

2021 Synod Assembly - Minutes

Virtual Assembly through Zoom
6:00 – 8:30pm September 24, 2021

Welcome and Technology Orientation

A welcome was given by NWOS Council Vice President Melissa Peper Firestone, member of Zion Lutheran Church, Waterville, followed by Technology orientation by Calla Gilson, synod staff.

In the Northwestern Ohio Synod, our mission is "***Sent by the crucified and risen Jesus to make disciples, equip leaders, strengthen parishes, and nurture new communities for the renewal of northwestern Ohio and the world***".

Melissa shared the excitement as we continue to grow into this calling and mission, and the work with all you throughout the Northwestern Ohio Synod as we seek renewal and new life in Jesus. Thanks were extended to all Synod Staff and the preparation for this assembly.

Thank you and welcome was given to ELCA Staff member, Nick Kiger and to Parliamentarian Judge Robert Pollex.

A devotion was given by Melissa addressing the past year of being in pandemic. Many of us are growing weary and impatient. 1 Corinthians 14:33 "*For God is not a God of confusion but a God of peace.*" Romans 12:12 "*Rejoice in our confident hope and be patient in trouble and continue to pray*" Melissa shared suggestions for finding peace in the chaos.

Isaiah 32:17-18	Take care of yourself, take time to breath to gather your thoughts.
2 Timothy 1:7	Focus on the positive.
John 13:34	Love those around you.
Matthew 24:6	Spend more time with God.
2 Thessalonians 3:16	Trust in His plan.
Malachi	I am the Lord and I do not change.

Melissa ended in prayer and turned the overview of the technology and testing of the voting process to Calla Gilson. Calla gave an overview of the technical part of a virtual assembly and gave helpful hints of how to navigate through the technology. She shared a hotline for instant help during the evening.

Gathering Devotions and Opening of Assembly

Bishop Daniel officially opened the 2021 NWOS Assembly with prayer and scripture from Matthew 6- "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume where thieves break in and steal but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither*

moth nor rust consume and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is there your heart will be also."

Secretary Becky Seibert read the credentials and reported a total of **315 registered voting members, consisting of 200 lay members and 115 rostered ministers. The quorum requirement is 50% and we have 248 voting members present. A quorum has been reached.**

Becky continued with the reading of The Rules of Procedure which was displayed on the screen. Seeing no objection Bishop Daniel declared Adoption of Rules and Procedures by unanimous consent.

Bishop asked Calla to display the Assembly Order of Business.

There was one addition to the Order of Business. At 2:53 this afternoon we received a resolution by authors Rev. Robbie Ketcham, Rostered Minister, St. Petri-Toledo, Rev. Kelley Ketcham, Augsburg-Toledo and Rev. Brenda Peconge, Lutheran Church of Our Savior-Toledo. We have added the consideration of that resolution (To Improve Communication of Positions Up for Election and Nominees) to the Order of Business.

A motion was made to consider and debate the proposed resolution by Bill Smith and seconded by Mike Porter. Secretary Becky read the resolution as it was displayed on screen. Seeing no objections or discussion, the Order of Business was adopted by unanimous consent.

Secretary Becky read the Nominations for Synod Council displayed on the screen and included in these notes. Bishop Daniel asked for nominees for Synod Council from the floor and seeing none, he declared nomination for Synod Council closed.

Secretary Becky then read the Nominations for the Consultation and Discipline Committee. (listing included in notes). Bishop asked for nominations from the floor and seeing he declared the nominations closed.

Secretary Becky then read nominations (included in notes) for Churchwide Assembly to be held in Columbus, Ohio August 8-12, 2022. Bishop Daniel asked for nominations from the floor. Question from the floor came from Pastor Kelley Ketcham who raised a point of order from before. Question is "Can someone serve on Synod Council if their spouse is a member of Synod staff?" Bishop Daniel replied that we do not have any provisions that would preclude a person from doing that. Seeing no other questions Bishop declared the nominations for Churchwide Assembly closed.

Secretary Becky then read the nominee for ELCA Churchwide Council Lay nominee. Seeing no nominations from the floor Bishop declared the nominations closed.

After a short break Melissa Peper Firestone offered a prayer as we proceeded to vote on all nominees. **Seeing no objection we elect by unanimous consent, all persons nominated for**

elected positions in which there was only one person nominated. (names were listed on screen and included in attached listing). **Bishop Daniel then declared listed persons duly elected by unanimous consent.**

Synod Council

Rostered Minister from Southeast Conf, term ending 2023	Pastor Jarrod Schaaf
Rostered Minister from Southwest Conf, term ending 2024	Pastor Robin Owen
Lay member from Southeast Conf., term ending 2023	Deb Noll
Lay member from Central Conf., term ending 2023	Casey Cox
Lay member at large, term ending 2023	Brent Gardner
Lay member from Toledo Conf. term ending 2023	Tom Ritter
Rostered minister from Maumee Conf., term ending 2023	Pastor Mindy Elliott
Synod Council Secretary, term ending 2025	Tracey Wright
Lay member minority or non-English primary language, term ending 2024	Rodney West-Estell
Lay member from North Central Conf., term ending 2024	Clark Price

Consultation Committee, term ending 2027

Pastor Janine Scherer

Discipline Committee, term ending 2027

Kevin McNeal

Churchwide voting member

Lay female from North Central Conf.	Mary Satterfield
Lay female from Southwest Conf.	Ingrid Miller
Lay female from Eastern Conf.	Heather Hawn
Minority/non-English primary language	Wellington Kamala
Lay male from Southeast Conf	Shawn Schneider
Lay male from Central Conf.	Brian Hurt

ELCA Churchwide Council – lay male

Hans Giller

A point of order question was heard from Gregory Olsen stating that there was no option to abstain in the voting process to which Bishop Daniel replied if you wish to abstain simply do not vote.

Bishop Daniel then proceeded with the remainder of the voting slate. Calla presented a flow chart explaining the voting process according to our Synodical Constitution. (see results on attached listing)

Synod Council Rostered Minister from North Central Conf. term ending 2024

Pastor Denise Brown	101 votes received – 44%	
Pastor Melanie Haack	127 votes received – 56%	Elected

CWA Youth/Young Adult – voting member

Victoria Cox	111 votes received – 50%	
Nate Stenke	112 votes received – 51%	Elected

Churchwide Voting Female Rostered Minister elect three

Ballot #1

Doris Mars	54 votes received – 24%
Brenda Peconge	30 votes received – 13%
Kathy Shuck	50 votes received – 22%
Mary Beth Smith Gunn	36 votes received – 16%
Beth Westphal	54 votes received – 24%

Ballot #2

Doris Mars	96 votes received – 42%	
Beth Westphal	135 voted received – 58%	Elected

2nd CW Female RM – Ballot 1

Doris Mars	105 votes received – 45%
Brenda Peconge	40 votes received – 17%
Kathy Shuck	45 votes received – 19%
Mary Beth Smith Gunn	41 votes received – 18%

Ballot #2

Doris Mars	145 votes received – 64%	Elected
Kathy Shuck	81 votes received – 36%	

#3 CW Female RM – Ballot 1

Brenda Peconge	51 votes received – 22%	
Kathy Shuck	127 votes received – 55%	Elected
Mary Beth Smith Gunn	51 votes received – 22%	

Pastors Beth Westphal, Doris Mars and Kathy Shuck have been elected as Churchwide voting Female Rostered Minister(s).
Pastors Brenda Peconge and Mary Beth Smith Gunn will remain as alternates in the event one of the elected would be unable to attend Churchwide Gathering.

Churchwide Voting Member Lay Male - Toledo

Louis Johnson	99 votes received – 48%
Bob Mens	109 votes received – 52%

Elected

Churchwide Voting Member, Male Rostered Minister elect two

Ballot #1

Pete Bowmer	56 votes received – 24%
Dan Gutman	44 votes received – 19%
Mike Hanck	52 votes received – 23%
Adam Sornchai	78 votes received – 34%

1st CW Male RM – Ballot #2

Pete Bowmer	83 votes received – 36%	
Adam Sornchai	147 votes received – 64%	Elected

2nd CW Male RM – Ballot #1

Pete Bowmer

Dan Gutman

Mike Hanck

116 votes received – 51%

52 votes received – 23%

59 votes received – 26%

Elected

Churchwide Voting Member, Maumee Valley Lay Male

Neal Denniston

Steve Graff - Elected

Bishop's Report and President's Report

Bishop Daniel began with scripture as we gathered virtually by zoom. Matthew chapter 6: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume where thieves break in and steal but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust consume and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is there your heart will be also." Our memory verse for 2021. (The full report was included in the Assembly packet.) Bishop spoke of the spiritual practice of generosity and our opportunity to partner with God to renew all things. We have been blessed abundantly which gives us the opportunity to give generously. He shared the very successful year-end campaign for 2020 with the goal of raising \$52,020 and with your kind hearts and generosity we raised, nearly \$85,000 to fund the mission to help equip leaders, make disciples, strengthen parishes and nurture new communities.

Pastor Sarah Schaaf and Calla Gilson gave an overview of the opportunity we have to grow and dream of how best to serve our communities and neighbors. They gave summary of the grants received and distributed within our synod. Pastor Sarah and Calla spoke of how the NWOS has been richly blessed the past year and how we would love to give back to the greater church for the renewal of the world by partnering with Lutheran Disaster Response.

Bishop Daniel and NWOS Council is encouraging us to partner with LDR and endeavor to raise at least \$100,000 for those who are experiencing great need right here in the US and around the world. This Year-End Ask will begin October 1 and take us through the end of the year.

Calla displayed on screen the link to the webpage for this Year-End Ask to learn more about the mission and work of LDR and to give or pledge a gift.

Bishop Daniel closed with prayer.

After a 10 minute break we continued with Jacob Henry presenting the Financial and Spending Plan. Jacob reviewed the financial report for 2020.

The following Presentations we reviewed and after discussion and questions presented a vote was taken on each (reporting on attached report). Discussion with our Parliamentarian was sought concerning some questions from the floor and reported as such.

Presentation of Financials and Spending Plan

Debate and Vote of Spending Plan

Action SA21.01 Synod Spending Plan:

“At the recommendation of the Synod Council, the Assembly approves the Synod Spending Plan for 2022/23.”

A second was made by Tracey Wright. Seeing no questions, a vote was taken with the following results:

Approve: 229 votes received – 98% - Approved

Oppose: 5 votes received – 2%

Presentation of Compensation Guidelines

Debate and Vote of Compensation Guidelines

Action SA21.02 NWOS Compensation Guidelines:

“At the recommendation of the Synod Council, the Assembly approves the NWOS Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers for 2022, including a suggested 3% cost of living increase.”

A 2nd was received by Pastor Will Stenke. The floor was open for discussion. After discussion and questions and opinions received a vote was taken with the following results:

Yes: 162 votes received – 72% - Approved

No: 64 votes received – 28%

Presentation of Constitutional Updates

Debate and Vote of Constitutional Update

Action SA21.03 NWOS Constitution Updates:

“At the recommendation of the Synod Council, the Assembly approves the updates to the Synod Constitution.”

A second was received by Pastor Melissa Micham. The floor was open for discussion. After discussion and questions and opinions received a vote was taken with the following results: (a 2/3 vote is needed)

Approve: 188 votes received – 84% - Approved

Oppose: 37 votes received – 16%

Presentation of Resolution, To Improve Communication of Positions Up for Elections and Nominees (full resolution at end of minutes)

After discussion and opinions were received a vote was taken with the following results:

Vote to adopt

Yes 190 votes were received – 86% - Adopted

No 31 votes were received – 14%

Brief Closing and Blessing

Bishop Daniel shared plans for the 2022 NWOS Assembly to be held in Bowling Green State University pending availability for the 2nd week of June.

The Assembly was declared officially closed at 9:30 p.m.

Bishop Daniel closed with prayer.

A Resolution, To Improve Communication of Positions Up for Election and Nominees

Proposed for consideration at the 2021 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly

Proposed by: Rev. Robbie Ketcham, Rostered Minister, St. Petri-Toledo

Rev. Kelley Ketcham, Augsburg-Toledo

Rev. Brenda Peconge, Lutheran Church of Our Saviour-Toledo

Whereas “the Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit” (NWOS Constitution 6.01, emphasis added); and

Whereas the responsibilities of the Northwestern Ohio Synod include “providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support” of the Church’s work (NWOS Const. 6.03.01.b); and

Whereas “additional nominations may be made from the [Synod Assembly] floor for all elections whose slates are prepared by the Nominating Committee or the Synod Council” (NWOS Const. 9.03.e); and

Whereas it is necessary to know what positions are open for election, in order to nominate oneself or another for that position...

Therefore be it resolved that:

- 1.) Starting in 2022, the Northwestern Ohio Synod Council or its designate shall publish and send to all congregations and rostered leaders a list of all positions to be elected by that year’s Synod Assembly, along with brief descriptions of these positions and guidelines for crafting resolutions and memorials. This shall be sent no less than 60 days, and preferably 90 days, before the nomination deadline.
- 2.) Starting in 2022, the Northwestern Ohio Synod Council or its designate shall publish and send to all Synod Assembly voting members a list and brief biographies of all nominees, resolutions, memorials and other action items. This shall be sent no less than 14 days before the start of the Synod Assembly.
- 3.) In the event of extraordinary circumstances that prevent the publications of these materials by these dates, the materials shall be sent as soon as possible.

Rationale:

It is often quite difficult to know ahead of time what positions are up for election at any Synod Assembly. This makes it hard for congregation members and even rostered leaders to make nominations for these positions, independent of those produced by the Nominating Committee. In turn, this risks increased alienation between congregations and the synod, if congregations and parishioners feel that they don’t really have a chance to make their voice heard and take part in synod affairs, unless they are “in the know” or are selected by the Nominating Committee. This resolution would seek to strengthen congregations’ ability to make nominations for synod leadership, thereby enhancing the trust and relationship between the synod and “everyday parishioners.”