Friday, June 1, 2016

The assembly began at 3pm at the Radisson Hotel in Billings. Rev. Brenda Satrum opened the assembly in prayer.

Tom Gossick introduced the officers of the assembly and gave an overview of the schedule and an introduction to the voting. Bishop Crist opened the assembly and we began with the work of: credentials report, adoption of the rules of the assembly, adoption of the agenda, introduction of synod council members, met the synod staff and the cluster deans, people on internship in the synod and pastors new to the synod.

Next Peggy Paugh Leuzinger gave the report of the secretary and the assembly adopted the minutes of the 2015 Montana Synod Assembly.

Greetings:

NRIT – Jenny Kunka greeted the assembly and thanked the Montana Synod for their support.

ELCA World Hunger – Jan Martin said our synod is one of the top giving synods in the ELCA to World Hunger. She thanked us for this generosity.

ELCA Church Council, John Lohrman gave greetings from the church-wide council.

Bishop’s Report:

1. Meet the Future Boldly – guides everything we do. It gives us courage and pushes us forward to new things.
2. Serve the World Especially the Poor and Those in Need. In our congregations, synod, country and church around the world we are working to serve those in need in so many different ways.
3. Deepen Faith and Witness. This is our bedrock. What we do differentiates us. We take our faith very seriously and education has always been important to Lutherans. Both NRIT and the LPA program are testaments to our focus on education
4. Promote Unity. We take the prayer that the followers of Christ might be one seriously. We’ve come through some difficult times and we are stronger. We differ in ways but we are one.
5. Strengthen Congregations. Much of what the synod staff does is to support congregations so you can carry out your ministries in the world. Our task is to strengthen congregations in their mission.

*A few highlights from Bishop Crist’s Report:*

* This assembly we will focus on “Deepen Faith and Witness.” During our theological conference we will go deeper into our faith so that we can go broader. As we study the reformation, we learn not only about our reformation heritage but also about possibilities for the future.
* Since we last gathered, we have continued to meet the future boldly. Each staff member has been finding ways to meet the future boldly. One example is the work of Colter McCarty in helping congregations to better work within the online/digital world.
* At the assembly, we are repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery which is still used to deny aboriginal people their rights.
* We have given four grants to organizations within the synod that are doing work to meet the future boldly.
* We are working hard at serving the world and you do so much in your congregations and communities, feeding, caring, housing advocating. Thank you to all of you who give of your time and energy to others. ves as the hunger coordinator and Jen Asselstine who served as the Malaria coordinator in the synod and thank you for giving to world hunger.
* Bishop Crist said she had the opportunity to visit both of our companion synods this year and experienced accompaniment. Not going and doing a service project, taking a picture and then leaving, but real accompaniment - walking together with our companion churches, listening to their stories, walking as equals. Equally gifted to serve. As we were together we talked about families and children and about life and about faith.
* A pastor from the Cape Orange Dioceses will come to spend two months with us in the Montana Synod. More information can be found in your packet.
* Companion synods are not only for global awareness. They deepen faith and witness all around and this is what we are all about. This is also why we are focusing on our reformation history now. Go to [www.montanasynod.org](http://www.montanasynod.org) to find many resources for all ages on learning more about the reformation anniversary.
* Bishop Crist held up our camps that provide life changing experiences for our kids and also held up the national youth convention last summer as well as events for youth organized by Jason Asselstine. She also held up our campus ministry programs that work with our young adults both at our public universities and church and private colleges, helping to deepen faith and witness
* We work with the Montana Association of Churches and the Wyoming Association of Churches and we work with our full communion partners in many ways to provide ministry in our cities and towns.
* One of the ways we will be commemorating the actual 500th anniversary of the Reformation next year is a joint service with the two Catholic Dioceses in Helena in the fall of 2017.
* As this election year unfolds in our states and in our country, I ask for your prayers for civil discourse and I think this is something we can have control over. We can be models for the rest of society. I would like our churches to be able to say, we have independents and republicans and democrats in our congregations but we know how to live together in Christ. We care for each other.
* Being part of the larger church expands our understanding and expands our scopt. 40% of the synod budget si passed on to the larger church so together we can do things that we couldn’t do on our own. Start new congregations, support colleges and seminaries, support youth in global mission, are only a few examples.
* In 1975, the Rocky Mountain District built a building that was perfect for its needs but that building is not perfect for the needs of the synod any longer. We are planning on building a new synod house that is handicapped accessible, environmentally friendly, technologically up-to-date. And usable for all. We have now just sold the old synod office (in only two weeks.) When our staff returns from the assembly, we will be putting everything in boxes and moving to New Hope Lutheran Ministry for one year. Next summer the Mission Builders (ELCA volunteers) to come and build the Montana Synod House.
* Bishop Crist ended by thanking the synod staff and members of the synod council.

Greetings:

Immanuel Lutheran Communities – Ronalee Skees thanked the assembly for their support and for generous financial gifts and gifts of time.

St. John’s Lutheran Ministries – Tom Schlotterback brought greetings and thanks and updates for the future plans at St. John’s Lutheran Ministries.

### Intermountain – Adam Jesperson brought greetings. He expressed gratitude to members of the Montana Synod for joining with them in their work. They serve children and youth and their families that suffer from trauma. Intermountain’s focus is “Working with others to improve society’s ability to provide prevention, protection, treatment, and permanency for all struggling children, youth, and families.”

### Mission Investment Fund – Lou Ann Ferguson brought greetings and a thank you for the Montana Synod support of their ministry.

### Mission Builders – Sue Ost said Mission Builders helps ELCA congregations, schools, camps and other ministries to construct buildings for their ministries. Sue brought greetings from the many volunteers (mostly retirees) who spend time working for Mission Builders

### MAC – Peter Erickson brought greetings from the Montana Association of Christians. He thanked all for support and membership in MAC. He invited everyone to consider becoming members of MAC either as individuals or as organizations.

### Freedom in Christ Ministries – Ron Nedbalek said Jesus Christ was counter cultural. The ministry in the prisons is counter cultural as well. He thanked the assembly especially for their prayers as that is the most important thing we can offer to those in the prison system.

### The assembly recessed for supper.

### Friday Evening

### The nominating committee presented names for nomination to the synod council (representing various clusters.) Two names were also nominated for the nominating committee and three for the Kogudus board.

### The assembly voted and all nominations were accepted.

### Synod Council treasurer, Sue Ost thanked all the congregations for their steadfast support of the MT Synod and the ELCA. She gave a brief report of the 2015 budget and 2016 so far. The treasurer’s report was received and the assembly voted to accept it.

### Sue then presented the new budget in the form of a narrative. She again did this to show how many ministries are supported by the generous gifts of congregations and individuals in the Montana Synod. The budget was printed out for each assembly member to study. It is available at [www.montanasynod.org](http://www.montanasynod.org) on the assembly page. The assembly watched a power point presentation about the budget. Churchwide support is 40% of the budget. The budget supports each of the benchmarks of the synod. The assembly will vote on the budget on Sunday morning.

### Greetings:

### Portico – Tammy Devine greeted the assembly. Portico benefit services is the benefit ministry of the ELCA. They want all churches and pastors to thrive and they want to start a wellness reformation within the ELCA, shaping a healthier church for the sake of the world.

### Christikon – Camp Director Mark Donald greeted the assembly. His staff is here to help with the worship service on Sunday. He invited members of the assembly to an adult education retreat later this summer.

### FLBC – Brenda Satrum represented the camp and sent greetings from Exec. Dir. Margie Fiedler and Assoc. Dir. Nathan Clements. What the camps offer is precious in the world, a safe and accepting place for kids. She thanked the Montana Synod and the assembly for it’s support.

###  Prairie Rose Seminole, ELCA program dir. Of the American Indian Alaska Native ministries of the ELCA greeted the assembly. She thanked us for the invitation. She is new to her position but was involved with the Fargo-Moorhead Native American ministries for over 20 years. She said the work is personal to her, there are less than 32 congregations for Native American Alaska ministries.

### For a long time American Indians and Alaska Natives have been asking the question, “How do we fit into this church?” Because the majority of American Indians and Alaska natives do not feel welcome. How we go about loving one another and establishing community is through our actions. Offering water and food is a way of bringing one into community. The people Prairie Rose represents are overjoyed with the movement of healing and reconciliation going on in the ELCA. Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery is part of this movement. The framework of the Doctrine of Discovery has been used in land grabs, relocations, removal of native children from their homes…The impact of the doctrine of discovery is still felt. We are going to repudiate this doctrine to begin taking steps toward healing and reconciliation. We are on the path.

### Greetings from Concordia.

### At this point the assembly moved to worship as an ending to the day.