

**Minutes**

**NT-NL Synod Assembly**

**Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Synod**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Meeting: September 26, 2020**

**Via Teleconference and Briarwood Retreat Center, Argyle, TX**

*Crossing Borders based on Psalm 126 v. 3* is the theme of this assembly.

Jason O’Neill and Bishop Gronberg welcomed attendees to Synod Assembly via teleconference.

A video comprised of Briarwood Summer Staff sang “I Believe” was presented for attendees. Then Bishop Gronberg welcomed attendees to Assembly.

**Brief Worship**

Bishop presided over a brief worship for Assembly.

Bishop declared Assembly to be in session.

Bishop thanked Jason O’Neill and Aaron Colwick for their assistance in this Assembly. Bishop highlighted the use of Zoom technology as specifically drew attention to the polling function that will be used to vote. Two test polls were shown to test the technology.

**Assembly Business Session**

**Agenda and Rules of Procedure**

Bishop spoke about the changes to Rules of Procedure during this online Assembly. He drew attention to Assembly Reference Materials

<i>VOTED SA 04.19.01</i>	<i>To approve the Rules of Procedure for the 2020 Assembly. APPROVED</i>
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<i>VOTED SA 04.19.02</i>	<i>To approve the Minutes of the 2019 Assembly and the Agenda of the 2020 Assembly. APPROVED</i>
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## **Audit Report & Introduction of 2021 Mission Strategy**

Mark Bradley presented the results of the last audit for NTNL. The opinion is favorable. He also presented the 2021 Mission Strategy for consideration by Assembly. Attendees were pointed to the Q&A box for asking questions.

## **First Ballot for NT-NL General Elections**

Bishop let Assembly know that I was serving as Elections Chair for this Assembly. I presented the following slate of candidates for available Synod Council positions.

Synod Secretary (4-year term):

Ballot A – [The Rev. Kelsey Fitting-Snyder](#), St. Matthew, Waco, Heart of Texas Conference

2. Synod Council positions:

Ballot B – Conference Out West Rostered Minister: [The Rev. Leslie Dunlap](#), Grace, Abilene

Ballot C – Dallas Area Metro North Lay Male: [Bruce Fisher](#), Resurrection, Plano

Ballot D – Eastern Conference Lay Female: [Renee Swanjord](#), Our Redeemer, Grand Prairie

Ballot E – Eastern Conference Lay Male: Corey Brown, Mount Olive, Dallas

Ballot F – Heart of Texas Conference Rostered Minister: The Rev. Austin Nickel, First, Waco

Ballot G – Latinx Conference Lay Female: [Maria Torres](#), Emanuel, Dallas

Ballot H – Latinx Conference Lay Male: Alfonso Marquez, San Gabriel, Alvarado

While Assembly waited for the first credentials report.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Credentials Report**

Jason O'Neill reported the following attendees.

Voting Members

Rostered

Total Rostered: 67

Non-Rostered Members

Total Non-Rostered Members: 101

## **Vote on Nominees En Bloc**

Assembly voted on the slate of candidates.

VOTED SA 04.19.03

*To approve the slate of candidates for Synod Council positions as presented to Assembly.*  
**APPROVED**

### **Report of the Bishop**

A video from Bishop Gronberg was displayed for Assembly. He highlight the various ministries and results that have been accrued throughout the year.

A video bringing greetings from Bishop Vashti Murphy-McKenzie 10<sup>th</sup> District AME was displayed for Assembly. Bishop Murphy-McKenzie is the first and only female Bishop in the AME tradition.

### **Celebration of 50/40/10 Anniversaries**

Pr. Kris Totzke spoke about various issues that are still prevalent today. Issues with women and LGBTQ+ ministers are still there. She encouraged us to continue efforts to break down barriers for all ministers. She presented a video highlighting women in ministry in NTNL and the ELCA.

### **Recognition of Ordination Anniversaries**

Bishop spoke about the many anniversaries throughout the Synod. The Ordination of Pr. Doris Dupree Harris, the first woman pastor of color in the ELCA, was particularly lifted up. Bishop offered prayer for women pastors, pastors of color, and pastors who are LGBT in orientation. A video highlighting anniversaries was presented.

### **Mission Endowment Fund Update**

Linda Ness gave an update on the Mission Endowment Fund. She let everyone know that the fund has given gifts of over \$900,000 from the funds establishment to date. She spoke about the need for funding in the time of COVID19 support. \$60,000 was allocated in addition to normal grants as additional support for our Synod congregations. She relayed her goals for the upcoming year and thanked the Synod congregations for their support.

### **NT-NL Public Witness Team Statement Introduction**

Bishop presented the Public Witness Team Statement from their team. He asked that we share this statement as a conversation starter for congregations. Pr. Wayne Menking gave a presentation regarding their statement.

## **Briarwood Report and Advisory Committee Meeting**

Pr. Robert Smith gave his report of the activities of Briarwood during this past year. A video presentation was displayed for Assembly. Pr. Smith highlighted the challenges of this year during COVID19. Summer Camp still happened. He spoke about the challenges of reopening the facility. He spoke about reimagining the ministry moving forward and of new possibilities.

## **Election of Briarwood Board Members**

A slate of nominees was presented by Pr. Smith.

Brandon Cooley  
Veronika Czutor  
Greg Getting  
Cathie Irons  
Edy Santos  
Veronica Webber Smith  
Doug Will

*VOTED SA 04.19.04*

*To approve the slate of candidates as presented for  
the Briarwood Board to Assembly.  
APPROVED*

## **Churchwide Rep., Assembly Video and Greeting**

Tom Blaney introduced Pr. Christopher Otten. Greetings were given to us via video by Pr. Otten. Bishop spoke about several NTNL Clergy who have served as Chaplains. A check in the amount of \$1,000 was presented via video to Pr. Otten to go toward development of Chaplain Ministry.

## **Presentation of NT-NL Gift to Fund for Leaders Federal Chaplain Scholarship**

Tom Blaney introduced Morgan Schmidlin, NTNL Lutheran Foundation of the South West Gift Planner, to Assembly. A video of her presentation was displayed for Assembly. Bishop encouraged all to engage with Morgan and her work through the Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest.

## **Lutheran Campus Ministry-Denton Update**

Pr. Kris Totzke introduced Rev. Jim Rowe who gave an update to Assembly regarding Lutheran Campus Ministry in Denton.

## **Business Session II**

Bishop introduced Pr. Kelsey Fitting-Snyder as the Chair of the Minutes Committee.

She affirmed the minutes are in order so far.

### **Credentials Report**

Jason O'Neill reported the following attendees.

Voting Members

Rostered

Total Rostered: 67

Non-Rostered Members

Total Non-Rostered Members: 101

Todd Weiss introduced the 2021 Care and Compensation for the Synod to Assembly.

*VOTED SA 04.19.05*

*To approve the 2021 Care and Compensation for  
the Synod.*

*APPROVED*

Mark Bradley presented the 2021 Mission Strategy for approval.

*VOTED SA 04.19.06*

*To approve the 2021 Mission Strategy.*

*APPROVED*

As we prepared for Worship, a video from ELCA Churchwide was presented highlighting various ministries and Lutheran efforts to share the Gospel throughout the world.

The date for the 2021 Assembly is tentatively April 23-24, 2021 with the location to be determined.

### **Worship and Closing**

Bishop spoke about the Stolls developed by the 50/40/10 team for Assembly.

Worship was held for Assembly with video and live support. Various participants were:

- Preacher: Bishop Tracie Bartholomew, New Jersey Synod, Chair, ELCA Conference of Bishops
- Liturgist: Rev. Irma Bañales
- Presider: Bishop Erik Gronberg
- Music: Online Choirs - King of Glory, Dallas; St. Matthews, Waco; and Abiding Grace, Southlake

**Assembly was declared closed by Bishop Gronberg at 4:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Weiss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Todd Weiss  
Secretary