017 is Global Church Sponsorship (International Women Leaders, Missionaries, and Young Adults for Global Mission). Packets were mailed to each congregation and synod office and they can be ordered from the e-store or downloaded. Thanks to all who have made contributions.

A conversation on Vocation, Leadership, and the Leadership Needs of the Church was presented by seminary leaders through LSTC President James Nieman. The challenge that seminaries face is the deepening difference between the supply and the need for rostered leaders. For example, M.Div. candidates in ELCA seminaries is 1/2 of what it was a decade below. Also, the average number of candidates available for first call assignment is about 1/3 of the need. Hence, we all have a need for lifting up leaders across this church. The COB will resume the conversation later.

After lunch and a time of siesta and renewal, we reconvened at 2 pm with a conversation on the Called Forward Together in Christ initiative. The focus of our conversation was two priorities: leadership and creating vital congregations. How can the churchwide organization best do this? How can synods best do this? Where do we best coordinate our efforts?



After a break we held a conversation on Motion F from the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. It calls for a joint consultation between the Conference of Bishops, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Domestic Mission unit, and the Church Council to address the call process in the ELCA. It will become a part of a broader conversation beyond the call process that addresses seminaries, identification of candidates, and the CFTinC initiative concerning leadership and supporting congregations.

We then resumed the conversation on Vocation, Leadership, and the Leadership Needs of the Church with more to follow later.

We then held a conversation with seminary leaders about the importance and format of annual Seminary Visits by Bishops. Most valuable practices discerned were the importance of shared learning and counsel, providing hopeful and exciting missional spots of service in this church, the opportunity to be immersed in the life of the school in various ways, and for these visits to become a venue for cross-fertilization between seminaries and synods.

Ideas for changes included focusing on a common theme for annual visits, developing a mission statement for these visits, consider guiding principles for the behavior of all involved, orient new seminary leaders to the life of the wider ELCA, and consider other models to explore, e.g. bishop in residence, study, etc.

Before dinner there was a time for Bishops' Announcements for the whole group and then Bishops' Concerns, which are shared among the COB only. After dinner, we gathered for 'Farewell and Godspeed' for those leaving the Office of Bishop – Tom Skrenes from the Northern Great Lakes Synod (18 Years), Jim Mauney of the Virginia Synod (18 Years), Martin Wells of the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod (18 Years), and Steve Talmage of the Grand Canyon Synod (11 years).

Saturday, March 4

Morning devotions were led by Bishop Andy Taylor using a Dwelling on the Word process on Luke 10: 1-11.

We heard the Report of the Presiding Bishop by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. 1) She emphasized components of the 500th Commemoration of the Reformation and the importance of joint celebrations with Roman Catholics across this church. Churchwide is planning an October 31st event in Washington, DC, at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation which will be livestreamed. 2) Future Directions conversations have been helpful in lifting up leadership and supporting congregations as the two major foci to begin work in this initiative. 3) We are working on a policy statement concerning interreligious relationships that may be ready to present in the Fall. She then opened the floor to questions and conversation among the COB.

The Report of the Executive for Synodical Relations from Pr. Walter May was presented. He will be taking a sabbatical from June 25-September 25 to do research on diversity in the ELCA.



There will be six bishop elections in 2017, with the assurance of three new bishops. After that, only two bishops have been elected before 2001 – Steve Ullestad and Ray Tiemann.

Several gatherings were/will be held this year. Bishop Assistants gathered in February. Administrative Assistants will gather in August. Vice-presidents will gather this year with the fall COB meeting. Future funding for these events is in jeopardy.

We also heard about the ministry of federal chaplains and its director, Pr. Eric Wester. There are two strategic efforts currently underway: 1) Attract the next generation of chaplains, and 2) Strengthen connections between chaplaincy ministries and congregations, synods, ELCA churchwide colleagues, institutions and agencies of the ELCA. The Centurion Connection is a person in a synod who promotes federal chaplaincy and helps provide to military personnel the Prayer Book for the Armed Services, which is in its 7th printing. For information, go to <http://elcachaps.com>

We currently provide 189 pastors and seminary students as chaplains and chaplain candidates in the:

- Department of Defense 160 chaplains and chaplain candidates
- Department of Veterans Affairs 27 chaplains
- Department of Justice 2 chaplains

In 2013, the Presiding Bishop, Executive for Mission Advancement, and the Federal Chaplaincies established the ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Scholarship Fund for Leaders Endowment. Two partial scholarships were presented in 2016. As of January 31st, the Endowment had grown to \$104,886.01. The goal is to raise \$1,000,000.

Congregations are again encouraged to support military personnel and their families on the Sunday closest to Veterans Day. Resources can be found at http://elcachaps.com/resources/veterans-day-2015/?doing_wp_cron=1488643209.5755090713500976562500

After a morning break, we received a Report of the Director for Mission Support by Victoria Flood which was followed by the Report of the Treasurer by Pr. Linda Norman.

Income from congregations through synods in the form of Mission Support income for the twelve months was \$45.2 million, favorable to the budget by \$0.2 million and unfavorable to the prior year results by \$2.0 million. The Mission Support budget for 2016 of \$45 million is \$2.1 million or 4.5% lower than the amount received in fiscal 2015.

The churchwide organization had a total operating revenue and support of \$69.0 million for the twelve-month period ending January 31, 2017, \$2.7 million higher than expenses of \$66.3 million. Mission Support makes up 65.5% of the total operating revenue.

The Mission Investment Fund provided grant support of \$1.5 million to the churchwide organization in support of new congregations. Additionally, other income of \$5.5 million was received during the period.

ELCA World Hunger was the 2016 ministry emphasis for The Campaign for the ELCA. Total contributions to ELCA World Hunger for the twelve months were \$21.9 million, \$1.1 million favorable to the prior year.

Lutheran Disaster Response received \$6.5 million, primarily in support of the response to U.S. Floods, Middle East - Europe Refugee Crisis, and for general undesignated programs.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA has raised \$113.4 million in



revenue and commitments in our five-year, comprehensive campaign. This amount represents 57.3% of the total goal of \$198 million by January 31, 2019.

Judith Roberts gave a report on Ethnic-Specific, Multicultural Ministries & Racial Justice Team. There are strategies for each of the diverse groups within the ELCA.

She particularly lifted up the resource, “One Body, Many Members.” It is a faith-based journey of discovery to learn, share, and proclaim God’s intention of oneness among people of every racial, ethnic, and class background. It can help groups practice skills needed to know how to speak the language of welcome and show actions of caring.

Resource are available at
<http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Racial-Justice-Ministries>

After lunch and an extended break, we reconvened by exploring challenges in understanding and addressing multicultural diversity as an important part of our Gospel witness, led by ELCA staff Judith Roberts and Kenneth Inskeep. In table groups, we looked at three questions: What are your synod goals for implementing a multicultural strategy? What obstacles does your synod face in achieving these goals? What resources does your synod need to overcome these obstacles?

Bishop Jessica Crist led us in a conversation from the Theological Education Advisory Committee concerning Synod Seminary Support. It was good conversation with information to be shared with them.

After dinner together and conversation, we had an evening free.

Sunday, March 5

A service of Holy Communion brought the COB together this morning with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, preaching, and Bishop Bill Gafkjen, presiding. The offering was for Zambia to build schools and train evangelists, totaling \$2,785.

After a short break, we heard the Report of the Vice President by Bill Horne. He discussed decisions from the November 2016 Church Council meeting and its approval of Called Forward Together in Christ, the ELCA Strategic Directions 2025 Statement. The implementation of the strategic directions will be the focus for the Church Council retreat in April. In addition, he shared highlights of his participation on the ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force and observations during his participation in the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Day activities sponsored by the Delaware-Maryland Synod Chapter of the African Descent Lutheran Association, Coalition of Lutherans Advancing in Mission (CLAIM), Racial Justice Ministry Team, and the African Descent Strategy Implementation Team in Baltimore.

We then received an update on the five synod mission support pilots by Bp. Brian Maas and Bp. James Dunlop. This experiment continues to provide mission support for churchwide



ministries but withholds the amount of funds that provide compensation for the DEM and grants that support mission starts/renewals in the synod. It was based on five assumptions, that this process would be accountable, be responsive, be efficient, be connected, and be generative of new funds. Over the last two years of the three year experiment, the results so far have been mixed.

Bp. Patricia Lull gave a Report on Assignment Consultation Task Force. The goal is to move pastors more quickly and smoothly into first call. Documents will be sent on the Bishop's listserve to follow up.

The two Church Council members who were our guests shared reflections on their time with us. One thanked the COB for being a generative assembly, how we modeled respectful conversation in plenary and in the hallway, and took enough time for self-care as well as important business. The other compared the tension between the realities we face and the hopefulness that stands before us. Both appreciated being with the COB, and we appreciated having them present and participating.

We had the afternoon and evening free.

Monday, March 6

Morning Prayer was led by Bishop Jim Gonia on temptation.

We then heard Committee Reports:

Academy, by Bp. Larry Wohlrabe. He reviewed the 2017 Academy in Charleston. The Academy in 2018 will be January 3-8, 2018 at the Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel in Vancouver, BC. Our theme will be: "First Nations Peoples: Spirituality, Theology, Reconciliation." We'll be hearing from our presenters on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings: Prairie Rose Seminole (ELCA Program Director for American Indian Alaska Native Ministries) will lead off on Thursday, January 4, focusing on spirituality and cultural awareness. The Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg (longtime professor at Augustana University of Sioux Falls SD) will address theological issues in the interface of Christianity and Native people on Friday, January 5. Bishop Mark MacDonald (National Indigenous Bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada) will address the topic of reconciliation among Native people and European-Americans, on Saturday, January 6. On Sunday we'll worship in Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or Anglican churches of Vancouver in the morning, be free for lunch and the early afternoon, and have a late-afternoon symposium on our theme involving our own colleagues who are most engaged with First Nations issues, followed by a reception/closing dinner and concluding with a final worship service. This will allow us to have Monday, January 8 strictly as a travel day, to accommodate those traveling to the East Coast as they deal with the time zone changes that will involve.



Bishop Formation was reported by Bp. Kurt Kusserow. This committee works with the orientation process for new bishops. He reviewed items to keep in mind as we enter a new election season.

Roster, by Bp. Mary Froiland was next. We looked at the report of rostered ministers to approve extensions of OLF status, non-stipendiary calls, and three-year waiver requests.

Theological and Ethical Concerns, by Bp. Jon Anderson. They heard a comprehensive report on the Rostered Ministers Gathering to be held in Atlanta in August. It was also reported that the Church Council approved the development of a social message on human rights. Also, work will be done to develop a statement or message on the relationship between science and religion. Finally, it is hoped that there will be a plenary session at one of the COB meetings to review the draft of the Social Statement on Women and Justice.

Ministry Among People in Poverty, by Bp. Wayne Miller. Items covered included: there will be a new 2-year cycle of domestic hunger grants; and update on ELCA World Hunger fell a bit short of our ambitious \$25M goal (\$21.9M); a large block of time was given to discussing the work of the AMMPARRO initiative with migrant children from Mexico and Central America; and a reminder about the upcoming Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC. The anticipated shifts in policy are expected to have a major impact on virtually all of our policy positions including, health care, education, immigration, safety net programs for the poor, and the environment.

Synodical and Rostered Leader Care, by Bp. John Roth. They tend to the Good Samaritan Fund and the Shared Risk Fund. There has been no activity in the Shared Risk Fund and in the fiscal year 2016, the Good Samaritan Fund assisted 14 rostered leaders or families.

DM: Leadership, by Bp. Brian Maas. They reviewed the update on the Roster Manual and heard reports on the network of ELCA Colleges and Universities, concerning updates in Candidacy, a report from the Entrance Rite Discernment Group for the Word and Service roster, and a report on the Assignment Consultation.

After a break we looked at three resolutions that became part of the COB's actions.

Resolution to Reorient the Visits of Bishops to Seminaries

Seminaries of the church and synods (or districts, mission fields or denominations before them) represent one of the highest forms of churchly mutuality and supportive interdependence among Lutheran institutions and structures in the North American context. Both are deeply engaged in the work of building up the Body of Christ and guaranteeing that there are well prepared, theologically formed pastors and other leaders for the church. The following resolution comes out of this long and constructive history.

WHEREAS there have been dramatic changes in the calendar of study and even the geographic location for seminary education in the ELCA, including the rise in the number of distributive learning students and curricular programs like the 2x2 model;

AND WHEREAS the rhythms of assigning candidates to synods for first call continues to evolve from a pattern of large numbers in spring, more modest numbers in fall and the past practice of winter and summer assignments;

AND WHEREAS the office of the synodical bishop includes a mandate for overseeing



teaching within the synod and a commitment to the vitality of theological education across the ELCA;

AND WHEREAS the seminaries of the ELCA have issued a generous invitation for bishops to be present on campus for a variety of purposes;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that new models for engaging seminary seniors prior to assignment be developed. This project could be undertaken by a small group of bishops and the staff of Leadership and Vocation, and need not include site visits to the seminaries but could include use of teleconferencing and other virtual communication formats to draw senior seminarians and synodical bishops into annual conversations;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a new pattern be developed for the visits of bishops to seminary communities, allowing all synod bishops to be present at a number of ELCA seminaries over a several year period and at times that best serve the mutual exploration of the mission of the church, the gifts and work of seminaries, the promotion of vocation for all Christians and the vitality of congregations in every regions of the ELCA. The actual details of such a pattern of rotating visits are to be crafted by a small group of bishops and seminary leaders with assistance from the office of synodical relations and implemented in 2018.

Resolution Calling this Church to Prayer for Rostered Ministry

As the Conference of Bishops, we call our worshiping communities to pray for raising up leaders for this church. We ask that the petitions of every worship service include a plea that new lay leaders, deacons and pastors be identified, invited, encouraged, and supported in responding to God's call to ministry.

Resolution for Sustained Engagement with our Seminaries

For the next two years as part of our work in living deeper into our strategic directions we will intentionally plan and structure time with the seminary presidents to talk about the formation of “Church leaders” in our life together.

Seminary presidents will be invited to be with us for our spring and fall meeting for formal and informal conversations to more effectively serve together to “support the proclamation of Jesus Christ in the coming years.”

We will focus on ways we can work together to invite people into the vocation of church leadership and better equip people called to serve in our mission fields today and in the future.

We will develop ways to recruit and create a “culture of call” in our church body and in its synods. This includes making visible to the whole Conference of Bishops data on how we are doing at each of our seminaries. Learning more about people attending other seminaries as part of their formation outside our denominational seminaries would also be helpful.

We will explore global models of catechists and evangelists as possible ways to supplement the work of rostered ministers as a way to better serve this church’s mission. This also connects to the formation work of our Synodically Authorized Ministers and sorting out whether seminaries might be a part of that formation work if helpful.



We will find ways to share encouraging stories highlighting 'bright spots' and 'best practices' in this shared work by synods and seminaries.

We will bring all the Conference of Bishops into the financial challenges of our seminary system by sharing together our investments more openly and also sharing the information found in the comparative audit of our seminaries. To lead well, the Conference needs to better understand how financial energy is flowing in our systems.

§ 8.21.07. The seminaries shall receive churchwide and synodical financial support. The amount of such support shall be determined through a consultation process involving seminaries, synods, and the appropriate churchwide unit. To implement financial support by this church, synods shall be assigned to specific seminaries in such manner as to attain equitable distribution of synods. Normally, all synods in a given region will be assigned to one seminary. Churchwide funds shall be distributed according to a formula developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and approved by the Church Council. Seminaries shall provide for their remaining financial requirements through tuition, fees, endowment income, and fundraising programs. Fundraising in the congregations of supporting synods, however, shall be conducted only upon approval of the synods.

We affirm the bishop's seminary visits as an integral and intentional part of holistic relationship building. If our focus has been primarily on interactions with students, we imagine more intentional interactions with faculty in our role as theologians and teachers. Intentional conversations with administration also would deepen the value of these visits and our awareness of opportunities and challenges in the life of our seminaries.

We will ask our existing committee system when possible to engage some of this work and create task groups as needed by the Executive Committee of the COB.

The COB looked at the revised Relational Agreement which was presented by Bp. Michael Burk and was approved.

We then revisited Committee Reports:

DM: New/Renewing Congregations, by Bp. Mark Narum. Reports were heard about 1) the National Youth Gathering on June 27-July 1, 2018, in Houston; 2) work on a synodical Comprehensive Mission Support Strategy; and 3) a review and redesign of the Congregational Renewal Programs.

Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, by Don Kreiss. We heard updated reports on Lutheran-Catholic relationships as related to the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation; Lutheran-Orthodox conversations; Lutheran-Muslim relations; the Inter-Religious Task Force; the Historic Black Church relationship; the 20th Anniversary of the Formula of Agreement with the PCUSA, the RCA, and the UCC; and a Churches Uniting in Christ event coming up in Dallas on June 4.



Global Mission Liaison, by Bp. Jim Gonia. We read about ministries that Global Mission connects to around the world, about Young Adults in Global Mission (91 this year), AMMPARO program, Companion Synod relationships, Mission Formation, and Diakonia.

Synodical-Churchwide Relations by, Bp. Suzanne Dillahunt. We heard about 1) Mission Support Strategy and Consultations, with staff visiting 22 synod/bishop visits and 18 synodical or churchwide events; 2) ELCA Foundation, with 20 regional gift planners and currently \$60.9M in Charitable Gift Annuities, \$70.5M in Charitable Trusts, and \$633M in the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust; and 3) Walter May reported on several gatherings this year - Bishop Assistants gathered in February, Administrative assistants will in August, and Vice-presidents will gather this year with the fall COB meeting.

During lunch, the various Ready Benches met separately - Middle East, Immigration, International, Domestic, Care of Creation, and Justice is not Just Us. In the afternoon there will be a conversation on the Role and Function of Ready Benches.

Jeff Thiemann gave a report on Portico Benefit Services. He shared information on the Portico Care Coordinators who help find providers, manage a health condition, and resolve medical and pharmacy issues. One in three households has used Care Coordinators since they began January 2017. Portico is also developing a Flexible Benefits Program for Lay Members and will use 10 congregations in a pilot program. Finally, there is a new Retirement Planning Tool with Portico staff which provides online retirement planning and financial planning. Early reviews have been very positive.

The COB had a brief executive session on current legal matters by Tom Cunniff, Office of the Secretary.

The COB had a beginning conversation concerning the situation at Standing Rock and addressed the broader question, "How do we live and work together around global issues experienced in local settings?"

After the break we had a 2018 Youth Gathering update. You can find more details at www.elca.org/YouthGathering.

We then heard from Linda Hartke of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. She shared LIRS' response to the updated Executive Order on refugee resettlement and immigration enforcement which was signed by President Trump today. She also updated us on a variety of refugee and immigration issues.

After Bishop's announcements and Bishop's Concerns, we enjoyed Regional Dinners.



Tuesday, March 7

Morning Prayer was led by Bishop Steve Talmage.

We received an update on AMMPARO and had a discussion of immigration concerns led by Mary Campbell and Bp. Abraham Allende. At the 2016 Churchwide Assembly the AMMPARO strategy to accompany migrant minors with protection, advocacy, representation and opportunities was approved.

In response to this action the churchwide office has developed a communication strategy that will help ELCA members learn about the strategy and find ways to participate. Support was renewed for those advocate programs in Honduras and El Salvador that address root causes of migration and assistance to those deported and a new program was opened in with a companion in Guatemala. Staff was put in place to implement the program and staff has connected with many synods, congregations, and members looking for ways to engage with AMMPARO. Since the assembly, the first Welcoming Congregations have been established in four synods and new congregations added in several more. Other congregations have expressed an interest in becoming Welcoming Congregations and are in the process. The expansion of the Guardian Angel program is being considered for development in those places where the program can be implemented, and there is a need for accompaniment of children in court.

AMMPARO is developing an advocacy strategy both in the U.S. and in the Northern Triangle of Central America and Mexico. The hope is to complete a plan that overlaps the ELCA's outreach with key decision-makers to be able to better impact legislation that might affect children and families in the U.S. and abroad.

In the first quarter of 2017 there was 25,694 unaccompanied children recorded entering the U.S. They are organizing constituency with synods (11) and congregations (42), the ELCA Lawyers Network, at synod assemblies, and the WELCA Triennial Gathering. You can see more at www.elca.org/ammparo or at their Facebook page at [Facebook.com/ELCAammparo](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAammparo).

Bp. William Gafkjen, the chair of the COB, spent some time debriefing the meeting. We gathered for prayers for those three bishops who will be open for reelection – Don Kreiss, John Roth, and Michael Girlinghouse.

Prayers for safe travel as bishops make their ways home.