

**Sierra Pacific Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Assembly  
May 4-6, 2017  
Fresno, CA**

**Thursday, May 4, 2017 1:00 PM**

The 30th Annual Assembly of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met under the theme "We are Church Together: Telling Our Story" (John 4:42). Bishop Mark Holmerud opened the Assembly on Thursday, May 4, 2017 at the Doubletree Hotel in Fresno, California. Signing and simultaneous English to Spanish interpretation were provided during the business sections.

Meeting called to order at 2:30 p.m.

Bishop Mark acknowledged those who participated in the day of work on Wednesday, May 3.

Acknowledgement of special guests: Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, ELCA assistant to the bishop and executive for administration; Pastor Jeff Thieman, CEO of Portico; Monica Latona, Assembly Artist; Jonathan Rudman, Assembly Musician; Pastor Ron Zoesch, Interim Director for Evangelical Mission; Bishop Emeritus Dave Mullen; and Youth Voting Members.

**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Bp. Holmerud called on Mr. Randy Presuhn, Chair of the Credentials Committee, to present the number of people who had registered as of 1:00 PM on May 4, 2017.

**LAY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	52	36.88%
Female	86	60.99%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2.13%</u>
<b>TOTAL LAY</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>58.75%</b>

**CLERGY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	56	56.57%
Female	42	42.42%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1.01%</u>
<b>TOTAL CLERGY</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>41.25%</b>

**TOTAL VOTING 240**

**ALL VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	108	45.00%
Female	128	53.33%
Non-Binary	4	1.67%
First Time Voting	53	22.08%
Youth / Young Adult	10	4.17%
Person of Color	11	4.58%
Language not English	6	2.50%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	14	5.83%

**TOTAL VISITORS 54**

Male	15	27.78%
Female	39	72.22%
Non-Binary	0	0.00%
Youth / Young Adult	2	3.70%
Person of Color	3	5.56%
Language not English	1	1.85%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	3	5.56%
Clergy	5	9.26%
Lay	49	90.74%

**TOTAL ATTENDEES 294**

**STANDING RULES OF ORDER**

Secretary Jeffrey Pennington drew the Assembly's attention to the Standing Rules of Order for Assemblies as distributed in the Assembly Handbook.

**SA17.05.01** Secretary Pennington moved the Standing Rules of Order for Assemblies. The motion was seconded (hereafter in these Minutes all motions recorded as having been considered by the Assembly were previously seconded). **PASSED**

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**SA17.05.02** Secretary Pennington moved the adoption of the proposed agenda as presented in the pre-Assembly handbook. **PASSED**

**APPOINTMENT OF ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES**

Secretary Pennington announced the appointment of the following individuals to the designated committees:

**Synod Assembly Planning:** Ms. Mary Wiberg, Co-Chair; Rev. Tom Miller, Co-Chair; Rev. Mark W. Holmerud, Bishop, Office of the Bishop; Rev. Katy Grindberg, Office of the Bishop; Rev. Kathryn Gulbranson, Office of the Bishop; Ms. Laurie Gaumer, Office of the Bishop; Rev. Kirsten Moore; Rev. Dot Lundgren; Rev. Nick Droge

**Planning Committee Advisory Members:** Ms. Diane Niggli of Helms Briscoe Meeting Planners – consultant; Mr. Tom Hoegel and Rev. Tim Huff, Big Dog Sound.

**Elections:** Ms. Sue Hertless, Chair; Ms. Gail Kiyomura, Synod Council Liaison; Ms. Pat Cash – liaison with Synod Nominating Committee; Rev. Kathryn Gulbranson – Staff Liaison, Office of the Bishop.

**Credentials:** Mr. Randy Presuhn, Chair; Pr. Mary Anne Fiene; Pr. Mary Lou Petitjean; Pr. Dorothy Lindstrom; Mr. Jeffrey Pennington – Synod Secretary – *ex-officio*.

**Resolutions Committee:** Rev. Steve Sabin, Chair; Rev. Diane Bowers; Rev. Joshua Serrano; Rev. Kathryn Gulbranson – Synod Council Liaison; Mr. Jeffrey Pennington – Synod Secretary – *ex-officio*; Bp. Mark W. Holmerud, Office of the Bishop – *ex-officio*.

## **VOICE MOTION**

**SA17.05.03** Secretary Pennington moved to grant voice at the Assembly to lay members of the Bishop's staff, all lay members of the Discipling Teams and Synod Committees, all lay members of the Assembly Planning Committee, all non-ELCA pastors serving synod congregations and ministries, the directors or chief executive officers of the organizations known as "Ministry Partners," and seminarians in internship/teaching parish assignments within this synod. **PASSED**

## **GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Bp. Holmerud introduced the Assembly Host Conference Dean, Pr. Doris Nolan (Christ, Reedley, CA), Central San Joaquin Valley Conference. Pastor Nolan welcomed everyone to Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley, the hottest part of the synod, and thanked the many volunteers from local congregations who are assisting with the assembly.

Bp. Holmerud introduced Assembly Chaplains Pastor Patricia Vargas (Nuestro Redentor/Our Redeemer, Livingston, CA) and Pastor Rob O'Berg (Trinity, Fresno, CA). Pastor Rob read the predicted high temperature for the day: 99 F.

## **INTRODUCTION OF NEW ROSTERED LEADERS TO THE SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD**

Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Katy Grindberg introduced the new rostered leaders who have come to the synod during the past year either by transfer or in their first call:

### **Transferred from another Synod:**

The Rev. Kristin Gallimore from Southwestern Washington Synod  
The Rev. Benjamin Colahan from Metro New York Synod  
The Rev. J. Erik Allen from Southeastern Synod  
The Rev. Amy Allen from Southeastern Synod  
The Rev. Marvin Abrahamson (RT) from Northwestern Minnesota Synod  
The Rev. Ruth Ann Leshar from Metro Chicago Synod  
The Rev. Mark Vance (RT) from Indiana-Kentucky Synod  
The Rev. Chad Adamik from Rocky Mountain Synod  
The Rev. Don Larson (RT) from SE Minnesota Synod  
The Rev. Ronald Moe-Lobeda from Northwestern Washington Synod  
The Rev. Scot Sorensen from South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

### **Additions to the Roster (First Call):**

The Rev. Ryan Eikenbary, Zion Lutheran Church – Stockton, CA

### **New non-ELCA Clergy serving SPS Congregations:**

The Rev. Monique Ortiz (UCC), Letter of Extended Service – Sta. Maria y Marta – San Francisco, CA

The Rev. Diana Turner (TEC), Letter of Extended Service – Hope Lutheran Church of the Sierras – South Lake Tahoe, CA

## REPORT OF THE SYNOD VICE-PRESIDENT

Vice President Elaine Whitney thanked the local hosts, the organizing committee, the bishop's staff, and outgoing members of the Synod Council for their service on Council.

She quoted Luke 24:28-32 and reminded us that the sin of racism is all around us, but the church reminded us that we are all children of God and that church is a place where all are loved and cherished. Racism is not a Christian value, and we must push back at all times—together, with God's help, and with eyes open—and have the gifts to turn the church into a place where love can triumph over sin.

## CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Bp. Holmerud called on Mr. Randy Presuhn, Chair of the Credentials Committee, to present the number of people who had registered as of 3:00 PM on May 4, 2017.

### LAY VOTING MEMBERS

Male	76	38.38%
Female	117	59.09%
Non-Binary	5	2.53%

**TOTAL LAY 198 57.06%**

### CLERGY VOTING MEMBERS

Male	86	57.72%
Female	60	40.27%
Non-Binary	3	2.01%

**TOTAL CLERGY 149 42.94%**

**TOTAL VOTING 347**

### ALL VOTING MEMBERS

Male	162	46.69%
Female	177	51.01%
Non-Binary	8	2.31%
First Time Voting	81	23.34%
Youth / Young Adult	27	7.78%
Person of Color	15	4.32%
Language not English	8	2.31%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	19	5.48%

### TOTAL VISITORS 71

Male	20	28.17%
Female	51	71.83%
Non-Binary	0	0.00%
Youth / Young Adult	5	7.04%
Person of Color	4	5.63%
Language not English	1	1.41%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	4	5.63%
Clergy	8	11.27%
Lay	63	88.73%

**TOTAL ATTENDEES 418**

**REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE, PROCEDURES FOR NOMINATIONS FOR AT-LARGE POSITION, AND ELECTIONS TO SYNOD COUNCIL CONFERENCE POSITIONS**

Ms. Pat Cash, Chair of the Sierra Pacific Synod Nominating Committee, read the standing rules for nominations to the At-Large Position.

She then introduced the following nominees for vacancies on the Synod Council that were submitted by the conferences. A vote was then held for each position by all present and the results of the votes are reflected below. The candidate with the most votes was elected to a three-year term:

- Conference 1: **Sue Michaelsen 283 votes**
- Conference 2: **Karl Brodt 190 votes**, Peter Quam 103 votes
- Conference 3: **Pr. Jason Bense 185 votes**, Pr. Frank Espergen 122 votes
- Conference 4: **Linda Babcock 291 votes**
- Conference 5: **John Allured 177 votes**, Jamie Stark 123 votes
- Conference 6: **Pr. Clark Brown 175 votes**, Pr. Anne Carlson 144 votes
- Conference 7:
- Conference 8: **Bill Turner 309 votes**
- Conference 9: **Pr. Paul Clark 300 votes**

**RECEIPT OF THE SYNOD FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT**

Synod Treasurer Linda Lownes reported that at the end of April she received the audit report and that it is included in the assembly book. She asked that if anyone had questions that they see her one-on-one, as we were only receiving it not discussing it at this meeting.

The Assembly broke for the day to attend hearings on proposed resolutions and on the proposed 2018-19 budget.

**FRIDAY, May 5, 2017**

**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Bp. Holmerud called on Mr. Randy Presuhn, Chair of the Credentials Committee, to present the number of people who had registered as of 8:30 AM on May 5, 2017.

**LAY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	90	39.13%
Female	134	58.26%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2.61%</u>
<b>TOTAL LAY</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>58.08%</b>

**CLERGY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	96	57.83%
Female	67	40.36%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1.81%</u>
<b>TOTAL CLERGY</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>41.92%</b>

**TOTAL VOTING 396**

**ALL VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	186	46.97%
Female	201	50.76%
Non-Binary	9	2.27%
First Time Voting	97	24.49%
Youth / Young Adult	28	7.07%
Person of Color	23	5.81%
Language not English	14	3.54%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	30	7.58%

**TOTAL VISITORS 87**

Male	28	32.18%
Female	59	67.82%
Non-Binary	0	0.00%
Youth / Young Adult	6	6.90%
Person of Color	5	5.75%
Language not English	2	2.30%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	6	6.90%
Clergy	10	11.49%
Lay	77	88.51%

**TOTAL ATTENDEES 483**

**GREETINGS AND REPORTS**

- **Greetings from Chaplain John Ault, Navy Recruiting Command for Chaplaincy**  
Chaplain Ault introduced the Synod Assembly to the military chaplaincy program and told the Assembly that we need people who love Jesus to take care of our sailors and marines.
- **SPS Youth Committee**  
Out-going president Inger Smuts spoke about the work of SPSYC and the retreats they organized.

- **Report of the Synod Treasurer**

Synod Treasurer Linda Lownes spoke about the three expressions of the church—congregations, synods, churchwide—but that only at the congregational level are offerings taken. Then introduced a short video which describes how mission support is used. She went on to lift up a number of congregations which had increased their planned mission support to the synod. She challenged the Assembly and represented congregations to “first-fruit giving” of 10%.

The remainder of the morning session included a keynote presentation, a worship service, and breakout gatherings for the conferences.

### **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Bp. Holmerud called on Mr. Randy Presuhn, Chair of the Credentials Committee, to present the number of people who had registered as of 1:00 PM on May 5, 2017.

#### **LAY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	94	39.17%
Female	140	58.33%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2.50%</u>
<b>TOTAL LAY</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>58.39%</b>

#### **CLERGY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	101	59.06%
Female	67	39.18%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1.75%</u>
<b>TOTAL CLERGY</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>41.61%</b>

**TOTAL VOTING 411**

#### ALL VOTING MEMBERS

Male	195	47.45%
Female	207	50.36%
Non-Binary	9	2.19%
First Time Voting	100	24.33%
Youth / Young Adult	29	7.06%
Person of Color	24	5.84%
Language not English	15	3.65%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	31	7.54%

#### TOTAL VISITORS 87

Male	28	32.18%
Female	59	67.82%
Non-Binary	0	0.00%
Youth / Young Adult	6	6.90%
Person of Color	5	5.75%
Language not English	2	2.30%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	6	6.90%
Clergy	10	11.49%
Lay	77	88.51%

**TOTAL ATTENDEES 498**

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO BY-LAWS OF SYNOD CONSTITUTION

**SA17.05.04** Secretary Pennington moved to approve changes to Synod Constitution Bylaw 9.01.01. regarding Provisions for election as Churchwide Voting Members.

- S9.01.01. Voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be elected by the Synod Assembly in the following manner:
- a. The bishop shall automatically be a member, in accordance with ELCA Constitution 12.41.11.
  - b. **The Vice President shall automatically be a member.**
  - c. The Assembly shall elect **an three** ordained ministers on the roster of this synod, **one three** lay **man males** and **one three** lay **woman females to serve as Churchwide Voting Members from each electoral district.** Preliminary nominations for these positions **may be will be** made by the conferences. **The particular nominations to be made by each conference (Clergy, Lay Male, Lay Female) shall be determined in the year prior to the election by means of a lottery conducted by the Synod Council Executive Committee.** **additional nominations may be made from the floor at the Electoral District Caucus with the consent of the nominee. Each Caucus shall select two persons for each position from among those nominated by the Conferences of the Electoral District or from the floor at the time of the Caucus. The t**Two nominees for each position selected by the **Caucus Conference** shall be presented to the Synod Assembly; no additional nominations shall be permitted. The Assembly shall elect one person for each position to serve as a member of the Churchwide Assembly. A member who subsequently moves out of the **electoral district Conference** from which **he or she was they were** elected shall continue to hold office until the next election, provided **he or she they** continues to hold membership in a congregation of this synod.
  - d. Additional members-at-large sufficient to complete the assigned **delegation** number shall be elected from nominations made by the Nominating Committee, with further nominations from the floor permitted. The election of the at-large members, if necessary, shall take place after the elections of the members from the **districts conferences** have been completed. In the event that the number of Churchwide Assembly members assigned to the Synod precludes electing **three nine** persons **described above from each Electoral District,** the Synod Council shall determine how best to distribute the members to be elected.
  - e. The runner-up in each election shall be the first alternate for the seat. In the event the elected voting member or alternate is unable to serve, the Synod Council or Executive Committee shall appoint additional alternates as necessary.

Passed, 229 votes yes, 8 votes no

**SA17.05.05** Secretary Pennington moved to approve changes to Synod Constitution Bylaw 7.22.01. regarding change in the percentage of the total number on the combined retired rosters who shall be selected as voting members at the Synod Assembly.

S7.22.01. Not less than 90 days prior to the convening of the Assembly, the Secretary of the Synod shall mail a letter to all retired ordained ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the combined rosters of the Synod, asking if they are willing to serve as a voting member of that year's Assembly. From the list of those who reply affirmatively, the secretary shall designate a number equal to **405%** of the total number on the combined rosters who shall be selected as voting members. The names of those replying affirmatively shall be placed in alphabetical order, and the persons selected shall be chosen alphabetically, moving down the list from the alphabetical point where the previous year's list of voting members left off. Alternates shall be designated by continuing down the list in alphabetical order, but alternates who are not seated as voting members will continue to be eligible the next year. The secretary shall notify all retired rostered persons of the results of this process.

**Failed** (2/3 vote required for approval), 179 (62%) votes yes, 111 (38%) votes no

## **ELCA CHURCHWIDE REPORT**

Pr. Elizabeth Ekdale, St. Mark's, San Francisco, CA and member of the ELCA Church Council, announced that her six-year term on Church Council is coming to an end. She reiterated and emphasized to the Assembly that the churchwide expression is **us**. She also took the opportunity to remind the Assembly about the ELCA's "Called Forward Together in Christ" strategic directions undertaking.

Pr. Ekdale introduced The Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, assistant to the Presiding Bishop and Executive for the Administration of the ELCA. Dr. Bullock shared the story of God's faithfulness and grace. She also introduced the Assembly to the ELCA's "Called Forward Together in Christ," inviting everybody to stay connected through the goals outlined in the paper. **Congregational vitality and Leadership**—these are the two goals which churchwide and our synod are focusing on first.

As part of the Leadership goal, the ELCA has prepared new candidacy manuals and candidacy committee manuals, and are continuing support of lay as well as rostered leaders.

Dr. Bullock stated that in 2016, \$21.9 million was given in support of the church's ELCA World Hunger campaign. She gave as an example support being provided to residents of Porterville, CA in providing wells for fresh water.

Dr. Bullock emphasized that the Holy Spirit keeps calling us and saying to us that the spirit of God is in becoming a more multicultural and diverse church. As one proof, 56% of new starts are in multicultural and diverse communities.

In addition, she recommended the ELCA resource "Stories of Faith in Action" to let congregational members know what's going on in the church.

**REPORT ON RESOLUTION 2016-6 BY RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINISTRIES STRATEGIES (REMS) CONVOCATION TASK FORCE**

Pastor Patricia Vargas, Nuestro Redentor/Our Redeemer, Livingston, CA, presented the report and explained that the task force had convened a convocation at the Oromo Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in San Lorenzo, CA, on March 18, 2017 to discuss next steps going forward. Forty-six people participated in this meeting. Three working groups were formed and future meetings of each group will be planned to follow-up. The REMS Discipling Team will work to develop an anti-racism policy for the synod and to do it through an organic process. The next Professional Leadership Conference will focus on becoming an anti-racist synod.

**SENSE OF THE HOUSE**

Bishop Holmerud called for a vote to ascertain the sense of the house as to whether or not to introduce the proposed 2018-19 Synod Budget at this time.

**PASSED, 250 yes, 77 no**

**APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 2018-19 BUDGET**

**SA17.05.06.** Treasurer Lownes moved the adoption of the Council-recommended budget proposed by the Synod Council.

**PASSED, 270 yes, 39 no**

**RESOLUTIONS**

Bp. Holmerud introduced Pastor Steve Sabin, Chair of the Resolutions Committee. He thanked all of the members of the Resolution Committee for their hard work.

**SA17.05.07.** On behalf of the Resolution Committee, which had vetted the resolution, Pastor Sabin moved adoption of Sierra Pacific Synod: Resolution 2017-1 Regarding Sierra Pacific Synod Compensation Guidelines.

**SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD: RESOLUTION 2017-1  
REGARDING SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD COMPENSATION GUIDELINES**

**WHEREAS**, in 2011, the Sierra Pacific Synod in Assembly adopted a process for determination of appropriate compensation for its Rostered Ministers; and

**WHEREAS** that process presumes that—annually in Assembly—the Sierra Pacific Synod will modify the “baseline compensation” figure as appropriate to reflect current economic realities; and

**WHEREAS**—for the period July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017—the appropriate “baseline compensation” figure for full-time Rostered Ministers in the Sierra Pacific Synod was at a level of \$51,900; and

**WHEREAS** the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ California Consumer Price Index for the period January 2016 to January 2017 acknowledged cost of living increases of 2.5%; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that Sierra Pacific Synod's 2017-2018 Compensation Guidelines reflect an appropriate baseline compensation for full-time Rostered Ministers of \$53,200 for the period July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018;

**RESOLVED** that Sierra Pacific Synod's 2017-2018 Sunday Pulpit Supply Guidelines be:

- One Service \$250
- One Service and Adult Class \$300
- Two Services \$300
- Two Services and Adult Class \$350

In addition, the congregation provides travel reimbursement in the amount of \$0.535 per mile (based on current IRS mileage reimbursement rates) and full payment for other expenses incurred in connection with the service of the supply pastor for the period of July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018;

And be it further **RESOLVED** that the Sierra Pacific Synod Council—in conjunction with the Leadership Discipling Team—will present to the 2018 Synod Assembly a comprehensive review of Synod Compensation Guidelines, with particular consideration given to how those guidelines might:

- A) be used to facilitate less than 'full-time' calls and contracts for service,
- B) offer clarification about equitable remuneration for pulpit supply, and
- C) facilitate greater flexibility in compensation negotiations between congregations and rostered leaders.

**Passed as amended: 321 yes, 34 no**

#### **REPORT OF THE BISHOP/MISSION CONVERSATION**

Synod Vice President Elaine Whitney gave a warm introduction to Sierra Pacific Synod Bishop Mark Holmerud. Bishop Holmerud individually introduced and thanked the synod staff, thanked those members of Synod Council currently going off council, and acknowledged the officers.

He told the assembly that we have to keep working forward to becoming a more multicultural, diverse synod and church; and he called out the fact that we are sometimes more invested in working with Rwanda than with African-American communities in our own synod.

#### **FAITH, SEXISM, JUSTICE: CONVERSATIONS TOWARD A SOCIAL STATEMENT**

Ms. Mary Wiberg and Pastor Connie Winter-Eulberg introduced the document which was sent out to congregations in fall 2016. They will serve as the “process builders” for our synod, who will work with congregations on going through the various modules in the statement. “Cheat sheets” are available on the synod website.

**SATURDAY, May 6, 2017**

**CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Bp. Holmerud called on Mr. Randy Presuhn, Chair of the Credentials Committee, to present the number of people who had registered as of 8:30 AM on May 6, 2017.

**LAY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	94	38.68%
Female	143	58.85%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2.47%</u>
<b>TOTAL LAY</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>58.27%</b>

**CLERGY VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	103	59.20%
Female	68	39.08%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1.72%</u>
<b>TOTAL CLERGY</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>41.73%</b>

**TOTAL VOTING 417**

**ALL VOTING MEMBERS**

Male	197	47.24%
Female	211	50.60%
Non-Binary	9	2.16%
First Time Voting	101	24.22%
Youth / Young Adult	32	7.67%
Person of Color	25	6.00%
Language not English	16	3.84%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	33	7.91%

**TOTAL VISITORS 89**

Male	29	32.58%
Female	60	67.42%
Non-Binary	0	0.00%
Youth / Young Adult	7	7.87%
Person of Color	5	5.62%
Language not English	2	2.25%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	7	6.74%
Clergy	10	11.24%
Lay	79	88.76%

**TOTAL ATTENDEES 506**

**GREETINGS AND REPORTS**

- **Report by Theresa Landi, Youth Representative from SPS Youth Committee**  
Ms. Landi spoke about her experience with SPSYC and how it has moved and effected her. She also spoke about the importance of people accepting and supporting those with mental health disorders.
- **Greetings from Bp. David Rice, Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin**  
Bishop Rice spoke about the challenges of the Episcopal Church in the San Joaquin Valley and its past as being in schism and the challenges that has proved. He asked us to reach out to Episcopalians wherever we are.

- **Mt. Cross Bible Camp**, presentation by Pr. David Dykes (interim executive director)  
Mr. Dykes showed a video presentation and centered his report on Isaiah 53: “When you go through deep waters, I’ll be there with you.” He informed the Assembly about the damage caused by the winter floods, and he reported that Mt. Cross has received some funds to help rebuild after the damage. This summer Mt. Cross will have an international summer camp counselor from Senegal.
- **Reformation 500 Task Force**, presentation by Pr. Diane Bowers  
Pastor Bowers highlighted events which have been taking place throughout the synod to commemorate the Reformation 500 anniversary. The theme of the events have been “past, present, and future.” She also spoke about the upcoming service to be held at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco on October 29, 2017 at 3 p.m.
- **Hunger Awareness**, Pr. Eileen Smith LeVan  
Pastor LeVan spoke about ELCA World Hunger campaign, offering Assembly participants the possibility to “feed Wilbur” (the pig)—the collection for ELCA World Hunger. She presented a video about the work ELCA World Hunger is doing around the world, including smokeless stoves and biopellets in India.
- **Portico update**, by Pr. Jeff Thiemann, CEO Portico Benefit Services  
Pastor Thiemann updated the assembly on the latest at Portico, reassuring the Assembly that Portico will be there to lead the ELCA through any changes in the Affordable Care Act. He stated that Portico does not have exclusions on pre-existing conditions and does not intend to implement those.

## **ELECTIONS OF SYNOD COUNCIL YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE AND MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

### **Synod Council Youth Representative**

**Nicholas Hays 311 votes**

### **At-large Representative**

Paula Barton, 8 votes

Pr. Linda Boston, 88 votes

Stephanie Leong, 57 votes

**Pr. Teresita Valeriano, 168 votes (52%)**

## **APPROVAL OF SLATE OF NOMINEES TO SYNOD COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE**

Rev. Heidi Hester, Trinity, Pleasanton, CA (term ends 2021)

Ms. Gisela Daetz, Immanuel, Los Altos, CA (term ends 2023)

Ms. Larrell Finneran, Elim, Petaluma, CA (term ends 2023)

Rev. Mary Lou Petitjean, St. Paul Lutheran Family, Carson City, NV (term ends 2023)

Rev. Ron Valadez, Bethlehem, Auburn, CA (term ends 2023)

**Approved: 308 yes votes, 8 no votes**

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SYNOD CONSTITUTION**

**SA17.05.08.** Secretary Pennington moved adoption of “non-required amendments” to the constitution for synods as approved by the 2016 churchwide assembly.

- S7.22. ~~The~~This synod may establish processes that permit retired ~~ordained~~rostered ministers, ~~retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above.~~ The synod may establish processes that permit ~~ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call,~~ or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. ~~above~~. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered leaders ~~ministers~~ specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.24. ~~Ordained ministers~~Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the ~~rosters of ordained ministers~~ of this synod. ~~Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod.~~ Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.27. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant ~~an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ~~ordained~~ minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S8.55. Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four-year term.
- S10.03. The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
- ...
- d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service ~~and of other official rosters~~, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
- e. Issue letters of call to ~~ordained~~rostered ministers ~~and letters of call to associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- ...

- S13.11. When a ~~pastor or when an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal-rostered~~ minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.
- S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former ~~pastor or associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal-rostered~~ minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- S14.013.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- S14.014.** Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.
- S14.015.** Each ~~ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- S14.127.** No ~~ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. ~~An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament~~ shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.
- S14.245.** All ~~ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament~~ under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.
- S14.33.** The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- S14.34.** Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- S14.42.** No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair

of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

PASSED, 301 yes votes, 10 no votes

#### **RESOLUTIONS (cont.)**

**SA17.05.09.** On behalf of the Resolution Committee, which had vetted the resolution, Pastor Sabin moved adoption of Sierra Pacific Synod: Resolution 2017-2 Regarding Sanctuary Synod.

#### **SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD: RESOLUTION 2017-2 REGARDING SANCTUARY SYNOD**

WHEREAS solidarity with others is called for throughout Holy Scripture: “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as a citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” (Lev 19:33) “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Mt 25:35c); and

WHEREAS we as a church and nation are composed largely of immigrants, yet immigration has become a crucial and sometimes divisive issue in our society; and

WHEREAS for the past seventy years Lutherans in the U.S. (especially through the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) have welcomed, protected, and provided for over a half million displaced and vulnerable persons; and

WHEREAS the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA has the highest number of immigrants of any ELCA synod in our nation, and in our cities, towns and agricultural areas, congregations serve multicultural neighborhoods where the influx of immigrants is often vital to the economy; and

WHEREAS the threat to undocumented immigrants has increased so that they live in fear of deportation, separation from their families, lose of their jobs, or being unable to return to school; and

WHEREAS the ancient, biblically-rooted idea of sanctuary was to provide places of refuge. In this country, although the concept of sanctuary has never been recognized in law, in the 1980s this tradition was revived as congregations — including some in this synod — became sanctuary congregations, providing safe havens for Central Americans fleeing civil conflicts and seeking protection from deportation. Now, under new circumstances, many other faith communities and cities are declaring themselves to be sanctuary churches or cities; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA declares itself to be a Sanctuary Synod; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Sierra Pacific Synod pledges to support and encourage the congregations and members of this synod to support meaningful reform of immigration law and policy; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Sierra Pacific Synod pledges to resist by advocacy, protest, and nonparticipation those policy proposals that target and seek to deport millions of undocumented immigrants, and to advocate against attempts to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Sierra Pacific Synod in Assembly urges its congregations to consider serving as places of welcome, refuge, healing, and doing other ministries of material and pastoral support for those targeted due to their immigration status or other differences, and that we work alongside others to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Sierra Pacific Synod assist in equipping congregations, clergy and lay leaders to engage in such work, appropriate to local contexts, capacity, and discernment by designating a staff person to work with the Synod Discipling Teams and Deans of Conferences for this priority; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that a representative group of the submitters in consultation with the bishop will convene a synod wide sanctuary movement task force to strategize in implementing this resolution and will report to the next Assembly on accomplishments and results. The task force is charged to address the following:

1. how best to coordinate with our sister synods in California, local and national sanctuary communities and institutions, immigrant rights groups and coalitions, especially with the ELCA church wide initiative, "Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities" (AMMPARO)
2. creating a process for congregations to help them discern their call to become Sanctuary Churches
3. identifying resources and other information for congregations who are or who are considering becoming Sanctuary churches regarding immigration policy and enforcement and any potential legal issues arising from the various types of assistance that congregations could provide to undocumented immigrants, and other needs and resources for undocumented immigrants.

**PASSED** as amended, 264 yes votes, 50 no votes

**SA17.05.10.** On behalf of the Resolution Committee, which had vetted the resolution, Pastor Sabin moved adoption of Sierra Pacific Synod: Resolution 2017-3 Regarding Creation of a Department of Peacebuilding in the U.S. Government.

**SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD: RESOLUTION 2017-3  
REGARDING Creation of a Department of Peacebuilding in the U.S. Government**

WHEREAS Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, admonishes us with the words, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9); and

WHEREAS Scripture calls us to pursue what makes for peace (Romans 14:19), peace in marriage (1Corinthians 7:15), peace in our relationships with others (2 Corinthians 13:11), to strive for peace with all people (Hebrews 12:14); and

WHEREAS the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA in 1995, adopted the social statement “For Peace in God’s World” on the responsibility of this church to work for peace; and

WHEREAS House Resolution 1111 (HR1111) would implement action in keeping with the goals stated in “For Peace in God’s World,” by creating a Cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding that will work to reduce domestic and international violence, to gather and coordinate information and recommendations, to teach violence prevention, generosity, compassion and mediation to America’s school children, to treat and dismantle gang psychology, to rehabilitate prison populations and to support our military with complementary approaches to ending violence; and

WHEREAS “There is a convergence of the ELCA's peacemaking priorities with the constitutive goals of a United States Department of Peace[building] (HR1111 – 2017) worthy of further exploration by the ELCA's expressions and affiliated and related independent organizations.” (Program Unit for Church in Society of the ELCA – 2010); therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod, meeting in assembly 2017, memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to endorse and advocate for HR1111 by calling on the Office of Domestic Mission of the ELCA to notify the nationwide network of state public policy advocacy offices and the members of the United States House of Representatives of this church’s support for HR1111; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to endorse and advocate for HR1111 by calling on the Office of Domestic Mission of the ELCA to encourage “affiliation” between The Peace Alliance/U.S. Department of Peace-building and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to call for the Strategic Communications unit to provide ELCA congregation members and staff with information about HR1111 through all appropriate media including, but not limited to, *Living Lutheran* magazine and the ELCA website.

RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod in assembly direct the Synod Council or its designee to communicate to member congregations of this Synod and to all other Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through their appropriate units the substance of this

“peace initiative” by the distribution of the Delegate Packet entitled “Regarding: Creations of a Cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding in the U.S. Government HR1111,” encouraging the study of its content, followed by the consideration of endorsement and advocacy of HR 1111 through all means available to those engaged.

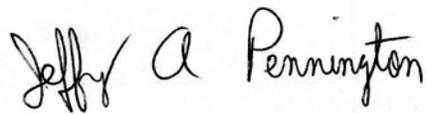
**PASSED as amended, 254 yes votes, 57 no votes**

**Business meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.**

**SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION, INSTALLATION AND CLOSING OF ASSEMBLY**

The Assembly closed with a worship service presided over by Pr. Rob O’Berg, with The Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock bringing the message and Bishop Mark Holmerud celebrating. Bp. Holmerud installed the newly elected Synod Council members during the service.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey A Pennington". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'J' and 'P'.

Jeffrey A Pennington, Secretary  
Synod Pacific Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America