

**Sierra Pacific Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Minutes of the Thirty-second Annual Assembly
May 10, 2019
Lodi, CA**

Saturday, May 10, 2019 10:00 AM

The 32nd Annual Assembly of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met under the theme “We are Church Together: Working in God’s Vineyard.” Bishop Mark Holmerud opened the Assembly on Saturday, May 10, 2019 at the Lodi Grape Pavilion, Lodi, California.

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Acknowledgement of special guests: Bianca Dueñas, Director of San Joaquin Immigrant Empowerment Project, California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation; Nuri Rubio, Organizer at Unite Here Local 49, Hospitality Union, Sacramento, CA; Luis Magaña-Acevedo, organizer and volunteer director of the California Agricultural Workers Organization (OTAC); Victoria Flood, Director for Mission Support in the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Assembly co-chairs Pastor Charlane Lines and Pastor Tom Miller; Lorenzo Cuesta, Parliamentarian; Ray Pickett and Sara Schultz, PLTS; Pastor Kirsten Laderach, YAGM Coordinator for Madagascar; Bishop Emeritus David Mullen; Big Dog sound technicians; and first-time 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 9:50 AM on May 10, 2019.

LAY VOTING MEMBERS

Male	45	41.3%
Female	64	58.7%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
TOTAL LAY	109	66.9%

CLERGY VOTING MEMBERS

Male	29	53.7%
Female	24	44.4%
<u>Non-Binary</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1.9%</u>
TOTAL CLERGY	54	33.1%

TOTAL VOTING 163

ALL VOTING MEMBERS

Male	74	45.4%
Female	88	54.0%
Non-Binary	1	0.6%
Youth / Young Adult	18	11.0%

Person of Color	14	8.6%
Language not English	9	5.5%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	16	9.8%

TOTAL VISITORS 71

Male	13	36.1%
Female	22	61.1%
Non-Binary	1	2.8%
Youth / Young Adult	3	8.3%
Person of Color	3	8.3%
Language not English	1	2.8%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	3	8.3%
Clergy	7	19.4%
Lay	29	80.6%

TOTAL ATTENDEES 199

Bishop Holmerud acknowledged first-time voting members and asked them to stand to be welcomed.

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.

SA19.05.01 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

SA19.05.02 Secretary Pennington moved the adoption of the proposed agenda as presented in the Assembly handbook. **PASSED**

APPOINTMENT OF ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

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

Synod Assembly Planning: Pr. Charlane Lines, Co-Chair; Pr. Tom Miller, Co-Chair; The Rev. Tita Valeriano, Office of the Bishop; The Rev. Katy Grindberg, Office of the Bishop; The Rev. Mark W. Holmerud, Bishop, Office of the Bishop; Ms. Laurie Gaumer, Office of the Bishop; The Rev. Kirsten Moore; The Rev. Dot Lundgren; Ms. Lisa Achen; The Rev. Jason Bense; The Rev. Clark Brown

Planning Committee Advisory Members: Ms. Diane Niggli of Helms Briscoe Meeting Planners – consultant; Mr. Tom Hoegel and The Rev. Tim Huff, Big Dog Sound; Pr. Nelson Rabell-Gonzales; Vicar Frances LeBas; Pr. Mark Price; Ms. Gail Kiyomura, Sierra Pacific Synod Vice-President

Elections: Ms. Sue Hertless, Co-Chair; Ms. Sue Michaelsen, Co-Chair; Ms. Sheela Boddu, Synod Council Liaison; Ms. Pat Cash, liaison with Synod Nominating Committee; The Rev. Katy Grindberg, Staff Liaison, Office of the Bishop

Credentials: Mr. Randy Presuhn, Chair; Pr. Mary Lou Petitjean; Mr. John Allured, Council Liaison; Ms. Laurie Gaumer, Staff Liaison, Office of the Bishop; Mr. Jeffrey Pennington, Synod Secretary (*ex-officio*)

Resolutions Committee: The Rev. Jeremy Serrano, Chair; The Rev. Diane Bowers; Mr. Ben Monroe; Ms. Lucy Allen, Synod Council liaison; Mr. Jeffrey Pennington, Synod Secretary (*ex-officio*); Bp. Mark W. Holmerud, Office of the Bishop (*ex-officio*)

VOICE MOTION

SA19.05.03 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 Assembly chaplains and host pastors Pr. Mark Price, Pr. Nelson Rabell-Gonzales, Pr. David Hill, and Vicar Frances Le Bas of Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, who welcomed the assembly members to Lodi.

50th ANNIVERSARY GREETING

Pr. David Flakoll, celebrating his 50th anniversary of ordination, greeted the Assembly.

REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE, PROCEDURES FOR NOMINATIONS FOR AT-LARGE POSITION

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

RECEIPT OF THE SYNOD FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT

Bishop Holmerud brought the attention of the Assembly to the Financial Audit Report, posted in the Synod Assembly Handbook.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD VICE PRESIDENT

Asked the Assembly not to forget the agricultural laborers who bring food to our tables.

Brought to the Assembly's attention the amount of money which congregations within the Synod contributed to ELCA ministries, i.e., designated offerings; also brought the attention to the difference between the amount of mission support budgeted in the FY18 budget and the shortfall in the amount of mission support received from congregations.

Brought Synod Council representatives up on stage for recognition, and had the Synod Council representatives lead their respective conferences in singing *Dona Nobis Pacem* in a round.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“From the Vineyard...” Address #1, delivered by Ms. Bianca Dueñas, immigration attorney with the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation and Director of San Joaquin Immigrant Empowerment Project.

ELCA CHURCHWIDE REPORT

Bishop Mark introduced Ms. Victoria Flood, Director for Mission Support in the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who spoke about the importance of the relationships we have in the ELCA among congregations, synods, and churchwide organization.

Presented the [*ELCA Year in Review 2018*](#) video.

Highlighted the \$1.9 million support received from the Sierra Pacific Synod for various ELCA ministries, e.g., ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Campaign for the ELCA; and \$430,000 in Mission Support (undesigned giving) from the Sierra Pacific Synod.

Presented Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's video message.

50th ANNIVERSARY GREETING

Pr. Tom Nibbe, celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination, greeted the Assembly.

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED FY 2020 (2020-2021) BUDGET

SA19.05.04. Bishop Mark brought to the floor the Council-Recommended Budget proposed by the Synod Council.

PASSED

RESOLUTIONS

Bp. Holmerud introduced Pastor Jeremy Serrano, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, and thanked all of the members of the Resolutions Committee for their hard work.

SA19.05.05. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, which had vetted the resolution, Pastor Jeremy Serrano moved adoption of Sierra Pacific Synod Resolution 2019-1 *Regarding Sierra Pacific Synod Compensation Guidelines*.

**Sierra Pacific Synod: Resolution 2019-1
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 the process presumes that – annually – the Sierra Pacific Synod in assembly will modify the "baseline compensation" as appropriate to reflect current economic realities, and

WHEREAS for the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, the appropriate “baseline compensation” figure for full-time Rostered Ministers in the Sierra Pacific Synod was set at a level of \$54,800, and

WHEREAS the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, *California Consumer Price Index* for the period of December 2017 to December 2018 acknowledged a cost of living increase of 3.7%, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod's 2019-2020 Compensation Guidelines reflect as appropriate baseline compensation for full-time Rostered Ministers the amount of \$56,828 for the period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, and be it further

RESOLVED that Sierra Pacific Synod's Pulpit Supply Guidelines for the period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 remain at:

One Service	\$275
One Service and Adult Class	\$350
Two Services	\$350
Two Services and Adult Class	\$400

and be it further

RESOLVED that Sierra Pacific Synod's Pulpit Supply Guidelines stipulate that the travel mileage reimbursement rate for the period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 be set at 58 cents per mile, per current IRS determination.

PASSED

SA19.05.06. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, which had vetted the resolution, Pastor Jeremy Serrano moved adoption of Sierra Pacific Synod Resolution 2019-2 *Implementing Actions Regarding “Faith, Sexism, and Justice.”*

**Sierra Pacific Synod: Resolution 2019-2
Implementing Actions Regarding “Faith, Sexism, and Justice”**

WHEREAS at its 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will consider the proposed Social Statement: “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: a Lutheran Call to Action”; and

WHEREAS this proposed statement acknowledges that “humans live in a state of sin... [and] collectively live out this [state of sin] through disobedience to God...and acts against others”; and

WHEREAS this proposed statement claims “Just as this church identifies patriarchy and sexism as sin. We confess that we are simultaneously liberated and sinful...”; and “Our tradition's

complicity in patriarchy and sexism”; and confesses “that Christianity [including Lutheranism] has been complicit in the sins of patriarchy and sexism”; and WHEREAS this proposed statement asserts that “everyone knowingly or unknowingly participates in this patriarchal system” which “makes us complicit in maintaining systems of oppression”; and WHEREAS this proposed statement confesses that “we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves” and concludes “once we understand our own participation in this systemic harm we can identify it as sin, confess it, and . . . begin to act differently”; and WHEREAS this proposed statement concludes: “The fundamental commitment needed is not to a particular program, practice, or process. Rather, we are called to repentance...”; and WHEREAS as the ELCA has previously issued statements of repentance in such documents as the “Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community” in 1994 and the “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery” in 2016; therefore, be it RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to include among the implementing resolutions appended to “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” commitments to make a public statement of repentance for the sins of patriarchy and sexism, to establish a national day of confession and repentance for the sins of sexism and patriarchy, and to provide worship and educational resources to synods and congregations so as to equip this church to meaningfully embrace this call to repentance.
PASSED

50th ANNIVERSARY GREETING

Pr. James Townsend, celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination, greeted the Assembly.

Break for lunch and conference gatherings

During the conference gatherings, the following Deans were elected:

Conference 1 – Redwood Mountain: The Rev. Robert Swartz, St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA

Conference 2 – Bridges: The Rev. Ned O’Donnell, Trinity Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA and East Bay Lutheran Parish Ministry to Nursing Homes, Alameda and Oakland, CA

Conference 3 – Capitol Valley: The Rev. Kirsten Moore, Calvary Lutheran Church, Rio Linda, CA

Conference 4 – Sierra Nevada Foothills: The Rev. Sarah Johnson, Lord of Mercy Lutheran Church, Sparks, NV

Conference 5 – San Francisco Peninsula: The Rev. Elizabeth Ekdale, St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA

Conference 6 – El Camino Real: The Rev. Sara Pearson, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Saratoga, CA

Conference 7 – Mt. Diablo: The Rev. Tyler Jensen, Messiah Lutheran Church, Hayward, CA

Conference 8 – Sierra Central Valley: The Rev. Nelson Rabell-Gonzalez, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, CA

Conference 9 – Central San Joaquin Valley: The Rev. Brian Malison, Christ Lutheran Church, Visalia, CA

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 1:13 PM on May 10, 2019.

LAY VOTING MEMBERS

Male	102	35.9%
Female	180	63.4%
Non-Binary	2	0.7%
TOTAL LAY	284	64.3%

CLERGY VOTING MEMBERS

Male	89	56.3%
Female	66	41.8%
Non-Binary	3	1.9%
TOTAL CLERGY	158	35.7%

TOTAL VOTING 442

ALL VOTING MEMBERS

Male	191	43.2%
Female	246	55.7%
Non-Binary	5	1.1%
Youth / Young Adult	23	5.2%
Person of Color	31	7.0%
Language not English	23	5.2%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	39	8.8%

TOTAL VISITORS 69

Male	27	39.1%
Female	40	58.0%
Non-Binary	2	2.9%
Youth / Young Adult	5	7.2%
Person of Color	8	11.6%
Language not English	5	7.2%
PoC <i>or</i> Language	9	13.0%
Clergy	15	21.7%
Lay	54	78.3%

TOTAL ATTENDEES 511

50th ANNIVERSARY GREETING

Pr. Robert Siekmann, celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination, addressed the Assembly.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP

Lifted up three congregations who have been on the forefront of expanding the diversity of their congregations: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA; Christ Lutheran Church, Visalia, CA; and Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, CA. Members from each congregation spoke about their efforts.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

"From the Vineyard..." Address #2, delivered by Mr. Luis Magaña-Acevedo, organizer and volunteer director of the California Agricultural Workers Organization (OTAC).

ELECTIONS (first round) FOR SYNOD COUNCIL AT-LARGE POSITION

Mr. Joseph Paxton 125

Pr. Linda Boston 120

Ms. Lucy Allen 60

Pr. Dawn Roginski 43

Pr. Crystal Larsen 32

Mr. Anand Darla 27

Mr. Joseph Paxton and Pr. Linda Boston proceeded to the second round.

SECOND-ROUND ELECTION FOR SYNOD COUNCIL AT-LARGE POSITION

Mr. Joseph Paxton 213

Pr. Linda Boston 184

Mr. Joseph Paxton elected to a three-year term to the Synod Council as Member At-Large.

50th ANNIVERSARY GREETING

Pr. Rod Seeger, celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination, addressed the Assembly.

SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD YOUTH COMMITTEE TESTIMONIAL

Bishop Holmerud invited Ms. Emma Lucke, Grace Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, CA, to address the Assembly and to speak about her experiences on the Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee.

RESOLUTIONS (cont.)

SA19.05.07. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, which had vetted the resolution, Pastor Jeremy Serrano moved adoption of Sierra Pacific Synod Resolution 2019-3 *Resources for Implementing “Faith, Sexism, and Justice.”*

Sierra Pacific Synod: Resolution 2019-3

Resources for Implementing “Faith, Sexism, and Justice”

WHEREAS at its 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will consider the proposed Social Statement: “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: a Lutheran Call to Action”; and

WHEREAS as Lutherans we believe in the paramount importance of scripture as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life; and WHEREAS translations and interpretations of Scripture have been used to portray women as sinners/prostitutes as with Eve, Rahab, and Mary Magdalene, or written out of scripture as in the case of Junia; and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement asserts that language for and images of God in the Christian faith are often androcentric, and that the use of only male language leads us to forget the incomprehensible mystery of God, and therefore the statement commends all Christians to retrieve and reform theological language, images, and themes so that they support faithful proclamations of God’s grace in Jesus Christ to all persons; and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement acknowledges that everyone knowingly or unknowingly participates in the patriarchal system and that we are socialized to conform to these patterns of power, privilege, and prejudice making us complicit in maintaining social systems of oppression; and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement calls us to “new commitments and actions as a church” (A. IV, l. 1236ff); and

WHEREAS in the past the ELCA has responded to the need for increasingly inclusive and diverse worship materials (for example, by initiating the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal and commending it for use in the ELCA); therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to create and initiate through various means the creation of commended resource materials for clergy, rostered leaders, lay leaders, and congregations to implement the goals of the proposed social statement. And, be it further

RESOLVED that the creation of materials intended to implement the goals of the proposed social statement will:

- Include more stories of women in scripture (e.g. Deborah, Ruth, Naomi, Mary Magdalene, Junia) and in our Christian tradition (e.g. the Desert Mothers) when developing future documents and resources relating to women gender and justice; and
- Include the most current translations of and biblical scholarship regarding stories of women in the Bible in any further documents and resources on gender and justice; and
- Endorse an inclusive language Bible; and
- Provide non-gender biased/inclusive materials for worship including hymnody, adult education, Confirmation, and Sunday school; and
- Use expansive language for God in ELCA worship resources (*Sundays & Seasons*, etc.); and

- Develop pastoral care resources for the care and healing of traumatized victims and survivors of sexism and patriarchy, and for the public acknowledgement of, and social dialogue about, the sins of sexism and patriarchy. These resources might include counseling information, healing services, etc. for victims/survivors of sexism and patriarchy; and
- Develop alternative scripture and worship, liturgy, and resource materials that address internalized misogyny (when women have been so conditioned to conform to the social system that includes patterns of male power, privilege, and prejudice that they work against their own interests often unknowingly); and
- Adopt intersectionality as a lens through which we see how institutionalized sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, classism, etc., are interconnected.

PASSED

ELECTIONS TO COMMITTEES

The following people were elected to the **Consultation Committee** for a six-year term, expiring 2025:

Rev. Trudy Franzen, St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, El Dorado Hills, CA

Rev. Sandi Olson-Decker, Grace Lutheran Church, King City, CA

Mr. Burke Wallace, Zion Lutheran Church, Stockton, CA

Rev. Bill Wong, Peace Lutheran Church, Grass Valley, CA

The following people were elected to the **Discipline Committee** for a six-year term, expiring 2025:

Rev. Stephanie Johnson, Trinity Lutheran Church, Alameda, CA

Mr. Nulek Singkeovilay, Lahu Ministry – Christ Lutheran Church, Visalia, CA

Rev. Brian Stein-Webber, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA

Deacon Susan Wessner, Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, Rohnert Park, CA

50th ANNIVERSARY GREETING

Bp. Emeritus David Mullen, celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination, addressed the Assembly.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“**From the Vineyard...**” **Address #3**, delivered by Ms. Nuri Rubio, organizer at Unite Here Local 49, Hospitality Union, Sacramento, California.

RESOLUTIONS (cont.)

SA19.05.08. On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, which had vetted the resolution, Pastor Jeremy Serrano moved adoption of Sierra Pacific Synod Resolution 2019-4 *Regarding a Social Statement on Gender Identity and Gender Expression*.

Sierra Pacific Synod: Resolution 2019-4

Regarding a Social Statement on Gender Identity and Gender Expression

WHEREAS the ELCA adopted “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” as a social teaching statement of this church by a two-thirds vote at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and

WHEREAS the ELCA intends to consider “Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” as a social statement of this church at its upcoming 2019 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and

WHEREAS the proposed draft of “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” acknowledges people who identify as Gender Non-conforming, Non-binary, Queer, Genderqueer, Intersex, and Transgender, while the document “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” does not, and

WHEREAS neither “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” nor “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” addresses the complexities of human sexuality and human sexual expression across the gender spectrum, and

WHEREAS our society is undergoing a paradigm shift as regards its understanding of biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, and

WHEREAS members of our congregations and rostered ministers of our church – as well as prospective members and prospective rostered ministers – identify across the gender spectrum; therefore let it be

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to commission a study leading to a social statement on gender identity, gender expression and human sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED that this study should facilitate education among our members so as to build awareness of the broad varieties of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation among God's people, as well as provide pastoral care insights regarding concerns and issues of the transgender experience and gender non-conformity.

PASSED

Business meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION, INSTALLATION, AND CLOSING OF ASSEMBLY

The Assembly closed with a worship service celebrated by The Rev. Dr. Alicia Vargas, with The Rev. Mark Holmerud preaching. During the service, Bishop Holmerud installed the newly elected Synod Council Member At-Large and Conference Deans.

Respectfully submitted,



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