

# *La Crosse Area Synod*

## *2014 Synod Assembly*

*La Crosse, Wis. – First Lutheran Church, Onalaska / La Crosse Center, North Hall / YOUR community*

*June 13-14, 2014*

The minutes of the twenty-seventh annual Synod Assembly are edited in the following manner. Each main motion by the Assembly will have a number indicating the year, the month and the action of the Synod Assembly, i.e. SA 14.06.01, etc. Substitute motions and motions to amend are not numbered. Those actions relating only to Assembly procedures (the previous question, etc.) are not usually included.

[DOCUMENTS LISTED AS “AVAILABLE ON ASSEMBLY WEB PAGE” can be found at [www.lacrosseareasynd.org/synodassembly/](http://www.lacrosseareasynd.org/synodassembly/).]

### **FRIDAY, JUNE 13 - Assembly Opening at First Lutheran, Onalaska**

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#### **PLENARY SESSION 1 – FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

410 MAIN ST, ONALASKA

#### **SA 14.06.01 Adopt Synod Assembly Agenda and the Rules as printed in the Assembly Book pgs. 4-5 and Proposed New Rule for Synod Assembly as follows:**

The parts of an assembly devoted to the process of electing a bishop will be presided over by a representative from the Churchwide Expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, appointed by the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Handout #1). **MMSC**

Bishop Arends welcomed Stephen McDougal as parliamentarian, and Steve gave a brief orientation to voting members of parliamentary procedure (pg. 6 of the assembly book).

Bishop called for announcements by Vice President Lori Toso. She shared procedural information regarding voting member responsibilities, name badges, messages, meals, displays, and miscellaneous assembly information.

#### **Bishop introduced guests to the assembly:**

- ♦ Carlos Peña, Vice President of the ELCA, who will preside over the Bishop Election process, bring our keynote address and give the Report of the ELCA (*p. 7 of assembly book*)
- ♦ Cindy Olson, assembly musician – Minister of Music, Grace Lutheran Church, Hastings, Michigan (*p. 8 of assembly book*)
- ♦ Rev. Huck Usgaard, Portico Benefit Services
- ♦ Rev. Larry Westfield, Regional Gift Planner, Lutheran Planned Giving of Wisconsin
- ♦ Barbara Solsaa (Dir. of Church Relations) & Keith Neumann (Exec. Director), Luther Park Bible Camp
- ♦ Jenna Putz, Young Adult in Global Mission from Christ Lutheran, Arcadia – serving in Argentina & Uruguay from Aug. 2014-Aug. 2015
- ♦ **UNABLE TO BE WITH US** - Daniel J. Lehmann, Editor, The Lutheran magazine – due to surgical procedures for skin cancer. We will keep him in prayer.

#### **Churches Celebrating Anniversaries in Our Synod in 2014**

Brush Creek Lutheran Church, Cashton – 150 years

Bishop Arends announced that additional resolutions needed to be in by noon on Saturday to be considered at this Assembly.

Bishop Arends invited Pr. Dan Wollman, Chair of Lutheran Campus Ministry Board, to give a mission story.

Bishop turned the chair over to Lori Toso, **Vice President, for Introduction of the Synod Council.**

Those going off Synod Council this year: Lori recognized Betty Sacia and Don Hoffmann and thanked them for their service, each completing two terms on the council. Also leaving Synod Council are due to personal reasons are Pr. Kimberly Jordan and JoAnn Salava.

Others serving on Synod Council: Michael Schnitzius, Derek Jackson, Rev. Elizabeth Albertson, Doug Myhre, Rev. Meg Hoversten, Lynn Joholski, Mike Lusk, Rev. Wendy Ruetten, Sandra Zenor, Rev. Mark Jolivet, Sharon Zimmerman, Jim Howe, Bob Bendiksen, Rev. Anna Sorenson, Wes Mack and Carol Leopold.

Lori Toso introduced the **Assembly Planning Committee** (*in addition to herself*): Rev. Libby Howe, Bishop Arends, Debbie Dukatz, Jim Howe, Rev. Wendy Ruetten, Joanne Richmond, Melanie Timmerman and, adjunct members Andy Stutesman and Debra Wold.

Bishop Arends invited Pr. Wes Dunbar, Evangelism and Outreach Committee, to give a mission story.

Bishop called on Pr. Libby Howe, Director for Evangelical Mission, for Part 1 of her Report (see also assembly book pgs. 16-17).

Bishop continued with **Roster Update, as of Mar. 1, 2014:**

**New Clergy in our synod:**

The Rev. Erik Feig, Trinity, La Crosse  
The Rev. Tanya Rist, retired  
The Rev. Corinne Thul, Gundersen Health System, La Crosse  
The Rev. Amanda Schultz, Bethany, Immanuel, Trinity, Cashton  
The Rev. Neal Solomonson, Wilmington, Caledonia  
The Rev. Nile Sandeen, Mt. Sterling & Utica, Mt. Sterling

**Members of our Synod in the candidacy process:**

Heidi Anderson	Bryant Bakkum
Shawn Brooks	Christopher Sesvold
Tami Groth	Jake Sorenson
Joe Iverson	Levi Powers
Bonnie Klos	Amy Heinz

**Clergy Transferred:**

The Rev. Lindsay Jordan to Christ the King Lutheran Church, Delafield, Wis.  
The Rev. Paul Petersen to Bethel Lutheran Church, Bethel Horizons, Madison, Wis.  
In addition (transfers after March 1),  
The Rev. Bryce Fellbaum to Immanuel Lutheran, Bethune, Colorado  
The Rev. Cheryl Fleckenstein to the Northeast Minnesota Synod

**Clergy Changes Within our Synod:**

The Rev. Wendy Haberman, to On Leave From Call  
The Rev. Jeffrey Miller, to retired

The Rev. Russell Trachte to resigned from the ELCA  
The Rev. Laurie Weis, to On Leave From Call  
The Rev. Kathleen Wohlers, to On Leave From Call  
The Rev. Daniel Wollman to Westby Coon Prairie & Vang Lutheran Churches  
In addition (changes after March 1),  
The Revs. April and Judd Larson have retired and joined our roster  
The Rev. Steven Spilde is resigning from the ELCA roster

**Ordination Anniversaries for 2014:**

Bishop Arends recognized clergy with significant anniversaries:

**5 Years**

The Rev. Anna Sorenson  
The Rev. Jean Schmidt  
The Rev. Nicholas Barootian

**35 Years**

The Rev. Christine Hallemeier  
The Rev. Stanley Kwiecien

**10 Years**

The Rev. Dana Jackson  
The Rev. Kristin Wendland

**45 Years**

The Rev. Ordean Grant  
The Rev. Ronald Nordin  
The Rev. Steven Fossum

**15 Years**

The Rev. Cheryl Fleckenstein  
The Rev. Daniel Wollman  
The Rev. Thomas Meyer

**50 Years**

The Rev. Clair Whitmore  
The Rev. Howard Larsen  
The Rev. Peter Peterson

**20 Years**

The Rev. Bryce Fellbaum  
The Rev. Corinne Thul  
The Rev. Jeffrey Ruetten  
The Rev. Kent Johnson  
The Rev. Steven E. Meyer

**55 Years**

The Rev. Charles Hulsether  
The Rev. Lyle Ness

**25 Years**

The Rev. Dennis Snider  
The Rev. William Horn

**60 Years**

The Rev. Merrill Herder

Lori Toso read the **Report of the Registrar:** 50 pastors and 155 lay for a total of 205 voting members, with 15 guests.

Worship—Vespers, 8:00 p.m.

Preacher—Rev. Libby Howe, Director for Evangelical Mission

Offering envelopes were made available for a variety of options for voting members to select.

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 14**

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### **PLENARY SESSION 2 – LA CROSSE CENTER – NORTH HALL**

300 HARBORVIEW, LA CROSSE

**WORSHIP** – Rev. Joanne Richmond led opening worship at 8:20 a.m.

Bishop Jim Arends called the assembly to order at 9:10 a.m. for the Plenary Session 2 and reminded non-voting visitors and guests to sit in designated areas.

Bishop called for announcements by **Vice President Lori Toso**. She shared procedural information regarding voting member responsibilities, name badges, messages, meals, displays, and miscellaneous assembly information.

Bishop Arends shared a taped greeting from **Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod of the ELCA** (our U.S. companion synod in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and Mississippi)

Bishop Arends invited Dr. **Lee Johnson, Synod Malaria Campaign Task Force**, to give a mission story.

Bishop Arends invited **Pr. Cassie Sauter, Middle East Subcommittee**, to give a mission story.

Bishop Arends called on **Derek Jackson, Synod Treasurer, for Report of the Treasurer**, including the Proposed 2015 Budget and review of the 2013 Treasurer's Report, dated January 31, 2014. *(Handout #2. Report available on assembly web page.)*

Derek highlighted the Seminarian Scholarships of \$11,603 (pg. 2) which are funded out of the interest from the endowment. He noted that the Held Funds are \$20,000 up from last year.

Derek continued with the Second Reading of the 2015 Budget *(first reading at pre-assembly conference caucuses)*. Churchwide benevolence remains constant: the first 55% of Mission Support is at \$455,000 for 2014. Campus Ministry also remains constant. Bishop Arends' salary has a 1% increase with a 2.5% increase for the rest of the staff. Synod Travel staff expense (4C1) has increased and the proposed 2015 Mission Support Budget shows an increase to \$4,000 in this line item, as has Continuing Education (4B4). Insurance (4F4) increases are reflected in the proposed budget.

Bishop Arends read the **Report of Nominating Committee**, in lieu of Mike Schnitzius, Synod Secretary, who was absent for a family emergency. Ballots were handed out to attendees (Handout #3) at the beginning of the plenary session with offices and nominees as follows:

### **2014 Ballot -- LACROSSE AREA SYNOD -- ELCA**

#### **SYNOD-WIDE NOMINATIONS:**

**Synod Treasurer** (4-year term to 2018): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_\_Derek Jackson, Mt. Calvary

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**Extra-Parish Ministries, clergy** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_\_Rev. Corinne Thul, Gundersen Health System Staff Chaplain, La Crosse

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**AT-LARGE NOMINATIONS TO FAITH & LIFE COMMITTEES:** (Under our by-laws each Faith & Life Committee has one clergy and one lay person from each conference and shall have two to four additional lay people at-large, no particular conference. The at-large nominations for Faith & Life Committees are separate from conference nominations.)

**Evangelism and Outreach Committee – Lay** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for Two

\_\_\_\_\_Linda Dahl, Lower Coon Valley (incumbent)

\_\_\_\_\_Peter Kirkegaard, Mt. Sterling

\_\_\_\_\_

**Mission Support Committee – Lay** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for Two

\_\_\_\_ Amy Noel, Halfway Creek  
\_\_\_\_ Michael Douglass, St. Peter's Evangelical, Prairie du Chien

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## **CONFERENCE NOMINATIONS**

### **NORTH CONFERENCE:**

**Church in Society Committee – Lay at Large** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Ellen Hovell, French Creek

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**LYLE Adult Advisory Team - Lay** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Matt Iverson, Holmen

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**Synod Council – Lay Female** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Leah Wisnewski, Journey

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**Discipline Committee – Lay** (6-year term to 2020 – 1 term limit): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Tom Stowers, Journey

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**Mission Support Committee – Lay** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Jim Welander, Journey

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### **SOUTH CONFERENCE:**

**Evangelism and Outreach Committee – Clergy** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Rev. Amanda Schultz, Trinity, Cashton

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**LYLE Adult Advisory Team – Lay** (2-year term to 2016): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Sheila Rodriguez, DeSoto

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**Discipline Committee – Lay** (6-year term to 2020 – 1 term limit): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Bette Keehner, St. Peter's Evangelical, Prairie du Chien

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**Discipline Committee – Clergy** (6-year term to 2020 – 1 term limit): Vote for One  
\_\_\_\_ Rev. Nile Sandeen, Mt. Sterling & Utica

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**EAST CONFERENCE:**

**Synod Council – Lay Male** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Dennis Glaman, Trinity, Sparta

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**Synod Council – Clergy** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Rev. Wendy Ruetten, Bethany/East Lemonweir, New Lisbon (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

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**Evangelism and Outreach Committee – Lay** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Kris Stauffacher, Trinity, Hustler

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**Evangelism and Outreach Committee – Clergy** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Rev. Wes Dunbar, Grace, Elroy

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**Discipline Committee – Clergy** (6-year term to 2020 – 1 term limit): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Rev. Stan Kwiecien, Woodland, Rome

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**Mission Support Committee – Lay** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Joan Hanson, Peace, Tomah (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

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**Mission Support Committee – Clergy** (3-year term to 2017): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Rev. Stan Kwiecien, Woodland, Rome (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

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**LYLE Adult Advisory Team – Clergy** (2-year term to 2016): Vote for One

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**WEST CONFERENCE:**

**Mission Support – Clergy** (2-year term to 2016): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Rev. Harald Bringsjord, Good Shepherd, La Crosse (to serve remaining 2 years of vacated 3-year term)

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**LYLE Adult Advisory Team – Clergy Team Advisor** (2-year term to 2016): Vote for One

\_\_\_\_ Rev. Lisa Shank, Bethel, La Crosse

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**SA 14.06.02** Motion to appoint the LYLE position as East Conference pastors' vacancies are filled.  
MMSC

Bishop Arends pointed out that all other positions do have nominations and that elections will take place after lunch during Plenary Session 3.

Vice President Lori Toso introduced Bishop Jim Arends for the **Report of the Bishop**

La Crosse Area Synod  
Bishop's Report  
June 14, 2014  
Jim Arends, Bishop

## ***ALWAYS BEING MADE NEW***

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth,  
do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:19)*

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)*

*And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,  
I'll sing the old, old story that I have loved so long. (ELW #661, v3)*

Lutherans have a habit of living in more than one reality at the same time. We confess that we are, at the same time, saints and sinners. We believe we are called to live under God's reign now, while looking to a time when we are gathered together in the eternal reign of God. We teach that each passage of scripture is both a word of law and a word of gospel. And we love the old, old story while we add to our repertoire new, new songs.

In nominating caucuses this past February 23, you lifted up my name alone to be your nominee for the next six-year term of bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod. I thank you for this and the confidence that it shows. It does make for some constitutional fun at this assembly – since the constitution says we must elect a bishop, and since our synod's process says I am the only one we can vote for at this point, I am about to be elected by a unanimous ballot. Again I do thank you for your confidence.

Now since human beings are creatures of habit, I am assuming that you expect more of the same from me. You expect me to preach, to pray, to teach, to administer, and to continually look for better ways to be Christ's Body together. You expect our synod people to celebrate with you in dedications, installations, ordinations, and anniversary celebrations. You expect the synod office to be with you in tough times - to offer coaching, help you find new ministers when former ones leave, work for resolution of conflict, and to stand up for order within impending chaos. You expect us to make connections to resources as you do the Christ-centered ministry that is best for your individual contexts. You expect me to challenge you with ministry opportunities beyond your neighborhoods, and to allow you to focus on the ministries that most touch your hearts. And you expect me to be your presence in the church beyond our synod's borders. These are the central tasks of the bishop's office and I strive to do them well.

These roles are many and varied. Our ministries are many upon many - too many to name in one report. So let me lift up some particular areas of celebration and concern.

In the most recent edition of Wartburg Seminary's "Life Together," second year student Nathaniel Bothwell reflects on his 2014 J-Term experiences in Tanzania. He names a general truth when he writes, "In Africa, the church is intimately involved in the doing of Christianity. The church seems acutely aware of the need not

only to preach Jesus, but to be Jesus.” As the Body of Christ, we are called to be Jesus. To be Jesus is to bring new life. These principles are at the center of this report.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The gift of life is a treasure when all parts of the body work together. Over the past six years I have had the joy of celebrating the life Jesus brings to many of us, our groups, our congregations, and our synod’s ministry. In the DVD and written copies of the sermon I provided for use in congregations I use examples of the Lord growing new life in twenty different congregations in the synod. And that is only a sampling. I have more and more stories to share of successes and best practices. These give the opportunity for us to gain, adapt and grow. God is doing new things and blessing old. Do you not perceive it?

Now on occasion, when I share the positive examples, I hear jealousy in comments ranging from, “Doesn’t the bishop know we do good things, too?” to “They may be doing that, but look at the resources they have,” to “But they’re not very Lutheran.” This behavior has got to stop. Jealousy must decrease. Mutual support must increase. Squabbling over personal interests and fighting to maintain the comfort of nostalgia must stop. Being Jesus in a world that desperately needs the loving Spirit of God must be our central endeavor. We are part of a shrinking church in a rapidly changing world that is seeing the church as less and less relevant. We need each other’s support and help and experience to be a church that makes a difference – that is the loving presence of God where love is so needed. My older, grumpier self promises to name more quickly behavior that harms the body of Christ. And I promise to coach and support pastors and congregational leaders who need to name behavior in members that harms the body of their congregations. My Christ-centered self promises to keep lifting up examples to guide us all, because all over this church the Christ is finding new ways to live in and through well-established congregations and ministries. Again, new things are springing forth. Do you not perceive it?

I especially want to commend the congregations of our synod that are intentionally working on mission plans, strategic plans, and new initiatives. Pastor Libby Howe, as our Director of Evangelical Mission, is working with seven congregations in mission planning and/or one-on-one training processes. She is providing coaching for mission development and/or revitalization with twelve congregations. She is assisting eight congregations with stewardship education and/or Consecration Sunday Programs. In addition, in the synod office, we are aware of at least six other congregations engaging in intentional mission development. I assist where and when I can and greatly appreciate the opportunities to do so.

Also, I give thanks for congregations that continually strive to be ministries that involve people of all ages. One reflection of this is worth noting today. Assembly Young Adult Voting Members are individuals who are confirmed and no older than twenty-four. This year we have sixteen Young Adult Voting Members, the most of any assembly to date.

At this assembly, you will hear the blessings of some of the ministries we bring as we work together as the La Crosse Area Synod. As I address the gift of working together, I want to thank the many who serve through synod ministries, especially our Synod Council with our present officers: Vice President Lori Toso, Secretary Mike Schnitzius, and Treasurer Derek Jackson. I want to share my deep appreciation for our synod staff: Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Ministry Pastor Libby Howe, Executive Assistant Melanie Timmerman, Office Assistant and Call Process Coordinator Deb Wold, and Bookkeeper Alice DaFoe. Most of all, I also want to thank the person I’ve worked with the longest in life and love, my wife Lynn.

## MISSION SUPPORT (basically money)

I was first elected in 2008 and took office at the start of the Great Recession. Finances have been difficult for households and congregations. So finances have been a challenge for our synod ministry and our outreach through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Our plan has been simple: we keep our spending in line, we keep our ministries Christ-centered, and we challenge our congregations to support the mission. And you



have. After a nasty drop of over \$55,000 in mission support from fiscal year 2009 to 2010, you have restored over \$6,600 each year since. This year has started out with challenges. Increased insurance costs and high heating bills have added to the necessary expenditures of our congregations. And they have led to a shortfall in mission support. At the end of May your contributions to our shared ministry in the synod and the ELCA lag behind last year's giving by \$15,472. Our synod and churchwide offices work constantly to avoid any wasteful spending. To continue the ministries that we are celebrating in this assembly, I ask you to take the need back to your congregations and encourage people to give as they are able. As you increase your giving to your congregations, you increase the proportional share of your mission support and you grow God's work in our world. (I am leading an assembly workshop on responding to mission support questions in our congregations.)

While we are talking money, let me give you three words of thanks and four more challenges. First, thank you for the mission support you have shared. Many congregations have worked hard to give beyond their doors in tough times. Some congregations have made commitments to send a percentage of their offering weekly for use in our synod and churchwide outreach. I challenge you to take an intentional look at your percentage giving to mission support. Consider working toward a ten percent tithe, setting an example to your congregation's members to consider tithing.

Second, thank you for fighting hunger in our world. I am thankful that last year our synod contributed \$2.77 per baptized member to the ELCA Hunger Appeal. But, as you will hear when we look at the resolution to fight world hunger, our per-member giving ranks 57<sup>th</sup> out of 65 synods in our church. My challenge to you is to adopt the resolution today - and to begin today - to raise our average to \$4.00 per baptized member.

Third, thank you for rising to the challenge to wipe out malaria in this world. The 2012 Synod Assembly set a goal of raising \$150,000 in three years to fight malaria. At this two-thirds point, we have given over \$130,000 to the battle. My challenge? Let's reach our goal this summer. If each congregation plans one special event, we can do it.

Finally, our ELCA in its 2013 Churchwide Assembly, seeking to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our church, established our first ever capital campaign: *Always Being Made New – the Campaign for the ELCA*. The goal is to raise \$198 million over the next five years to undergird and expand a number of ministries that are dear to us. Gifts to the Hunger Appeal and the Malaria Campaign will count toward the total. Gifts to start new congregations will count toward the total. Gifts to the Fund for Leaders, which provides seminary scholarships, will count. So will gifts to support Young Adults in Global Mission, global ministries, youth ministry initiatives, and more. While we are talking money, I invite you to take the challenge to grow our church's ministry. Adopt the resolution which promises our involvement and, as you are able, please, give.

## GLOBAL MISSION

Our global connections and ministries have changed radically over the last six years. At the start of 2013, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus severed ties with our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in protest over the ELCA's decisions regarding sexuality issues in 2009. This put our companion synod relationship with the Central Synod of the EECMY on hold. Many of us continue to grieve this loss.

At the same time our companion church in Peru, la Iglesia Luterana Evangelica Peruana (ILEP), has been challenged with leadership and accountability issues. While the congregations continue to do powerful ministry individually, the church body is in need of reform. At the present time, the ELCA has stopped funding any ministries in Peru, calling for much needed reform in leadership and accountability in financial matters. Pastor Raquel Rodriguez, ELCA Director for Ministry in Latin America, has recommended our La Crosse Area Synod take a delegation to Peru as soon as possible to visit congregations, celebrate ministries, and provide the pastoral care of listening. Our Peru Subcommittee will be exploring the option soon. Start considering joining the delegation. And, for those with a passion for this ministry, your contributions are needed.

So in this time of flux, how do we keep our spirit for and our commitment to connecting to Christians around the world? First, sponsor one of the two individuals from our synod to serve as Young Adults in Global Mission from August 2014 to August 2015. Jenna Putz from Christ Lutheran in Arcadia will serve in Uruguay-Argentina. Elise Hynek from Our Savior's-La Crosse will serve in the United Kingdom.

And second, our Global Mission Committee has an answer. They are creating a *Global Mission 2Go* event. It will provide the opportunity to bring the joys and gifts of global mission to your congregation. Consider being one of the first congregations to welcome *GM2Go*!

#### CAMPUS MINISTRY

Every year students from our congregations go off to college. They welcome their family on campus for Family Day and another event or two. But mostly they want to try out a new world on their own. Campus Ministry was designed to reach into their lives with faithful people in new ways, while home congregations are left at home. Our Lutheran Campus Ministry of La Crosse is vital for doing new, perceivable ministry at UW-L, Viterbo, and Western. But it cannot function without our help. A new full-time campus pastor needs to be called. Programs need to be funded. Payments toward the remaining \$200,000 on the mortgage need to be made. And our present support leaves us short of full time ministry. A few of our congregations contribute thousands of dollars each year. Others supply smaller amounts. Leaders in a few of our congregations have promised to challenge their congregations to provide an additional \$5,000 a year for three years. We need six congregations to take on this challenge – yes, another challenge. And we need additional funds to start pouring in before August 1.

#### SAME GENDER UNIONS

On Friday, June 6, a federal judge ruled against Wisconsin's ban on same gender marriages. The full implications of this are expected to be laid out by the end of the month. Our church's actions of 2009 are our guide for the future. We have voted that congregations that choose to may recognize publicly accountable, life-long, monogamous, same gender relationships. Our developing guide is that recognition should require couples to be united in the most complete option allowed by a state. If that is marriage (as is the case in Minnesota), marriage would be the standard for recognition. Because of church/state issues, no pastor can be mandated to preside over any marriage ceremony, whether male-female or same gender. In our denomination pastors have the authority to preside because of their call to a congregation. So, pastors of this synod should have the authorization of their church council before they preside over any uniting ceremonies. I have sent two resources from Minnesota synods to our pastors to help them look to the future with their congregations.

#### FINALLY

My ministry as Bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod has been to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. My ministry has been to bring you more challenges than you want to hear. My ministry has called us to see the connected nature of our mission. My ministry has been to keep the fundamentals before us: to know that *Grace Happens Here*, to be *Rooted in the Word*, to trust that we are *Spirit Led-Spirit Fed*, to receive *Generous Love* as we lead *Generous Lives*, to perceive God's presence as we are *Always Being Made New*. My ministry has been to be there for you in good times and in bad. I regret where I have failed. I thank God where our shared ministry has been successful. This is the ministry I promise to continue.

At the risk of sounding "corny," while being totally sincere, I close with the words of ELW Hymn #659:

*Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?  
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.*

*We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road;*


*We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.*

*I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.*

*I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.*

*Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?  
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.*

Thankfully,



Bishop

Bishop Arends invited **Cheryl Mader, Global Mission Committee**, to tell a mission story about the Global Mission to Go initiative.

Bishop Arends turned the chair over to **Carlos Peña, Vice President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**, for the election of the Bishop.

Carlos Peña explained the election process (S904 of the constitution), reminding the assembly of the seating area restricted to voting members. He noted that the voting members call a bishop to serve as pastor of this synod. The bishop is: a pastor, a servant, an evangelist, one who reminds us of our unity within the ELCA, the CEO of the synod, and our leader.

Carlos reminded voting members that all four conference caucuses nominated Rev. James Arends.

**Report of the Registrar** given by Lori Toso: 62 pastors present and 170 lay persons for a total of 233 voting members; 32 visitors, volunteers, and guests were also present.

Carlos Peña called for a moment of silence and then called forward Rev. Dr. Mark Jolivet, Dean of the West Conference, who led the assembly in prayer. Ushers distributed the ballot. When all voting members received ballots, the assembly voted, ushers collected the ballots, and the election committee convened.

Bishop Arends invited **Cindy Berg, Mission Support Committee and Mission Interpreter Coordinator**, to tell a mission story.

Bishop Arends introduced **Louise Hemstead, Representative from the La Crosse Area Synod and Region 5 on the ELCA Church Council**. Louise reported on the work of the ELCA Church Council. Louise Hemstead reported on serving on the Theological Education Council. She noted that a proposal for a unified roster of Word and Service ministry which will be put forward to the Churchwide assembly in 2016. Louise Hemstead thanked Bishop Arends and the synod for consistently reaching the 55% goal year by year. She highlighted Always Being Made New, the campaign for the ELCA.

Bishop Arends invited **Carlos Peña, Vice President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**, to give the Report of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

Carlos Peña brought greetings from Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and thanked the synod for the shared ministry, Bishop Arends for his leadership and service, the synod council, Vice President Lori Toso, Council Representative Louise Hemstead, and all voting members for their time and talents. He showed the video, “We are the Church Together,” presented by our presiding bishop, Elizabeth Eaton. Carlos noted that God uses seemingly ordinary people to be Christ to the world and noted that the La Crosse Area Synod’s contributions make a difference in fighting malaria and hunger, among other initiatives. He highlighted Always Being Made New, the campaign for the ELCA.

**Carlos Peña** called on **Vice President Lori Toso** to present the results of the election for bishop. She thanked the members of the Bishop Election Committee for their work. Election results: 225 votes were cast—no illegal votes and 5 abstentions results in 220 votes to re-elect Bishop Jim Arends.

**Vice President Carlos Peña** declared the election final. The assembly congratulated Bishop Arends with a standing ovation.

The assembly sang “We All Are One in Mission.”

Bishop Arends called on Pr. Libby Howe to give announcements regarding the logistics of lunch and the break-out sessions. He announced that the plenary will resume at 3:30 p.m. following the two break-out sessions.

Pr. Libby Howe called on Rev. Mark Jolivette, Dean, West Conference, for prayer.

### PLENARY SESSION 3 – LA CROSSE CENTER, NORTH HALL

Bishop Arends called the assembly to order and led the group in song.

Bishop Arends called on Pr. Meg Hoversten, Dean, South Conference, for the opening prayer.

Bishop Arends reminded the assembly that any business not finished by 7 p.m. today will be directed to the Synod Council.

Bishop Arends invited **Kelly Gochenauer, Professional Service & Care Committee**, to share a mission story.

### 2014 Ballot -- LACROSSE AREA SYNOD – ELCA SYNOD-WIDE NOMINATIONS:

**SA 14.06.03 Motion to cast a unanimous ballot for all openings**

**MMSC**

Bishop Arends offered the following prayer for the 2015 budget prior to vote being taken:

#### **Prayer for Synod Budget:**

*God of all things—*

*This budget is our intention to give and distribute money.*

*We give this money because you first loved us and we are grateful.*

*We give this money because we know you are God and money is not.*

*We give this money because we trust you to give us our daily bread.*

*This spending plan declares our intentions to volunteer, to minister to each other, to reach out to our community and our world. It says what we want to do in honor and praise of your*

*great love. As givers, may we give joyfully and liberally extend your mercy to those who stand in need of it.*

*We want to do something more than just meet this budget, O God. We do not want it to be the limit or the target of our giving. We anticipate the celebration of going beyond it, and the ability to do more for you than our little faith allowed us to dream.*

*We declare our intentions to give and distribute as fully dedicated to you. May we be surprised by all that is done through these efforts.*

*And may you be pleased. Amen*

**SA 14.06.04 Motion made and seconded to amend the budget 2015 and add a line item (4H1) for sabbatical reserves of \$3,000 (\$1500 each for the bishop and for the assistant to the bishop), with funds for 2015 to be redirected from existing funds by the synod council.**

**MMSC**

**SA 14.06.05 Motion to approve 2015 Mission Support Budget as amended and Salary Guidelines for 2015**

**MMSC**

Bishop Arends called on Connie Scharlau, of the **Reference & Counsel Committee** to read

**Resolution 1 – Resolution Regarding Ethiopia Funds (Handout #4).**

### **Resolution Regarding Ethiopia Funds**

WHEREAS the Central Synod of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) has chosen to discontinue its companion synod relationship with the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), thereby severing companion relationships with synods of the ELCA, and

WHEREAS we do not know when or if these relationship will be resumed, and

WHEREAS it is not good stewardship of money to hold it unused in a bank account, and

WHEREAS the La Crosse Area Synod is holding money designated to support medical clinics in EECMY, and

WHEREAS the La Crosse Area Synod is holding money designated to provide scholarships and books for students in the EECMY, and

WHEREAS Elise Hynek (Our Savior's, La Crosse) and Jenna Putz (Christ Lutheran, Arcadia) have been selected to serve as Young Adults in Global Mission beginning in August in the United Kingdom and Argentina-Uruguay respectively, therefore be it

RESOLVED that money given to our synod designated for clinics in Ethiopia be instead dedicated to the Malaria Campaign, and be it further

RESOLVED that money given to our synod designated for EECMY scholarships instead be designated to the ELCA initiatives to provide scholarships and educational opportunities for women leaders from our global companion churches, and be it further

RESOLVED that money given to our synod designated for books instead be designated to support this year's Young Adults in Global Mission from the La Crosse Area Synod, Elise Hynek and Jenna Putz.

Supplemental Information:

As of May 22, 2014, the account balances were:

- Medical Clinics = \$470.42
- Scholarships = \$1445.62
- Books = \$3115.75

**SA 14.06.06 R1 –Resolution Regarding Ethiopia Funds**

**MMSC**

Bishop Arends called on Pr. Julie Wollman, of the **Reference & Counsel Committee** to read **Resolution 2 – Resolution to Amend Synod Constitution (Handout #5).**

**Resolution to Amend Synod Constitution**

BE IT RESOLVED to amend the synod constitution S8.52 as follows:

S8.52. The term of the bishop shall begin on the first day of the ~~fourth~~ *third* month following the election. The terms of the vice-president, secretary and treasurer and the Synod Council members shall begin at the conclusion of the Synod Assembly at which they are elected.

This recommendation comes from the Synod Council and, to be adopted, requires a 2/3 vote of this assembly and the next regularly called Synod Assembly.

**SA 14.06.07 R2 –Resolution to Amend Synod Constitution**

**MMSC**

Bishop Arends called on Pr. Julie Wollman, of the **Reference & Counsel Committee** to read **Resolution 3 – Resolution in Support of *Always Being Made new: The Campaign for the ELCA* (Handout #6).**

**Resolution in Support of *Always Being Made New:  
The Campaign for the ELCA***

WHEREAS the La Crosse Area Synod and the congregations of this synod celebrate their work together as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); and  
WHEREAS the ELCA in its 2013 Churchwide Assembly established *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* as its first ever churchwide capital campaign; and  
WHEREAS this campaign seeks to strengthen and further the efforts of the ELCA to:

- create and renew congregations,
- better minister with those who are physically and mentally challenged,
- raise up new leaders and strengthen its ministry with youth and young adults,
- eradicate hunger and malaria,
- grow in global ministries including work through Young Adults in Global Mission, and help to train women leaders from our global companion churches, and

WHEREAS, the La Crosse Area Synod supports these efforts through its churchwide ministries; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly affirm and commit itself to participation in *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, and be it further

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod Council establish a task force that will:

- set goals for this synod's participation in the Campaign,
- provide resources for congregations to participate in the Campaign, and
- enable connections to be made between the churchwide expression of this church and the congregations of the La Crosse Area Synod.

Submitted by the La Crosse Area Synod Council

**SA 14.06.08 R3 –Resolution in Support of *Always Being Made new: The Campaign for the ELCA.* MMSC**

Bishop Arends called on Connie Scharlau, of the **Reference & Counsel Committee** to read **Resolution 4 – Resolution on World Hunger (Handout #7).**

## **Resolution on World Hunger**

WHEREAS, God is at work providing food for everyone, and

WHEREAS, when he was confronted with 5000 hungry people, Jesus said to his followers, “You feed them!”, and in a parable Jesus said to his followers, “I was hungry and you fed me” and in the Parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus expanded our understanding of neighbor, and

WHEREAS, 868 million people are chronically hungry and cannot lead active daily lives, and 1.4 billion people live in extreme poverty living on less than \$1.25 per day, and in the U.S. more than 50 million people do not know where their next meal is coming from, and 46.2 million Americans are living in poverty, and

WHEREAS, the World Hunger Appeal responded to this crisis by supporting projects and programs in 43 U.S. states and 56 countries including: 388 food pantries, homeless shelters, and other projects in the U.S.; 239 sustainable development, health and other projects around the world; and also 15 education and networking programs in the ELCA, and

WHEREAS, the La Crosse Area Synod exists in the breadbasket of the world and is home to farmers who seek to feed the world, and

WHEREAS, the congregations of the La Crosse Area Synod are generous in their giving to food pantries to provide locally for hungry people, and

WHEREAS, as people with generous hearts we would like to give more than \$2.77 per member from our abundance to alleviate hunger and poverty among our sisters and brothers living in God's good creation, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the congregations of the La Crosse Area Synod participate in a Synod-Wide World Hunger Sunday in the fall of 2014 using resources provided by the World Hunger Subcommittee, and be it further

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod gathered in Assembly recommend congregations commit to giving \$4.00 per baptized member to the World Hunger Appeal through their budgets, Special Offerings, Memorial Gifts, Endowment Funds, and matching funds to reach this goal, and be it further



RESOLVED that the World Hunger Subcommittee report regularly to the congregations throughout the year on efforts to reach this goal and that the subcommittee provide educational and motivational materials to the congregations.

Submitted by the synod World Hunger Subcommittee  
Endorsed by La Crosse Area Synod Council

#### **SA 14.06.09 R4 –Resolution on World Hunger**

**MMSC**

Bishop Arends invited **Carol Leopold, Synod Women of the ELCA**, to share a mission story.

Bishop Arends invited **Rachel Slough, Peru Companion Synod Sub-committee**, to share a mission story.

Bishop Arends called on **Carlos Peña, Vice President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, for the keynote address.**

Bishop Arends called on Vice President Lori Toso to give announcements regarding the logistics of dinner. The plenary concluded with a song.

Bishop Arends called on Pr. Meg Hoversten, Dean, South Conference, for prayer.

#### **PLENARY SESSION 4 – LA CROSSE CENTER, NORTH HALL**

Bishop Arends called on Pr. Wendy Ruetten, Dean, East Conference, for prayer.

Bishop called on Pr. Libby Howe for Part 2 of the Report of Director for Evangelical Mission. Pr. Howe recognized the following congregations for their notable mission support:

- 1) The highest percentage of mission support giving: Immanuel in Caledonia;
- 2) The most improved in percentage of mission support giving: Grace in Elroy;
- 3) The highest dollar amount per baptized member: Zion in Big Flats;
- 4) The most improved in the dollar amount per baptized member: Journey in Holmen.

Bishop Arends invited **Pr. Jean Pagliaro, Candidacy Committee**, to share a mission story.

Bishop Arends invited **Pr. Kathryn Ingbritsen**, to share a mission story regarding Immanuel-Viroqua's initiative with a Hunger garden.

Bishop Arends reminded voting members to provide an overview of synod assembly to their congregations on Sunday and to pick up a copy of the Coulee Courier Assembly Edition.

Vice President Lori Toso made announcements regarding evaluation forms, and re-use of binders and name tag holders.

Worship—Service of Holy Communion, 7:00 p.m.

Preacher—Rev. Jim Arends, Bishop

Affirmation of Ministry of Bishop Arends

Installation of newly elected Synod Council members and committee members.

Offering to the ELCA *Always Being Made New* Capital Campaign.

Submitted by Naomi Stennes-Spidahl, on behalf of Mike Schnitzius, Synod Secretary



**ACTIONS:**

SA 14.06.01 Adopt Synod Assembly Agenda and the Rules as printed in the Assembly Book pgs. 4-5. MMSC

SA 14.06.02 Motion to appoint the LYLE position as East Conference pastors' vacancies are filled. MMSC

SA 14.06.03 Motion to cast a unanimous ballot for all openings MMSC

SA 14.06.04 Motion made and seconded to amend the budget 2015 and add a line item (4H1) for sabbatical reserves of \$3,000 (\$1500 each for the bishop and for the assistant to the bishop), with funds for 2015 to be redirected from existing funds by the synod council.

MMSC

SA 14.06.05 Motion to approve 2015 Mission Support Budget and Salary Guidelines for 2015

MMSC

SA 14.06.06 R1 –Resolution Regarding Ethiopia Funds

MMSC

SA 14.06.07 R2 –Resolution to Amend Synod Constitution

MMSC

SA 14.06.08 R3 –Resolution in Support of *Always Being Made new: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

MMSC

SA 14.06.09 R4 –Resolution on World Hunger

MMSC

**HANDOUTS:**

- 1) Proposed New Rule for Synod Assembly
- 2) Proposed 2015 Budget and 2013 Treasurer's Report
- 3) 2014 Ballot: Synod-Wide Nominations
- 4) Resolution 1 – Resolution Regarding Ethiopia Funds
- 5) Resolution 2 – Resolution to Amend Synod Constitution
- 6) Resolution 3 – Resolution in Support of *Always Being Made new: The Campaign for the ELCA*
- 7) Resolution 4 – Resolution on World Hunger

MMSC = Motion Moved, Seconded and Carried

MMS = Motion comes Moved and Seconded