



**Synod Assembly Minutes**  
**Friday, May 19, 2017—Saturday, May 20, 2017**

On Friday evening, May 19, 2017 the NWOS gathered at St. Aloysius Catholic Church in Bowling Green, Ohio for a keynote speaker presentation by Dr. Mary Jane Haemig and a joint Roman Catholic Lutheran Evening Prayer in the Taize form of worship. Following worship the youth gathered at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Bowling Green for an overnight lock-in.

On Saturday morning, May 20, 2017 the NWOS began meeting in assembly at Bowen Thompson Student Union on the campus of Bowling Green State University. The assembly's time together began with a Morning Prayer led by Pastor Melissa Micham and youth of Olivet Lutheran Church. The following are the minutes of the assembly that commenced with Plenary Session I at 8:10am.

PLENARY SESSION I

**Opening of Assembly**

**Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin**

Bishop Beaudoin declared the assembly to be open and began with a reading from Ephesians 2:8-10 and a brief prayer. He then acknowledged leaders within NWOS and special guests in attendance. As each group was read, they stood and were then recognized by the assembly.

**Synod Council: Officers**, Vice-President Melissa Peper Firestone, Secretary Pam Kensler, Treasurer Phil Koenig and **Members**, Tom Ritter, Casey Cox, Cindy Millbury, Christina Wheeler, Deb Noll, Jacob Nekoranec, Pastor Kent Wilson, Cindy Milbry, Pastor Juli Lejman-Guy, Cassie Yeager, Sue Lawrence, Diane Ninke, Pastor Pete Bowmer, Pastor Steve Edmiston, Pastor Richard Genzman, Nancy Green, Pastor Julie Parsell, James Schwabero, Darlene Weaver, Pastor Mark Wentz,

**Special Guests**: Rev Dr Roger Willer, Churchwide Representative and Director of Theological Ethics, ELCA; Dr Mary Jane Haemig, Professor of Church History at Luther Seminary, Keynote Speaker; Pastor Vicki Garber, ELCA Church Council Region 6 Representative; Pastor Kent Peterson, Regional Manager of the Mission Investment Fund (also thanked for their generous gift for the youth event); Penny Christensen, Executive Director of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio; Pastor Cathy Schibler, Region 6 Representative for Portico; Mr. Chris Norman, Director of Development at Trinity Lutheran Seminary; Rick Marshall, CEO Genacross Lutheran Services; Terri Rodriguez, CEO Lutheran Ministries of Mercy

**Synod Assembly Volunteers**: Linda Schwepe, Carol Groman, Lois Luoma, Paul Weichman, Pastor Cindy Ritter, Pastor Mark Wentz, Barb Moelmann, Pastor Mark Bauer

**Interns serving in our synod**: Fred Bartelt at St. John Lutheran Church in Celina; Kevin O'Bryan at Zoar Lutheran Church in Perrysburg

**Newly assigned First Call Candidate:** Katelyn Rakotoarivelo (not present as graduating from Luther Seminary today)

**Rostered leaders who are new to the NWOS since April 1, 2016:**

Pastor Scott Mauch serving at the LIFT Parish in Fremont  
Pastor Joan Christoffers serving at St. James Lutheran Church in Toledo  
Pastor Ed Hunker ordained and serving at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Attica  
Pastor Clayton Bailey serving at First Lutheran Church in Tiffin  
Deacon Steve Basselman consecrated and serving at St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Archbold  
Deacon Hannah Demaree serving at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio  
Pastor Janine Foster ordained and serving at Trinity Lutheran Church in Convoy  
Pastor Todd Milner ordained and serving at Providence Lutheran Church in Holland  
Pastor Eric Bodenstab serving at Zion Lutheran Church in Sandusky  
Pastor Chris Hanley ordained and serving at Glenwood Lutheran Church in Toledo  
Deacon Jennifer Heinze who will be consecrated on May 31 at Zion Lutheran Church in Latcha, serving as a Hospice Chaplain

**Testing of Electronic Voting**

**Jacob Henry**

Jacob ensured that all voting members of assembly had an electronic voting device and then conducted a test of the voting devices. Result of test question indicated that only 11% of assembly members were below the age of 40.

**Credentials Report**

**Rev. Mark Bauer**

A quorum was declared with 30% of voting members clergy and 70% lay.

**Adoption of Rules and Procedures**

**Floor Committees, and Agenda**

**Pam Kensler**

Rules of Procedure were referenced as found in Section 1 pages 11-13. The standing non-parliamentary rules of the assembly as found on page 12 were read by Pam. No objections were offered and the standing non-parliamentary rules were adopted by unanimous consent. The standing parliamentary rules of the assembly as found on page 13 were read by Pam. No objections were offered and the standing parliamentary rules were adopted by unanimous consent.

The Assembly Floor Committees as found on page 5 of section one were highlighted with the reading of each committee. Specifically named was the Parliamentarian, Tim Niemeyer. Again no objections were offered and the committees as presented to the assembly were adopted by unanimous consent.

Thanks was offered to all those serving on committees, especially the 500<sup>th</sup> Reformation Anniversary Committee.

**Adoption of the Order of Business / Agenda**

The agenda as found in Section 1, pages 9-10 of the assembly packet was modified to allow for presentations of the budget, 2018 compensation guidelines, a Flexible Assembly Bylaw and Synod Constitutional updates during Plenary Session #1. During Plenary Session #2 there will be

time for discussion and voting on all matters presented during session #1. No objections were offered so the revised Order of Business/Agenda was adopted by unanimous consent. Bishop Daniel offered a reminder that the Chair reserves the right to adjust the agenda to best facilitate the work of God through this Assembly.

Bishop Daniel drew attention to the 2016 Synod Assembly Minutes as they were approved by Synod Council at their July 30, 2016 meeting. They are printed on pages 2 through 16 of Section 2. Also included in the assembly packet are approved Synod Council minutes, found in Section 4 pages 37-54.

### **Report of Nominating Committee**

**Barb Moellman**

Barb offered thanks for each of those who were willing to be nominated and shared the joy she had in working on the nominations this year.

For all of the following nominations there were no nominations from the floor and all nominations were declared closed following the announcements of the names, which were presented as follows:

For Synod Council Secretary, 4 year term, Tracey Merrithew and Becky Seibert. Tracey Merrithew has withdrawn her name and is unable to stand for election.

For Synod Council North Central Conference Lay, 3 year term, Jake Nekoranec.

For Synod Council Southeastern Conference Lay, 3 year term, Deborah Noll.

For Synod Council Maumee Valley Conference Clergy, 3 year term, Terry Courter and Julie Parsell.

For Synod Council Eastern Conference Clergy, 3 year term, Juli-Lejman-Guy and Anita Marshall.

For Synod Council Toledo Area Lay, 3 year term, Thomas Ritter.

For Synod Council At-Large Lay, 3 year term, Brent Gardner and Darlene Weaver.

For Discipline Committee Clergy, 6 year term, Kent Wilson and Janet Wittenmyer.

For Discipline Committee Lay, 6 year term, Hans Giller and Timothy Wiersma.

For Consultation Committee Clergy, 6 year term, Shawn O'Brien, Matthew Wheeler, and David Wietelmann.

For Consultation Committee Lay, 6 year term, Howard "Ardy" Gonyer.

For Nominating Committee Central Conference, 3 year term, Steve Ramsey

Reminder was offered that voting on the nominees will occur during the afternoon Plenary Session. Bishop Daniel offered a prayer for the nominees and sharing of Ephesians 4:11-12.

### **Bishop's Report**

**Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin**

As Bishop Daniel began his report he read Ephesians 1:15-18 and offered a prayer. The written report of the bishop can be found in section 4 pages 2-5, but this time will be an opportunity to provide highlights and a teaching (similar to the way in which Bishop Daniel has provided reports to the Synod Council and previously as he did with church councils when he served in congregations).

Bishop Daniel reflected that this year's theme has been set as the year of grace; and in so many ways he is experiencing that personally through prayers and words of encouragement and love.

He shared that this is a call that you grow into and that it takes time, but there are sacred moments throughout this call. "Our" bishop, with the word our ringing in his soul, this call is about us and the one who calls; and the places that this call allows presence to be granted. God is teaching and growing and at every turn God's grace is evident and witnessed. For those interested, over lunch Bishop Daniel will discuss how to have grace filled conversations in difficult times.

With the transitions in the bishop's office, Bishop Daniel offered thanks and recognition of current staff: Jacob Henry, Jennifer Prueter, Sherry Krieger, Brett Gnagey, Cathy Schibler, Jack Eggleston, Diane Stultz, Mary Boals, and Calla Gilson. Thanks was also offered to those serving as conference deans, Paul Reichert, Kristina Ahlman, Jody Rice, Will Haggis, Sarah Schaaf, Ralph Mineo, and Steve Bauerle.

Bishop Daniel than shared the open position for DEM had been posted, a unique position, only one structured this way in the ELCA. The call will come from Synod Council with day to day oversight by Synod Bishop and the revenue from Churchwide to fund position. The assembly is asked to join in prayer for seeking God's will for the right person for the position. The position description for Congregational Leadership and Congregational Care is nearly finalized.

Bishop Daniel than shared that he will always offer a short teaching to be used in personal life or life of congregation. The teaching offered today was on staffing and the 5 C's principle that Bishop Daniel encouraged everyone to consider in identifying leaders:

- Is this person **Committed to Christ**?
  - Do you see a genuine love for Jesus?
  - Is this love for Jesus reflected in love for neighbor.
- Is this a person of **Character**?
  - Is this a person of integrity?
  - Can you trust this person?
- Does this person have **Capacity**?
  - Does this person have the gift of growth?
  - Is this person willing to learn?
  - An organization, including a congregation, will never grow beyond the growth of its primary leader.
- Does this person have **Chemistry**?
  - How well does this person play with others?
  - Can this person be an effective part of a team?
- Does this person have **Competency**?
  - Does this person have the gifts and skills to do the job?
  - You can teach someone to be competent, but you cannot teach someone to have the other 4 C's, which include:
    - Commitment to Christ
    - Character
    - Capacity
    - Chemistry

As we look ahead to the future, Bishop Daniel shared the Northwestern Ohio Synod themes for the coming years:

- 2018 Year of Purposeful Prayer / Prayer Life of Nehemiah
- 2019 Year of Mission and Vision / Book of Acts

Bishop Daniel closed his report in prayer and then offered a rousing stretch break of "Bishop" Says (similar in fashion to Simon Says).

### **Treasurer's Report**

**Phil Koenig**

As Phil Koenig began his report, the assembly was reminded that the Revised 2017 Budget and Proposed 2018 budget could be found in Section 3, pages 2-4. For additional reference, the Auditor's Report can be found on pages 5-25.

Phil stated that he always like to offer a big thank you and this year it is easy to do with a second year in a row for increased mission support (by .3%)! Additionally expenses are below budget by 1.3%, cash position is remaining steady, there was an outstanding audit, 72/162 congregations have increased % giving of mission support, and of 65 synods had highest increase in mission support in our geographic region and 19<sup>th</sup> highest % increase overall.

Point of Order at Microphone 3 from Kelly Ketcham to have increased volume from microphone on stage and to slow down in speaking so those on the edges can hear more clearly.

Phil encouraged the assembly members to Google "ELCA where does my money go?" One of the items that will come up is a video that shows where your offering goes. After the assembly watched the video, Phil shared a one slide summary of the video and how the dollars given through offerings are used in ministry within the NWOS.

In reviewing graphs, Phil indicated that the synod's cash position has remained steady for past 3 years and we remain well above the audit line for minimum cash position. The mission support graph indicates the variable of month to month giving is represented with a rolling line for the year average, for the first time in the last decade our mission support exceeds our expenses. In reviewing the major expenses graph, Phil highlighted the ways in which the synod is faithfully stewarding the mission support dollars including 51% given to Churchwide ministries.

As it relates to the Proposed 2018 Budget, the following highlights were made of significant changes in the budget from 2018 vs. 2016:

- First time that a balanced budget is being presented with the assumption that there will be a 1% increase in mission support. Every congregation will need to work on stewardship in order for the assumption to be proven accurate.
- Cost savings in decrease of cost to Region 6 archives
- Purchase of used car for bishop who has comfortability with working on cars
- Increased dean/leader costs as we move to the dean model
- Increased staff salaries by 1.5% per guidelines
- Reduced candidacy costs to reflect actual expenditures over recent years
- Added for office equipment depreciation
- Increased accounting/auditing costs there are changes coming to charitable organizations that require additional time from bookkeeper and accountant to implement those new standards

In closing Phil offered a final thanks for the support and help in building the body of Christ. Bishop Daniel offered his thanks for Phil's work and reminded the assembly that discussion and voting on the budget will take place in the afternoon plenary. Phil will be in the ballroom during the lunch hour to answer any questions related to the budget.

### **Mission Support Recognition**

**Rev. Jim Wenger**

Rev. Jim Wenger shared that he is presenting to the assembly on behalf of the Table for Faithful Response and offers a thank you **to each person** for promoting the Good News of Jesus Christ. Thank you for again increasing the mission support. As a new DEM is identified the Table for Faithful Response will be working with that person, continuing to have stewardship dinners, and will also be developing videos to tell the stories of stewardship throughout the synod.

As the Table for Faithful Response considered mission support recognition this year they wanted to highlight stories throughout the synod that exemplify the gospel being promoted. Jim shared that he was most impressed with St. John, Celina. Their work with the Wernle Home and with their own St John Builds has made an environment of strong giving and mission support. As well as St. John, Fremont (which I was told had made good use of Consecration Sunday Events), St. John, Crestline (that although relatively small has really grown in their mission support). Also highlighted were Trinity, Willard; Zion, Lima; Zion, Waterville (specifically their endowment that funds mission efforts); Solomon, Woodville (which has a Recovery Worship Service followed by a support group for heroin addicts), Peace, Bowling Green (that installed new solar panels) and Faith, Fremont.

In closing Jim thanked each person for their support of the Gospel and the collective way mission support can further the mission throughout the synod and beyond.

### **Compensation Guidelines**

**Rev. Cathy Schibler**

Cathy reminded assembly members that the compensation guidelines (found in Section 3, pages 26-59) are provided as a tool to be used for conversation for not only compensation but ministry of each congregation. There is an increase provided in this year's guidelines. There is also a recommendation for retirement to be at 15% rather than the current 10%. To increase to that percentage, congregations and rostered leaders are encouraged to consider congregations increase their giving to retirement and for the rostered leader to match that increase in coming years to help rostered leaders be better suited for retirement.

### **Vice-President's Report**

**Melissa Peper Firestone**

As Melissa shared the privilege that she feels serving as the Synod Vice-President she reflected on the focus of the past year. It was a time of transition from the long term of Bishop Lohrmann to the newly elected Bishop. The Synod Council met four times throughout the year with the Executive Committee meeting monthly between meetings. Together the council has helped Bishop Daniel acclimate to his new role. Melissa offered thanks to Phil Koenig for his diligent work on the budget. Reviewing the budget is a large portion of the time Synod Council spends to further the ministry of the synod and the individual congregations throughout the synod. Melissa also extended thanks to everyone that serves on the council and the commitment given by all those who serve. In this time of transition, Daniel has quickly stepped into the role with firm ideas of change but eager for all to lead the changes. Melissa reflected on the ways in which God

has been with us through all of the changes from the time of the Reformation to our changes within congregations and the synod. God has seen all the changes and has been the witness without fear. At the close of her report, Melissa extended the gratitude of the synod to Pam Kensler as she completes her term as Synod Council secretary.

**Presentation of Flexible Assembly Bylaw**

**Melissa Peper Firestone**

The Flexible Assembly Bylaw is presented to allow greater flexibility in the scheduling of future assemblies. This recommendation is being made by the Synod Council in response to the cost of annual assembly continues to increase for the use of the building and the materials as well as the request of previous assemblies to consider alternative dates for the synod assembly to better accommodate the participation of youth and young adults at the assembly. Melissa clarified that it is still the intention of the synod to have a gathering in the off years but it will not be a business meeting, rather an opportunity for service, fellowship and/or discipleship building. There will be a Synod Assembly in 2018 and with the adoption of the Flexible Assembly Bylaw the next assembly would then be in 2020.

**Presentation of Synod Constitution Updates**

**Melissa Peper Firestone**

Melissa reported that the Synod Constitution updates do not have any substantive changes. The amendments are primarily language changes and a result of action taken by the Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Daniel reminded the assembly that all of the presentations made this morning will have time for discussion and voting during the afternoon plenary session. Melissa then introduced Dr. Mary Jane Haemig who currently serves as Professor of Church History at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Mary Jane Haemig provided a keynote titled “*What Kind of God?*” At the conclusion of her keynote, the assembly broke into workshops and a time for lunch discussion groups. The same workshops were offered during both workshop sessions (before and after the lunch break) to allow for greater shared learning opportunities. The assembly reconvened for Plenary Session #2 at 2:10pm.

**PLENARY SESSION 2**

Bishop Daniel offered a short prayer of gathering and a reading from Ephesians 4:4-6.

**General Elections**

**Barb Moellman**

Bishop Daniel asked for a motion to elect via voice acclamation all those persons nominated to a position in which there was only 1 nomination. The list of those positions are as follows:

- Synod Council Secretary: Becky Seibert
- Synod Council North Central Conference Lay: Jake Nekoranec.
- Synod Council Southeastern Conference Lay: Deborah Noll
- Synod Council Toledo Area Lay: Thomas Ritter
- Consultation Committee Lay: Howard “Ardy” Gonyer
- Nominating Committee Central Conference: Steve Ramsey

A voice motion was provided from the floor as well as a second. No discussion was offered and all those in favor were asked to signify their vote by saying aye. A majority was offered to duly elect the following by voice acclamation:

- Synod Council Secretary: Becky Seibert

Synod Council North Central Conference Lay: Jake Nekoranec.  
Synod Council Southeastern Conference Lay: Deborah Noll  
Synod Council Toledo Area Lay: Thomas Ritter  
Consultation Committee Lay: Howard "Ardy" Gonyer  
Nominating Committee Central Conference: Steve Ramsey

Voting devices were used for the remaining positions up for election. Barb Moellman stated the names of those nominated prior to the instruction from Bishop Daniel to vote. The following were declared duly elected as a result of the electronic voting.

Synod Council Maumee Valley Conference Clergy: Julie Parsell  
Synod Council Eastern Conference Clergy: Anita Marshall  
Synod Council At-Large Lay: Brent Gardner  
Discipline Committee Clergy: Kent Wilson  
Discipline Committee Lay: Timothy Wiersma  
Consultation Committee Clergy: Matthew Wheeler & David Wietelmann

Appreciation from the assembly was shown by applause for all those who were willing to put their names forward for nomination.

#### **Budget Discussion and Vote**

**Phil Koenig**

A motion to adopt the Revised 2017 Budget and proposed 2018 Budget was offered from the floor as well as second. No discussion was offered and a vote was taken using the electronic voting devices. The Revised 2017 Budget and Proposed 2018 Budgets were passed.

#### **Compensation Guidelines Discussion and Vote**

**Rev. Cathy Schibler**

Clarification made that on page 34 of compensation guidelines (found in section 3 of the assembly packet) item IV under other benefits; vacation 4 weeks including 4 weekends is a correction in keeping with the other guidelines.

A motion to adopt the 2018 Compensation Guidelines as well as a second was offered from the floor. During discussion, Rev. Keith Hunsinger, Hope Hamler, made a friendly amendment that on page 55 corrections to the years to show 2018 guidelines accepted at May 2017 assembly. The friendly amendment was accepted and a vote was held with the electronic voting devices. The 2018 Compensation Guidelines were adopted.

#### **Flexible Assembly Bylaw Discussion and Vote**

**Melissa Peper Firestone**

A motion from the floor as well as a second was offered to adopt the Flexible Assembly Bylaw. The following discussion was held prior to the vote:

Greg Olson, voice in opposition with concern in regard to the possibility of a delay in assembly out of conflict, propose to table for a year to discuss

Rob Ketcham, voice in opposition that if the target is to save money having something in the off year would still cost money, how we currently meet doesn't allow for much business and as we are harmonious currently it is ok for synod council to act as the legislative body

Phil Gardener, point of order, if there was a request for tabling the vote

Mary Beth Smith Gunn, voice in favor, there is a provision for a special called assembly to meet should the need arise and the off year does allow for greater fellowship

Greg Olson, moved to table the vote, second offered, vote was held with the motion to table opposed, original motion is back on the floor

Richard Weaver, move to call the question

Melissa read again the proposed bylaw change to ensure all were aware of what the vote was on.

Don Fletcher, point of order if the call to question requires a vote, clarification provided by parliamentarian that yes one person can call the question

An electronic vote was then held with 72% voting in favor, the Flexible Assembly Bylaw was adopted.

### **Synod Constitution Updates Discussion and Vote**

**Melissa Peper Firestone**

A motion and a second from the floor was offered to adopt the Synod Constitution Updates.

During discussion the following were raised from the floor:

Keith Hunsinger, Hope Hamler, point of order to clarify what is being voted on (Melissa clarified that it was the materials as presented in the assembly packet)

Chris Johnson, why is ordained being eliminated from constitution (Bishop Daniel clarified the change of rosters as approved at Churchwide Assembly impacted the language used related to ordained.)

An electronic vote was then held with 95% voting in favor, the Synod Constitution Updates were adopted.

Bishop Daniel read Ephesians 6:10 and offered a prayer of thanksgiving. All voting machines were then collected as Sherry Kreiger offered an introduction to her brother, this year's ELCA representative, Rev. Dr. Roger Willer, ELCA Director of Ethics.

### **ELCA Report**

**Rev. Dr. Roger Willer**

Rev. Dr. Roger Willer reflected on the "connect-ivity" that forms the ELCA. A video was then shared from Churchwide. His reflection continued that all of us only have this ministry for a season, but will be exciting to see how we use this season to see where god has called us together in Christ. In his review of the three expressions of the ELCA: Congregation, Synod, Churchwide it is important to remember that "it is us" that are the ELCA. At the conclusion of his reflection, Rev. Dr. Roger Willer called upon the members of the assembly to write down the name of one or two people that you could ask to consider seminary, that it is only together we can "Let the team work grow!"

Following the conclusion of assembly business, the Sending Eucharist was celebrated with Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin preaching and Rev. Dr. Roger Willer presiding.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pam Kensler  
NWOS Secretary