

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America South Dakota Synod Assembly

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Sioux Falls, SD

May 29-30, 2026

The thirty-eighth annual Assembly of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA, was held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD on May 29-30, 2026, with the theme Equip Exodus 18:13-27. Archived video of all reports is available on the synod's YouTube Channel.

On Friday, May 29, 2026 at 9:15 am Central Daylight Time (CDT), the opening service was held in the Celebrate Center of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD. Rev. Jonathan Vehar and Rev. Renee Splichal Larson opened the service in place of Bishop Hagmaier. Bishop Hagmaier will be at the assembly later in the morning.

First Plenary Session

Friday, May 29, 2026

10:30-12:00

Welcome and Order for opening of the Synod Assembly

Bishop Hagmaier called the assembly to order at the close of worship. Bishop Hagmaier introduced the narrative budget. This is a new way to share the ministry and how we journey together.

Greetings and Introductions

Bishop Hagmaier made the following introductions: Churchwide Representative: Dr. Ryan Cummings, Director of Theological Ethics in the ELCA churchwide organization; Musicians, Dakota Road Music; Assembly Chaplain, Pastor Denise Broveak; Jill Beers, Secretary; Terry Johnson, Treasurer; and Nick Moser, Parliamentarian. Synod Vice President Dennis Thompson was unable to attend this weekend and sends his greetings.

Completed Form A Awards

Three congregations are receiving a homemade pie baked by DEM Pastor Jonathan Vehar. Congregations receiving the pies are Christ Lutheran Church, Salem; St. John Lutheran Church, Hot Springs; and Norway Lutheran Church, Glenham. Three tickets to the Dunk Tank (sponsored by the Holy Playground Initiative) were awarded to Our Savior's, Spearfish; Augustana Lutheran, Sioux Falls; and Grace Lutheran, Sisseton.

Voting Practice

Voting at this year's assembly will take place via a secure online platform, Poll Everywhere. Sample questions were used for the practice.

Credentials Report

The report of the Credentials Committee. As of 10:34 am, there were 120 rostered ministers, 144 lay female voting members, 84 lay male voting members, 3 lay decline to state voting members, for a total of 231 voting members. Of that number, 9 are youth and 7 are BIPOC. Total Advisory, Visitors & Displayers are 31. Total Attendance is 382.

Adoption of the Rules & Agenda

Bishop Hagmaier seeks a motion to adopt the standing rules of the South Dakota Synod Assembly.

MSC to adopt the standing rules of the South Dakota Synod Assembly.

SA.2026.05.01

Bishop Hagmaier asked for any additions or changes to the proposed agenda as outlined in the Assembly Guidebook.

It was pointed out that many proposed changes to our Synod constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions will be adopted en bloc in Resolution 1. If a voting member wishes to individually discuss or vote on one of the proposed amendments in Resolution 1, please fill out the form available at the assembly office. The deadline for removal is 1 PM on Friday (today).

MSC to adopt the agenda as outlined or amended in the Assembly Guidebook.

SA.2026.05.02

Greetings From Our Savior's

Pastor Tim Lemme from Our Savior's brought greetings to the assembly from the host church. He gave a general lay of the land and offered areas of the church for use. Bishop Hagmaier thanked Our Savior's for being a great host.

State of the ELCA Report with Dr. Ryan Cumming

Dr. Cumming gave an update on the state of the ELCA.

Music Break with Dakota Road Music

ELCA Church Council Report

Bishop Hagmaier introduced Emma Witt, ELCA Church Council Youth Representative and member of the SD Synod. Emma gave an update on her representation on the Churchwide Council. She shared the goals for youth representation in the church.

Panel 1: Associates to the Bishop

Bishop Hagmaier introduced the moderator, Rev. Elisa Berndt McMullen. Pastor Elisa interviewed Associates Rev. Jonathan Vehar and Rev. Renee Splichal Larson about the part they play in the SD Synod and as associates to the bishop. They each were able to describe the other person and the job that they do.

Lutheran Planned Generosity

Bishop Hagmaier introduced Kathy McHenry, director of Lutheran Planned Generosity (LPG) of South Dakota. Kathy gave an overview of the place LPG plays in the SD Synod. Kathy is retiring and plans to be on the job until October. Recognition was given to Kathy for all of the work she has done for LPG. Kathy was given the book *I Will To You* by Herbert Brokering as a thank you.

Announcements

Several conferences need to caucus and they should do so before eating lunch. Resolutions and nominations deadline is 1:00 pm. The deadline to remove a resolution from en bloc is 1:00. Seating for meals is available in both the upstairs and downstairs fellowship hall.

Table prayer was led by chaplain Pastor Denise Broveak.

Lunch break and conference Caucuses.

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Friday, May 29, 2026

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

Dakota Road played the assembly back in from lunch. Bishop Hagmaier welcomed us back from lunch. She reminded the assembly that there would be voting later in the afternoon and to please have their devices handy.

Video Greetings from Wartburg Seminary

The assembly viewed a video from Wartburg Seminary.

Credentials Report

There are 356 voting members checked in as of 1:11 PM on May 29, 2026.

Panel 2: Lilly Grant Updates

Bishop Constanze introduced the team that is implementing the Lilly Grants. Pastor Kari Webb works with Pasque Pathway and Pastor Joel Pakan leads the Rural Ambassadors. Pastor Renee Boehmer introduced the Holy Playground. Each of these programs will have a breakout session during that time period.

Narrative Budget/Treasurer's Report

Bishop Hagmaier introduced Rev. Jonathan Vehar to explain the Narrative Budget for the synod. This does not replace the Line-Item Budget. The budget will be visited tomorrow.

Video Greetings from Luther Seminary

The assembly viewed a video from Luther Seminary.

State of the Synod - Bishop Constanze Hagmaier

Bishop Hagmaier gave her state of the synod report. She used the annual Christmas letter for the basis of her report. She reminded us that the farming community is having a really tough time. She also discussed the events going on in the world and the place they play in our lives. We all need to have conversations, especially with the bishop. We need to have courage to answer these questions. We are ready to share with other congregations and support each other.

Companion Synods Video Greetings

A video greeting was shared from the Lutheran Church in Nicaragua and Cameroon.

Compensation and Guidelines Task Force

Annalies Seffrood shared a presentation on the recommended compensation guidelines. This year there was a task force to work on the Purpose of Guidelines. The task force looked at the compensation table, health care recommendations, ministers serving below guidelines, SAM benefits and overnight chaperones.

Vote on Resolution 1

Bishop Hagmaier introduced Rev. David Bentz from the Resolutions Committee.

Resolution #1

Resolution to Adopt Amendments to the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the South Dakota Synod.

BE IT RESOLVED, except for those bylaws and continuing resolutions that may be requested for separation consideration, to amend en bloc the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the South Dakota Synod as follows:
Additions are underlined. Deletions are struck through in the text. Recommendation from the committee is do pass. There was no discussion.

Motion: to adopt Resolution 1: Adopt Amendments to the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions to the South Dakota Synod.

MSC to adopt Resolution 1: Adopt Amendments to the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions to the South Dakota Synod.
SA.2026.05.03

Vote on Resolution 3

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 Female)	Erin Weinkauf, Volga
Crossroads Conference (Rostered)	Pr. Herb Wounded Head III, Sioux Falls
Southeastern Conference (Lay Male)	Lyle Braun, Vermillion
Prairie Rivers Conference (Rostered)	Pr. Tami Steffensen, Presho
Bear Butte Conference (Lay Female)	Jordan Duprey, Hill City

Motion: to elect the South Dakota Synod Council Members

MSC to elect the South Dakota Synod Council Members.

SA.2026.05.04

Youth Gathering Update

Bishop Constanze introduced Amanda Black; Region 3 National Youth Gathering Rep. Amanda introduced the theme for the 2027 Gathering is Imagine More. The Theme Verse is To God - whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine. Ephesians 3:20. Host city is Minneapolis. The Gathering is June 28-July 2. MYLE is June 26-28. The tAble is also held before the main Gathering. Rev. Jonathan will be able to answer any questions.

Holy Cow Award

Pastor Erika Lehmann from the Synod Hunger Team is presenting the Holy Cow Award. Winners this year are Our Savior's Lutheran in Sioux Falls and Trinity Lutheran in Arlington.

Introduction to Fresh Expressions

DEM Jonathan Vehar is introducing Fresh Expressions. He will have a breakout session.

Augustana University

Pr. Ann Rosendale talked about the Buntrock Scholarship, Chapel on Ice, the Chapel of Reconciliation has been remodeled, and Augustana has received a five-million-dollar Lilly Grant for Sacred Discoveries, which will record sacred stories from young people. The Sacred Discoveries team will hold a breakout session this afternoon.

Video Greeting from Lutheran Social Services

Lutheran Social Services shared a video. Lutheran Social Services is also one of the sponsors for SDSU ice cream at the evening dinner.

Announcements

The breakout sessions are being called Equipment Rooms this year. The sessions will run from 3:40-4:20 and 4:30-5:10. Following the Equipment Rooms, the food trucks will be in the south parking lot. The pick-up choir will meet following the 2nd Equipment Room. Pastor Denise Broveak led us in prayer for our supper.

Assembly in recess until Saturday morning, May 30, 2026

Equipment Room Breakout Session #1

- Augustana University Sacred Discoveries
- Holy Playground
- Equipping Leaders (Pasque)
- Rural Ministries

Equipment Room Breakout Session #2

- Fresh Expressions
- ELCA Social Statements
- Compensation and Guidelines
- ELCA World Hunger

Saturday, May 31, 2025

Morning Worship

Rev. Denise Broveak gave the message. The Installation of the Synod Council & Officers was celebrated. Communion was served.

Lutheran Outdoors in South Dakota Annual Meeting

Rev. David Lund from LO gave an opening prayer. Nick Moser, LO Director greeted the assembly. He reminded us that the Treasurer's Report is in the packet. The report is very simple and he made us aware that there is a deficit in this current report. He is happy to talk with anyone about the budget. Outgoing staff and board members were recognized. Pastor Jess Daum gave the closing prayer.

Video Presentations

The following videos were shared with the assembly:

1. Portico
2. ELEA
3. VINE
4. Shepherd's Table

Equipment Room Breakout Session #3

- Lutheran Social Services
- Church on the Street
- St. Dymas
- LuMin Campus Ministries

Break - sponsored by Lutherans Outdoors

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Saturday, May 30, 2026

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Dakota Road played us back in from the Equipment Room Breakout and the cookie break sponsored by Lutherans Outdoors. Bishop Constanze welcomed Pr. Denise Broveak to share a prayer to open the session.

Bible Study/Story Sharing – Augustana University Sacred Discoveries

Pastor Ann Rosendale from the Augustana University Sacred Discoveries Team shared a time of Bible Study and Story Sharing. She invited the assembly to share a story with your neighbor about a time someone thought you were lost, but you knew right where you were. Pastor Ann read a story to the assembly and encouraged the members to shout out questions or statements regarding the story. She also shared the question, “Where are the young adults from your community calling you to come and be?”

Credentials Report

There are 359 voting members checked in as of 11:00 AM on May 30, 2026.

Adoption of the 2027 Mission Plan

Bishop Constanze introduced Terry Johnson for the adoption of the mission plan. Mission support last year was down about 6%. Year to date, we are 4% ahead of the giving. The proposed budget does balance down to zero. This will go into effect on Feb. 1, 2027.

Motion: to adopt the 2027 Mission Plan.

Discussion was held. A voice vote was held to close discussion.

MSC to adopt the 2027 Mission Plan for the SD Synod.

SA.2026.05.05

Nominating Ballot - Committees to be filled

Motion: to elect the following people to these committees

Consultation Committee

1 Lay Vacancy	Jodi Spilde, Prairie Coteau
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Discipline Committee

2 Lay Vacancy	Nick Fosheim, Prairie Coteau Orland Geigle, Northern Plains
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Multicultural Committee

1 Lay Vacancy	Bruce Shoemaker, Prairie Coteau
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2 Rostered Ministers Vacancy

Pr. Lisa Heffernan, Southeastern Pr. LeShea Avery, Northern Plains

Evangelical Outreach Committee

1 Lay Vacancy	Naomi Graves, Southeastern
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1 Rostered Minister Vacancy

(Northern Plains)

Support to Ministries

1 Lay Vacancy

Brad Sanderson, Medary

Augustana Association

2 Lay or Rostered Ministers Vacancy

Pr. Dan Overbo, Prairie Coteau

Joyce Vasgaard, Southeastern

Chapel in the Hills

Barbara Mascher, Faith, Rapid City (2nd term)

Pam Carda, South Canyon, Rapid City (1st term)

Synod Council Youth

Zoey Haselhorst, Northern Plains

A voice vote was held. All voted aye.

MSC to elect the following people to these committees.

SA.2026.05.06

Vote on Resolution #2

Bishop Hagmaier introduced Rev. David Bentz from the Resolutions Committee

RESOLVED, that the “2027 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 2026 South Dakota Synod Assembly.

Motion: to pass Resolution #2 - 2027 Compensation and Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Lay Staff

MSC to pass Resolution #2 - 2027 Compensation and Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Lay Staff.

SA.2026.05.07

Discussion, Thank Yous & Announcements

Bishop Constanze encouraged the assembly to turn to a neighbor and ask the question: What are you going to share and how are you going to share about this Assembly?

- Rostered Leaders are encouraged to register for the 2026 Fall Theological Conference to be held in Custer in September
- The 2027 Synod Assembly will be held June 4-5, 2027 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Rapid City

Thank Yous & Gifts

- Thank you to Dr. Ryan Cumming and was presented a corn cob pen made by DEM Jonathan Vehar
- Thank you to all who served on the panels and led the Equipment Room discussions
- Thank you to Dakota Road Music
- Thank you to Our Savior's for being gracious hosts.
- Thank you to the synod staff, planning committee and volunteers who helped out.
- Thank you to the synod officers, our parliamentarian and chaplain for your leadership
- Thank you to the SD Synod for sharing the Gospel of God's love and forgiveness around our Synod and around the world.

Closing of the Assembly

Bishop Hagmaier led the Closing Dialogue.

Bishop Hagmaier declared the Assembly closed.

Dakota Road led the assembly in the closing hymn.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Beers, Secretary