

Minutes

NT-NL Synod Assembly

Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Meeting: April 26-27, 2018

Calvary Lutheran Church, Richland Hills, TX

Friday April 26, 2019

Opening Assembly Worship/Eucharist

Service of the Word and Order was conducted for the Opening of Assembly.

What Happens in the Church Does Not Stay in the Church is the theme of this assembly.

Bishop Gronberg and Pastor Phil Heinze welcomed Assembly voting members, visitors, guests and vendors.

Conference Out West Ministry Update

Pr. Kyle Rouze, Co-Chair of the assembly introduced Pr. Diane Eggemeyer, Dean of the Conference out West, who gave updates on conference ministry events. Bethel, Avoca, Trinity, Miles, Midland, Calvary Lutheran, Faith, Sagerton, Hope, Midland, Christ, Odessa and Grace, Abilene ministries were all highlighted.

Business Session I

Stephanie Varnum presented the Agenda, Standing Committees, Rules of Procedure, and Minutes from the Synod Council. She introduced Pr. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Mr. Rick Bidne, Assembly Parliamentarian.

Ann Hafften was introduced as the Chairwoman of the Nominating Committee who introduced Mr. Alfred Gorvie, Chair of the Elections Committee. Alfred presented the ballots for nominees for various uncontested positions.

Nominees are:

1. Synod Vice President:

Ballot A – Synod Vice President – Mr. Tom Blaney

2. Synod Council positions:

Ballot B – Male Minister of Word and Sacrament from Metroplex North conference – Pr. Ernie Hinojosa

Ballot C – Lay Female from Panhandle conference – Mrs. Carolyn Klaus

Ballot D – Lay Male from Metroplex West conference – Mr. Jeff Manthei

Ballot E – Lay Female from Metroplex West conference – Mrs. Ann Hafften

3. Committees:

Ballot F – Consultation (need two lay persons and two ministers)

Lay Persons:

Mr. Ronald Gubrud

Deacon Stephanie Varnum

Ministers:

Rev. Norma Cooper

Rev. Franz Schemmel

Ballot G – Discipline (elect two)

Mrs. Angie Krug

Mr. Mark Hadley

Bishop spoke about the Resolutions of Appreciation for the service of two faithful servants to the Synod. Mrs. Tyna Oslie has been the only Administrator that NTNL has ever known. This resolution is:

Whereas God calls the baptized into vocation and service;

and Whereas Tyna Oslie served the NT-NL faithfully as Synod Administrator since its inception; and

Whereas including her prior decade of service to a congregation of the future ELCA she spent 40 years of her life in service to the church and NT-NL; and

Whereas she has been and continues to be faithful and diligent as a member of an NT-NL congregation (Shepherd of Life, Arlington); and

Whereas she has represented NT-NL and the church in exemplary fashion; and

Whereas she retired from service to NT-NL December 31, 2018:

Be it resolved that the Synod Council of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gives its heartfelt gratitude and thanksgiving to Tyna Oslie for her service and encourage all rostered and authorized leaders and members of NT-NL congregations to likewise give thanks for her work as she continues to care for her family and move into new vocational service.

In Witness Whereof this Ninth day of February, Year of our Lord 2019...

Bishop also spoke about the faithful service of Deacon Stephanie Varnum. This resolution is:

Whereas Christ calls us all to serve one another as he has served us and our Lutheran Confessions affirm the vocation of the baptized in the church; and

Whereas Deacon Stephanie Varnum has served the NT-NL faithfully as Synod Vice President since 2008; and

Whereas she has served in that role with integrity, compassion, sincerity and a deep love for the church; and

Whereas she has been a consistent leader for the synod through capital campaign, a bishop election, church conflicts and celebrations; and

Whereas she has represented NT-NL to the wider church and world as a model of Christian leadership; and

Whereas she has discerned it is time for her to retire from this role in 2019:

Be it resolved that the Synod Council of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gives its heartfelt gratitude and thanksgiving to Deacon Varnum for her service and encourage the 2019 synod assembly and all members of NT-NL congregations to likewise give thanks for this “good and faithful” servant as she moves into new vocational service.

1st Credentials Report

Pr. Matt Schroeder, Chair of the Credentials Committee reported the following voting members:

Voting Members

Rostered

ELCA Ordained Voting Member- 59 *Count as Ordained

AIM or Deacon:
Ordained SAWL. *Count as Ordained
Retired Rostered Leader: 12 *Count as Ordained
Retired Rostered AIM or Deacon 1
Total Rostered: 72

Non-Rostered Members
Lay Voting Member: 117
Lay SAWL: 8
Lay Mission Council Member
Total Non-Rostered Members: 125

Total Voting Members: 197

<i>VOTED SA 04.19.01</i>	<i>To approve the Agenda of the 2019 Assembly. APPROVED</i>
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<i>VOTED SA 04.19.02</i>	<i>To approve the Rules of Procedure for the 2019 Assembly. APPROVED</i>
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<i>VOTED SA 04.19.03</i>	<i>To approve the Minutes of the 2018 Assembly. APPROVED</i>
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<i>VOTED SA 04.19.04</i>	<i>To approve the 2019 Care and Compensation Package. APPROVED</i>
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Elections

Bishop called for nominations from the floor for officers and Synod Council positions.

<i>VOTED SA 04.19.05</i>	<i>To approve election of uncontested positions by Acclamation. APPROVED</i>
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Bible Study Session One

Bishop introduced Rev. Dr. Kendra Mohn to conduct our first bible study. Dr. Mohn spoke about the Assembly theme - What happens here doesn't stay here. What is God doing through us, around us, and what are we being equipped for? What happens in our churches should not stay in our buildings. It should go out into the world. This Little Light of Mine was sung by the Assembly. We tell our children to let their light shine.

She spoke about what Jesus did when he had a gathered crowd. He started with the Beatitudes. He is trying to form an identity. Then he shapes what their light should look like. He then gives the crowd the Sermon on the Mount. Now, they are empowered to go out into the world and let their light shine.

In letting the light shine, it is very hard to put it out. Jesus spoke about the absurdity of covering a light with a bushel basket. You wouldn't do it.

From where does the light come? This question is a driving force. Titles used by the Roman Empire were also used to describe Jesus and his ministry. Jesus let us all know that we are the light of the world. Where do we look for light in the world? She asked the Assembly to think about this question for a few minutes.

We grow up in the world economically and politically aware, but not theologically. Learn to see God. How is he working? Where do you see the light? This is what Jesus means when he calls us the light of the world. God lights us so that we can shine in the world. He will never cover us up. We shine so that people will know how to see God and his work through us. Pr. Mohn asked the Assembly to think about who lit the light in us. What God does through us goes out into the world.

When we share the stories of our baptism and our ministries in the world, we are letting our light shine. When we go out of our church walls, the community gets to see us shine. Living out the promise of our baptism, people experience Grace, Mercy, and the Love of God through us.

The Assembly took a break after the study.

Latinx Ministry Updates

Pr. Kyle Rouze introduced Violeta Siguenza del Aguila and Pr. Jesus Escamilla to provide updates regarding NTNLC Latinx Conference ministries. Pr. Jesus highlighted many diverse ministries. Pr. Violeta spoke about the demographics of the Metroplex and how the Latinx ministries will be expanding in the future. Pr. Kris Totzke presented Pr. Violeta with a certificate for her anniversary in ministry.

Bishop Gronberg spoke about accountability issues with respect to two ministries who left the ELCA improperly. Santa Maria de Guadalupe and San Miguel left improperly (not according to constitutional requirements) and we are in an ongoing litigation to bring resolution to issues with these ministries.

Report of the Treasurer

Mark Bradley reported on the 2018 Audit. He stated that the full report of this audit would be presented to the 2020 Assembly. He also spoke about the NTNL Constitutional Amendment to amend the timing of Audits for the Synod. Mark will meet with the auditors in May and report to Synod Council the audit report for 2018 during their September meeting.

Mark then presented the 2019 Plan. This is the budget for the upcoming year. He also reported on 2018 financial results. He also presented the 2020 Strategy for the upcoming year. Key points were discussed for all topics. Working within our means is a focus. 2020 Strategy Budget Amendments can be submitted to the Secretary.

Portico Benefits Service

Bishop introduced Deacon Terry Endres. Deacon Terry shared a presentation with the Assembly. She brought greetings from Portico. She thanked NTNL for our continued support. She spoke about highlights from Portico's work with congregations of the ELCA. September 24th will have a retirement seminar in Waco. Portico recently won an award for innovation in benefits and keeping costs in check.

Bishop spoke about the work Portico does within the Synod. He praised their work in a challenging benefits environment.

Dallas Area Metro North Conference Update

Pr. Neil White, Dean, spoke about the various ministries of their conference. He spoke about their conference hosting creative conversations that assist in ministry development for the future. He also spoke about demographic shifts within their conference. The highlights included the ministries that are working in their communities. Pr. Kris Totzke honored three persons celebrating anniversaries. Pr. Irma Banales, Pr. Neil White, and Pr. Jamie Bruning were all recognized.

Bishop highlighted that the largest Hindu temple in North Texas is right across the street from Rejoice, Frisco. Our demographics have changed and how do we respond. Bishop encouraged us to tell our stories.

Fund for Leaders

Bishop spoke about the NTNL Fund for Leaders and how last year's Assembly offering was directed to this ministry. Pr. Kris Totzke presented the scholarship recipients for the NTNL Fund for Leaders. Kimberly Cooper and Kyle Hicks are these recipients. The ELCA Fund for Leaders awarded Jonathan Lys with a full scholarship for his studies. Jonathan thanked the Assembly members, Synod, and ELCA Churchwide for his scholarship.

Report of the Bishop

Bishop highlighted excerpts from his reports. The pictures from his report tell the stories that are happening in our Synod. It is important to be together and see each other to continue our bond and mutual ministry. Bishop wanted to have an Assembly where there was an actual sanctuary for a worship service. Calvary, Richland Hills made this possible. Bishop noted that he has visited all congregations and he would like to continue to visit and be present on Sundays. The Synod needs creative growth in congregations. Our communities are growing and we need to grow with them. He outlined a strategy for action that related to some critical questions. How do we use the resources at our disposal? How do we maintain accountability in our actions? How do we make the ministry of Briarwood viable? How do we work on justice issues?

After three years in office, participation goals for the Synod continue to be addressed. We set goals for youth and young adults. The National Youth Gathering was attended by many youth from NTNL. Parochial reports are encouraged and increased participation is necessary. Mission support is also needing an increase. There is progress in mission support participation although total receipts in 2018 was lower and the 2019 budget reflects this reality. Leader reports are required by the Synod. Participation in Leader reports need to improvement. This fosters our relationships.

He highlighted the progress on three areas of his focus for 2019. Youth and Young Adults, Leadership development, and Global Relationships. He lifted up Pr. Kris Totzke and Director of Evangelical Mission Pr. Irma Banales on their work in our Synod. Their efforts have made possible many goal targets to be realized.

He spoke about the events well attended by Youth and Young Adults. In January, a Confirmation Fest was held at Christ Lutheran Church. Over 130 youth and 50 adults gathered for this event. We have youth in our congregations, the question is are we willing to invest in them? He also highlighted Sarah Weaver, YAGM in 2019.

Bishop spoke about many leaders raised up within our Synod. We are blessed with many candidates for ordination upcoming. Bishop encouraged us to further consider the possibility of LGBTQ ministers in our congregations. He lifted up that we are now 10 years past the 2009 decision. While no congregation is ever forced to consider or call a candidate, those unwilling to consider the gifts of candidates because of gender, sexuality, race, or background will be limiting who is available to serve their parish.

The Parish Lay Ministry Academy is going very strong. Coaching is also being developed and used within our Synod. Finally, we need to continue to strengthen our global ministry partners. Bishop brought greetings from Sierra Leone and Bishop Momoh. We need to continue our work with our companion Synod. The ELCSL wants to build people, not just buildings. NTNL will be an accompanying partner in this endeavor.

Bishop Gronberg spoke about the history of the ministry of Briarwood. Camping ministries were already established at Luther Hill and Chrysalis for many years before Briarwood was purchased from the Presbyterians. Briarwood was a very late comer to Lutheran camping ministry in Texas. Briarwood has struggled to get a viable camping ministry going. But, the DiscipleLife Alive Campaign made the Leadership Center at Briarwood a reality. With this center, more events have been made possible at Briarwood. Continued improvement of the facilities was necessary to support this new event growth.

Bishop made a commitment to make the investment in Briarwood viable. The question of what the Leadership Center would do was studied by a committee. Out of this study, new shared staffing models as well as shared resources between Briarwood and the NTNL Synod Office were developed. This was an adaptive change that was necessary. Now, a Director of the Leadership Center was developed. This shared employee expense expresses the desire to be good stewards of this valuable resource. Also, land was sold to remove bank loans associated with the property. Now, Briarwood has no further notes with outside creditors.

As a result of these changes, the ministry at Briarwood is moving in the right direction. Briarwood is cash flow positive in the first quarter without touching any reserves established from the land sale. Now, another shared staff member will handle Administrator duties. Theological education is being developed by our Latinx Conference (Secondary School of Theological Education) that is a bridge between Parish Lay Ministry Academy and TEEM ministry to further develop leaders and deepen their education and build abilities for seminary education.

Bishop challenged the Assembly members to support events at Briarwood. There are many opportunities from a myriad of programs that can be attended by members of our Synod congregations. He encouraged Assembly to continue to support Briarwood.

Finally, he spoke about what we are doing moving forward in the Synod. Continue to invite Bishop and/or his staff to attend your congregation. Also, the Youth from our Synod are performing service projects this weekend as well. He reminded us that we are an abundant Synod with many resources.

He expressed his excitement for upcoming ministries and events for the Synod. Next year's Assembly will be themed as "Crossing Borders." We hope to hold the next Assembly at Paul Quinn College which is the only historically black college or university in the metroplex. Women in Ministry will also have a task force next year to further the development of Women Leaders.

Assembly Break for Worship

Banquet

A pot luck style banquet was prepared for the Assembly attendees and guests by Calvary, Richland Hills, Umoja, Fort Worth, and San Gabriel, Alvarado.

Saturday April 27, 2019

Opening Music

Pr. Phil Heinze and Pr. Kyle Rouze entertained the Assembly with songs they use in their worship.

Welcome

Bishop Gronberg welcomed the Assembly members back to today's meeting. He explained the afternoon workshop schedule

Heart of Texas Ministry Update

Pr. Kyle Rouze introduced Pr. Heath Abel, Dean, to the Assembly. Pr. Abel then introduced Charlie Begossi from the conference who spoke about ministries in which the conference congregations are engaged. Charlie spoke about Relay for Life which has been a very successful program for their conference. It is supported by a barbeque fund-raising event annually which is continuing to grow. Pr. Dave Anfenson spoke about Lutheran Sunset Ministry in Clifton which is an assisted living facility serving central Texas residents. Many other ministries in the conference were described. Pr. Kris Totzke recognized the anniversary of Pr. Terry Atkins service.

2nd Credentials Report

Pr. Matt Schroeder, Chair of the Credentials Committee reported the following voting members:

Voting Members

Rostered

ELCA Ordained Voting Member- 68 *Count as Ordained

AIM or Deacon:

Ordained SAWL. *Count as Ordained

Retired Rostered Leader- 13 *Count as Ordained

Retired Rostered AIM or Deacon 1

Total Rostered: 82

Non-Rostered Members

Lay Voting Member: 129

Lay SAWL: 8

Lay Mission Council Member

Total Non-Rostered Members: 137

Total Voting Members: 219

Committee on Minutes

Pr. Julio Cruz-Natal reported that the Minutes of the Assembly were in order at this time.

Youth Activity Report

Bishop spoke about the issues surrounding youth and young adults that exist today. He spoke about some of the activities they were engaged in over the weekend. He expressed gratitude for their service this weekend.

Bible Study Session Two

Rev. Dr. Kendra Mohn recapped her study on Friday. Where do we go from here? It goes out into the neighborhood. The Assembly sang two more verses from “This Little Light of Mine.” Today the focus is on the neighborhood. We need a sense of who our neighbors are. The Assembly was asked to discuss their neighborhood.

Dr. Mohn then had the Assembly sing the theme song from Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. The show just celebrated its 50th year. She spoke about the documentary on Fred Rogers life. Fred Rogers was a Presbyterian minister. He was very particular in his execution of his show. He spoke about feelings from a masculine perspective. He asked you what you felt about topics. He was learning to find the truth, which will set you free. By breaking rules of television at the time, Mr. Rogers Neighborhood was able to bring his unique view of Neighborhood to the masses.

Luke's Gospel of the lead up to and telling of the Good Samaritan relays the perspective on neighbors that it uniquely Christian. Luke spoke about the deed as well as the economics of the event. Jesus and the lawyer had a shared understanding of the law but a different interpretation. There are reasons to distrust your enemies. But Jesus asks us to love all of our neighbors.

Dr. Mohn spoke about Mr. Rogers Neighborhood that it is perceived as a form of utopia. But, the first episode is the story of King Friday the 13th. The episode was about building walls and not accepting change. Over the course of the episode and with encouragement from the outsiders, the walls come down and all are seen as the neighborhood. Engage people where they are and show them respect. She relayed many illustrations from the show to describe the neighborhood.

How do we engage the neighborhoods in which we live? It requires humility and a listening heart. It is worth it to care for the humanity in all. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love fulfills the Law of God. You are sent into the world to engage the neighborhood.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, the question of “Who is my neighbor?” is a powerful question. Jesus says “Which of these three was a neighbor?” and the context changes. It forces us to focus on us as individuals. How are we spreading the Love of God? Mr.

Rogers asked, “Do you know that the only way to be happy in this world is to find a way to help your neighbor?” And, you should go out and help your neighbor. Don't wait for someone to tell you what to do.

Bishop offered reflections on the study as well. He highlighted the many different ways in which we can engage our neighbors and reminded us to be aware of issues in our communities. He encouraged Assembly members to continue to lead in the efforts to welcome our neighbors.

Eastern Conference Ministry Update

Pr. Kyle Rouze introduced Pr. Vicki Taylor, Dean, and Pr. Violeta Siguenza del Aguila to provide updates. There are 27 churches in the conference. There are many ministries but she introduced Pr. Violeta to relay her specific ministries. Pr. Violeta relayed what Walnut Hill Lutheran Church was doing with the DFW Faith Health Collaborative. They are providing free screenings for health for their community. Basic screenings should care for many and reduce the stress on the emergency rooms of the County hospital. She spoke about AuntBertha.com which is a list of all the health resources in the DFW Metroplex. They are also working on a Toastmasters program for the youth to help them with public speaking. Pr. Kris Totzke recognized Pr. Vicki Taylor and Pr. Debra Lyonne for anniversaries.

Bishop gave more reflections on resources and ministry opportunities that exist in our Synod. He encouraged us to connect to these resources as a valuable way to start or extend ministry efforts.

ELCA Churchwide Report

Stephanie Varnum introduced Pr. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to the Assembly. Secretary Boerger relayed that our Synod Assembly was one of only two that he has visited twice during his tenure. He said that it was his job was to describe this Church.

Instead of claiming the Churchwide Offices in Chicago are the ELCA, he emphasized the individual congregations within the ELCA are primarily the church. Authority is granted upward to the Synods and ultimately to the Churchwide organization. When you act as a congregation, the ELCA is acting. We are members of all three expressions of the Church (congregation, Synod, and Churchwide). He presented a video to the Assembly from the ELCA. He thanked Synod Assembly for their continued support of ELCA Churchwide ministry.

He spoke about the Campaign for the ELCA to raise funds for ELCA ministries. He spoke about what these funds will do for the various ministries in which the Churchwide organization is involved. He spoke about educating women leaders worldwide. He spoke about disaster response. Leadership and Congregation Vitality are also focus

areas. Let's get back to the basics. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has asked congregations to get back to using the Small Catechism.

He thanked our Synod for the raising up of leaders for Candidacy. It is our duty to raise up leaders. He was encouraged to be a leader from a young age.

He spoke about immigration issues and how to assist in this process. He spoke about the care needs for children inside and outside of the country.

He spoke about the upcoming Churchwide Assembly. Presiding Bishop and Secretary are offices that will be elected. Also, an Inter-Religious statement will be made. As we are in full communion with other denominations, we are in a unique position to be a leader in ecumenical topics. Other statements will be made at the Churchwide Assembly that express who we are moving forward. The ELCA does the theological study of statements prior to release that other denominations look to for guidance.

He encouraged us to share our stories. We learn when we share what we do. He highlighted many other activities the Churchwide organization has in action. He presented another video to the Assembly. He thanked us again for our work.

Bishop Gronberg presented a gift for Secretary Boerger of a cowboy hat and thanked Secretary Boerger for their time together.

Panhandle Conference Ministry Update

Pr. Kyle Rouze introduced Pr. Amanda Ullrich to provide an update on ministries in their conference. Pr. Ullrich spoke about St. John, Wilson and their support of feeding families from their church location. Other congregations in the conference were highlighted. They are proud that they have the youth engaged in many ministry efforts. A community garden in Levelland is a wonderful partnership with the community there. Pr. Kris Totzke recognized Pr. Jeremy Ullrich and Pr. Amanda Ullrich for their anniversaries.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) Update

Bishop Gronberg introduced Folabi Olagbaju from LIRS. He relayed that the mission of LIRS was to assist Lutherans fleeing war zones after World War II. After this war, one in six were refugees. Today, they are involved with immigration issues in the country as well as advocacy for issues with policy makers. LIRS welcomes their neighbors. He shared highlights of the issues they are seeing and the stories they are hearing. Immigrants are not a problem to be solved, but a blessing to receive.

Campus Ministry Update

The team from Campus Ministry in Denton were called forward. Pr. Celene Welch will be retiring in May. Christ the Servant in Denton as well as Rejoice, Frisco are involved

with the Campus Ministry. Bishop spoke about Pr. Jim Rowe being called to Campus Ministry as interim Campus Pastor.

NTNL Stewardship Update

The new team for stewardship was introduced. The team thanked the Bishop for his support in the establishment of this effort. The Stewardship of Life program was thanked for giving a grant to the team as well as the Mission Endowment Fund for supporting their work.

Report from Briarwood

Rev. Dr. Robert Smith was introduced to the Assembly by Bishop Gronberg. Dr. Smith asked the Assembly a few questions regarding participation in various events and ministries at Briarwood. The Briarwood Gala is May 4th and he encouraged participation in this event. Camping Ministry at Briarwood remains a focus. What do we think about Briarwood beyond Camping Ministry? Perhaps we see it as a Retreat Center. Do we think about it as the Leadership Center or the Synod Office? He encouraged us to think about all the things Briarwood is. What if we describe Briarwood as trees? He went on to describe the Ministry using trees as the guiding thought. He then went on to show how trees describe our efforts through and at Briarwood. He went on to highlight the many ways that the facility is used and the ministries the NTNL Staff are engaged with outside the facility. He spoke about the ecumenical engagements in which they are involved.

He spoke about the sale of land to address the budgetary constraints of the ministry. They are now poised to perform in a cash flow positive way. He stressed how the ministry will remain grounded in the past. They will not be changing the logo, but the colors used in the logo will change to reflect the communities we are seeking to embrace. They will change the website to www.bwtx.org and this change will be the new face of a new branding effort.

Mission Endowment Fund Update

Bishop Gronberg introduced Mrs. Linda Ness the new Executive director of the NT-NL MEF to the Assembly. Bishop expressed gratitude for the Mission Endowment Fund's work in the Synod. She recognized MEF Board members at the Assembly. She relayed that their annual event is on October 19th this year. Linda encouraged donations during the Assembly to the Fund. She praised the applicants for grants that she's received. They tell stories of ministry and activity in our Synod. She displayed a presentation to the Assembly.

Break for Lunch

Metroplex West Conference Updates

Pr. Kyle Rouze introduced Pr. Mark Hadley to the Assembly. Pr. Hadley highlighted many of the ministries of the conference. He spoke about Shepherd of Life's Food Pantry which has really taken off. A Mission Endowment Fund grant has assisted them with this ministry as well. The program has really taken off. They now are working with the Tarrant County Food Bank to source food through their program. They also give out diapers. Pr. Kris Totzke recognized Pr. Ernie Barr and Pr. Kathy Cox for anniversaries.

Break to Workshops

Pr. Phil Heinze directed the Assembly to the various workshops in which the Assembly could participate. The list of workshops included:

Worship workshop – Viktor Andersson
Music with Children and Families – Janelle Miller/Debbie Villavicienco
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services – Folabi Olagbaju
How to start at social ministry? SOL food pantry – Mark Hadley
Worship in a public space – Kristen Klade
Bishop forum – Erik Gronberg
#InMissionTogether: Ministry better Together – Kris Totzke & Len Avecilla
Parish Lay Ministry Academy – Phil Heinze
Critical Conversations – Todd Porter
Stewardship – Sandra Gass
Rural Ministries – Don Heller
Outreach and Evangelism – DEM Irma Bañales

Bible Study Session Three

Rev. Dr. Kendra Mohn prepared the Assembly for discussions that would be held. She talked about the TV program “On the Way.” She continued with the Gospel from Luke 24:13 and discussed the story of Jesus meeting the disciples on the road.

Roads in Jesus' time enabled travel and the movement of goods from place to place. Roads are connectors. Roads are also dangerous. So, the Disciples being on the road is symbolic of a larger narrative. We spend time on the road in our daily life. What does it mean to spend so much time in between locations?

The Disciples are in the midst of a discussion when Jesus meets them on the road. Their eyes are kept from recognizing Jesus. Jesus asks them what is going on. “Are you the only one who doesn't know?” is their response. They had hoped that something different would have happened to Jesus. They did not expect him to be crucified. We also, as a Church, have hoped for different outcomes in our past. She relayed the story of Doug Perrin and his assistance with past Assemblies. Dr. Mohn expressed regret that some things with regard to her ministry at Trinity that she had hoped for with Doug Perrin did not happen because he passed away.

Dr. Mohn asked the Assembly to discuss some events or things that they hoped would happen that didn't quite turn out as expected. Dr. Mohn pointed out that what you hope for got them moving. At this moment, is when you meet Jesus.

The Gospel continues with the Disciples commenting that the women had returned and claimed they had seen Angels who told them that Jesus was alive. Jesus tells them that should believe the scriptures. This had to happen. Dr. Mohn then discussed the story of Palestinian refugees after World War II. They are still refugees today. We should have empathy for refugees. This is where Jesus meets us, in the space between.

The Gospel story continues with Jesus intending to go on ahead on the dangerous road. But the Disciples let Jesus know that they day is almost done and invite him to come home with them. At the table, when they break bread, the Disciples then recognize Jesus and become witnesses to his resurrection. The guest becomes the host when Jesus breaks bread with the Disciples. Now they change from being people with a sad story to a positive story of hope and witness.

Our story is now, we have seen the Lord and He is Risen! Dr. Mohn asked the Assembly to discuss where they have seen Jesus. Dr. Mohn pointed out that we need community in order to discuss topics and work through issues. We trust that Jesus has shown up and that he has changed us. We have seen the Lord! We then sang “We Have Seen the Lord.”

Business Session III

Credentials

Pr. Matt Schroeder, Chair of the Credentials Committee reported the following voting members:

Voting Members

Rostered

ELCA Ordained Voting Member- 69 *Count as Ordained

AIM or Deacon:

Ordained SAWL. *Count as Ordained

Retired Rostered Leader- 13 *Count as Ordained

Retired Rostered AIM or Deacon 1

Total Rostered: 83

Non-Rostered Members

Lay Voting Member: 129

Lay SAWL: 8

Lay Mission Council Member

Total Non-Rostered Members: 137

Total Voting Members: 220

Bishop asked for questions regarding the Mission Strategy. Pr. Rusty Sullivan spoke that he had hoped for more response to a call for increase in mission support he had made in 2018. He encouraged the Assembly to grow in benevolence and mission support. There was no other speaking to the strategy.

VOTED SA 04.19.06

*To approve the 2020 Mission Strategy.
APPROVED*

Mark Bradley spoke about the Constitutional Amendment regarding Audits.

VOTED SA 04.19.07

*To approve the new amendment regarding
Audits.
APPROVED*

Reference and Counsel

Pr. Neil White presented the following Resolution of Appreciation:

WHEREAS the Metroplex West Conference of the Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has faithfully met in service to prepare for us, the 2019 Synod Assembly here in Richland Hills, Texas and,

WHEREAS our spirits have been fed with inspiring Bible Study led by the Rev. Kendra Mohn, Ph.D. and also by the joyful worship provided by the planners and the musicians, and

WHEREAS we as voting members and visitors have experienced true Christian fellowship because of the efforts of Pastor Heinze, Pastor Rouze, the members of Calvary Lutheran Church (the Yellow Vest Brigade) and all those persons and congregations who worked with them, including the supporting efforts of the staff of the NT-NL office, particularly Becky Brakke ...

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we thank our Assembly Co-Chairs, The Rev. Phil Heinze and The Rev. Kyle Rouze, and the 2019 Assembly planning team by asking all those who have served this assembly as workers of any and every kind to stand now as we express our gratitude with applause.

Assembly Host Message

Pr. Phil Heinze gave some final instructions for the Assembly regarding returning name tags and he let members know that box lunches were available for those traveling. Bishop thanked Pr. Heinze for his congregation's generosity in hosting the Assembly.

2020 Assembly Location

The 2020 Assembly location will be Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas and the Eastern Conference will host. Pr. Doris Harris (St. John, Dallas) and Pastor Jeffrey Bergeron (New Life in Christ, Duncanville) will be the co-chairs.

Assembly business concluded at 5:00 pm and a closing worship was held led by the youth of NT-NL.

Assembly was declared closed by Bishop Gronberg at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Weiss". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "W".

Todd Weiss
Secretary