

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America South Dakota Synod Assembly

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Sioux Falls, SD

June 2 and 3, 2023

The thirty-fifth annual Assembly of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA, was held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD on June 2 and 3, 2023, with the theme *Cultivate*. Archived video of all reports are available on the synod's YouTube Channel.

On Friday, June 2, 2023, 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 2, 2023

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.

Greetings and Introductions

Bishop Hagmaier made the following introductions: the Rev. Dr. Philip Hirsch, Executive Director of the Domestic Mission unit, the Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen and the Rev. Jon Anderson as this year's keynote speakers; assembly chaplain, Bishop Emerita Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, Synod Officers, Dennis Thompson, Vice-president; the Rev. Jonathan Vehar, Secretary; Terry Johnson, Treasurer; and Brett Koenecke, Parliamentarian.

Credentials Report

The report of the Credentials Committee. As of 10:40 am, there were 115 rostered ministers, 146 lay female voting members, lay male voting members 89, for a total of 321 voting members. Of that number, 3 are youth and 8 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 2023 Synod Assembly.

SA.23.01

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

Ministry Partner Greetings

The Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson, Associate Campus Pastor at Augustana University, brought a greeting on behalf of the university. As a part of a 10-year strategic plan, a new residence hall was completed. A new iceplex to host South Dakota's first Division I hockey team has broken ground.

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.23.02

Keynote Preview

Keynote speakers the Rev. Jonathan Anderson and the Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen previewed the topics they planned to cover during the evening program.

Ecumenical Greetings

The Rev. Rebecca Trefz, of the United Methodist Church, brought a greeting on behalf of the Dakota Conference of the UMC.

Churchwide Report

Bishop Hagmaier invited the Rev. Dr. Phil Hirsch, Executive Director of Domestic Mission for the ELCA to bring a greeting from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and bring the State of the ELCA report.

Guest musicians, Heart River Child 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. Randy Gehring.

Lunch Break and Conference Caucuses

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Friday, June 2, 2023

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 Associate for Stewardship and Outreach.

State of the Synod

Associate Reports

The Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Associate to the Bishop for Candidacy and Mobility, presented an oral report. A written report is available in the pre-assembly material.

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, Director for Evangelical Mission and Associate to the Bishop for Stewardship & Outreach, presented an oral report.

State of the South Dakota Synod

Bishop Hagmaier presented the State of the Synod report. The post-resurrection story of the Road to Emmaus is a foundational passage for how the synod engages in accompaniment. Living out our work together, the synod is active in recruiting current and new rostered leaders to serve in rural communities. New mission starts in Box Elder and Sioux Falls join the work we do together. The full address can be found

Credentials Report

The report of the Credentials Committee. As of 1:50 pm, there were 121 rostered ministers, 148 lay female voting members, lay male voting members 89, for a total of 237 lay voting members and a total Voting Members of 358. Of that number, 3 are youth and 8 are BIPOC.

Introduction of Resolutions

The Rev. Kari Foss from the Resolutions Committee presented Resolution #1: Elect South Dakota Synod Members.

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

Prairie Coteau Conference (Lay) John Rasmussen, Sisseton
Prairie Coteau Conference (Lay) Kristi Anderson, Bristol
Medary Conference (Lay) Gary Kaufmann, Arlington
Southeastern Conference (Rostered) Reverend Alyssa Mitchell, Centerville
Northern Plains Conference (Lay) Chad Nilson, Aberdeen
Bear Butte Conference (Rostered) Reverend Wilbur Holz, Rapid City

MSC (324 yes, 3 no)

SA.23.03

Report of the Vice President

Dennis Thompson, Vice-president of the South Dakota Synod, brought a report. He thanked the Bishop, synod staff, Synod Council, and the members of our congregations for the work we do together.

Treasures 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 2022 budget as modified by the Synod Council.

The Endowment Fund rebounded well after market turbulence in in 2021 and early 2022. 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.

The full financial report is available in the pre-assembly material. Similar to previous years, from 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 2023 Mission Plan was revised by the Synod Council to:

Lower forecasted Mission Support by 3.4%,

No material changes to staff support.,

Maintained Mission Support to the Churchwide Organization at 43%. It is the hope that the support levels to the Churchwide Organization can be restored to the previous levels of 45%.

The 2024 Mission Plan will be presented on Saturday.

Mission Support to the Churchwide Organization is 41%.

Stable support for South Dakota-supported ministries.

Adoption of the General Ballot

Bishop Hagmaier presented the General Ballot. For each of the open positions, there was only one nomination.

Moved to Elect the General Ballot as follows

Consultation Committee: The Rev. Justin Van Orman to a six-year term.

Evangelical Outreach Committee: Kari Ostrem to a three-year term.

Augustana Association: The Rev. Michael Jordan to a one-year term.

Synod Council Youth Representative: Juan Angel Ferro, to a one-year term.

MSC (319 yes, 6 no)

SA.23.04

Journey Together E-Learning and Resource Hub

Bishop Hagmaier introduced the Rev. Kari Webb as the coordinator for the E-Learning and Resource Hub. These new resources are designed to support lay leaders, especially in rural areas, to grow in ministry gifts. More information will be shared during the Cultivation Labs.

Open Door Accompaniment Team

The Rev. Karen Soli was invited to share about the work of the Open Door Accompaniment Team that seeks to create greater opportunity for congregations of our synod to welcome the gifts of rostered leaders with diverse backgrounds. More information will be shared at the Cultivation Labs.

Greeting from Lutheran Social Services

Rebecca Kiesow Knudsen, President and CEO of LSS SD brought a greeting on behalf of Lutheran Social Services, SD. With its begins as a group of Lutheran woman who started in Sioux Falls support for woman experiencing unintended pregnancy, the ministry of LSS now extends throughout the state and have 15 different service lines to address many needs identified in our communities. LSS has recently undergone the development of a new strategic plan.

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.

Gift from Good Samaritan

Back by popular demand, the Good Samaritan Society provided a water bottle to voting members.

Recess

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Friday, June 2, 2023

3:30 p.m.-4:20 p.m.

Compensation Guidelines Task Force

Bishop Hagmaier invited the Rev. Justin Kosec and Annelies Seffrood 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. The goals for the task force for the year were to review the Compensation table for 2024, further define Housing Allowance/Parsonage/ and Housing Equity Contribution, Parental/Family Leave policies, Pulpit Supply rates, SAM Guidelines, prior experience credit, pastoral ethics, and health care costs. Some recommendations for the 2024 Guidelines:

- Parental Leave – proposed 8 weeks, up from six weeks. Can be used within one year. A clergy couple would both be eligible.
- Pulpit Supply – increase in rate and provide more clarity and options.
- Housing Equity Contribution increased to \$150 up from \$125.
- Housing Allowance – Change in wording to clarify intent that Housing Allowance would reflect the actual cost of housing, not to exceed 50% of base salary.
- Compensation guidelines would increase by 5% for Rostered Ministers, Lay Leaders, and Hourly staff.

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.

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. Pr. Matson announced that the Rev. Dr. Soliete Lopez, resigned as the missionary to the Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope, Nicaragua, to take a position with the ELCA YAGM program. Much gratitude is expressed for her work and the process has begun to find a replacement. Highlighting the synod's work in the last year, the synod was present to help recovery efforts from Hurricane Julia in Nicaragua. In Cameroon, our work continues to help support school children in Train up a Child, support for the seminary, and four new roofs were added to

churches. This year marks the 100-year anniversary of missionary work in the Sudan region, including Cameroon. A celebration is planned for this summer.

Rural Ministry Liasion

The Rev. Alan Blankenfeld is the Rural Ministry Liasion, and shared about his work in the last year and a half connecting to 27 congregations in 15 locations. In these communities, he immerses himself for about a two-week period performing pastoral ministry, and identifying potential leaders.

Lutheran Planned Generosity of South Dakota

2023 marks a number of anniversaries in the generosity of South Dakota. It is the 40th anniversary since Bishop Eitrheim appointed the Rev. Franklin Pudas as the first Development Counselor. It is the 30th anniversary since the South Dakota Synod Endowment Fund was created with an opening balance of \$50,347.04. Today, the balance is over \$10,000,000. It is the 20th anniversary of Lutheran Planned Giving of South Dakota as a partnership of Lutheran ministries in the synod. Now under the name of Lutheran Planned Generosity, 11 partner ministries support the work of generosity in legacy gifts.

Cultivate Labs

The assembly is recessed for Cultivate Labs and evening programming.

Evening Meal and Celebrations

After dinner, the Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel Juleen and the Rev. Jon Anderson delivered the keynote addresses highlighting rural ministry.

Anniversaries and Dedications

100th Anniversary

Grace Lutheran Church, Midland

150th Anniversary

Beaver Valley Lutheran Church, Brandon

Saturday, June 3, 2023

Morning Worship with Holy Communion

The Rev. Dr. Jon Anderson delivered the sermon. The worship service included a celebration recognizing the transfer of the synod-owned building and property in Rapid City, which has been the home to the Woyatan community, to Woyatan Lutheran Church.

Lutheran Outdoors Annual Meeting

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

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Saturday, June 4, 2022

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Credentials Report

Carla Borchardt presented the report of the Credentials Committee. As of 11:00 am, there were 123 rostered ministers, 152 lay female voting members, 92 lay male voting members, for 244 lay voting members, and total voting members of 367.

South Dakota Synod Youth Gathering

Mara Stillson, 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering Synod Champion, shared a story about the importance on attending the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering and the impact on youth to experience the larger church.

Lutheran Campus Ministry

The Rev. Cassandra Lamb brought a greeting from the campus ministry of South Dakota State University, as well as the LuMin ministries at the University of South Dakota, Northern State, Black Hills State, and South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. LuMin is part of a nationwide network that supports college students. Congregations and individuals can be a part of this work by referring students, giving to support these ministries, and praying.

Good Samaritan Society

The Rev. Christine Hallenbeck-Ask, the Senior Pastor of the Good Samaritan Society, brought a greeting from the society. The Good Samaritan Society is a nationwide network of senior living. There is a strong desire to continue connecting congregations with senior living centers, as isolation has such a negative impact on the health and well-being of those who live in senior living.

Report of the Resolutions Committee

The Rev. Kari Foss presented Resolution #2, 2023 Compensation and Guidelines. The resolution comes with a do pass recommendation from the Resolutions Committee.

RESOLVED, that the “2024 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 2023 South Dakota Synod Assembly.
MSC (267 - Yes, 14 – No)
SA.23.05

2024 Mission Plan

Terry Johnson offered a chance for the assembly to ask questions about the 2024 Mission Plan.

To adopt the 2024 Mission Plan.
MSC (276 – Yes, 5 - No)
SA.23.06

The Holy Cow Award

The Rev. Erica Lehmann and the Rev. Mindy Ehrke 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 Trinity Lutheran Church, Tea, SD, and Bethany Lutheran Church, Howard, SD. This is work we do together as the wider church.

Thank yous

Bishop Hagmair offered thanks on behalf of the assembly to our keynote speakers the Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel Juleen and the Rev. Jon Anderson, churchwide representative, the Rev. Dr. Rev. Phil Hirsch, our musicians - Heart River Child, Synod Assembly planning team and tech support, the volunteers from Our Savior's Lutheran Church, and synod staff.

Closing of the Assembly

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

The 2024 Synod Assembly will be May 31-June 1, 2024 in Rapid City, SD.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Jonathan Vehar, secretary