

Jessica Crist

From: "Jessica Crist" <jcrist@montanasynod.org>
To: <shedahl@montanasynod.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2009 8:33 AM
Subject: Staying in Touch with the Churchwide Assembly--Look for the MT Synod Blog

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Montana Synod,

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly starts on Monday, August 17. I have asked out Synod to joint the Presiding Bishop's call for 50 Days of Prayer preceding the Assembly, and I am grateful that so many of you have participated. I ask you to continue your prayers for the Churchwide Assembly, the Montana Synod's Voting members, and the whole Church throughout the 7 days of the Assembly, and afterwards.

A Churchwide Assembly is many things. It is the highest legislative body of the denomination. It is an opportunity for people from all across the church to get together and pray with one another, learn from one another, work with one another. It is a time to hear from the ministries in which this church is engaged--from disaster relieve and refugee resettlement, to early childhood education to global mission. It is a time when carefully thought out documents and proposals are debated and revised. And it is a time when new ideas come forward and sometimes bear fruit.

At this upcoming Churchwide Assembly, human sexuality is one of the issues being discussed. We will consider a social statement on human sexuality and vote on whether or not to adopt it. That is how these things happen in our denomination--not top-down. Voting members at a previous Churchwide Assembly asked to have a social statement on human sexuality, and voting members at this assembly will vote on whether or not to adopt it as policy. (If you have not read it, you can find it online at www.elca.org.) And voting members will also consider proposals to change the ELCA's standards for rostered ministers. (Again, if you have not read the proposals, do so.) If you look in the newspapers or on TV for news of the assembly, they will probalby only report on these issues.

But the Churchwide Assembly is so much more. We will be considering a full-communion agreement with the United Methodist Church. This could have real impact in Montana. After Lutherans, Methodists are the largest Protestant group in Montana. A full-communion agreement with United Methodists could help both our denominations serve our communities better, through sharing. We will be considering the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, an ambitious program dedicated to tackling one of the most prevalant and preventable diseases in the world. We will adopt a budget, elect members of boards and committees, worship, pray, study, and so much more.

I am asking the 12 voting members from our Synod to be available to clusters and congregations to give reports and reflections on the Churchwide Assembly. Invite them! Thank them. Listen to them.

+ There are ways to keep in touch with what is happening at the Churchwide Assembly. I will be doing a daily blog from the assembly. You can find it at <http://montanasynod.org/blogs/blog2.php>.

And the ELCA will be providing streaming video of the Assembly as well. <http://www.elca.org/livevideo>. Below are a whole host of links for assembly materials.

Feel free to contact the Synod Office if you need additional information or assistance.

Thank you for your prayers and your support. It is good to be the church together. And we will continue to be the church together, embracing our differences in God's expansive love.

Your partner in Christ,

Jessica Crist, Bishop

Here are some URL shortcuts for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly Web pages.

If you're referring to these pages in print or via e-mail, these shortcuts might make your job easier.

2009 Churchwide Assembly links:

- * Assembly main page: <http://www.elca.org/assembly>
- * Blessing and Sending for CWA09 participants: <http://www.elca.org/assembly/blessing>
- * Live Web stream: <http://www.elca.org/livevideo>
- * Memorials Report: <http://www.elca.org/assembly/memorials>
- * Multimedia section: <http://www.elca.org/assembly/multimedia>
 - CWA09 blog: <http://blogs.elca.org/assembly>
 - ELCA Twitter stream: <http://twitter.com/ELCA>
 - ELCA Facebook page: <http://facebook.com/Lutherans>
- * Pre-Assembly Report (includes all reports and memorials): <http://www.elca.org/assembly/report>
- * Schedule: <http://www.elca.org/assembly/schedule>
- * Summary of Actions: <http://www.elca.org/assembly/voting>
- * Voting Results (when the assembly starts rolling): <http://www.elca.org/assembly/actions>

Other relevant links:

You can find an alphabetical listing of topics with URL shortcuts at A-Z Index. But here are a few highlights:

- * ELCA News Service: <http://www.elca.org/news>
- * ELCA Studies on Sexuality: <http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney>
- * Lutheran Malaria Initiative: <http://www.elca.org/malaria>
- * HIV and AIDS: <http://www.elca.org/aids>
- * Full Communion partners: <http://www.elca.org/fullcommunion>
- * Justice for Women: <http://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen>

Thanks for all your help in sharing news about the assembly.

Sincerely,

Ben McDonald Coltvet

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