

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America South Dakota Synod Assembly

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Sioux Falls, SD
June 3 and 4, 2022

The thirty-four annual Assembly of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA, was held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD on June 3 and 4, 2022, with the theme *imagine*.

On Friday, June 3, 2022, at 9:15 am Central Daylight Time (CDT), the opening service was held in the sanctuary of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD. The Rev. Constanze Hagmaier, bishop of the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA, delivered the sermon.

PLENARY SESSION ONE

Friday, June 3, 2022
10:50 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Welcome and Order for Opening of the Synod Assembly

Bishop Hagmaier called the assembly to order at the close of worship and thanked everyone for "showing up" to the assembly.

Greetings and Introductions

Bishop Hagmaier made the following introductions: the Rev. Keith Fry, Executive for Administration in the ELCA Office of the Secretary, Peggy Hahn, Executive Director for LEAD as the keynote speaker; assembly chaplains, the Rev. Kari Sansgaard, chaplain at Avera Dougherty Hospice Care in Sioux Falls; Synod Officers, Dennis Thompson, Vice-president; the Rev. Jonathan Vehar, Secretary; Terry Johnson, Treasurer; and Scott Parsley, Parliamentarian.

Credentials Report

Mara Stillson presented the report of the Credentials Committee. As of 10:40 am, there were 105 rostered ministers, 139 lay female voting members for a total of 321 voting members. Of that number, 2 are youth and 3 are BIPOC.

Consideration of the Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

Bishop Hagmaier declared a quorum present and directed voting members to the Synod Rules of Procedure distributed through the Guidebook.

MSC to adopt the Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for the 2022 Synod Assembly.

SA.22.01

Kari Ostrem, after being recognized, moved “at next year’s assembly to use smart phone or another form of voting besides the voting devices we were given this year.”

The motion was ruled out of order by the chair.

Consideration of the Order of Business

Bishop Hagmaier directed voting members to the agenda. She noted that from time to time, she might ask for allowance on the agenda to best facilitate the work of the assembly.

MSC to adopt the agenda.

SA.22.02

The assembly practiced with the voting platform that will be in use throughout the assembly.

Ministry Partner Greetings

Kathy McHenry of Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota offered a word of thanks for the work we are able to do together in inspiring generosity. McHenry asked the assembly to consider the stories of when they first experienced generosity.

The Rev. Ann Rosendale, Campus Pastor at Augustana University, brought a greeting on behalf of the university. 2022-23 will see the largest incoming freshman class in the university’s history. As a part of a 10-year strategic plan, efforts are underway to build a new residence hall and an iceplex to host the new Augie hockey team. A capital campaign is also underway to renovate the Chapel of the Resurrection. Renovations will begin once the \$4,000,000 needed is raised. Pastor Ann shared about the annual Sophomore retreat where students explore vocation, understanding that our vocation is where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need. This question underlines the educational values of the university. Pastor Ann thanks the assembly for all our work together in higher education today.

Ecumenical Greetings

Bishop Jonathan Folts of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota brought a greeting on behalf of the Episcopal congregations in South Dakota. He thanked the synod for our partnership which allowed for two ELCA pastors to serve ecumenically in Episcopal congregations. In addition, we are able to work in important work on the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center and the new ministry of the McLaughlin Community Alliance Group.

Churchwide Report

Bishop Hagmaier invited Pastor Keith Fry to deliver the State of the ELCA address. The report began with a video greeting from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, giving thanks for the

witness of the church in an ever-changing world. She outlined the ELCA's goal of reaching 1,000,000 new, young, and diverse people in order to share the love of God with a new generation. Pastor Fry thanked the synod for the \$812,120 in Mission Support given in 2021. The Churchwide Organization received \$40,739,221 in Mission Support from synods, with 41% supporting is used for domestic ministries, 21% for ministry globally, and 37% for the development of leaders in the church.

Members of the South Dakota Synod supported ELCA World Hunger at \$328,357 in 2021, with \$23,000,000 distributed for hunger and poverty relief. ELCA ministries have been active in responding to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict in Ukraine.

Four congregations, Brandon Lutheran in Brandon, Peace Lutheran in Sioux Falls, Good Shepherd in Aberdeen, and South Canyon in Rapid City, are participants in the Congregations Lead Initiative, one of the first phases of the ELCA's goal to reach one million new, young, diverse people. Four seminary students have been selected to receive Fund for Leaders scholarships, Rhonda Hansen, Hans Lundquist, Tami Steffensen, and Sawyer Vanden Heuvel.

We also support the work of missionaries in our Companion Synods in Cameroon and Nicaragua through Pr. Elisabeth Johnson, Anne and Willie Langdji, Pr. Michael Busbey and Hellen Rios Carrillo, The Rev. Dr. Soliette Lopez-Ortega, and Pr. Kyle and Anna Svennungsen.

Other thanks to Kathy McHenry and Lutheran Planned Giving, Director of Evangelical Mission Pastor Jonathan Steiner, and the whole synod staff. Fry thanked Bishop Hagmaier for her partnership and the many ways she has served in the wider church.

He also shared the new worship resource, All Creation Sings, and the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. A Rostered Ministers Gathering will take place July 17-20, 2023, in Phoenix, AZ. The 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering will be in New Orleans.

One final word of thanks was offered for the imagination of the South Dakota Synod.

Glocal Musicians shared in music.

Announcements

Several conferences will need to caucus before lunch if there are still vacancies on the ballot. Resolutions and nomination deadlines are at noon.

Meals will be served up and downstairs.

Greetings and a welcome from Our Savior's Lutheran was brought by the Rev. Tim Lemme.

Lunch Break and Conference Caucuses

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Friday, June 3, 2022

1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Bishop Hagmaier called the assembly back to order. She then introduced the Associates to the Bishop, the Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, who manages candidacy and mobility, and the Rev. Jonathan Steiner, Director of Evangelical Mission and stewardship.

State of the Synod

Bishop Hagmaier gave the State of the Synod address, noting how thankful she was to be gathered in person for this assembly. The Bishop was joined by the North Split Rock Evangelical Norwegian Lutheran Basement Church Women to share about what has been happening in the synod.

As Bishop Hagmaier travels across the synod, she notes that the question still gets asked regularly, “how are we going to survive?” It’s a question that was asked at the beginning of the Bishop’s term and amplified after the pandemic. Even in the midst of challenges, the Holy Spirit is alive throughout the synod. Spirit of Hope Lutheran in Scotland and McLaughlin Community Alliance Group are two new ministries that are growing out of the places where there has been a struggle.

The synod is also showing up in rural ministries in transition. Pastor Alan Blankenfeld is now serving as the Rural Ministry Liaison and visits congregations in a transition for several weeks at a time. He helps to offer pastoral care and identifies leaders. Pastor Alan will be leading an Imagination Station later in the assembly.

Also leading an Imagination Station will be Pastor Matt Spoden, who will talk about technology in the congregation.

Bishop Hagmaier is delighted to share that for the first time in the history of the program, the Rural Immersion course at Wartburg Seminary will be hosted in South Dakota. The Bishop is also conveying a rural ministry task force from the Conference of Bishops to help tell the stories of rural ministry across the church.

Associate Reports

The Rev. Renee Splichal Larson

Pastor Splichal Larson noted that the church and world are still affected by many factors, such as a pandemic, wars, and racial tension. Data from the ELCA Research and Evaluation from 2016, estimated that by 2019, 20% of full-time calls would be in parish arrangements. While updated information isn't yet available, this trend is being seen in South Dakota. The changing landscape of church life gives both moments for lament and the opportunity to respond to the Holy Spirit. The synod staff keeps looking for ways to accompany and walk with the congregations of this synod.

Pastor Splichal Larson took delight in sharing a few important numbers from the last year. In 2021, there were 38 ministry site studies and 38 Letters of Call issued. Another 15 have been completed so far in 2022. Nine first-call candidates in 2021 and three so far in 2022. Last year there was over \$55,000 given in seminary debt reductions, with another \$135,000 in seminary scholarships. The Synod staff has visited over 150 congregations.

The word synod means "walking together," and thanks is given to God for all the ways we are able to walk together as synod.

Partner Greeting

A video greeting was given by Portico Benefit Services, the health, wellness, and financial retirement services for the ELCA.

The Rev. Jonathan Steiner

Pastor Steiner serves in the South Dakota Synod as an Associate to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission, a position of the churchwide organization. Pastor Steiner lifted up the supported ministries of the synod through the Neighbors in Solidarity. These ministry partners are located throughout the synod: Woyatan Lutheran Church, Rapid City; Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center, Pine Ridge; Pueblo de Dios, First Lutheran African Ministry, and Church on the Street, Sioux Falls; LuMin with campus ministries at Black Hills State University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Northern State University, South Dakota State University, and the University of South Dakota; McLaughlin Community Alliance Group, McLaughlin; Spirit of Hope, Scotland; Companion Synods in Nicaragua & Cameroon; and St. Dymas Prison Ministries. The different Neighbor in Solidarity ministries will be introduced throughout the assembly. He issued a challenge not just to support these ministries financially but in forming relationships.

A resource to aid congregations in understanding their neighborhood is FaithX, which offers demographic reports examining over two hundred data points. Congregations can schedule a consultation and, because of the partnership with the synod, receive in-depth reports for 1/10 of the cost if they accessed the same information independently.

Pastor Steiner serves the synod in stewardship education.

Finally, Pastor Steiner thanked the synod and churchwide organization for the opportunity of Paternity Leave, calling it a tremendous gift that allowed him to grow into his vocation as husband and father.

Credentials Report

Mr. Malcom Chapman presented the report of the Credentials Committee: 108 clergy, 143 lay females, and 77 lay males, for a total of 220 lay voting members and 328 voting members.

Introduction of Resolutions

The Rev. Siri Sorensen presented Resolution #1: Elect South Dakota Synod Council Members. The resolutions comes with a Do Pass recommendation from the Resolutions Committee.

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod, ELCA elect the following conference nominees to the South Dakota Synod Council for a term of four years:

Medary Conference (Lay)

Marlee Braun, Brookings

Crossroads Conference (Rostered)

Deacon Christie Meier, Tea

Southeastern Conference (Lay)

Jake Hoffner, Yankton

Prairie Rivers Conference (Rostered)

Reverend Becky Senner, Bridgewater

Bear Butte Conference (Lay)

Emily Hiatt, Custer

MSC

SA.22.03

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Terry Johnson, Treasurer of the Synod Dakota Synod, presented the Treasurer's Report. The synod's financial position is strong. The synod achieved the revised 2021 budget as modified by the Synod Council.

The Endowment Fund performed well. With a total value of just over \$10,000,000, an annual distribution helps to fund many ministries across the synod. Most of the Endowment sits in restrictive funds that are designated to specific ministries.

Of the Mission Support from congregations, 70 cents of every dollar went to international, national, state, and local ministries, 25 cents for staff wages and benefits, 5 cents for insurance, utilities, supplies, and office expenses, and less than 1 cent for council and committee administration.

The 2022 Mission Plan was revised by the Synod Council to:

Lower forecasted Mission Support by 2%,
staff wages and benefits up 3%,

and lowered Mission Support to the Churchwide Organization from 45% to 43%. It is the hope that the support levels to the Churchwide Organization can be restored.

The 2023 Mission Plan will be presented on Saturday.

Adoption of the General Ballot

Bishop Hagmaier presented the General Ballot. For each of the open positions, there was only one nomination. Bishop Hagmaier requested a unanimous ballot, which was adopted 297-0.

Report of the Resolutions Committee

The Rev. Siri Sorenson presented Resolution 3b to the assembly. Resolution 3b was written by the committee as a substitute to Resolution 3a from the Northern Plains Conference. The revision was done in collaboration with the author of the original. Resolution 3b comes with a do-pass recommendation and does not require a second.

Resolution #3b

Memorial for the Review of the Roster Manual

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to review the “Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

RESOLVED, that the review process to include, but not limited to: the time limits given for On-leave-from-Call, steps for requesting a roster status, and a process by which an action or lack of recommendation from a bishop may be appealed, including the possibility of an appeal in a synod other than the synod from which they were removed from the roster.

RESOLVED, that the review considers questions of specialized ministry such as interim/transition ministry, campus ministry, outdoor ministry, college and seminary professors, chaplains, innovative ministry, and others where practices are not uniform across the ELCA.

RESOLVED, that the review process include a diverse group representing both the roster of word and sacrament and the roster of word and service, those in specialized ministry, and on-leave-from-call for family, study, disability, and between calls.

RESOLVED, that 2022 Churchwide Assembly urge bishops and synod councils to use sparingly any action by which a minister is removed from the roster for non-disciplinary reasons, unless the minister requests removal, until this review is complete.

RESOLVED, that the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization prepare a report and recommendations for consideration by the Fall 2024 meeting of the Church Council.

MSC

Y - 257

N – 48

SA.22.04

Mission Investment Fund

The assembly received a video greeting from the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA highlighting ways in which congregations are responding to the needs of their community, and how the MIF walks along them with loan interest loans.

Bishop Hagmaier announced the morning offering totaled \$3,744.00.

Recess

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Friday, June 3
3:30 p.m.-4:20 p.m.

Compensation Guidelines Task Force

Bishop Hagmaier invited Annelies Seffrood and the Rev. Justin Kosec from the Compensation Guidelines Task Force to present. The Support to Ministry Committee revised the process for developing the Compensation Guidelines by forming a Task Force that would serve multiple years. Previously, this responsibility rotated through each of the seven conferences without carryover from year to year. While the Task Force plans to tackle larger questions in the guidelines in coming years, for this initial year of service, they are recommending a 4.5% increase for rostered leaders and a 6.4% increase for lay staff. Since 2017-2021, there has been no increase other than the step increase for experience.

Digital Ministry Task Force

The Rev. Matt Spoden, chair of the Digital Ministry Task Force, updated the assembly about the work of the group. The purpose arose out of the pandemic while many congregations sought ways to use technology to enhance their ministry. The Task Force views technology as a gift to grow in relationships, but not as a replacement for in-person gatherings and worship. The Task Force is available to help congregations explore the use of technology and would love to hear the questions and needs of the congregations so they can focus their efforts.

Companion Synod Committee

The Rev. Dr. Aaron Matson serves as the Companion Synod Coordinator, helping to nurture the partnership between the synod and our partner churches in Cameroon and Nicaragua. Video greetings were shared from the Rev. Dr. Soliete Lopez, missionary to the Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope, Nicaragua and Bishop Baiguele Jean, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church of Cameroon. Pastor Matson was recently able to visit Nicaragua, and the community is eager to have more visitors soon. Please continue to support these communities in prayer and financial gifts.

Rural Ministry Liasion

The Rev. Alan Blankenfeld is the new Rural Ministry Liasion, a new position in the synod. His role is to become a part of a community that is in transition in pastoral leadership. He has baptized, offered first communion, and walked with families experiencing tragedy. While immersed in these communities, he also looks to identify lay leaders who can be supported in their ministry to the congregation and community.

Disaster Response

The synod has been very responsive to disaster response with the storms that impacted many communities in the spring. The Executive Committee approved \$25,000 in micro-grants, and another \$10,000 was given from ELCA Disaster Response. These funds are available to help support congregations in responding to their neighbor's needs.

Imagination Labs

Bishop Hagmaier explained the "Imagination Labs" available in the afternoon. Labs included: SD Coaching Network, Congregation LEAD Initiative, Re-Imagine Rural Ministry, SD Synod Rural Ministry Strategy, Digital Ministry, Open Door Accompaniment Team, Garden Project, Glocal – Stories and Songs.

Meal Blessing

Bishop Victoria Cortez led a blessing for the evening meal.

Recess

Evening Meal and Celebrations

After dinner, Peggy Hahn gave the keynote address via video. Each congregation will receive a resource book with resources to assist congregations in imagining anew the ministry they are doing in the community. To see the church as a verb and not a noun.

Anniversaries and Dedications

75th Anniversary

Trinity Lutheran Church, Carthage

American Lutheran Church, Milbank

150th Anniversary
Roseni Lutheran Church, Beresford
Faith United Lutheran Church, Volin

Saturday, June 4, 2022

Morning Worship with Holy Communion

The Rev. Dr. Soliette Lopez Ortega delivered the sermon.

Lutheran Outdoors Annual Meeting

Following worship, the assembly recessed for the Lutheran Outdoors of South Dakota Annual Meeting.

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Saturday, June 4, 2022

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Credentials Report

Mara Stillson presented the report of the Credentials Committee. As of 10:40 am, there were 109 rostered ministers, 147 lay female voting members, 48 lay male voting members, for 225 lay voting members, and total voting members of 334.

South Dakota Synod Youth Gathering

Tammy Steffenson made a plug for the South Dakota Synod Youth Gathering, one way the synod is responding to the cancelation of the ELCA Youth Gathering.

The Holy Cow Award

The Rev. Erica Lehmann presented the Holy Cow Award to recognize congregations giving to ELCA World Hunger. Two churches are selected, one for the overall gift and one for per-member giving. The winning churches are St. John Lutheran, Dimock, SD, and Resurrection Lutheran, Pierre, SD. As a challenge to the synod, Pr. Lehmann noted only half of the congregations had a record of giving to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response. This is work we do together as the wider church.

Report of the Resolutions Committee

Pastor Sorenson brought forward Resolution #2, 2023 Compensation and Guidelines. The resolution comes with a do pass recommendation from the Resolutions Committee.

Subject: 2023 Compensation and Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Lay Staff
Source: Committee for Support to Ministries and its Compensation Task Force
RESOLVED, that the “2023 Compensation and Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Lay Staff,” prepared by a task force for the Committee for Support to Ministries and recommended by the committee for adoption, be adopted as the policy of the South Dakota Synod by the 2022 South Dakota Synod Assembly.

MSC

Yes 272, No 9

SA.22.05

2023 Mission Plan

Terry Johnson offered a chance for the assembly to ask questions about the 2023 Mission Plan.

To adopt the 2023 Mission Plan.

MSC

Yes 280, No 2

SA.22.06

SD Coaching Network

Jamie Duprey, the Coaching Coordinator for the synod, shared about the coaching process in the synod and how trained coaches can be a resource to congregations and leaders to build up the ministry.

Lutheran Social Service

Bishop Hagmaier invited Rebecca Kiesow Knudsen, President & CEO of Lutheran Social Services. LSS was founded over 100 years ago by a group of women from First Lutheran Church who saw a need to support women with unintended pregnancies. LSS has grown to a state-wide organization with 18 different service lines under the mission that “All South Dakotans will be healthy, safe, and accepted.” Addressing specific questions, Ms. Kiesow Knudsen spoke to refugees from Ukraine. While LSS will support those being resettled from Ukraine, it will look different from more traditional refugee resettlement.

ELCA Social Statement

The Rev. Dr. Aaron Matson shared that the writing team for the ELCA Social Statement on Lutheran engagement in civil government is receiving feedback. Listening posts can be held, and feedback will be due by August.

Report of the Resolutions Committee

The Rev. Siri Sorenson presented Resolution 4b,

RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Synod, ELCA encourages its members to prayerfully consider the many metaphors used throughout Scripture when referring to God.

The Rev. Jeff Sorenson moved to table the resolution. Second. The motion to table was lost; yes 130, no 158.

The previous question was moved. Second. The motion to close debate was adopted; yes 269, no 19.

The results of the main motion, Resolution 4b, was yes 33, no 255. The motion was lost.

Campus Ministry – LuMin Greetings

The Rev. Cassandra Lamb brought a greeting from the campus ministry of the synod and a challenge to support and connect young people with the campus ministry of the college of their choosing. LuMin is present at Northern State University, Black Hills State University, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, The University of South Dakota, and South Dakota State University, along with 100 of campuses across the synod. Student ministries are only possible with the support, and referrals, of students.

Neighbors in Solidarity Blessing

Leaders from Neighbors in Solidarity ministries were invited forward to receive a blessing for their work at ministries throughout the synod.

Announcements

The Farm to Table Dinner in support of rural ministries will be in August.

Remember to turn in voting devices.

Boxed lunches are available.

Hour of Hope Grants are available now in support of the digital ministry.

Thank yous

Bishop Hagmaier offered thanks on behalf of the assembly to the Rev. Keith Fry, Peggy Hahn, our Glocal musicians, and the volunteers from Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

Bishop Hagmaier shared that she was part of the Listening Post convened by the Presiding Bishop to listen to the communities in the Sierra Pacific Synod. It was a very difficult process and much mending of relationships is needed.

The synod staff was thanked for all of their work and the ways they support the work we are all called to as the South Dakota Synod. Additional thanks were given to the planning teams, and Synod Council and to all of the voting members who "showed up."

Closing of the Assembly

There being no further business of the assembly, Bishop Hagmaier closed the assembly.

The 2023 Synod Assembly will be June 2-3, 2023 in Sioux Falls, SD.

Other announcements of upcoming events were shared; information can be found on the synod website.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jonathan Vehar, Secretary