

CENTRAL STATES SYNOD ASSEMBLY
ADAM'S MARK HOTEL
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
JUNE 8-10, 2017

THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2017

PLENARY SESSION #1- CELEBRATION

The Central States Synod Assembly was called to order by Bishop Roger Gustafson at 3:00 p.m., on Thursday, June 8, 2017, in the Grand Ballroom of the Adam's Mark Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri. He welcomed voting members, guests, and visitors, noting the Assembly theme *Growing in Hope: Discipleship*. He led the Assembly in the order for the Opening of the Assembly.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Jack King, a youth member of the Synod Council, was called upon to present the initial report of the Credentials Committee, as of 1:00 p.m., on Thursday, June 8, 2017. The report follows:

- 107 Voting Members

- 64 Lay Voting Members (60% of Voting Members)
- 43 Clergy (40% of Voting Members)

The Credentials Report was accompanied, as it would be each time, by a question about Martin Luther.

INTRODUCTIONS

Bishop Gustafson introduced the key-note speaker for the Assembly, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. Also introduced was Pastor Ron Glusenkamp, Director of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

Bishop Gustafson introduced the members of the Synod staff: Pastor Keith Hohly, Bishop's Associate for Leadership; Pastor Donna Simon, half-time Director for Evangelical Mission (Outreach); Pastor Susan Candea, Bishop's Associate for Administration and half-time Director for Evangelical Mission (Stewardship); Rick Moser, Assistant to the Bishop for Communication; Ms. Sandy Van Tuyl, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Dawne Bockelman, Administrative Assistant and Assembly Manager; and the three adjunct staff members serving in Lutheran Campus Ministry, Pastor Rebecca Boardman (St Louis), Pastor Shawn Norris (University of Kansas), and Pastor Kevin Clark (Kansas State University).

The officers of the Synod were introduced: Dennis Allerheiligen, Vice-President; Pastor Loren Mai, Secretary; and Scott Schulte, Treasurer. It was noted that Rick Mueller, Parliamentarian, would be present for Saturday's session.

Pastor Brian Hiortdahl, Overland Park, KS, was introduced as the Chair of the Synod's *Team 500*, a group tasked with planning commemorations of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation throughout the Synod. Pastor Hiortdahl invited the voting members to pick up congregational

“Time Capsules” containing items of commemoration of the Anniversary. He thanked Bishop Gustafson for his support of the celebration. The Assembly sang the hymn *Founded on Faith*, by Paul D. Weber; this hymn was the winner of a Synod-wide competition for a 500th Anniversary hymn. The other members of *Team 500* were introduced and thanked for their service: Mindy Tillberg, Dr. Charles Maahs, Rev. Elizabeth Cummings, Rev. Roy Christell, Rev. Julia Will, Rev. Jon Anderson, Rev. Keith Holste, Kris Kvam, Rev. Michael Brecke, Rev. Mike Malone, Pat Bjuland, and Tyler Atkinson.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Bishop Gustafson introduced ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton as the keynote speaker. Bishop Eaton’s remarks focused on Luther’s *Small Catechism*, and she built on her four emphases for the ELCA: *We Are Church; We are Lutheran; We are church together; and We are church for the sake of the world.* She invited the members of the Assembly to live out their Baptism through proclamation and service. The theme of God’s grace permeated her presentation.

The Assembly was in recess from 4:50 p.m. until Friday, June 9, at 8:30 a.m.

At 6:15 p.m., Assembly participants gathered for the evening meal. Prior to the meal, a stole was presented as a gift to Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. Susan Candeia introduced the Stewardship placemats and invited the Assembly to converse about the mission being accomplished through the Synod. She also introduced the story of the Assembly banners. Pastor Michael Kern, Assembly Chaplain, led the Assembly in a meal-time prayer. The Assembly participants enjoyed an authentic Kansas City BBQ buffet.

The Opening Worship of Holy Communion was held in the Grand Ballroom after the evening meal. Pre-service music was provided by the “Jazz Group,” and service music was led by the Blue Notes of First Lutheran Church, Mission Hills, KS. Pastor Marie Sager, Hays, KS, was the Presiding Minister, and Bishop Roger Gustafson was the Preacher. The sermon involved congregational participation at the tables. The Assembly offering was equally divided among the following: Synod Youth Ministry; Synod Lutheran Campus Ministry (program at the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and St. Louis); and the ELCA Campaign – Always Being Made New.

After the Opening Worship, Bishop Gustafson made announcements related to Friday breakfast and the Friday business session. He also noted the Display tables set up in the hall outside the Ballroom. The Assembly then gathered for dessert.

FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2017

PLENARY SESSION #2 - CONVERSATION

Pastor Keith Hohly and Pastor Donna Simon led the morning worship service, which began at 8:30 a.m. The service included the reception of Pastor Odir Flores on the ELCA Roster of Ministers. Bishop Gustafson led the Assembly in the rite of Welcome, and the Assembly greeted Pastor Flores with acclamation. Pastor Flores serves as mission developer of Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazon de Jesus in Garden City, KS, and Parroquia El Divino Nino, Dodge City, KS.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Theodore Keese, a youth voting member, was summoned to give the report of the Credentials Committee, as of 8:00 a.m., on Friday, June 9, 2017. The report follows:

350 Voting Members

229 Lay Voting Members (65%); 136 Female and 93 Male

121 Clergy Voting Members (35%); 44 Female and 77 Male

Of the Voting Members, 9 were Persons of Color/Primary Language other than English

Of the Voting Members, 8 were youth

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Bishop Roger Gustafson introduced ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton as the Keynote speaker for the morning session. Referring to a printed ELCA Churchwide Report in the Assembly packet, Bishop Eaton focused on *Called Forward Together in Christ Strategic Directions 2025* for the ELCA. She noted five goals that came from the process that resulted in the Strategic Directions:

(1) A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people.

(2) A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.

(3) An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.

(4) A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace, and reconciliation in communities and around the world.

(5) A well-governed, connected, and sustainable church.

Her remarks reflected the main focus areas for the ELCA in the next few years: Congregational Vitality and Leadership.

Bishop Eaton concluded her presentation with a question/answer time.

A break was taken from 9:45 until 10:15 a.m.

Bishop Gustafson reconvened the Assembly at 10:15 a.m. He introduced counselors at Camp Tomah Shinga who are citizens of Papua New Guinea, a companion Synod of the Central States Synod. He also introduced Sly James, mayor of Kansas City, MO; Mr. James addressed the Assembly, welcoming participants to Kansas City.

BISHOP GUSTAFSON'S MESSAGE TO THE ASSEMBLY

Bishop Gustafson referred to his printed report in the Assembly packet, as he provided verbal highlights. In a coming shortage of clergy, he emphasized a need for vitalizing the Synod's Parish Ministry Associate program. He noted again the theme of the Assembly and the focus for the coming year: *Growing in Hope: Discipleship*.

As a part of the Bishop's Report, Pastor Keith Hohly (Bishop's Associate) and Pastor Donna Simon (Director for Evangelical Mission) introduced the theme of Discipleship with a power-point presentation. Participants were encouraged to consider what must die in a congregation

and what must die in a person for God's future to be realized. Assembly participants divided into small groups to consider what it means to grow in hope and increase in our response to God's grace through discipleship.

Bishop Gustafson provided a conclusion to his report, emphasizing the gift of discipleship.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Pat Bjuland, Overland Park, KS, was introduced as the Chair of the Nominating Committee. She presented the ballot for Synod Council members, for members of the Consultation Committee, and members of the Discipline Committee. For each ballot, Bishop Gustafson sought nominations from the floor.

(+ denotes incumbent)

SYNOD COUNCIL (3-year term)

Area 3	Male Clergy	+Rev. David Strommen; Salina, KS
Area 6	Female Layperson	+Ms. Jeanie Schuler; Topeka, KS
Area 7	Female Layperson	Ms. Susan Boxberger; Olathe, KS
At Large	Female Clergy	Rev. Kristen Koch; St. Ann, MO Rev. Anita Strommen; Salina, KS
At Large (youth)	Female Layperson (2-year)	Ms. Grace Vannoy; Overland Park, KS

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (6-year term; no re-election)

At Large	Female Layperson	Ms. Mary Jo Moore; Kansas City, MO
At Large	Male Clergy	Rev. Gordon Peterson; Overland Park, KS

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE (6-year term; no re-election)

At Large	Female Clergy	Rev. Mari Larson; Wichita, KS
At Large	Female Layperson	Ms. Debrah Eagleburger; Kansas City, KS
At Large	Male Layperson	Mr. Kevin Boatright; Lawrence, KS
At Large	Male Layperson	Mr. Charles Frickey; Oberlin, KS
At Large	Female Layperson (2-year)	

Bishop Gustafson declared nominations closed for each ballot. A word of thanks was expressed to the members of the Nominating Committee for their work. It was noted that the elections would be held on Saturday.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND PRESENTATION OF BUDGET FOR FYE 1/31/2019

Bishop Gustafson called on Scott Schulte, Synod Treasurer, to tell the story of the Synod budget. In his presentation, Scott Schulte referred the Assembly to the Budget/Finance section of the Assembly notebook and first highlighted the report that summarized the Synod's financial status at the close of the Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2017. He noted that congregational mission support continued to decline. Total spending was \$90,517 below budget and \$100,441 less than the previous year. One result of this decrease was the elimination of the equivalent of one full-time staff position.

Scott Schulte remarked that total revenue and support for FYE 1/31/2017 totaled \$1,754,268—which was \$78,482 less than anticipated in the revised budget and \$81,096 less than the previous year. Expenditures for the year were \$1,742,231—resulting in a surplus of \$12,038. This compared to a deficit of \$7,310 in the operating budget for the previous year. It was pointed out that the Synod no longer needed to amortize the prepaid expenses related to the Mission Fund appeal. Congregational support for the year totaled \$1,699,683—which was a decrease of \$19,337 from the previous year (a 1.1% decrease); a graph showed the trend of declining support over the past decade. An attached report detailed the support received from each congregation in the Synod. The Synod has continued to contribute to the ELCA Churchwide organization at a 50% rate. The total contributed to the ELCA was \$853,733—which was a decrease of \$22,068 (2.6%) from the previous year.

Scott Schulte reported that the annual audit of the Synod financial records (for FYE 1/31/2017) was completed, and it was considered a “clean” audit. Copies of the audit report were available at the Assembly, and an electronic version of the audit report was posted on the Synod web-site.

Pastor Susan Candea spoke about the importance of mission support for the life and ministry of the Synod. She referred the Assembly to a booklet, *Stories of Hope*, that highlighted mission and ministry being done in Synod congregations.

Scott Schulte noted that the Synod Council had revised the budget for the current year (FYE 1/31/2018) to reflect the anticipated decline in mission support. The revised spending budget reduced by \$52,000 the original budget approved by the 2016 Synod Assembly. Key changes that were made included the reduction of expectations by \$40,000 the support from congregations; lowering expectations for reimbursements by \$5,000; reducing the amount to be shared with Churchwide by \$22,000; and reducing the amounts for Travel and for Seminaries by \$5,000 each. The revised spending plan resulted in a balanced budget for the current year.

Scott Schulte introduced the proposed Synod Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2019, noting that the Synod Assembly would be considering approval of that budget on Saturday. He explained the spending plan in terms of a Narrative Budget, including the following categories:

The Ministry Entrusted to the Synod	\$ 17,500
The Ministry of Oversight and Pastoral Care	\$713,270
The Ministry of ELCA Partnerships	\$ 60,125
The Ministry of Place and Property	\$102,400
Gathering and Planning	\$ 25,511
We are Church Together	\$835,000

It was noted that the total proposed budget for FYE 1/31/2019 would be \$1,753,806. The Assembly then reviewed the budget spreadsheet. It was observed that the projected support from congregations is estimated at \$1,660,000—a decrease of \$50,000 from the amount of support estimated in the revised budget for the current year. The projected amount of Reimbursement/Other Income has been increased by \$23,000 to reflect the reimbursement received from Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska for funding that was no longer necessary. On the expenditure side, the amount contributed to ELCA Churchwide will decrease to \$835,000 as a result of the decreased estimated support received from congregations (contribution rate remains at 50%). Synod salaries and benefits will increase by approximately \$20,000 to reflect an increase in hours for the part-time communications position. The Campus Ministry Salaries and Benefits line item (in the Synod budget) has been reduced by \$20,000 to \$145,000. The Synod staff travel line item was reduced by \$6,000. Funding for seminaries was reduced by \$5,000 to \$20,000. The changes that have been made will result in a balanced budget of \$1,753,806 for the FYE 1/31/2019.

Scott Schulte reminded participants of a Budget Hearing during the lunch hour. He thanked the members of the Synod Mission Budget Team for their service: Bishop Roger Gustafson, Dennis Allerheiligen, Rev. Loren Mai, Tom Nelson, Barbara Beadle (lead accountant for the Synod's bookkeeping service), and Rev. Susan Candea.

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

The Assembly viewed a video introducing the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering, which will be held in Houston, Texas, June 27-July 1, 2018.

A lunch break was taken at 12:00 Noon, with Susan Candea making announcements. The following hearings and working lunches were available to Assembly participants during the lunch hour: a Budget Hearing, a Resolutions Hearing, a Compensation Guidelines Working Lunch, a 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering Working Lunch, and a Bethany College Alumni Gathering. Youth Voting Members met with the Bishop and Synod Council members. Pastor Michael Kern, Assembly Chaplain, led the Assembly in a table blessing prior to the lunch break.

PLENARY SESSION #3 – CONVERSATION AND GRACE IN ACTION

Bishop Roger Gustafson reconvened the Assembly at 1:15 p.m. He called for the report of the Credentials Committee.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Theodore Keese presented the report of the Credentials Committee, as of 12:00 Noon on Friday, June 9, 2017. The report follows:

374 Voting Members

247 Lay Voting Members (66% of Voting Members); 144 female; 103 male

127 Clergy Voting Members (34% of Voting Members); 44 female; 83 male

Includes 13 Voting Members who are Persons of Color/Language other than English

Includes 8 Voting Members who are Youth

24 Visitors

398 TOTAL ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION

ELECTIONS

Bishop Gustafson declared the following persons elected to their respective positions:

Synod Council – Area 3	The Rev. David Strommen
Synod Council – Area 6	Ms. Jeanie Schuler
Synod Council – Area 7	Ms. Susan Boxberger
Synod Council – Youth	Ms. Grace Vannoy
Consultation Committee	Ms. Mary Jo Moore
Consultation Committee	The Rev. Gordon Peterson
Discipline Committee	The Rev. Mari Larson
Discipline Committee	Ms. Debrah Eagleburger
Discipline Committee	Mr. Kevin Boatright
Discipline Committee	Mr. Charles Frickey

In the only contested election, the Assembly then voted by ballot to decide the Synod Council At Large position matching the Rev. Kristen Koch and the Rev. Anita Strommen. Pastor Michael Kern, Assembly Chaplain, led the Assembly in a prayer prior to the voting.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS

Bishop Gustafson introduced Pastor Philip Vickers, Mission Hills, KS, as the Chair of the Resolutions Committee. Pastor Vickers presented resolutions for the consideration of the Assembly.

SA.17.01. A SEASON OF GLOBAL AWARENESS – REMEMBERING OUR COMPANION SYNODS.

It was MSC:

That the Epiphany Season be designated as a “Season of Global Awareness” for all congregations within the Central States Synod and that congregations intentionally lift up the church around the world through prayer, song, publicity, and in any way appropriate to the context of the congregation; and

That the congregations of the Central States Synod designate at least one Sunday during the Epiphany season as a “Sunday of Celebration for the Global Church.” This Sunday would focus not only on our Companion Synods in Papua New Guinea and Russia, but also the Global Ministry we share in through the Global Mission arm of the ELCA such as Missionary Sponsorship, Young Adults in Global Mission, and our support of Projects that promote the witness of the Gospel, works of compassion and Justice ministry around the world. This Sunday should also be a time to lift up local international ministries such as Ethnic Specific ministries within the Central States Synod, and congregational mission trips to places such as Latin America or the Caribbean; and

That **Sunday, June 17, 2018**, be designated as a Sunday of solidarity, and prayer for, our Companion District, the Kotte District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea

(ELCPNG). *This date is chosen because it was in the summer of 1876 that the first Lutheran Missionary arrived in Papua New Guinea to begin mission work among the ancestors of the Christians of the Kotte District. And*

That **Sunday, September 23, 2018**, be designated as a Sunday of solidarity with, and prayer for, our Companion Synod in Russia, the “Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Urals, Siberia, and Far East” (ELCUSFE), with a special focus on the Far Eastern Deanery. *This date was chosen because it was on September 17, 1997, that the church building that had been confiscated by the Soviets in 1935 was formally returned to the congregation of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Vladivostok, and this marks the beginning of the resurrection of the Lutheran Church in Eastern Russia.*

The Central States Synod Companion Synod Team will provide resources for mission education and worship for the Epiphany season, and additionally, prayer requests, recent news and communications from our Companion Churches prior to the two Companion Synod Sundays to help us to “accompany one another” in our journey as followers, servants and witnesses to Jesus Christ in our respective parts of God’s world.

SA.17.02. DESIGNATION OF BETHANY LUTHERAN HOME SUNDAY.

It was MSC:

That the 2017 Central States Synod Assembly designate Sunday, November 5, 2017, as “Bethany Home Sunday in November 2017” in support of our mission as a ministry partner of the ELCA.

Bethany Lutheran Home was established by the Augustana Lutheran Synod Convention held at Elim Lutheran Church in Marquette, Kansas, in November 1911. The Bethany Home Association hereby acknowledges the gifts of love and financial support awarded pursuant to the resolution adopted in 2016 by the Central States Synod Assembly in support of “the Bethany Home Sunday in November 2016” and looks forward to such continued support.

SA.17.03. DESIGNATION OF LUTHERAN SENIOR SERVICES WEEKEND.

It was MSC:

That all congregations of the Central States Synod be encouraged to use the bulletin inserts and the intercessory prayer petitions provided by Lutheran Senior Services on the weekend of September 16-17, 2017, as a way of informing our brothers and sisters in Christ of how God is at work through this ministry with seniors; and

That the Assembly stand and offer our “Amen—Alleluia—Thanks be to God” to the work of ministry being done through Lutheran Senior Services.

The Assembly stood and shouted “Amen—Alleluia—Thanks be to God!”

SA.17.04. CHRISTIAN VOCATION.

It was MSC:

That the Central States Synod designate August 27, 2017, as “Christian Vocation Sunday,” and prior to this date, the Central States Synod provide and post resources on the Synod website and in electronic communication to assist congregations to address and focus on Christian Vocation in liturgy, proclamation, and education; and

That congregations encourage and equip members in their Christian vocation through the provision of education, be it through congregational education session(s) for adults and youth, Synod-wide education sessions and discussion groups, or other means, including resources from the Life of Faith Initiative (www.lifeoffaith.info) offering of theological training through schools of study, or other creative options; and

That the Central States Synod through the work of the PMA Task Force and other current Synod teams continue to develop and provide educational information and opportunities regarding Christian vocation.

Pastor Vickers was thanked for his presentation of resolutions. The Assembly would consider other resolutions on Saturday.

Assembly participants were provided with cupcakes to enjoy on “National Cupcake Day.”

A break was taken from 1:45 until 2:00 p.m. to facilitate movement of participants to workshop sites in the hotel.

WORKSHOP SESSION #1

From 2:00 until 3:00 p.m., Assembly participants attended the following workshops:

KC for Refugees

On the Way: Catholic-Lutheran Relations

Table Talk: The Reformation for Families

The Forgotten Luther: Social Teachings

Creating Blessing Rituals for Worship

A New Premise for Discussing the Reformation

How to Talk about Politically Sensitive Topics and Still be Friends

Service Project – Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry Urban Orchard and Community Garden

Service Project – Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry Lunch Sack Packing Party

A break was taken from 3:00 until 3:15 p.m.

WORKSHOP SESSION #2

From 3:15 until 4:15 p.m., participants attended the following workshops:

Lutheran-Muslim Relations

On the Way: Catholic-Lutheran Relations

Table Talk: The Reformation for Families

The Forgotten Luther: Social Teachings

Women and Reformation: Opportunities and Challenges

Practicing Incarnation: Creating Opportunities to Encounter God

Service Project – Card Making for the Sake of Others

Service Project – Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry Lunch Sack Packing Party

The Assembly was in recess at 4:15 p.m., until Saturday, June 10, at 8:00 a.m.

The Assembly banquet was held at 6:00 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom. Bishop Gustafson welcomed the Assembly to dinner. Pastor Michael Kern, Assembly Chaplain, led the Assembly

in a table prayer. After the meal, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton provided some words of introduction. Heather Yerian Keck was recognized for her recent completion of the PMA program. Bishop Gustafson and Pastor Keith Hohly assisted with the celebration of ordination anniversaries of rostered persons. Following the evening program, Pastor Susan Candea thanked the attendees and gave announcements. Bishop Gustafson concluded the evening festivities at 7:40 p.m. with closing remarks.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2017

PLENARY SESSION #4 – SYNOD BUSINESS

The Assembly convened for the business session at 8:00 a.m., on Saturday, June 10, 2017. Pastor Michael Kern, Assembly Chaplain, led the group in prayer for the business and ministry of the Synod. Bishop Roger Gustafson assumed the Chair and called for the final report of the Credentials Committee.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Theodore Keesee presented the final report of the Credentials Committee, as of 8:00 a.m., on Saturday, June 10, 2017. The report follows:

375 Voting Members

248 Lay Voting Members (66% of Voting Members); 145 female; 103 male

127 Clergy Voting Members (34% of Voting Members); 44 female; 83 male

Includes 13 Voting Members who are Persons of Color/Language Other than English

Includes 8 Voting Members who are Youth

27 Visitors

402 TOTAL ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION

RESULT OF ELECTION

The Assembly received the result of the election for the At Large position, female clergy, on Synod Council:

Rev. Kristen Koch 152

Rev. Anita Strommen 131

Bishop Gustafson declared Rev. Kristen Koch elected. He invited all those who were elected to Synod Council and Committee positions to stand. Bishop Gustafson declared them installed.

ELCA PRESENTATION

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was welcomed to the podium for her “State of the Church” presentation. She thanked the Central States Synod for faithfully remitting Mission Support and for the ministry we share. She gave thanks for the Church-wide support of the Campaign for the ELCA and highlighted aspects of that campaign. She emphasized the interdependence of the three expressions of the Church: congregations, synods, and ELCA. Ecumenical relationships and inter-faith connections are a hallmark of the ELCA. As a part of

Bishop Eaton's report, a video of ELCA ministry highlights was shown to the Assembly. She concluded her remarks by reminding the Assembly that we are in ministry together, and she thanked the Assembly and Bishop Gustafson for ministry accomplished and still to come. The Assembly thanked Bishop Eaton for her presentation and her leadership.

VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dennis Allerheiligen, Synod Vice-President, gave his report to the Assembly. He gave thanks for the participation of the Voting Members, including those youth who were elected as Voting Members from their congregations. He also expressed his thanks to Bishop Gustafson and the Synod staff for their leadership and ministry. In addition, he spoke words of appreciation for the work of the Synod Council. He noted that the Synod works well together, while also facing challenges in the years ahead.

CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING 1/31/2019.

Bishop Gustafson declared that the proposed budget for FYE 1/31/2019 was properly before the Assembly. Scott Schulte, Treasurer, proceeded to the podium for budget interpretation and to address questions and concerns. Scott Schulte observed that the budget had been recommended by the Synod Council for passage, and that it was the responsibility of the Assembly to approve it.

It was voted to approve the budget proposed for the Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2019 in the amount of \$1,753,806. Scott Schulte was thanked for his work as Treasurer.

APPROVAL OF 2018 COMPENSATION GUIDELINES.

Bishop Gustafson introduced Kathy Nevans, Independence, MO, as the Chair of the Synod Compensation Guidelines Task Force. Ms. Nevans presented the 2018 Synod Guidelines for Professional Leaders, as proposed by the Compensation Guidelines Task Force, and as recommended for approval by the Synod Council in March.

It was MSC to amend the Compensation Guidelines by adding the following sentence to the final paragraph of Section Two – Benefits (ELCA BENEFITS PLAN – PORTICO): “Congregations, in consultation, with the rostered leaders, have the option of moving 2% of the recommended retirement contribution to help those rostered leaders reduce their student loan principal.”

It was MSC to adopt the Compensation Guidelines for 2018, as amended. Gratitude was expressed to the members of the Task Force for their work.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS.

Pastor Phil Vickers was called upon to present resolutions for the consideration of the Assembly.

SA.17.05. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.

It was MSC (as duly amended):

That the Central States Synod encourage its leaders and congregations to make use of the resources of Lutherans Restoring Creation for faith-based congregational initiatives addressing care of creation and the threat of climate ~~change~~-damage, including personal “green discipleship” and action to conserve energy and/or use of renewable energy, congregational educational

programs and action plans that may include such things as installing solar panels to generate renewable electricity, utilizing the Lutheran study guide on the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis (Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home), and supporting policies that seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: and,

That the Central States Synod recommend that all members of its congregations be active environmental stewards and “green disciples” by engaging in prayer for guidance, study to gain a better understanding of environmental issues, and action to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

SA.17.06. REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS.

A motion was made and seconded to delete the final “resolved” of the resolution (see below). After a vote to close debate, the motion was defeated.

A motion was made and seconded to insert the phrase “non-criminal” in the final “resolved,” in the following manner: “,,,,, committed to protecting non-criminal refugees and undocumented sisters and brothers.....”

After a vote to close debate, the motion was defeated.

The resolution follows:

It was MSC:

That the Central States Synod will encourage all congregations of the Synod to support and engage in the ongoing work of welcoming refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and various partner organizations and ministries within the confines of this Synod; and

That the Central States Synod recommits to being an advocate and justice seeker for refugees, requests that the synodical bishop communicates our concerns to our members of Congress and other federal, state and local elected officials, and encourages all congregations and their members to express their concern for refugees to their elected officials; and

That all congregations of the Central States Synod be encouraged to pray for the displaced and refugees around the world, for aid and resettlement organizations, for just and humane governmental policies that reflect our nation’s core values of welcome and inclusivity, and for a world where no one need flee their home for fear of violence, oppression or economic hardship; and

That each congregation and Synodical leadership be encouraged to celebrate and give thanks for the rich and diverse gifts refugees bring to our communities, our state(s) and our nation by annually hosting a Refugee Sunday (www.lirs.org/refugeesunday); and

That the Central States Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that the Presiding Bishop communicate the church’s resolute commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the U.S. and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and members of Congress; and, further,

That the Central States Synod Council appoint a task force to explore becoming a Sanctuary Synod of the ELCA, to be supportive of congregations committed to protecting refugees and undocumented sisters and brothers from arrest and deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. The task force is to report back to the 2018 Synod Assembly.

SA.17.07. SYNOD ASSEMBLY MEETING DATES.

The following resolution was defeated: Resolved that beginning in 2020 future Synod Assemblies begin on Friday evenings and conclude by Noon on Sunday.

SA.17.08. CONGREGATIONS THAT HAVE LEFT THE ELCA.

It was MSC:

That the Central States Synod in Assembly give thanks for Zion Lutheran Church, Everest, Kansas, (which has left the ELCA), and the partnership in mission and ministry we shared over the years; and

That the Chaplain of this Assembly lead us in prayer for all of Christ's Church.

Pastor Michael Kern, Assembly Chaplain, led the Assembly in prayer.

SA.17.09. RETIREMENTS.

It was MSC;

That the Central States Synod in Assembly expresses appreciation to the following retired persons (since the last Assembly) by standing and giving applause in thanksgiving for them and their service to the Church:

The Rev. Beverly Jo Arnold
The Rev. Daniel C. Friberg
The Rev. J. Vincent Goss
The Rev. Katharine Redpath
The Rev. James Schack
The Rev. James Strasen
The Rev. Julia Will

The Assembly stood and applauded.

SA.17.10. FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

It was MSC:

That the Central States Synod in Assembly stands to sing our praises in the words of the hymn, *Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service* (stanzas 1 and 4), remembering before God with reverence and affection those workers in the Kingdom of God who have passed through the gates of death to life eternal since our last convening, and thanking God for their faithful service:

The Rev. Robert L. Albin
The Rev. Shelby L. Bailey
The Rev. William D. Brooks
The Rev. Donald L. Hawk
The Rev. Holland H. Jones
The Rev. Alfred W. Lindberg, Jr.
The Rev. Arthur Ohl

The Assembly stood and sang *Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service* (Stanzas 1 and 4).

A word of thanks was extended to Pastor Phil Vickers and other members of the Resolutions Committee for their fine work.

ISSUES OF CONSCIENCE

Pastor William Yancey expressed remarks on an issue of conscience.

Bishop Gustafson recessed the meeting of the Synod Assembly.

The Assembly proceeded to serve as the Bethany Home Association in order to elect persons to fill positions on the Board of Directors of Bethany Lutheran Home, Lindsborg, KS.

MEETING OF THE BETHANY HOME ASSOCIATION.

Pastor Jim Strasen, President of the Bethany Home Board of Directors, called the meeting of the Bethany Home Association to order. He advised the Voting Members of their responsibility of electing members to the Board of Directors of Bethany Lutheran Home to 3-year terms. Pastor Strasen prayed for discernment prior to the election.

It was MSC to elect the following persons to terms on the Bethany Home Board of Directors:
3-year terms - The Rev. Jim Strasen, Ms. Jean Rowland, Mr. Jim Ruble, and Ms. Mari Loder
2-year term – Ms. Kathy Richardson; 1-year term – Ms. Debbie Jacobson

The nominees were declared elected to the Bethany Home Board of Directors. Pastor Strasen thanked the Assembly for the support of Bethany Home. The meeting of the Bethany Home Association was adjourned.

2018 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

It was announced that the 2018 Synod Assembly would be held June 7-9, 2018, on the campus of Bethany College, Lindsborg, KS. Music leadership will be provided by the ELCA Global Mission Team; a video highlighting the music of the group was shown to the Assembly.

Pastor Susan Canda announced that the festive closing worship service would take place at Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS, beginning at 1:00 p.m. (Music prelude beginning at 12:30 p.m.)

CLOSING WORSHIP SERVICE

The Assembly concluded with a festival worship service at 1:00 p.m., in Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS. The theme of the service was *Growing in Grace for the Life of the World*, with a focus on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Bishop Roger Gustafson presided at the Service of Holy Communion, and ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was the preacher. Ms. Ericka Youngquist served as the Assisting Minister. The order for the Closing of a Synod Assembly was a part of the service. The service concluded at 2:50 p.m., at which time the Assembly was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Loren D. Mai
Secretary, Central States Synod