

Notes from ELCSA COD 22nd Synod Assembly held in Mossel Bay, Western Cape Province from 10-14 October 2018 by Rev. Philip J. Knutson ELCA Global Mission Regional Representative – Southern Africa.

The 22nd Synod assembly of the ELCSA Cape Orange Diocese was held in Mossel Bay next to the Indian Ocean in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The assembly was attended by 69 voting delegates from the six circuits, as well as guests and partners (North German Church (Pomerania/Rev. Mathias Tuve), ELCRN (Bishop E. //Gamxamub and delegation), the Ethiopian Episcopal Church (Bishop Diwonga Ntlokwa and delegation), ELCSA Cape Church (Bishop G. Filter). I was honored to attend the assembly and bring greetings on behalf of ELCA Global Mission and the ELCA Montana Companion Synod.

(In past years I was privileged to serve on behalf of the ALC initially and then the ELCA in the ELCSA Cape Orange Diocese from 1982 to 2004 in parish ministry in Botshabelo in the Freestate Circuit and Gelvandale/Port Elizabeth in the South Eastern Circuit and subsequently in Cape Town as Christian Education Facilitator for the Diocese.)



The Synod assembly was opened with a worship service and Holy Communion on Wednesday evening Oct 10, 2018. On the Thursday morning Rev. N.

Brandt led the Bible study. Nominations were followed by the election of the Bishop's Deputy (Rev. KP Ramahadi), President of the Synod (Mr. Thelo Wakefield) and Synod Vice-president (Mrs. Antoinette Mthethwa). On the Friday the keynote address was delivered by the bishop of the Ethiopian Episcopal Church D. Ntlokwa. The synod received reports from Bishop Manong, the Executive treasurer Rev. Standaar, the six circuits, the Leagues and Commissions (Prayer Women's, Men's, Young Adult's, Youth, the Health and Wellness Programme).

Bishop Manong, in his Episcopal report, reflected on the assembly theme: **“Holy Eucharist: Celebrating our Communion with God”** asking: “What is our understanding of the Eucharist and Communion? Is God an integral part of this ‘human action’ or not?” Bishop Manong noted: “Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament of the “Gift” of God in Christ to the world.”

The Episcopal report covered the spiritual and financial situation in the diocese and the work of the various leagues and organizations. Current statistics for the diocese noted 29,205 members and 44 pastors (34 male and 10 female, 15 are self-supporting.) The bishop noted with concern the decline in membership of the Men's League and the inability of the Prayer Women's League to grow and retain membership. The bishop also called for more resources to be put into



Children's Ministry for the sake of the future of the church and commended the work of the Health

and Wellness programme which focuses on HIV & AIDS prevention and mobilizing against Gender-Based Violence.

The report also lifted up the various companion and partnership relationships with the diocese including the relationship with the ELCA Montana Synod.

The bishop called for regular pastors' conventions to build capacity in the areas of stewardship, church practice and discipline, labour relations and conditions of service and liturgical transformation. The bishop also expressed concern regarding ongoing challenges to the church such as the cost of litigation and the closure of the LTI seminary in Pietermaritzburg, KZN.

The Executive Treasurer reported arrears in the payment of assessments from circuits to the diocese for 2017 and 2018 totalling R1,830,614.

The Episcopal report also proposed:

1. The need for compiling a new strategic plan for the diocese by May 2019.
2. Investigation into the feasibility of increasing the number of circuits from 6 to 8.

The synod delegates nominated and elected clergy and lay members to the Diocesan Council who will serve for the next six years as well as delegates to the ELCSA General Assembly.



The delegation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) led by Bishop Ernest //Gamxamub and the leadership of the ELCSA Cape Orange Diocese signed a revised Partnership Agreement.

The closing service on Sunday October 14 with Holy Communion included the induction of the five deans-elect who were elected at Circuit Meetings earlier in 2018 (Kalahari – G. De Wee, Moriah – Rev. N. Brandt, Western Cape - Rev. G. De Vries Bock, Freestate – Rev. NN Mokobane, Northern Cape – Rev. KP Ramahadi) [The Eastern Cape Circuit decided not to elect a dean due to the lack of full-time pastors. Self-supporting or part-time pastors are not eligible to stand for election as dean. Bishop Manong is assisting the circuit in the interim.]

The worship service was enhanced by the presence of acolytes from the Eastern Cape Circuit, local choirs and the Youth Brigade Brass Band from the Oudtshoorn parish.

Compiled by:

Rev. Dr. Philip J. Knutson
ELCA Global Mission
Regional Representative – Southern Africa
Johannesburg
October 16, 2018

