

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY OF THE SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD

“CONNECTIONS”

May 29-31, 2015

Sacramento Hyatt Regency Hotel

Sacramento, CA

HIGHLIGHTS

The Sierra Pacific Synod met in Assembly under the theme “Connections” (Ezekiel 37:7-10).

Of the 561 individuals present at Assembly, 470 were voting members. Of that group, 291 were lay persons and 179 were clergy. Thirty six were either persons whose primary language is other than English, or were persons of color. Closed captioning was available for those with impaired hearing, as well as English to Spanish translation services. Assembly chaplains were **Pr. Craig Minich** and **Pr. Holly McHale-Larson**.

We welcomed Bishop David Ying-ping Wu and a delegation from the Taiwan Lutheran Church. Bp. Wu brought greetings to the Assembly, presided at worship on Friday night, and engaged in conversation during the Open Space time.

Keynote addresses were presented by **The Rev. Dr. Colleen Windham-Hughes**, a member of the faculty at California Lutheran University. **The Rev. Jeffrey Thiemann**, President and CEO of Portico Benefit Services presented the Bible Studies. **The Rev. Elizabeth Ekdale**, St. Mark’s, San Francisco and a member of the **ELCA Church Council**, introduced **The Rev. Ron Glusenkamp**, Director of the *Always Being Made New* Campaign for the ELCA. He delivered the report of the **ELCA** and electronically shared the inspiring words of **Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton**, and an update on the ELCA Malaria campaign.

Bp. Mark Holmerud in his written verbal presentation proposed three ways for the Synod to measure progress towards its shared mission:

- Becoming more culturally competent, culturally humble and anti-racist
- Becoming a better reflection of the neighborhood and communities we are called to serve
- Becoming able and willing to share our stories of Jesus

An Assembly Banquet on Friday evening, Emceed by **The Rev. Gene Jewel (RT)** celebrated the significant anniversaries of congregations and rostered leaders. Three pastors celebrating their 50th Anniversary of Ordination addressed the banquet – The Rev. Marty Schaefer, The Rev.

Pr. Jose Luis and Karen Idler, AIM work in the Office of the Bishop was celebrated, and a farewell and thanksgiving was offered, as their positions were eliminated as a result of budget cuts.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED

Resolution 2015-1 *Regarding Growth Giving for Mission Support* (which encourages each congregation to increase Mission Support by at least 1% of congregational offerings in 2015)

Resolution 2015-2 *Regarding Gender Identity Inclusivity* (which welcomes individuals of diverse gender identities into the life of the synod and resolves to revise its policies and institutional language to assist in reaching this goal)

Resolution 2015-3 *Regarding Sierra Pacific Synod Compensation Guidelines* (which resolves that the appropriate baseline compensation for full-time pastoral leaders in the Sierra Pacific Synod be increased to \$50,700 for the period July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016)

Resolution 2015-4 *A Memorial to Churchwide Assembly Regarding Gender Identity Inclusivity* (which memorializes the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to task the ELCA Church Council to review and make recommendations on existing church policy regarding gender identity).

RESOLUTIONS PENDING-AWAITING VOTE

Resolution 2015-5 *Resolution Regarding the Campaign for the ELCA* (which encourages members and congregations to participate in the ***Always Being Made New Campaign*** for the ELCA and track the progress of giving in 2016 and 2017).

INSTALLATION

Reverend Carlton Monroe was installed as Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop

ELECTIONS

Synod Council members elected include **Sue Michaelson**, District A Lay Female; **Rev. Don Haven**, District B Clergy; **Andrew Stevens**, District C Lay Male; **Stephanie Leong**, District D lay female; **Rev. Patricia Vargas**, District E Clergy; At-Large pending vote. Those elected to serve in these offices were installed at the Closing Worship Service.

2016 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members Panel-from which nine voting members will be selected by the Synod Council in June:

District	Lay Female	Lay Male	Clergy
A	Pat Cash	Jack Pease	Rev. Kathryn Gulbranson
B	Linda Lownes	Dr. Paul Brosy	Rev. Cindy Carroll
C	Gail Kiyomura	Andrew Stevens	Rev. Jeff R. Johnson
D	Elizabeth Hood	James L. White	Rev. Clark Brown
E	Melissa Standish	Stephen Rosendale	Rev. Patricia Vargas

Youth / young adult representative to 2016 Churchwide Assembly: Nicholas Riner

Person of Color / Primary Language Other than English: Rev. Tuhina Rasche

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

- The Assembly adopted the 2016-17 Council recommended **Budget** which showed anticipated total revenue of \$2,070,890 expected expenses totaling \$2,095,929.
- The Assembly heard a reading of changes to the **Synod Constitution S9.04** that would simplify the election process for bishop. The changes will be voted on in 2016.
- **Pr. Kerstin Weidmann** and **Pr. Diane Bowers** presented on the 500th anniversary of the reformation that will occur in 2017
- **Pr. John Rutsindintwarane** brought greetings from the Lutheran Church in Rwanda, and spoke about the efforts of PICO in Rwanda

There were faith reflections/prayers shared by members of the Sierra Pacific Youth Committee, and other synod youth and young adults on eight occasions during the Assembly.

We shared worship together each day. On Friday evening, **The Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus** provided musical leadership, **Bp. Mark Holmerud** preached, and **Bp. Ying-ping Wu, Taiwan Lutheran Church** presided. On Saturday we shared a service of the word. At Closing worship on Sunday, **The Rev. Dr. Colleen Windham-Hughes** preached and **Bp. Holmerud** presided.