

**Minutes Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Synod Assembly**  
**Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
**Meeting: April 29-30, 2022**  
**King of Glory Lutheran Church**

*“The Lord has Done Great Things for Us”*

*Friday April 29<sup>th</sup>*

*Registration opens 10:30am*

**Assembly Business Session 1**

12:30pm

Introduction & Welcome

Bishop Gronberg welcomed people to the assembly and gave thanks for the work of council.  
Bishop Introduced **Parliamentarian** – Ted Steinke (Central Lutheran, Dallas).

The Rev. Kenny Dickson welcomed people to the assembly at King of Glory Lutheran Church.

**Agenda and Rules of Procedure**

*VOTED SA 04.29.01*

*To approve the agenda for the 2022  
Assembly.  
APPROVED*

*VOTED SA 04.29.02*

*To approve the Rules of Procedure and the standing  
committees for the 202 Assembly.  
APPROVED*

The Rev. Kelsey Fitting-Snyder presented the minutes of the 2021 assembly.

*VOTED SA 04.29.03*

*To approve the Minutes of the 2021 Assembly  
APPROVED*

**Explanation of the Bishop Election Process** – Committee on Elections Chair and ELCA  
Churchwide representative

Victoria Flood (ELCA Churchwide representative) & Rick Bidne Elections Committee Chair

Victoria Flood explained the election process as dictated in the NT-NL constitution.

## **Nominating Committee Report for General Elections**

The Rev. Austin Nickel was recognized as nomination chair and presented the slate of candidates for Synod Council

Nominee for Conferencia Latina, Rostered – The Rev. Rachel Ringlaben

Nominee for Conferencia Latina, Lay Male – Alejandro Cornejo

Nominee for Eastern Conference, Rostered – Kathryn Saunders-Allen

Nominee for Heart of Texas Conference, Lay Female – Angie Krug

Nominee for Heart of Texas Conference, Lay Male – Victor Larson

Nominee for Conference Out West, Lay Female – Joyce O’Connell

Nominee for Conference Out West, Lay Male – Lindy Patton

Nominee for Conference Out West, Rostered – The Rev. Richard Strait

Bishop Gronberg opened the floor for nominations. There were no nominations from the floor.

## **Treasurer’s Report** Mark Bradley

Financial Report

2020 Audit – Favorable response from auditors

2021 audit will take place in May of 2022

Mark Bradley highlighted 2021 financial report.

2022 Plan for spending is up 3.4% from 2021 receipts

2023 Mission Strategy Presented

2023 Congregation and salary increase of 3%

*Registration Closed*

## **Credentials Committee Report**

Anthony Tucker presented the credential report

1:10pm

187 83% of registered voters

Lay 127

Rostered 60

Quorum established

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

*VOTED SA 04.29.04*

*To approve slate of candidates for synod council and  
churchwide lay voting member*

*APPROVED*

### **First Ballot for Synod Bishop**

Paper ballots distributed

Prayer

Voting and collection of ballots

Ballot closed at 1:41pm

**Bible Study #1** Dr. Terra Rowe University of North Texas

### **Report of the first Ballot**

Rick Bidne presented the results of the first ballot for bishop for the NT-NL Synod

186 cast

172 legal

129 needed to elect

Rev. Tulio Cruz-Natal 1

Rev. Ben Deholm 1

Rev. Ernie Hinotosa 1

Rev. Michael Househoulder 1

Rev. Kyle Rouze 1

Rev. Russell Vardell 1

Rev. Kris Totzke 2

Rev. Paul Missacinio 3

Rev. Rusty Sullivan 3

Rev. Phil Heinze 4

Rev. Erik Gronberg 154

Victoria Flood introduced The Rev. Erik Gronberg as the elected Bishop of the NT-NL Synod on the first ballot.

*Registration Re-Opens*

**Report from Portico Representative** – Deacon Terry Endres

### **Mission Endowment Fund Report**

Video Presentation

Bishop Erik Gronberg introduced The Rev. Donna Wright, Chair of the MEF board to introduce the new Executive Director of the Mission Endowment Fund Jennifer Hachmeister.

Jennifer Hachmeister was installed as the MEF Executive Director.

Bishop Gronberg thanked Linda Ness for her four years of service.

*Break*

**Introduction of Memorial from Synod Council** – Vice President Tom Blaney  
Tom Blaney read the memorial as moved by the NT-NL Synod Council.

**DEM Report** The Rev. Irma Banales

Patsor Irma introduced The Rev. Jeff Borgwardt who shared information about the congregational renewal vitality team. They are working on putting together a resource and a manual for congregations.

The Rev. Adam Stockton shared about the mission start “*Gathering at the Table.*”

The Rev. Tom Schwolert emphasized the stewardship resources and events happening in the synod; The Generosity Project, Stewardship Coaching, & Stewardship Kaleidoscope

*Registration Closed*

***Video Highlight – Lutheran Men in Mission***

**Bishop’s Associate Report and Introduction of Safe Gatherings Resources** –

The Rev. Kris Totzke presented Safe Gatherings programs. This resource provides prevention programming that screens and educates staff and volunteers to help prevent abuse of children. They also include background checks, offer a policy builder, and online boundary training for clergy.

**Recognition of Milestone Ordination and Congregational Anniversaries**

VOTED SA 04.29.05

*To approve adapted Saturday schedule*  
**APPROVED**

**Dinner**

**Festival Worship with Holy Communion**

**Reception**

*The offerings collected at festival worship will go to the eastern conference and the stewardship team.*

*Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup>*

Registration opens 8:00am

Morning Prayer

**Assembly Business Session 2**

**Briarwood Leadership Center Report** The Rev. Dr. Robert Smith

Pastor Smith took time to thank the hardworking staff of the Briarwood Leadership Center. He explained the hardships that Briarwood faced in the pandemic and the winter storm. Pastor Smith announced that the rebuilding of Briarwood is now complete. The Rev. Smith thanked the synod as well congregations for their financial support of Briarwood.

Briarwood has now been able to host small groups. Pastor Smith highlighted the online events and programming.

**Report of the ELCA Churchwide Representative** Victoria Flood (Senior Director for Mission Support)

Victoria thanked the elections committee and the chair Rick Bidne. Victoria highlighted that the ELCA turned 35 on this day, April 30<sup>th</sup>. She expressed the importance of the relationships that bring us together as the ELCA.

**Greetings from the Gulf Coast Synod** Bishop Mike Rinehart

Bishop Rinehart congratulated Bishop Gronborg on his re-election, affirming the work that Bishop Gronberg and his staff has done. He sent greetings on behalf of the people of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod.

**Candidacy Committee Update** The Rev. Kris Totzke and Mr. Don Heller

Pastor Totzke and Don Heller emphasized the importance of the NTNL Parish Lay Minister Academy and the Secondary School of Theological Education. Pastor Totzke also explained the transition from Parish Lay Academy to Synodically Authorized Worship Leader. Don and Pastor Totzke explained parts of the candidacy process, distinguishing the difference between the TEEM program and a Master of Divinity degree. Pastor Totzke highlighted the many ways that people engage in seminary education, such as the distance learning and collaborative learning programs.

**Bible Study** Dr. Terra Rowe

*Break*

**Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest** Morgan Schmidlin

Morgan Schmidlin explained the many ways the Lutheran of the Foundation of the Southwest helps congregation and individual with gifts and legacy planning. Morgan also highlighted an example of a gift that is a scholarship program for Lutheran students pursuing a degree in higher education.

**Report of ELCA church council representative** The Rev. Nick Billardello

Pastor Billardello expressed his passion for serving on the ELCA church council. A program that he was a part of gave grants to congregations in need, and starting new ministry. Pastor Billardello also discussed some of the work the council is doing in regards to sanctuary denominations and social statements. The new innovation initiative is working around the theme *Rooted in Tradition and Radically Relevant*. Refugee resettlement is also happening across the ELCA.

There is another focus at the churchwide level to continue to make seminary education affordable, not only that, but to support those who statistically take longer to find first calls and time between calls.

**Greetings from Campus chaplain at Texas Lutheran University** Wes Cain

Pastor Cain expressed that the least ministered to people in our denomination and across denominations are ages 18-25. Pastor Cain encouraged the assembly to find ways to invite young people into the congregation and have them part of the ministry and leadership.

**Report of the Bishop**

Madeline Richard will be the new dean of the parish lay ministry academy.

Bishop Gronberg highlighted five points he wanted to focus on during his six years:

- Being Present (even in the pandemic)
- Encourage Creative Growth
- Accountability & Accompaniment
- Making our investment in Briarwood pay dividends
- Naming Privilege and working for Justice

“The law is for the proud and the Gospel for the brokenhearted.”

**Plenary Time to Consider Memorial** “Memorial to Restructure the Governance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”

Discussion took place regarding the memorial. Clarifying questions were asked, people spoke in favor of the memorial.

<i>VOTED SA 04.29.06</i>	<i>To approve the “Memorial to Restructure the Governance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” APPROVED</i>
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**Bible Study**

**Consideration of 2023 Mission Strategy**

Mark Bradley presented the 2023 Mission Strategy for approval.

<i>VOTED SA 04.25.07</i>	<i>To approve the 2023 Mission Strategy. APPROVED</i>
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*The introduced the 2023 Care and Compensation package to the assembly.*

<i>VOTED SA 04.25.08</i>	<i>To approve the 2023 Care and Compensation for the Synod. APPROVED</i>
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**Resolution of Appreciation**

Closing Worship

The Assembly Adjourned at 3:35pm

Respectfully Submitted,



The Rev. Kelsey Fitting-Snyder