

MINUTES
MONTANA SYNOD ASSEMBLY
June 5-7, 2015
Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls, Montana
Serve the World –
Especially the Poor and Those in Need



FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2015

Plenary I: 4:00-5:00 pm

Call to Order

Bishop Jessica Crist called the 28th Montana Synod Assembly to order at 4:03 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2015 and opened the Assembly with a responsive reading and prayer.

Adoption of Agenda

Motion

Second: Adopt the agenda with privilege of chair to adjust

SA.15.06.01

VOTE: ADOPT THE AGENDA WITH PRIVILEGE OF CHAIR TO ADJUST

Credentials Report

Neal Wedum gave the Credentials Report as of 4:00 p.m.

Clergy: 94

Lay: 135

Voting Members: 229

Visitors: 61

Total: 290

Motion

Second: Accept the report of the Credentials Committee

SA.15.06.02

VOTE: ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Adoption of the Rules of the Assembly

Motion

Second: Adopt the Rules of the Assembly

SA.15.06.03

VOTE: ADOPT THE RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY

Introductions:

Officers: Bishop Jessica Crist, Vice President Tom Gossack, Secretary Peggy Paugh Leuzinger, Treasurer Harold Spilde

Synod Council: Eric Nord, Pastor Mark Taylor, Neal Wedum, Pastor Amanda Liggett, Janet Stocks, Doug Allie, Tonya Erickson, Lisa Jahraus, Pastor Linda Webster, Pastor Brenda Satrum, Cammy Sue Oakland, Katie Leu, Ethan Leuzinger

Parliamentarian: Pastor Lowell Anderson

Churchwide Representative: Tammy Jackson, Program director for the International Leaders Program in the Global Mission Unit of the ELCA

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Justin Eller, ELCA Global Mission Regional Representative in Southern South America and Kari Eller, leading a workshop

Other Guests:

Musicians: Rev. Julie Long, Rev. Grant Applehans, Coordinators

Global Mission musicians: Kevin (KC) Frazier, Peter Mack, Timothy Butler, Josue Gonzalez, Rev. Cathy Pino, Rev. Felix Malpica, Regina Doss-Rhymes

Synod Staff: Pastor Jason Asselstine, Associate to the Bishop, Pastor George Karres, Director for Evangelical Mission, Administrative Staff: Susan Hedahl, Susan Smith, Tech Guy: Colter McCarty, Director of NRIT: Jenny Kunka, Capital Campaign for Synod House: Jeanne McKoskery and Jan Nerem

People new to the Synod: Natalie Faltin, Elizabeth Daniels, Seth Nelson, Wade Brinkopf, Martha McCreight, Gretchen Wagner, Sara Nehm, Paul Myers, Darren Paulson, Molly Sasser-Goehner, Betty Lou Deuchler, James Aageson, Tom Schlotterback, Stacey Siebrasse, Anna Merritt, Jason McSpadden, Eric Huseh, Lawrence Stappler, Allen Sasser-Goehner, Arnie Bergland, Tony Rhodes, Lynne Ogren, Katie Emory, Will Johnson, Risa Paul

Report of the Secretary

Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger referred the assembly to the Secretary's Report in the Reports Book and to the Minutes of the 2014 Montana Synod Assembly, which are up on the website and announced in May 20th News Of The Week

Motion

Second: Accept the minutes of the 2014 Synod Assembly and the report of the Secretary

SA.15.06.04

VOTE: ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 2014 SYNOD ASSEMBLY AND THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Correspondence:

Pastor Leuzinger read a letter from Pastor Presidente Emilio Flores and from Bishop Bill Bowles from our Companion Synods in Bolivia and South Africa and read notes of greetings from the New Jersey Synod and the South Central Synod of Wisconsin. She also indicated the other Synods meeting in assembly this weekend who we remember in prayer and who are also praying for us.

Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer Harold Spilde thanked the congregations of the Synod for their support and acknowledged that all partners were paid their budgeted amount and referred people to the Reports booklet for the report of the designated giving. He also thanked the congregations for the support of world hunger.

Motion

Second: Receive the Treasurer's Report with gratitude

SA.15.06.05

VOTE: RECEIVE THE TREASURER'S REPORT WITH GRATITUDE

Greetings from Full Communion Partners: Rev. Kama Hamilton Morton, Montana Superintendent, Yellowstone Conference, part of The Montana Sky Area, The United Methodist Church greeted the Assembly on behalf of the Methodist church in Montana. She thanked especially Pastors Melanie and Ron Martin-Dent and Pastors Amanda and Grant Applehans and Pastor Amanda Liggett who all serve Methodist churches or joint Methodist-Lutheran congregations.

Greetings from Region I:

Rev. Mark Nelson, the Coordinator for Missional Leadership in Region 1 brought greetings from Region 1. Pastor Nelson relates most closely to the Candidacy Committee and leaders in rostered ministry and with lay people in serving the world.

Mission Investment Fund: Pastor Joel Wudel

Joel stated that he is present on behalf of Pastor Dan Carlson who is unable to be present. He would say three things: 1: that he is sorry that he is not able to be here, 2: thank you 3: we have money to lend.

Portico: Andrea Arey

Andrea reminded the assembly that there is a triangle of wellness for rostered leaders by caring for them with health insurance, retirement and disability insurance. A video from Portico was shown.

Kogodus: Pastor Greg Karlsgodt

Pastor Karlsgodt spoke about the ministry of Kogodus, born from Olaf Magnus' inspiration, now celebrating its 40th anniversary. He recounted how Kogodus has been and will continue to be a retreat ministry for the church and pastors focusing on the basics of the Christian faith. He invited the Assembly to stop by their display room.

Candidacy:

The following introduced themselves: Sylvia Bull, Jeremy DuPrey, Jessica Obrecht, Sara Nehm, Tonia Fisher-Clark, Paul Myers. They are all in various stages of candidacy in various ways through a variety of seminaries and institutions.

Closing prayer: Pastor Mark Taylor led the assembly in a closing prayer.

Bishop Crist declared the Assembly in recess until 7:00 p.m.

At 6:30 the global musician lead the assembly in a sing-a-long.

Plenary II 7:00-8:00 pm. Friday, June 5, 2015

Bishop Crist called the Assembly back to order and introduced the Global Mission musicians.

Credentials Report

Neal Wedum presented the Credentials Report as of 7:00 p.m.

Clergy: 101

Lay Voting Members: 138

Total Voting Members: 239

Visitors: 67

Total: 306

Motion

Second: Accept the Credentials Report

SA.15.06.06

VOTE: ACCEPT THE CREDENTIALS REPORT

Reformation 500

Rev. Tonya Eza is the chair of the Reformation 500 and shared the ways in which the 100 year anniversaries were celebrated in the past and encouraged the Assembly participants to focus on this 500th anniversary and to understand the heart of the reformation.

Associates in Ministry Candidates

Colter McCarty and Keith Weatherford were acknowledged as candidates for Associates in Ministry

ELCA Youth Gathering

Pastor Jason Asselstine spoke to the Assembly about the ELCA Youth Gathering and shared that adolescent faith formation is at the heart of the gathering. All the preparations as well as the actual gathering are geared toward faith formation. There will be 247 youth attending the gathering from Montana.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Chair Trudi Schmidt presented the Nominating Ballot

The following were nominated:

Treasurer: Sue Ost

Synod Council Representatives

Beartooth Cluster: Eric Nord

Five Valleys Cluster: Rev. Brenda Satrum
Northeast Cluster: Rev. Mark Taylor
Russell Country Cluster: Lisa Jahraus

Churchwide Assembly Voting Members

Position 1: Bishop Jessica Crist
Position 2: Rev. Audrey Rydbom
Rev. Brad Ulgenes
Position 3: Rev. Tammy Bull
Rev. Peggy Paugh Leuzinger
Position 4: Tom Gossack, Synod Council Vice President
Position 5: Ben Peterson
Clayton Schenck
Position 6: Rick Mikkelson
Halvar Olstead
Position 7: Lisa Jahraus
Debra Oldfield
Position 8: Alicia Moe
Hannah Peterson
Position 9: Beverly Bell
Carol Will
Position 10: Traci Gibson
Drew Syring
Position 11: Carly Tattoo

Committee on Discipline:

Position 1: Rev. Nathan Clements
Rev. Linda Rose
Position 2: Rev. Dr. Christine Holler-Dinsmore
Rev. Doug Peterson
Position 3: Rev. Ellen Ayres
Rev. Ron Martin-Dent
Position 4: Larry Lambert
John Trangmoe
Position 5: Maureen Stiles
Cynthia Thomas

Consultation Committee

Position 1: Rev. Arne Bergland
Rev. Chris Flohr
Position 2: Glenn Deuchler
Mark Huber
Position 3: Joelene Goodover
Cindy Little

Nominating Committee:

Position 1: Rev. Ken Duvall
Rev. Greg Holler-Dinsmore
Position 2 Rev. Joel Skindlov
Rev. Brad Ulgenes
Position 3: Bill Moss
Rob Stuberg
Position 4: Chris Hillesland
John Sheppard
Position 5: Deb Oldfield
Trudi Schmidt
Position 5: Kristianne Wilson
Lorrie Vennes

Kogodus Renewal Ministry:

Position 1: Joy Mc Sparron
Position 2: Tamara Bushnell

Synod Council member Eric Nord led the assembly in prayer.

The First Ballot was cast.

Power Point Presentation of the Proposed 2016 Budget

Sue Ost, Assistant Treasurer presented the narrative budget with pictures and a focus on our Synod Benchmarks.

Closing Prayer Synod Council Member Lisa Jahraus lead the Assembly in prayer.

Bishop Crist declared the Assembly in recess.

Opening Eucharist was held with Bishop Crist preaching and Pastor Stacy Siebrasse presiding. The Assembly brought forward their intents and an offering was received for FISH. The Global Musicians from the ELCA led the music for the worship.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2015

Morning Prayer and Global Music with a focus on Africa was led by Rob Stuberg and Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger

Plenary III 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Credentials Report

Neal Wedum gave the Credentials Report:
Clergy: 108

Lay Voting Members: 150
Total: 258
Visitors: 73
Total: 331
Motion
Second: Accept the Credentials Report
SA.15.06.07
VOTE: Accept the Credentials Report

Keynote Address:

Rev. Justin Eller, Regional Representative in Southern South America and former missionary in Bolivia gave the Keynote Address to the Assembly.

ACCOMPANIMENT

Within accompaniment there are five values: Mutuality, Inclusivity, Vulnerability, Empowerment and Sustainability.

Rev. Eller focused his comments on three of the five values: mutuality, vulnerability and sustainability.

1. Mutuality – we work to recognize that all of us have skills to offer to God’s mission. Mutuality values the gifts of all and builds upon giving and receiving trust. Mutuality focuses on developing reciprocal relationships. Vulnerability is a big piece of this, because mutuality must include an openness to relationship and a giving up of power, which is God’s way of redemption. In U.S. culture, vulnerability is seen as weakness but it is necessary in mutuality. Pastor Eller told a story called the Elephant and the Mouse, in which the elephant and mouse went to a party and no one had more fun or danced harder than the elephant. In the end, however, when the elephant went to look for his friend the mouse so they could talk about how great the party was, he found his friend dead, having been killed by his own large feet. The moral of the story was: “Sometimes doing mission with you Americans is like a mouse dancing with an elephant.”
There needs to be mutuality.

2. Sustainability – any relationship requires intentional commitment of attention and time to build up all involved. Sustainability must include embedding the project or work in the community as a whole, so the project does not depend only on one or two people and can continue over time.

To be sustainable, accompaniment must not just be what we do...it must be how we are. How we are here in Montana...how we are with people of different cultures here in this land. Sustainability might not mean “teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime,” it means more. When thinking of this axiom we ask, who is doing the teaching? In the original axiom we hear patriarchy and imperialism. We are doing the teaching, we have the power. In accompaniment we need to stop teaching to fish and instead, learn to sit down and listen to the communities. Why is the river important? What does it mean to their community? How can they organize and come up with their own solutions? We need to learn to be co-fishermen and co-fisherwomen. Sustainability keeps us firm to the commitment of long-term relationship without eroding resources. Additionally, sustainability is more than stewardship.

In Global Mission we ask, is it integral, holistic and comprehensive, does it last for the long-haul?

3. Vulnerability – What is at the heart of our Lutheran identity? A cross. And isn't this a sign of vulnerability? The incarnation, God putting on skin and coming to dwell with us, is vulnerability - Christ crucified and resurrected. Our vulnerability is being Christ-like with the neighbor. When we are willing to be vulnerable, the cries of the broken can break into our hearts and we hear those cries as God's voice. As we are people from the dominant culture, we need to realize that we have to let things go and we also need to realize that vulnerability looks different to us than it does to the oppressed. Vulnerability is the giving up of power. It is an openness to relationship.

And what really matters is that you try, that you have the willingness to try, to be wrong, to make mistakes.

Bishop Jessica Crist called the assembly back into session at 10:15 a.m. after a short break.

Intermountain Children's Home Presentation

Pastor George Karres introduced Intermountain Children's Home ministry. The Montana Synod has been invited to become a full-partner with Intermountain Children's Home ministry. Jim FitzGerald shared in a video the mission of Intermountain Children's Home. Tim Lanham, a Presbyterian minister also shared how his congregation's relationship has been strengthened through a relationship with Intermountain Children's Home.

Resolution On Intermountain Deaconess Children's Services And Intermountain Children's Home (Hereafter Intermountain)

WHEREAS Intermountain provides services to children and families in Montana and beyond; and

WHEREAS ELCA Full Communion Partners Presbyterian Church (USA) (Glacier and Yellowstone Presbyteries); United Church of Christ (Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference); United Methodist Church (Yellowstone Annual Conference) are partners in governance of Intermountain; and

WHEREAS The Statement of Purpose in the Montana Synod and ELCA Constitutions states:
"To participate in God's mission, this synod as part of the Church shall: Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and stand with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs."

And

“Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;” and

WHEREAS The ecumenical partners who are part of Intermountain have invited the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to enter into partnership with them at Intermountain, participating in governance and support; and

WHEREAS The Montana Synod Council and staff have thoroughly investigated Intermountain and recommend partnership; therefore be it

RESOLVED That the Montana Synod, in Assembly, June 6, 2015, vote to enter into partnership with Intermountain, participating in governance, advocacy and support, effective upon Intermountain’s ratification of the Statement of Relationship and revision of its bylaws for inclusion of the Montana Synod of the ELCA as owner/partner but no later than October 1, 2015.

Motion

Second: Approve the Resolution On Intermountain Deaconess Children’s Services And Intermountain Children’s Home (Hereafter Intermountain)

SA.15.06.08

VOTE: APPROVE THE RESOLUTION ON INTERMOUNTAIN DEACONESS CHILDREN’S SERVICES AND INTERMOUNTAIN CHILDREN’S HOME

LSS Presentation

Pastor Tom Schlotterback shared the story of the gift of adoption and thanked the Synod for their love and support for the ministry of LSS.

PLTS

Brian Stein Webber greeted the Assembly and shared how now California Lutheran and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary have been merged in a bold and new way. The Seminary will welcome new professors and is working to reach out to the whole church.

Luther Seminary

Rich Omland greeted the Assembly remembering that 44 years ago he was one of those greeted as new to ministry. On behalf of Luther Seminary Rev. Omland directed the Assembly to the report from President Steinke. He also thanked the Montana Synod for their support for Luther Seminary.

Concordia College

Trina Pisk Hall greeted the Assembly. She encouraged the Assembly to refer their young people to consider Concordia and shared some of the ways in which Concordia focuses on the benchmarks from the Synod through life on campus.

PLU

Daniel Lee, Vice President of Advancement, greeted the Assembly and shared some of the ways in which PLU is working to live out the MT Synod benchmarks.

Mission Table

Andy Wendle shared as a member of the Mission Table about the struggles of life in this world, that we live in challenging times, but we are also in a new reformation. We are called to live in this new day, but that we are not called to live by Lutheran values and cultural traps. As a member of the Mission Table Andy shared that “Deepening Faith and Witness” is at the heart of the Mission table and challenged the assembly to be reformed.

Mission Builders

Jim Dyes is the Mission Builder construction manager and is the construction manager right now at Bethel Lutheran in Great Falls. He shared the work and mission of mission builders.

Bishop Crist declared the Assembly in recess at 11:30 a.m.

The Global Mission Music Team led a sing-a-long with the Assembly from 1:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Plenary IV 1:30-2:30 p.m. Saturday, June 5, 2015

Bishop Crist called the Assembly back into session at 1:30 p.m.

Bishop’s Report to the 2015 Montana Synod Assembly

Good afternoon. It is good to be with you at our Montana Synod Assembly under the theme of “Serve the world, especially the poor and those in need.” It is good to have our special guests here—Justin and Kari and Eber Eller, and Tammy Jackson. And it is good to be doing some important business together.

Our Synod has committed to meet the future boldly, and we are seeing some of that as we adopt a budget, as we vote to enter into relationship with Intermountain, as we change our 27 year old constitution to fit our current reality. We have committed to serve the world, especially the poor and those in need. And in this assembly, with our emphasis on global church, global ministry, global issues, we are really honing in on some of what it means to serve the world.

We have committed to deepen faith and witness. Our worship and our keynotes and our workshops are oriented towards that commitment. We have committed to promoting unity. And our reaffirmation of our relationship with the Montana Association of Jewish Communities and our commitment to the new Montana Association of Christians are part of that unity. So is our conversation with Tammy Jackson, representing the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the larger church.

We have committed to strengthening congregations. We hope that the things you learn here, the connections you make, the budget that you pass will help to strengthen all

congregations—both those that are strong and those that need additional assistance. That’s what we are about—strengthening congregations so that they can serve God and neighbor.

Did you notice? I just gave you the 5 benchmarks.

I want to talk about leadership now. Whenever we meet with a congregation in transition they ask: “What’s it like out there? How many congregations are looking for pastors? How many pastors are there out there who might come to our place?” In 2014, I ordained 8 seminary graduates—all of whom are serving in our Synod. Already in 2015 we’ve had 2 ordinations, 2 more are scheduled, and 2 more are in call processes. That means another 6 in 2015, at least! We are extremely fortunate, as the baby boomers are retiring to be able to welcome these new pastors into our Synod to do ministry. Thanks be to God.

That’s the good news. The more challenging news is that seminary enrollment is down across the board—every seminary. We have a couple of our seminarians here with us this weekend—Jessie Obrecht from Havre is helping us out. She’s starting an internship in Billings this fall, and the year after that will go to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to finish up. Sylvia Bull of Great Falls has just graduated from Princeton Seminary and is preparing for an internship in North Carolina. Jeremy DuPrey is continuing his Distributed Learning program at Luther, while simultaneously working at Big Timber Lutheran. And we just got word that Jeff Brown from Cut Bank has received a call in North Dakota and will be ordained June 20.

If we are going to continue to have congregations served by pastors, we need to recruit and support candidates for ministry. One group of seminarians I have not mentioned yet is our TEEM candidates. TEEM is an alternate route to ordained ministry, allowing homegrown candidates to serve in place while they get their theological training. You don’t see them this weekend because they are off at seminary at class right now. In our synod, small rural congregations who have lifted up leaders have been able to have ministry that would not otherwise have been possible. We give thanks for TEEM.

But we need you to be on the lookout for likely candidates for ministry—either ordained or lay. Look at young people. Encourage them. Suggest it. It is amazing what impact a suggestion can have. Talk with one of our Synod Staff, or a member of the Candidacy Committee, or Pastor Bob Quam, who staffs our Candidacy Committee. Talk to people who aren’t young. We have many people in second and third and fourth careers who are now pastors. We need all kinds of leaders. But they don’t just drop from the sky like manna. We have to recruit. And support.

Once upon a time the church pretty much supported seminarians. Going to seminary was relatively inexpensive. The older generation of pastors graduated debt-free. So going to a congregation with a relatively low salary was manageable. Rarely do seminarians graduate debt-free any more. Most begin seminary with college debt. And seminaries are no longer supported by the church the way they used to be. The average educational debt for 2014 seminary graduates who borrowed was over \$45,000. This is a real issue for prospective seminarians and for congregations.

We have a couple of approaches. First is the Fund for Leaders. A dozen years ago the ELCA started the Fund for Leaders to endow scholarships for seminary students. The fund has about \$45 million, and is currently providing scholarships—some full, some partial-- for 241 students. We have our own Montana Synod version of the fund. We ask that offerings from ordinations and installations be sent to the Synod, and we divide them up to support both the Montana Synod Fund for Leaders Scholarship and First Call Theological Education. Of

course other donations are always welcome, and we have received several bequests, as well as the Omland and Daehlin Funds, which were intended for seminary scholarships, and have been added to the corpus. We currently have over \$135,000, and are able to distribute the interest to qualified seminarians.

A second approach is a fund that was set up when former Bishop Mark Ramseth left office. The Ramseth Fund was established to help with seminary debts of pastors serving in our synod. The fund has now reached about \$145,000, and the Synod Council yesterday, in consultation with Mark Ramseth, has begun the process of distribution of the funds. Anyone with a seminary debt is eligible to get one month's payment paid by the fund simply by applying to the Synod and sending in the July coupon. Watch for details in the enews these next couple of weeks.

Leadership. We need pastors. And we need strong and committed and informed and engaged lay leaders in the church. We have several people in the candidacy track to become Associates in Ministry. Their interests range from youth ministry to music to technology. And we have more than 30 people in our current LPA training class. That is in addition to the over 70 who have already been through the program and are active. This is an enormous resource to the church. Not only do LPAs do supply preaching. They lead Bible studies, do pastoral calling, serve interim ministries, serve as Synodically Authorized Ministers, visit hospitals and nursing homes, serve on synod committees and in WELCA leadership. LPAs rock, and we are the envy of every other synod who hears about it!

We need leaders in the church and we need leaders in the world. We need to equip ourselves to be able to make the connections between our faith and our daily life. We need informed and equipped teachers and merchants, farmers and law enforcement, stock brokers and forest workers. We need people in the medical field who understand the complexities of faith, and we need pastors who are knowledgeable about science and economics. Leadership.

I want to talk with you about our staff team, some of the leaders in the Montana Synod. We have a fabulous staff team. Pastor Jason Asselstine has been on the job as Associate to the Bishop for a year and a half now, and he has brought energy and enthusiasm to the job. Jason has a map in his office with magic marker on the roads he has travelled, crisscrossing the Synod. And he has learned that trying to get from Culbertson to Spokane in one day is not a very good idea. Jason works with congregations in transition, with the LPA program, with First Call Theological Education. He is organizing our Synod for the Youth Gathering, and he also excels at "other duties as assigned."

Colter McCarty is our tech guru. An office manager at Bethel Lutheran by day and a youth director by night, Colter spends his extra time consulting with congregations and ministries around the Synod. One thing we knew when we looked at the future was that we—and I mean all of us—need to get a lot more tech-savvy. Colter is helping us with that. And he will come to your congregation, too. All you need to do is ask.

Pastor George Karres is the newest member of our staff. As Director for Evangelical Mission, George works with stewardship and outreach, helping existing congregations, and helping to develop and sustain new ministries. He works with Freedom in Christ, Our Saviour's Rocky Boy, Spirit of Life and New Hope in addition to other congregations who ask. This fall George and his team will be offering comprehensive congregational reviews to healthy congregations who are seeking to meet the future boldly. Talk to him. He is also working on getting congregations in urban areas to come together to discuss area strategies for ministry.

George and Jason and Colter and I are all available to come to congregations, and consider it a privilege. You don't need to be in crisis or transition.

Susan Hedahl and Susan Smith round out our staff team, keeping the office going with the million details that are invisible to most of us, but are essential. They are there to answer the phone, get out the reports, pass on information, organize meetings and events, keep in touch with churchwide and congregations and generally serve as the bridge to congregations. We have a wonderful Team Susan, and I ask you to thank them when you see them.

At the end of summer Susan Smith will be leaving us. She is moving to Texas where she has a granddaughter. Please thank her for all her good work and wish her well.

One of the ways that we are meeting the future boldly in our Synod is through the campaign of our new Synod House. Our current building, constructed in the 1970's for a different set of needs, is overcrowded, under-wired and falling apart. We are in the process of raising funds for the new Synod House for which we have a design and a plan. We are excited about the possibilities for flexible, high-tech, green and hospitable ministry that we will be able to do in our new space. We are just not there yet. And we could use some help. You'll hear more about that later. Jeanne McCoskery is coordinating the effort, assisted by Jan Nerem and a campaign team.

Just as many congregations tithe to mission when they do a capital campaign, our campaign for a new synod house tithes to the Mission Venture Capital Fund. What's that, you ask? It is a fund that we have established in the Montana Synod that challenges congregations and ministry to meet the future boldly, to serve the world, especially the poor and those in need, to deepen faith and witness, to promote unity and to strengthen congregations. Emmaus Campus Ministry saw a need for something for returning Young Adults in Global Mission. So they designed a program that places a returning YAGM in a social agency, living in community, and finding ways to integrate the global experience with what comes next in life. It was our first Mission Venture Capital Fund project, and Keenan Weatherford is the guy. Keenan writes about his YAGM and post-YAGM experiences as life-transforming.

We've also had proposals from the Pedal for Peas World Hunger project, from a congregation sponsoring a learning event and from a congregation doing outreach to unchurched children. The possibilities are endless. If you have a good idea, especially if it is out of the box and meets the future boldly, get congregational buy-in. And then talk with George Karres or a member of the Mission Table. Much as we love to give away money, we also like to get some back. So part of this Mission Venture Capital idea is that ministries that receive money will find ways to pay some or all of it back, so that we continue to have seed money for new projects. This is one of the ways we strengthen congregations.

We also strengthen congregations through our Wellness Grants. For the last 8 years Portico, our health insurance provider, has offered a 2% discount to synods where at least 66% of the eligible plan members completed a health assessment online. We did it the first year—one of only 4 synods—and we've done it every year since. And everybody benefits—even the folks who don't bother to do it. I've told our pastors that I will respect their privacy and not ask them directly if they participated. But you can ask. And starting next January you can lobby them. It takes 20 minutes, it offers resources for increasing health, and it provides a rebate. What's not to like?

One of the benefits from it is an additional sum of money the Montana Synod has received. And we've used it to underwrite events like the Convocation in the fall. And we

have established a Wellness grant program. Pastors and other church leaders can apply for a grant for personal wellness, congregational wellness, community wellness. It is a wonderful opportunity to promote wellness and promote community.

2015 is the 50th anniversary of Lutheran-Catholic dialogues—a direct outcome of Vatican 2. In 2012, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Vatican 2 by having Lutheran-Catholic dinners and dialogues with the bishops in 5 locations across the state. Roman Catholic Bishop Michael Warfel and I went to congregations where we ate together, talked about the challenges and opportunities of our churches and fielded questions from eager crowds.

We are moving towards the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation in 2017, and we have tentative plans to do something jointly with the Catholics in Montana. In the meantime, our Synod has a task force working hard to prepare resources for the Reformation anniversary. Take a look on our web site under The Luther 500. We've got discussion pieces, curricula, ideas for children, and much more. Tonya Eza chairs that committee. And there's a new book out, *One Hope: Re-Membering the Body of Christ*, written by 3 Lutherans and 3 Catholics for lay people to read and study. Julie Aageson, now living in our synod, is one of the authors. Take a look.

The years since Vatican 2 have resulted in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue way beyond just Lutherans and Catholics. In 1973, Protestants and Catholics in Montana joined to form the Montana Association of Churches. And in Wyoming a similar thing happened. MAC was a ministry of ecumenical cooperation and advocacy for many years. And gradually, as times changed, it became apparent that MAC needed to change. And so, this past year, under the leadership of Pastor Peter Erickson from Columbia Falls, MAC redesigned itself, took a new name—Montana Association of Christians—and opened membership to individuals, congregations, ministries as well as judicatories. Tomorrow morning we will affirm our membership in and commitment to the new MAC.

The ELCA has 6 full communion partners. As a denomination we have worked hard on establishing relationships with these denominations. Each agreement is accompanied by theological statements, affirmations and background information. We have full communion agreements with the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, the Moravians, the Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church. That means that we are welcome at each other's tables, and that we can exchange pastors. The implications for a densely populated rural state like ours are significant. We have cooperative agreements with 4 of the 6 denominations—essentially all the ones that have an actual presence in Montana. Last night we had greetings from the Rev. Kama Hamilton Morton of the United Methodist Church, Yellowstone Annual Conference. And in the fall we will be sharing our Bishops' Convocation with the Episcopal Diocese.

This afternoon we will be reaffirming an agreement the Montana Synod made with the Montana Association of Jewish Communities 20 years ago. At that time, the ELCA and the Lutheran World Federation had formally repudiated the hateful words of Martin Luther that had been used to justify horrific anti-Semitism, including the Holocaust. At the same time, there were acts of anti-Semitism in Billings, that precipitated that MAC "Not in our town" campaign. The Montana Synod approached the Montana Association of Jewish Communities and the result was an agreement that we are renewing today.

Six years ago the ELCA voted to allow gay and lesbian partnered pastors to serve in the church and for congregations to bless same-sex unions, where permissible by law. That

decision shook things up for a while. But we have settled down and our church continues to make space for people on all parts of the spectrum in terms of these issues of human sexuality.

Last fall, in anticipation of court decisions on the laws banning same-sex marriage in both Wyoming and Montana, we had a day-long convocation for pastors on marriage. Colleagues made presentations on marriage, on the ELCA's social statement, on practices and challenges in congregations. When the courts overturned the marriage bans in November, the clergy of the Synod were prepared to have conversations with their congregations. Nobody was taken unawares this time. Some congregations decided to have conversations openly about their policies. Some decided not to. Some decided to leave it up to the pastor. Some decided to keep in conversation. The important thing, I have said, is to be in communication, not to act as a lone ranger, and no surprises.

This past fall our staff initiated a series of conversations with pastors in the clusters on the ELCA's 1997 statement on sacramental practices—The Use of the Means of Grace. We wanted to have the opportunity to talk about how different congregations see and do communion, and how that reflects or ignores our official document. We had good turnout and lively conversation on this topic that everyone could relate to. This was initiated by a request at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly that the church discuss our communion practices. We did so, in the clusters, and I know that some congregations have also done the study in their own setting.

We are indeed part of a larger church. When we come to a Synod Assembly we see that the church is larger than our congregation. There are so many things we do together as a Synod that we cannot do on our own. Freedom in Christ Prison Ministry. The Apology to the Tribes. Campus Ministry. Continuing education. Camping and young adult ministry. Educational ministry.

And the church is larger than the Synod. We are part of the ELCA, and the Lutheran World Federation. And we can touch the globe because of it. Tammy Jackson is here representing the wider ELCA, and we'll hear from her tomorrow. But the global musicians are here in the same capacity. And our Director for Evangelical Mission is, too. And Pastor Mark Nelson, from Region 1 is as well. And the Ellers are, too. And anybody who is going through or has gone through Candidacy. Or seminary. Or adopted a child through LSS, or had a relative in a Lutheran care facility.

Since its inception the ELCA has had a robust world hunger campaign. Each year across the church we raise 19 million dollars to spent helping to eradicate hunger and alleviate poverty. Jan Martin is our hunger coordinator. Look for the display, and invite her to your congregation. In 2009 we also committed to raising \$15 million to eradicate malaria by the end of 2015. Jen Asselstine has shared with us how close we are. Whenever there is a disaster worldwide, the Lutherans are there. Whether it is through our cooperation with Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran World Federation, or directly through Lutheran Disaster Response, the Lutherans are there. Just this week LDR received an award for innovation and creativity in dealing with disaster.

Right now the ELCA is engaged in a campaign to provide above and beyond funding for ministries of the ELCA, like expanding the Young Adults in Global Mission program and establishing more congregations, and supporting global leaders, world hunger and malaria, fund for leaders, renewing congregations, disability ministries and youth ministries. When we

complete our Synod House campaign we will focus on the wider ELCA campaign. But you can learn more about it online, or by speaking with Tammy Jackson.

As the Chair of the Conference of Bishops I am deeply involved in the wider work of the ELCA. Not only do I plan and coordinate the agendas of the Conference of Bishops, I also serve on the ELCA Church Council and the ELCA Executive Committee as part of my duties. On the one hand that means more time away from the Montana Synod. On the other hand it means I have an opportunity to be part of decisions that affect the whole church—like the adoption of a new candidacy manual, the conversation on a combined word and service roster, the ongoing work of the task force assigned to produce a social statement on women and justice, and so on. All are issues that eventually go to the Churchwide Assembly. Those of you who are elected to serve will need to learn all the ins and outs of the debate.

None of this is secret. You can keep abreast of what is going on in the synod by signing up for our weekly e-news. And you can learn about what is going on churchwide by signing up for news briefs from the ELCA.

Our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, has asked the church to look at 4 emphases. Some of you may have used the resource during Lent. Others of you may want to consider using it in the coming years. She asks us to discuss:

1. We are church.
2. We are Lutheran.
3. We are church together.
4. We are church for the sake of the world.

You will find those 4 themes in various churchwide resources. Try crossing them with our 5 benchmarks and see what you get! Bishop Eaton will be one of our guests at the post-Easter pastoral conference at Chico next spring. We are delighted to welcome her here.

I am grateful to all of you for taking the time to come together as a Synod in this Assembly. We are so much more effective together than we are alone. This is what we are about.

Meeting the future boldly.

Serving the world, especially the poor and those in need.

Deepening faith and witness.

Promoting unity.

Strengthening congregations.

Thanks be to God!

Quilts

Susan Hedahl, Administrative Assistant in the Synod Office shared that she used old choir robes to reuse as parts of quilts for LWR.

Tech Support

Colter McCarty shared how he is available to help congregations in all kinds of ways, from small classes on using computers to live streaming or helping each congregation have a website.

MAJCO Presentation and Vote

Pastor Mark Ramseth, Rev. Dr. Paul Seastrand and members of the Jewish community were present for the renewal of the agreement with the Montana Association of Jewish communities.

Pastor Seastrand shared a little of the history of what led to the agreement 20 years ago.

Resolution On Renewal Of Agreement With Montana Association Of Jewish Communities

WHEREAS The Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America entered into an agreement with the Montana Association of Jewish Communities in 1995, affirming common heritage, mutual respect and common commitment to civil society; and

WHEREAS Our world is even more religiously diverse than it was 20 years ago, with even greater need for intentional interreligious dialogue, cooperation and understanding;

WHEREAS We agreed in 1995 and again in 2005 to review the Agreement; therefore be it

RESOLVED That the Montana Synod Assembly, on June 6, 2015, Re-affirm the Agreement with the Montana Association of Jewish Communities, committing ourselves to ongoing friendship, cooperation and dialogue.

Motion

Second: Approve the Resolution On Renewal Of Agreement With Montana Association Of Jewish Communities

SA.15.06.09

VOTE: APPROVE THE RESOLUTION ON RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT WITH MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Bishop Crist declared the Assembly in recess at 2:35 p.m.

Workshops related to the themes of the Benchmark: Serve the world, especially the poor and those in need were offered during two sessions. Workshop presenters and titles were:

Rev. Justin Eller: "Accompaniment: A Face of Inter- culturality"

Rev. Greg Holler-Dinsmore: "Strategies for Addressing Racism"

Rev. Eric Huseh; Rev. Stacey Siebrasse, Amanda Bratenberg, Luke Stappler: "Young Adults in Global Mission-Stories, Experiences, and some thoughts on the Church's future"

Tammy Jackson: "Education and Gender: "Why Women? Why Now?"

Rev. Dr. Kathryn Schifferdecker: "The Global Church: Opportunities and Challenges"

Kari Eller: "EPEC: Re-forming Christian Education in the Americas"

Rev. George Karres: "Stewardship – Our life with money"

Rev. Peggy Paugh-Leuzinger & Rev. Jason Asselstine: "Companion Synod Relationships"

Rev. Steve Schmidt & Colter Mc Carty: “Bringing Global Mission Home”
Neal Wedum: “Historic Trauma”

Immanuel, St. John’s Lutheran Ministries, and Sapphire Homes hosted a reception in the pool/display area from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Members of the Assembly gathered at 6:00 p.m. for the Recognitions Banquet. Vice President Tom Gossack served as Master of Ceremony for the Banquet. FISH Christian Food Program received the Spirit of Hope Award for 2015 and was honored. Harold Spilde has been the Volunteer Director for FISH. Outgoing Treasurer Harold Spilde was honored for his 22 years of service as Treasurer of the Montana Synod. Former Bishops Mark Ramseth and Rich Omland as well as Jeanne McCoskery spoke about Harold’s faithfulness in serving.

Milestone Anniversaries:

Associate in Ministry: 30th Anniversary: Ms. Susan Penn

Ordained Ministers:

5th Anniversary: Rev. Bonnie Novak

10th Anniversary: Rev. Molly Sasser-Goehner, Rev. Will Sappington

15th Anniversary: Rev. Catherine Card, Rev. Patricia Callaghan

20th Anniversary: Rev. Maryann Morgenstern, Rev. Tim Christiansen

25th Anniversary: Rev. Jason McSpadden, Rev. Larry Stappler, Rev. Martin Russell, Rev. Tim Trippel

30th Anniversary: Rev. Aprille Jordan, Rev. Jerry Olson, Rev. Steve Loy

35th Anniversary: Rev. Mitch Jones, Rev. Paul Seastrand

40th Anniversary: Rev. Dave Peters, Rev. Joe Haugestuen, Rev. Marty Dreyer, Rev. Peter Ramseth

45th Anniversary: Rev. Gary Cockrell, Rev. Larry Vinson, Rev. Michael Aune, Rev. Richard Widerholdt

50th Anniversary: Rev. Ronald Paulson

55th Anniversary: Rev. Ralph Holmlund, Rev. Raymond Johnson, II

65th Anniversary: Rev. Everett Tande

70th Anniversary: Rev. Irvin Cliff Gronneberg

Congregation Anniversaries:

75th Anniversary: Grace Lutheran, Fairfield

100th Anniversary: Peace Lutheran, Plevna

125th Anniversary: Our Savior’s, Great Falls

Retirements:

Rev. James Aageson, Rev. Michael Aune, Rev. Catherine Card, AIM Mary Jones, Rev. Darius Larson, Rev. Jean Larson, Rev. Dr. Paul Seastrand, Rev. Janet Young

The Assembly joined in worship using Prayer for the Healing of the Nations, led by the Global Mission Worship team.

SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2015

Morning Prayer, focusing on Asia was led by Jessica Obrecht and the Global Mission Worship team.

Plenary V: 9-10:30 a.m.

The Assembly was called to order by Bishop Jessica Crist

Credentials Report

Neal Wedum gave the Credentials Report:

Clergy: 112

Lay Voting Members: 151

Total Voting Members: 263

Visitors: 74

Total in Attendance: 337

Motion

Second: Receive the Credentials Report

SA.15.06.10

VOTE: RECEIVE THE CREDENTIALS REPORT

Proposed Constitutional changes:

Old:

†S6.04.B09. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

New:

†S6.04.B09. It is the goal of this synod that 10 percent of the membership of synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and/or other organizational units be young adults and youth.

1. Encourage member congregations to consider youth and young adults when appointing voting members to the Synod Assembly.
2. Authorize up to 20 additional voting members for Montana Synod Assembly meetings, with the following provisions:
 - A. These voting members shall be youth, defined as confirmed and less than 18-years-old;
 - B. One youth voting membership shall be reserved for each cluster,

- C. Reserved memberships shall be held until 30 days prior to the Synod Assembly, at which time all remaining voting memberships shall be assigned on a first-come/first-served basis.
- D. The establishment of designated youth voting memberships should not discourage member congregations from otherwise appointing youth as regular voting members. Such appointments shall not be accounted in the 20 youth voting memberships.
- E. Costs for youth voting membership participation in the Synod Assembly shall be borne by the member congregation.

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**S9.03.** The NOMINATING COMMITTEE shall consist of ~~twelve~~ **six** members who shall be ~~appointed~~ **elected** by the Synod ~~Council Assembly to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.~~ and **serve for three year staggered terms.** ~~In making appointments to the Nominating Committee the Synod Council shall give consideration to geographical, clergy/lay, male/female and persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English representation.~~ **In making nominations to the Nominating Committee, representational principles of geography, gender, lay/clergy, and age will be considered.**

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S9.11. ~~The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the council of Region I.~~
 Delete S9.11. This constitutional provision is outdated, in that the Region I Council has changed its makeup to bishops and vice-presidents.

Motion

Second: Approve these 3 Constitutional changes (second vote)

SA.15.06.11

VOTE: APPROVE THESE 3 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES (SECOND VOTE)

Bishop Crist announced the election results. The following were declared elected:

Treasurer: Sue Ost

Synod Council Representatives

- Beartooth Cluster: Eric Nord
- Five Valleys Cluster: Rev. Brenda Satrum
- Northeast Cluster: Rev. Mark Taylor
- Russell Country Cluster: Lisa Jahraus

Churchwide Assembly Voting Members

- Position 1: Bishop Jessica Crist
- Position 2: Rev. Brad Ulgenes
- Position 3: Rev. Tammy Bull
- Position 4: Tom Gossack, Synod Council Vice President
- Position 5: Ben Peterson
- Position 6: Rick Mikkelson
- Position 7: Debra Oldfield

Position 8: Alicia Moe
Position 9: Beverly Bell
Position 10: Traci Gibson
Position 11: Carly Tattoo

Committee on Discipline:

Position 1: Rev. Nathan Clements
Position 2: Rev. Dr. Christine Holler-Dinsmore
Position 3: Rev. Ellen Ayres
Position 4: John Trangmoe
Position 5: Maureen Stiles

Consultation Committee

Position 1: Rev. Chris Flohr
Position 2: Glenn Deuchler
Position 3: Joeline Goodover

Nominating Committee:

Position 1: Rev. Greg Holler-Dinsmore
Position 2: Rev. Joel Skindlov
Position 3: Rob Stuberg
Position 4: John Sheppard
Position 5: Trudi Schmidt
Position 6: Lorrie Vennes

Kogodus Renewal Ministry:

Position 1: Joy Mc Sparron
Position 2: Tamara Bushnell

Bishop Crist installed Sue Ost as Treasurer of the Montana Synod.

Montana Association of Christians

MAC President, Pastor Pete Erickson and Rev. Valerie Webster expressed their thanks, and announced that the name of the organization has been changed from Montana Association of Churches to Montana Association of *Christians*. They also announced that MAC has established Action Teams for Ministry, and that the association will be governed by a council which will meet 3 times per year, and not by the MAC Assembly.

Resolution Affirming Membership In The Montana Association Of Christians

WHEREAS, The Montana Synod, through its predecessor bodies (the Rocky Mountain District of the American Lutheran Church and the Pacific Northwest Synod of the Lutheran Church in America) was a charter member on the Montana Association of Churches; and

WHEREAS, The Statement of Purpose in the Montana Synod and ELCA Constitutions states:

“To participate in God’s mission, this synod as part of the Church shall: Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives;” and

WHEREAS The Montana Association of Churches has become the Montana Association of Christians and has automatically included members of the previous organization as founding members; be it therefore

RESOLVED: That the Montana Synod Assembly, meeting June 7, 2015, affirm the Montana Synod’s membership in the Montana Association of Christians.

Motion

Second: Approve The Resolution Affirming Membership In The Montana Association Of Christians

SA.15.06.12

VOTE: RESOLUTION AFFIRMING MEMBERSHIP IN THE MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIANS

The Assembly joined in a Litany of Gratitude for the Montana Association of Christians.

New Hope Lutheran Church

Resolution For Recognizing New Hope Lutheran Church, Great Falls, Montana As A Congregation Of The Montana Synod Of The Evangelical Lutheran Church In America

WHEREAS On March 12, 2011 New Hope Lutheran Ministry was designated as a “New Wine” Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community after the majority of its predecessor congregation left the ELCA, and

WHEREAS New Hope Lutheran Ministry since then has held weekly services of worship, provided pastoral care and Christian education ministry for people of all ages, and engaged in outreach and service ministry to its neighbors, and

WHEREAS New Hope Lutheran Ministry has enthusiastically and faithfully supported the ministries of the Montana Synod and the ELCA, and

WHEREAS New Hope Lutheran Ministry has requested that they be recognized as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as part of the Montana Synod – to be known as New Hope Lutheran Church, and

WHEREAS More than one hundred persons have signed a Charter to become members of New Hope Lutheran Church, and

WHEREAS New Hope has adopted a constitution, called a pastor, and fulfilled all other steps necessary to be a recognized congregation of the Montana Synod of the ELCA, therefore be it

RESOLVED That the Montana Synod, meeting in Assembly on June 7, 2015 receive New Hope Lutheran Church as a recognized congregation of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and be it further

RESOLVED That this Assembly welcome New Hope Lutheran Church into the Montana Synod by standing and applauding.

Motion

Second: Approve the Resolution For Recognizing New Hope Lutheran Church, Great Falls, Montana As A Congregation Of The Montana Synod Of The Evangelical Lutheran Church In America

SA.15.06.13

VOTE: APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR RECOGNIZING NEW HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH, GREAT FALLS, MONTANA AS A CONGREGATION OF THE MONTANA SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

World Hunger

Jan Martin, the Montana Synod's ELCA World Hunger Coordinator, gave thanks for congregational and individual participation in the many programs to eradicate hunger. She also lifted up the 2015 "Peddle for Peas" as a way to participate further, and ask for volunteers to drive the support truck, as well as give financial and prayer support.

2016 Montana Synod Budget

Motion

Second: Approve the 2016 Montana Synod Budget as presented

SA.15.06.14

VOTE: APPROVE THE 2016 MONTANA SYNOD BUDGET AS PRESENTED

Greeting from Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp and Christikon

Margie Fiedler, Executive Director of Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (FLBC) greeted the Assembly on behalf of FLBC and Christikon Bible Camp. She thanked the Assembly for their support, and introduced 2 international FLBC staff members, emphasized various camp programs designed for faith formation for campers and staff alike, and announced a greater effort of cooperation between our 2 camps.

WELCA

Bishop Crist asked the Assembly to acknowledge the work of WELCA with applause, especially for the ways in which they help with various aspects of the assembly.

ELCA Churchwide Report

Tammy Jackson, program director for the International Leaders Program in the Global Mission unit of the ELCA and the representative from Churchwide to the Montana Assembly brought greetings from Bishop Eaton and the whole church to our assembly.

She spoke of an ELCA program in which M.Div. students can spend their internship year in an international setting. It's a unique opportunity. There is also a program for ELCA professors, in which they can take a sabbatical, serving in a global setting.

Jackson wanted us to know that our brothers and sisters are grateful for our passion to serve the gospel. Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents with the whole ELCA. Ms. Jackson thanked Bishop Crist as well for the many ways she has selflessly served the church. She also thanked former Bishop Ramseth.

When one congregation engages in service and ministry, those members are the church, serving and ministering on behalf of all of us. One congregation serving the hungry is doing so on behalf of all of us. Additionally, when you send money to the synod office it doesn't stop there, it goes to various ministries and to Churchwide. And when you send money to Churchwide, it doesn't stay in the building, it spreads out to many ministries that serve people in our country and around the world.

The 2015 Video Greeting from Bishop Elizabeth Eaton addressed the theme: *We are Church.* (go to YouTube and enter: *ELCA, We are church*)

ELCA World Hunger has programs in more than 60 countries and more than 300 programs in the U.S. Lutheran Disaster Response: in 2014, \$6.1 million in gifts were being put to use. The program responded to 50 disasters globally. One major 2014 disaster in the U.S. was the influx of unaccompanied migrant children who flowed into the U.S., 60,000 refugee children who entered the U.S. with no one to help them. We also helped to provide emergency protective equipment to health workers working to fight Ebola.

The ELCA awarded 241 scholarships to seminarians at 8 ELCA seminaries. We also supported 53 new congregations and 363 new ministries currently under development. The ELCA malaria campaign is making a difference, reducing the impact of malaria in 13 African countries.

We also supported 63 young adults into global mission and supported 246 missionaries in more than 46 countries. We have also asserted our support of women, educating and developing women leaders around the world. She encouraged the Assembly to check out the "Always Made New Campaign" – established to grow the mission of the ELCA. Check it out at www.ELCAorg/campaign.

Bishop Crist asked that the Assembly acknowledge the 43rd Anniversary of the ordination of women with applause.

Mission Table

Chair, Pastor Scott Hedegaard brought thanks to the Assembly for “living generously” by turning in estimates of giving forms, participating in the estimate of giving parades held at every Assembly’s opening worship, and for the many other ways in which we give.

Malaria Campaign

Mrs. Jen Asselstine, Montana Synod Malaria Campaign Coordinator, gave thanks for the Assembly for “meeting the future boldly” by working to eradicate Malaria.

Bishop Jessica Crist declared the Montana Synod Assembly adjourned and the Assembly remained for the Closing Worship. Presiding Minister: Bishop Crist, Preacher: Pastor Tammy Bull

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Peggy Paugh Leuzinger

Secretary, Montana Synod