

Synod Summary
Sunday, June 2, 2019

The morning begins with a prayer led by Bishop Kristen Kuempel from the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod. Bishop Kuempel announces in the morning prayer time that her synod has accepted a couple of ELCA congregations from Oregon and how this is a part of the ELCA's ministry is to be inclusive and find ways to include people and walk with people. She announced that the synod would be changing their name. The prayer concludes.

The assembly continues at 9:10 a.m. Bishop Crist reports that we are back in session for Plenary V. Bishop Crist then introduces Rev. Hirsch to officially announce the results of the fifth ballot and the Montana Synod's new bishop-elect.

Rev. Philip Hirsch announces the numbers 281 as the total voting members. Rev. Hirsch announces that Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling came in at 143. New Bishop-Elect Laurie Jungling gives an acceptance speech. "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid...none of us can be a Christian alone." Saying she can't do it alone and that she is honored to be elected and will do the best that she can because that's all one can do.

Bishop Crist checks in with credentials but decides no new registration so unnecessary.

Director of Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (FLBC) Margie Fiedler announces the camps Christikon, Upper Missouri. Fiedler announces that FLBC has received a grant from the ELCA for eight students to work at FLBC summer 2019. She speaks about the ministry within the camp to pair with people around the state on various reservations. Fiedler collaborates with multiple organizations like ELCA Hunger, Elias Tours, ELCA church in Helena, MT. She says camps exist to partner with congregations to build congregational life and mission. Fiedler thanks the assembly for their support both financially and spiritually. She then announces a member from the Cape Orange Lutheran Diocese in South Africa who will be working as a counselor at the camp. Damian, FLBC counselor visiting from South Africa, gives thanks for the opportunity and looks forward to building a healthy relationship. Cape Orange Diocese does some of the similar things, but he is excited to learn. FLBC Director and Damian do a raffle for a voting member in the audience. Together they announce the winner of the raffle.

The Churchwide report not having to do with elections by Rev. Hirsch. Executive Director ELCA Domestic Mission. Rev. Hirsch shared his thanks for having him as a mediator and director of this synod assembly and the bishop elections as is not something he has done this before.

Rev. Hirsch brings a greeting from Bishop Eaton through a video. Bishop Eaton's video acknowledges the stress and anxiety in our society but talks about how Jesus and church are the one place for people to find respite and reconciliation from this stress and anxiety. God's Work Our Hands organization spoke about the interfaith service project between Christians and Muslims. The video also shared about Guest House and Good Shepherd Lutheran that offers rehabilitation and housing for women recovering from a crisis. Ekklesia, fear keeps us from

going out in being in community. Rev. Hirsch talks about how the ELCA loves as a church "deep and wide." He announced that together the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response was able to send a solar generator down to Puerto Rico. 11.5 million dollars alone helped with Disasters this last year alone. Rohingya Refugee in Bangladesh, Venezuela. Cyclones and hurricanes in the past year. Thirty-three countries 33 emergencies in 19 states.

Rev. Hirsch announces on ELCA hunger. He gives a presentation describing how 1 in 10 of our global neighbors experience hunger. The number of hungry is down from the 1990s, but still a problem. Their goal is justice, peace, and reconciliation. \$196,091 have been given in 2019 so far. Their mission is to alleviate hunger. Our Saviour's Rocky Boy in Montana is a recipient of the ELCA hunger grant. Montana Synod gave \$253,167 in 2018 alone. Planting of new churches is a part of the mission of ELCA hunger. Rev. Hirsch announces a new ministry in Missoula in the community and how this is a bold effort trying to connect with new people all over the country until we find the things that are beginning to work.

Another ministry is international development and international women leaders in Southeast Asia and Eastern Africa.

Rev. Hirsch continues his presentation by announcing the Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee in August 2019. Eleven people are going from the Montana and Northeastern Wyoming synod. Considering a resolution about faith, sexism, and justice, and interreligious statement will be up for discussion at this national assembly.

Hirsch then gives statistics about the church and how we are growing but also shrinking.

- 9,163 congregations
- 3,460,000 members 2017
- 25% of congregations did not baptize anyone last year
- 51% did not receive a single person by affirmation of faith

1988-2017 graph showing a general decline in members of the ELCA we are losing about a synod's worth of members per year. Facing the future together boldly is facing issues together boldly, because it is happening. Rev. Hirsch said part of his reason for taking his position is because he believes this work is critical.

ELCA is committed to focusing on two initiatives from now until 2025:

- 1) Priority of congregations to support congregation vitality. (Bringing new people along in the faith, disciple other people who will disciple others and so forth, we need to grow younger, more diverse and financially diverse.) People will learn how to disciple others, health and vitality will be marked by how well we disciple others. Disconnection in American Christianity changed in how they have adhered to Christianity, but we have to figure this out by making this a priority. We have to try together.
 - a) Table of vitality, who are you showing love to you when they are in crisis?
Remember Christ and the faith that we believe in. "Evangelize."

- 2) The priority of nurturing and supporting leaderships in various ways. An effort called "Growing Young," study of congregations all over the US across denominations. They looked at churches growing with young adults and asked why? what? And how? The ELCA is offering training in these ways. Including young people. What does it mean to connect with people just to say hello?
 - a) Funds for Leaders program for theological education financial support
 - b) Rostered Ministers Gathering Phoenix, AZ 2020
 - c) Women of the ELCA Phoenix, AZ 2020
 - d) Lay Pastoral Associates (LPA) program

The assembly moves on to budget after Rev. Hirsch from churchwide closes his portion of the report from ELCA.

Bishop Crist announces that we will move onto the budget. Bishop Crist introduces Treasurer, Sue Ost, who will present further on the budget if needed, but considering that Treasurer Sue Ost did so in Plenary session I members of the assembly should be aware at this point what the budget is. The budget is voted on, and it passes unanimously.

Bishop Crist Thanks everyone for their patience yesterday with the ballot issue and with voting on the resolutions and amendments.

Resolution update: Creation Care amended the amendment with no formal objections. It now reads, "The resolution to care for creation and respond to changing climate," now says it on the title and the back as it describes the name of the task force. Bishop Crist asked the maker of the amendment if "Changing Creation," was a solution to the issue with "Climate Change." They said no. They want the first amendment to go forth where it takes out "Climate Change." Floor opens for discourse on whether the original amendment should be approved. Voting opens on the amendment to get rid of the term "Changing Climate," or "Climate Change." Amendment fails, the majority vote no on the change of the title. Now the assembly moves to the original motion of passing the resolution. Member has the floor and asks for two-word changes. Words, "present," in the second "whereas," and third, "whereas," line, "implement," to consider." The assembly moves to vote on the amendment. The amendment passes. Discourse on the main resolution opens again. Discourse closes, and the voting opens. President Dick Deschamps prays before assembly votes.

Assembly moves to vote on Creation Care the resolution. Majority votes in favor of resolution. The resolution passes.

Bishop Crist now announces the changes in the synod constitution. The first proposal is in the instructions to the committee. (Need to eliminate C, c says insure geographical location when nominating synod council meetings.

- S. 9. 11 Synod council should grow robust synod council
- S. 12. 01 clusters
- S. 12. 02 grow the leadership of clusters

- S. 12 04. Nominating people to get clusters together within the synod office
- Recommendation 5 S12.01.07 congregations that either no longer exist or are a part of the ELCA.

Assembly moves to vote on these five recommendations. The five recommendations are adopted and removed from the Montana and Northeastern Wyoming Synod Constitution. The Plenary V closes. All resolutions and elections completed.

Next, is the blessing of Churchwide voting members for the Nationwide meeting in Milwaukee. The voting members come up to the stage to be blessed by Bishop Crist.

Synod President Dick Deschamps gives thanks to the ELCA Churchwide representatives. Dick Deschamps takes a brief moment for Tom Gossack who passed away this year and was the vice-president of the Montana Synod.

Bishop Crist closes the assembly with a prayer and benediction. The assembly is officially closed Sunday, June 2, 2019, at 11:00 a.m.

The event concludes with a full Eucharist led by Bishop Crist, who both preaches and presides with the assistance of her entire staff; Susan Hedahl, Colter McCarty, Rev. Peggy Paugh Leuzinger and Rev. Jason Asselstine.