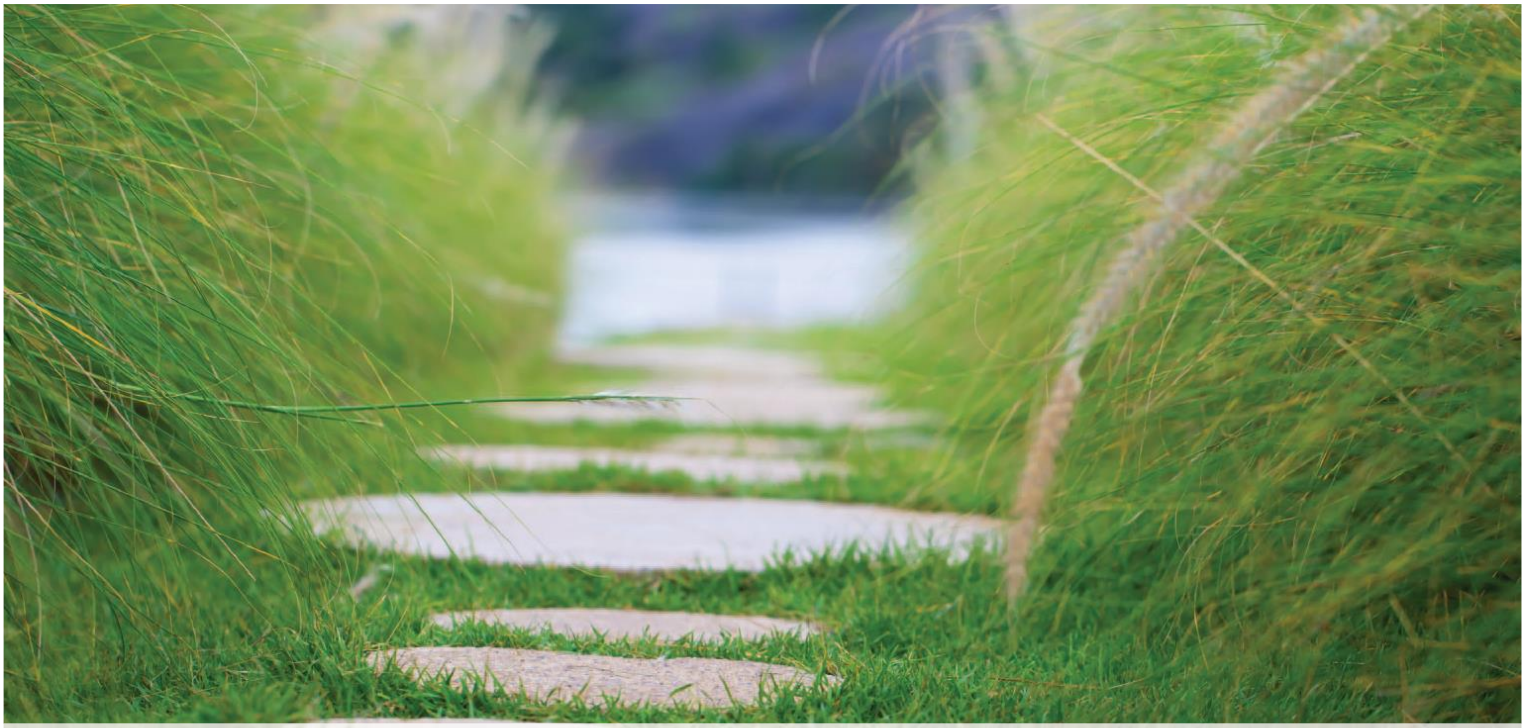
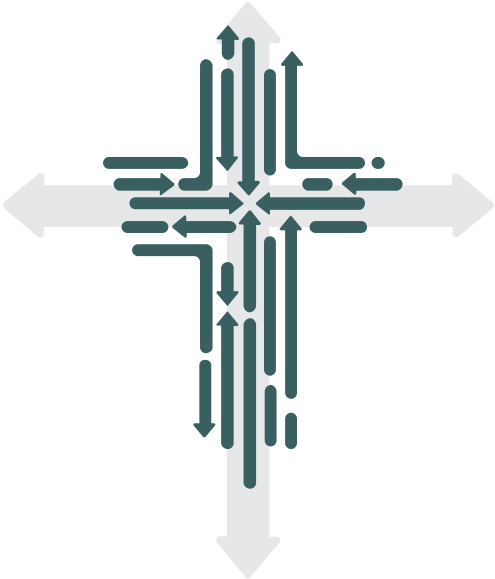


God of Peace will be with you.

2021 Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

We are excited to welcome you all to our 2021 Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly!

We are grateful you will be joining us on June 6, 11 & 12th, when we will gather virtually on Zoom videoconferencing platform as a synod to worship, conduct the business of the Assembly, and elect a new bishop. While this year's gathering may look a little different, we are coming to you with the same excitement to gather in faith and gratitude as we all experience the Assembly in a new way! We want all participants to have an enjoyable, positive experience and we have worked hard and sought excellent advice from the brave synods who have gone before us. Please read this whole book, participate in all Pre-Assembly meetings, practice sessions, and ballots. Most importantly, pray. Now more than ever, we are called to show up and remember that church is more than a building, it is a community. The work of our synod takes all of us. Though we might wish we could gather in person, we are committed to making this Assembly the next best thing! We ask for your grace as we navigate this exciting adventure together!

swmnelca.org/synod-assembly

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Voting Member Information

Welcome to our 2021 Synod Assembly! We are excited to gather this year, virtually, and we hope you are too! Even though this looks different than meeting at Gustavus Adolphus College or in Redwood Falls, we have worked hard to bring you the same organized, quality Assembly you have seen in the past. Please read on for important information that will make your voting member experience and this Assembly a success.

VOTING MEMBERS:

1. **Due to the nature of a Virtual Assembly, VOTING MEMBERS WILL NEED:**

+ An email address unique for ***each*** voting member.
+ Quality and ***stable*** internet connection.
+ A web-based device to participate from that offers both video and sound.
    - A computer/laptop/tablet is the most user-friendly. A good case scenario would be if you could view the Assembly from your computer and use your cell phone or other smart device for voting.
    - We are encouraging, "Watch Parties" where congregations and/or conferences gather as a group with their pastors to participate, discern, celebrate, and enjoy our Assembly on one big screen and use their individual devices for voting sessions.

Voting members will utilize the Zoom platform.

Voting members will vote via Election Runner, a web-based ballot and the Zoom platform. For Election Runner, those credentialed for that session will be emailed the invitation to vote when the voting window has opened. For the Zoom-based balloting, those credentialed will participate in real-time.

All voting members are strongly encouraged to participate in at least ONE practice tech-session. During the session, voting members will practice voting on both platforms, learn more about the rules of procedure and how to request speaking privileges during the Assembly.

Practice Tech Sessions:

+ Tuesday, May 25 - 7 pm
+ Wednesday, May 26 – 4 pm
+ Wednesday, May 26 – 7 pm

Compensation Guideline Forum:

Tuesday, May 18 - 7 pm

2022 Budget Forum

Wednesday, May 19 – 7 pm

Registration links for these sessions will be available on our Synod Assembly Webpage. After you register, you will receive an email confirmation containing information on how to join the meeting.

Participating in one of these sessions will help ensure everyone has a quality and efficient experience during the Assembly. While we will have tech assistance available during the Assembly, these sessions will help us identify most issues and resolve them in advance!

Additionally, participating in the Compensation Guidelines or Budget forums will allow you to give input on these proposed documents prior to actually attending our Assembly! Plan to attend and save the dates!

2. **STUDY THE PRE-ASSEMBLY MATERIALS:**
   Your informed decisions and other input, guided by God's spirit, scripture, and your conscience, are very important. Please read through this whole book. Read through all the biographical forms. Pray. We will elect our next bishop, representatives for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and other important synod positions. You will have the privilege and responsibility to address the other voting members. The procedure for how to do that in a Virtual Assembly is explained later in this book.

3. **ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION – CREDENTIALS:**
   If you received this Pre-Assembly book, you have successfully registered for our Assembly and tech-session and have received your individual link to log-in to our Assembly on June 6, 11 & 12. (same link). Remember this is your own personal Voter ID and Zoom Link. This is what gives you the credentialing right to vote in our Assembly. **Only one device will be allowed to connect via that link at any one time**.

4. **LOGGING INTO THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY:**
   If we were gathered in-person you would likely arrive early to claim your seat. It is the same for our Virtual Assembly. The waiting room for each plenary session will open 90 minutes prior to the start of each session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. **Once the plenary session has been called to order, no additional participants will be admitted to that plenary session.**

   Helpful tips:

   + Check in early so you have plenty of time to get settled. Once you are admitted, grab your favorite beverage, take a walk, read through our Pre-Assembly book, pray. Do not wait until the last minute and risk losing your chance to participate and vote in that session's business. Great news!! Every seat this year is a great one! Your chair can be as soft as you like, the temperature in the room will be perfect, and you will be able to hear every word!
   + Once you are admitted into the Zoom platform for that session, there is no need to exit. Simply mute and turn your camera off when we break. If you have technical connection issues and need to exit and re-join a session, you will be re-admitted, provided you had been admitted prior to the session being called to order.
   + **TECH TEAM**: If you have trouble getting into the Zoom Meeting, difficulty voting or finding your link, or any other technical questions, feel free to call this number ***during the Assembly***:

     TECH TEAM: 320-321-5007 GENERAL ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS: 218-227-3289

5. **COME WITH AN OPEN MIND, OPEN HEART AND READINESS TO LEARN AND GROW AS WE NAVIGATE THIS HOLY EXERIMENT.**
   In a true sense of the word synod, we are "walking-together" through this new way of gathering and learning together. Patience and grace will make this a faithful experience for everyone!

Assembly Offerings

"Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you." – Philippians 4:9

At this year's virtual synod assembly, we are inviting you to give two offerings:

Our worship offering will support the ministries of our synod. Congregations are encouraged to contribute $1 per baptized member for this offering. Congregations may want to do this prior to our assembly but it will be lifted up during our worship service on Friday, June 11, 2021.

Secondly, we invite you to express your gratitude for Bishop Jon Anderson's leadership legacy by responding generously to the "Gifts of Grace: Gratitude for 18 Years of Leadership" appeal. In your pre-assembly materials, you will find a letter with a giving card inviting your financial gifts as an individual, as a congregation, from a congregational Endowment Fund, or as a Conference.

Give online at www.swmnelca.org. See the Online Giving button under the red Quick Links on the homepage or make your check payable to SW MN Synod and mail to: SW MN Synod, PO Box 499, Redwood Falls, MN 56283. Please include the offering in the memo line.

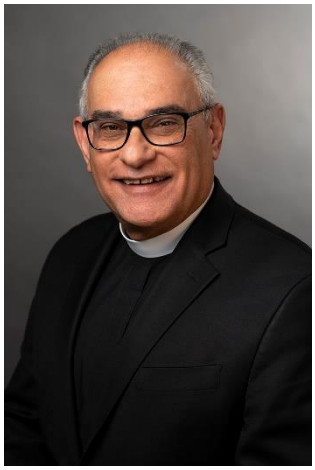
Thank you for your generosity.

Gifts of Grace: *Gratitude for 18 Years of Leadership*

www.swmnelca.org/gifts-of-grace

Special Guest - Rafael Malpica Padilla

Service and Justice Home Area ● Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla serves as Executive Director for the Service and Justice Home Area (formerly the Global Mission Unit) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA. In this capacity, he oversees the ELCA's worldwide program, which gives expression to the accompaniment model for mission through the deepening of relationships and cooperation with Lutheran churches in approximately 90 countries, the relief and development work supported by World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response internationally and domestic; relationships with Lutheran Services of America (LSA), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), Lutheran World Relief (LWR), ELCA Social Ministry Organizations, Independent Lutheran Organizations, and the Deaconess Community; the work of the Ethnic Specific Desk and relationship with the Ethnic Associations; the AMMPARO program; and the advocacy work of this church through the ELCA Washington Office, State Public Policy Offices, the Lutheran Office for World Community, and matters related to Corporate Social Responsibility Service and Justice expends about $35 million annually, including grants to companions, international scholarships, and financial and programmatic support for the work of over 160 missionaries including volunteers, associates and country coordinators and 46 Chicago and Nationally based staff.

Prior to becoming ELCA Global Mission's Executive Director in 2003, Pastor Malpica Padilla served the Global Mission Unit in several positions from 1993 to 2003. Before being called to churchwide service in the ELCA, Pastor Malpica Padilla served as bishop of the ELCA's Caribbean Synod from 1987-1993 and as a parish pastor in Puerto Rico following his ordination in 1981. Pastor Malpica Padilla holds a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Puerto Rico (1977 Cum Laude) and a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (1981). He has been awarded honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees by Newberry College in South Carolina in 1989, the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration in India in 2006, Trinity Lutheran Seminary in 2010, and The Serampore College (University) in India in 2019. In 2013, the Caribbean Synod Council awarded him the title Bishop Emeritus of the ELCA Caribbean Synod.

Pastor Malpica Padilla's extensive international and ecumenical experience includes serving as an election observer with the US Congregational Delegation in Haiti and El Salvador, member of the executive committee of Church World Service, member of the board of directors of Lutheran World Relief, advisor to the Council of Lutheran World Federation, and member of the Lutheran World Federation team that negotiated with the State of Israel for the tax case of Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem.
Working with companion churches in Latin America and the Caribbean Pr. Malpica Padilla developed *Accompaniment* as the theology for mission guiding the work with churches in the region. This theological approach was adopted by the Division for Global Mission in 1998, and subsequently became the preferred mode for missional engagement in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Pastor Malpica Padilla is married to Luz D. Malpica, (retired) occupational therapist. They are members of Bethany Lutheran Church, in Crystal Lake, Illinois. Together they have three children – Rafael, Felix Javier (an ELCA pastor), Karla Marie, and three grandchildren, Amaya, Javier, and Ruben.

Adoption of Bylaw S7.15.02

Allowing for Electronic Meetings of the Synod Assembly

Motion: At the recommendation of our Synod Council, to amend the bylaws of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod by adopting the following:

S7.15.02 When it is determined by the Synod Council and the bishop that it is not practical or prudent for the Synod Assembly to meet in-person the Synod Council or bishop may provide for either a regular or special meeting of the Synod Assembly to be conducted by telephone or other electronic means.

CHAPTER 10: SYNOD COUNCIL

S10.08. **Robert's Rules of Order**, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.

S10.0~~7~~8.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Proposed Abbreviated Agenda

Times are subject to change

Sunday, June 6

12:30 p.m.	**Voting Member Check-In** *For credentialing purposes, voting members will need to "check-in" each day or after we recess. Please join Zoom 90 minutes early prior to the start of each plenary session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis. Once a plenary session has been called to order, no additional voting members will be admitted to that plenary session.*
2:00 p.m.	**Assembly Called to Order: Vote to Allow Digital Meeting**
	Plenary Session 1: Opening prayer, Welcome, Adoption of Bylaw S7.15.02, Adoption of the Agenda & Rules of Procedure, Orientation Process of Electing a Bishop, Credentials Report, First Ballot for Bishop, Report of the Nominating Committee, Ministry Moment, Election Committee Report, First Ballot for Synod Elections, Closing Prayer.
4:00 p.m.	**RECESS**
5:00 p.m.	**Voting Member Check-In** *For credentialing purposes, voting members will need to "check-in" each day or after we recess. Please join Zoom 90 minutes early prior to the start of each plenary session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis. Once a plenary session has been called to order, no additional voting members will be admitted to that plenary session.*
6:30 p.m.	**Plenary Session 2:** Opening prayer, Recap of Plenary Session 1, Credentials Report, Gifts of Grace – 18 years of Gratitude, Report of First Ballot for Bishop, Second Ballot for Bishop, Report of Bishop Jon Anderson, Report of Second Ballot for Synod Elections, Closing Prayer. *(Report of Second Ballot for Bishop will posted)*
8:00 p.m.	**Recess**

Friday, June 11

12:30 p.m.	**Voting Member Check-In** *For credentialing purposes, voting members will need to "check-in" each day or after we recess. Please join Zoom 90 minutes early prior to the start of each plenary session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis. Once a plenary session has been called to order, no additional voting members will be admitted to that plenary session.*
2:00 p.m.	**Assembly Reconvenes – Worship/Offering**
3:00 p.m.	**Plenary Session 3:** Opening Worship, Recap of Plenary Session 2, Credentials Report, Third Ballot for Bishop, Churchwide Representative, Report of Third Ballot for Bishop.
4:30 p.m.	**Break**

5:00 p.m.	**Voting Member Check-In** *For credentialing purposes, voting members will need to "check-in" each day or after we recess. Please join Zoom 90 minutes early prior to the start of each plenary session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis. Once a plenary session has been called to order, no additional voting members will be admitted to that plenary session.*
6:30 p.m.	**Plenary Session 4:** Opening prayer, Recap of Plenary Session 3, Interview of Nominees, Credentials Report, Fourth Ballot for Bishop, Treasurer's Report and Presentation of 2022 Proposed Budget, Break, Ministry Moment, Presentation of 2022 Compensation Guidelines, Report of Fourth Ballot for Bishop, *Ministry Moment, Closing Prayer.
8:30 p.m.	**Recess**

Saturday, June 12

8:00 a.m.	**Voting Member Check-In** *For credentialing purposes, voting members will need to "check-in" each day or after we recess. Please join Zoom 90 minutes early prior to the start of each plenary session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis. Once a plenary session has been called to order, no additional voting members will be admitted to that plenary session.*
9:30 a.m.	**Assembly Called to Order**
	Plenary Session 5: Opening prayer, Recap of Plenary Session 4, LSS Servant of Christ Award, Approve 2022 Budget, Break, Approve 2022 Compensation Guidelines, Appreciation, Ministry Moment, Prayer, Fifth Ballot for Bishop, Ministry Moment, Other Business, Celebration.
12:30 p.m.	**Closing of Assembly.** ***This is an estimated end time.***

Rules of Procedure

1. **AGENDA AND RULES:** The agenda and rules of procedure will be adopted during the first plenary session of the Synod Assembly. Once adopted, neither document may be amended except by a two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly.

2. **BEING ADMITTED TO A PLENARY SESSION:** For credentialling purposes, voting members will need to "check-in" to each plenary session. The waiting room will open 90 minutes prior to the start of each session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. ***Once a plenary session has been called to order, no additional voting members will be admitted to that plenary session.***

3. **POINT OF ORDER:** Any voting member may submit a "point of order" to the chair and may, if necessary, interrupt a speaker for that purpose. He/she/they will do this via the "chat" feature in Zoom.

4. **MAKING A MOTION:** If a voting member wishes to make a motion (including any motions to amend a pending matter or refer a pending matter) the motion must be submitted in writing via the "chat" feature in Zoom. The maker of the motion must provide his/her/their name, congregation, and city – followed by the motion. The Zoom moderator will forward the motion to the chair of the Assembly. When recognized by the chair, the maker of the motion should identify him/her/them/self and state the motion using: "I move that…" The chair shall then announce whether the motion requires a second. After it is moved (and seconded) the chair shall restate the motion and, if appropriate, ask for discussion.

5. **AMENDMENTS TO THE MOTION:** When a motion brought before the Assembly does not receive ready acceptance by all voting members, a proposal to modify the wording can be made by the following motions, "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This will require a second. Then, a majority vote is necessary to pass the amended motion.

6. **WITHDRAWL OF A MOTION:** Any motion or amendment may be withdrawn by permission of the Assembly or the person who originally made the motion.

7. **PREVIOUS QUESTION:** To move the previous question is to bring the Assembly to an immediate decision as to whether debate on a motion should cease. It is not debatable. If adopted, the Assembly proceeds, without further debate, to vote at once on the pending question(s). A two-thirds vote is required to close debate.

8. **SPEAKING DURING DISCUSSION:** If a voting member wishes to speak to a pending matter, he/she/they will request permission by sending a message in the "chat" feature of Zoom – indicating his/her/their name, congregation, city and whether he/she/they favor or oppose the pending mater or are asking a clarifying question. All speeches shall be limited to no more than two minutes; and a voting member may address the same topic no more than two times. Speeches will also alternate between those speaking for and against the pending matter. To address the Assembly you must first ask to be recognized by the chair in chat and then once recognized address the Assembly by speaking.

9. **RULES GOVERNING DEBATE OF RESOLUTIONS:** The principal author of the resolution shall have the privilege to speak first during the debate. The speech shall be limited to three (3) minutes.

   A. All subsequent speeches on each resolution shall be limited to two (2) minutes each.

   B. Those who have spoken once to a resolution shall not speak again to the same resolution until all others have had the opportunity to speak once, except when invited by the chair to respond to questions of clarification. Second speeches shall be limited to one (1) minute each.

   C. "Calling the Question" – Those persons wishing to "call the question" will request permission by sending a message in the "chat" feature of Zoom – indicating his/her/their name, congregation, city and wait to be recognized by the chair. They will be called on in order, and call of the question may not interrupt a speaker. For further clarification see Robert's Rules of Order, 12th Edition.

10. **PRESIDING BISHOP/ELCA REPRESENTATIVE:** They shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. (S7.23).

11. **BISHOP ELECTION:** The presiding bishop of this church, or the appointee of the presiding bishop, shall install into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, each newly elected synod bishop. (S8.15).

   A. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no election results, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot. (S9.04.01)

   B. On the first ballot at the Synod Assembly, each voting member may write the name of one person who is eligible to serve as Synod Bishop. (S9.04.03)

C. Any nominees who have not submitted biographical information must do so prior to the second ballot. (S9.04.03)

D. After each ballot, the names remaining shall have biographical information available to the synod. (S9.04.03)

E. After the second ballot is cast, nominees' names may no longer be removed from the balloting process. (S.04.04. A2019)

12. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** Except as otherwise provided in the constitution and bylaws of this Synod, the Nominating Committee shall normally present the names of at least two nominees for positions elected at any meeting of a Synod Assembly. An agency or institution of the church for which the Synod Assembly elects board members may be granted an exception to this provision, provided it has (a) requested such an exception in writing to the Nominating Committee and (b) documented this request by providing the Nominating Committee with a copy of pertinent meeting minutes or governing documents of the agency or institution.

13. **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE:** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the Assembly.

14. **RULES REGARDING INTRODUCTIONS OF RESOLUTIONS:** As Assembly resolutions are introduced for consideration and debate, the Synod Secretary will eliminate the reading of the "Whereas" clauses and only read the "Be it Resolved" clause of the resolution.

15. **RULES REGARDING CASTING UNANIMOUS BALLOT FOR UNAPPOSED BALLOT:** The Synod Secretary will cast a unanimous ballot for all synod positions where there is only one name on the ballot.

Table of Parliamentary Terms

To accomplish this:	You say this:	Interrupt the speaker?	Is a second necessary?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	Necessary vote
Item of business	"I move that…"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by…"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Give further study	"I move to refer the matter to committee…"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone discussion for stated period of time	"I move to postpone the discussion until…"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
End debate on amendments	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Suspend consideration of an issue temporarily	"I move to table the motion."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Other motions to:	You say:					
Request Information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Reconsider an action	"I move to reconsider the vote on…"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Verify a voice vote	"I call for a division."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Limit or extend time in debate	"I move to…."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3

How Do We Elect a Bishop?

S9.04.01. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no election results, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

S9.04.04. On the first ballot at the Synod Assembly, each voting member may write the name of one person who is eligible to serve as Synod Bishop.

*It is important to note that all pre-identified nominees will need to be nominated at our Synod Assembly by a voting member of the Assembly.

First Ballot	**Point of Information**	**TO BE ELECTED**
Ecclesiastical ballot – each voting member of the Assembly may nominate one Minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of the ELCA.	*There are no names on the first ballot.* *Pastors who do not wish to participate as nominees must remove their names from consideration after the first ballot.* *Those pastors moving forward will submit biographical data that will be distributed prior to the second ballot.*	***75%*** *of legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot.* *If no election results, voting members will receive a list of pastors who were nominated on the first ballot.*
Second Ballot	**Point of Information**	**TO BE ELECTED**
The second ballot is limited to those names listed on the results of the first ballot.	*After the second ballot is cast, nominees' names may no longer be removed from the balloting process.*	***75%*** *of legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the second ballot.*
Third Ballot	**Point of Information**	**TO BE ELECTED**
The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot.		***66.7%*** *of legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the third ballot.*
Forth Ballot	**Point of Information**	**TO BE ELECTED**
The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot.		***60 %*** *of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.*
Fifth Ballot (Subsequent Ballots)	**Point of Information**	**TO BE ELECTED**
These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.		*A* ***majority*** *of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.*

Bishop Election FAQs

Who is the current bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod?
The current bishop is Rev. Jon V. Anderson. Bishop Anderson was elected in 2003 and has served this synod for the past 18 years.

Is our current bishop, Rev. Jon V. Anderson, standing for re-election in 2021?
No he is not. Bishop Anderson has prayerfully decided that it is time to end his call as Bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

Are there term limits for the Office of Bishop in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod?
No. There are no limits to how many 6-year terms a bishop may serve in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

Who is eligible to serve as the bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod?
Nominees for bishop must be Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA, in good standing. Nominees do not need to be rostered in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. The term of office for bishop is six years.

Who votes for bishop?
All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this synod are voting members of the Assembly. All ministers of Word and Service, under call, on the roster of this synod are voting members of the Assembly. Lay members elected by each congregation are voting members of the Assembly. Duly elected conference chairpersons and lay synod council members are likewise voting members of the Assembly.

When does our new bishop's term begin?
The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of third month following election. (S8.52)
So, in this case, our newly elected bishop's term will begin on September 1, 2021.

What will happen to the current synod staff?
The Synod Ministers (pastors) working in the synod office are co-terminus with the bishop. This means their calls cease on August 31, 2021. They may be invited to remain for a period of time by the new bishop.

The administrative staff, while not under call, is also selected by the bishop. This means a new bishop may choose to maintain the current staff or choose to hire a new support staff.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

We've learned over the past year how resilient we are as church and as people of God. It's been a time of pain, loss, injustice and uncertainty. It has also been a time of learning, listening and trying new things — stepping out of our comfort zones and into a more digital world. This church persevered in so many ways.

The churchwide organization has been working alongside all expressions and ministries of the ELCA and our partners to provide resources, share stories, engage members and keep our programs alive as we've shifted our focus to responding to the pandemic.

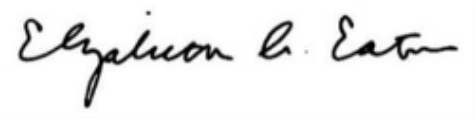
For the generosity of this church through its COVID-19 Response Fund, for the remarkable ways in which we connected to one another, and for the innovative approaches so many of you took to engaging your communities in the gospel, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your ingenuity, and for knowing that God has a plan for us and it's one filled with hope.

As we look to the future, I invite you to dream with me for a moment.

Imagine more people knowing Jesus. Imagine creating communities of love and justice online and in real life. Imagine our online communities and pews filled with new, young and diverse members. Imagine spending more of your time collaborating with others to have a bigger impact in our neighborhoods and in the world.

That is the future I want to build with you. We've all experienced God's ability to see us through challenging times and through new seasons of life. This is an invitation to be part of something that God is doing with and through us. There's never been a better moment to share the way of Jesus and introduce more people to community, justice and love.

In peace,



Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop

Obispo Presidenta Elizabeth Eaton, ELCA

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

"Porque yo sé muy bien los planes que tengo para ustedes —afirma el Señor—, planes de bienestar y no de calamidad, a fin de darles un futuro y una esperanza" (Jeremías 29:11).

En el último año hemos aprendido lo resistentes que somos como iglesia y como pueblo de Dios. Ha sido un tiempo de dolor, pérdida, injusticia e incertidumbre. También ha sido un tiempo para aprender, escuchar y probar cosas nuevas que nos hizo salir de nuestras zonas de comodidad y hacia un mundo más digital. Esta iglesia perseveró de tantas maneras.

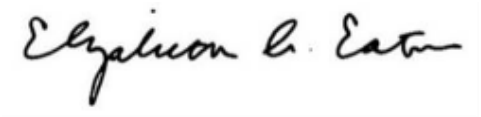
La organización nacional ha estado trabajando junto a todas las expresiones y ministerios de la ELCA y nuestros socios para proporcionar recursos, compartir historias, involucrar a los miembros y mantener vivos nuestros programas a medida que hemos ido cambiando nuestra manera de responder a la pandemia.

Quiero dar gracias por la generosidad de esta iglesia a través de su Fondo de Respuesta al COVID-19, por las extraordinarias maneras de conectarnos unos con otros, y por los métodos innovadores que muchos de ustedes utilizaron para que sus comunidades pudieran participar en el Evangelio. Gracias por su ingenio, y por saber que Dios tiene un plan para nosotros, y que es un plan lleno de esperanza.

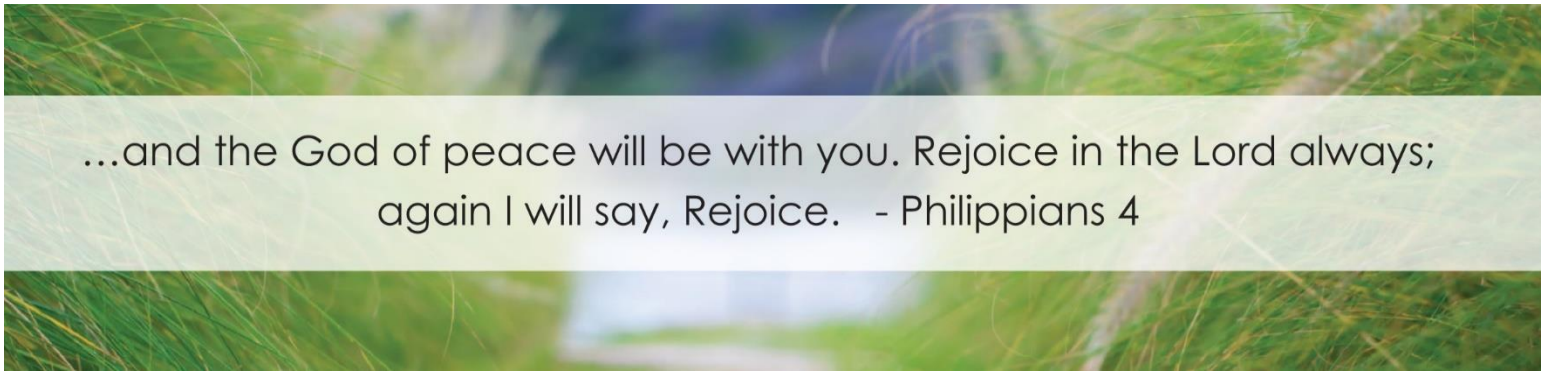
Mientras miramos hacia el futuro, los invito a soñar conmigo por un momento.
Imaginen que más personas conocen a Jesús. Imaginen que creamos comunidades de amor y justicia a través del internet y en la vida real. Imaginen que nuestras comunidades en línea y las bancas de la iglesia están llenas de miembros nuevos, jóvenes y diversos. Imaginen que pasamos más tiempo colaborando con otros para causar un mayor impacto en nuestros vecindarios y en el mundo.

Ese es el futuro que quiero construir con ustedes. Todos hemos experimentado la capacidad de Dios para guiarnos a través de tiempos difíciles y a través de nuevas estaciones de la vida. Esta es una invitación a ser parte de algo que Dios está haciendo con nosotros y a través de nosotros. Nunca ha habido un mejor momento para compartir el camino de Jesús e introducir a más personas a la comunidad, la justicia y el amor.

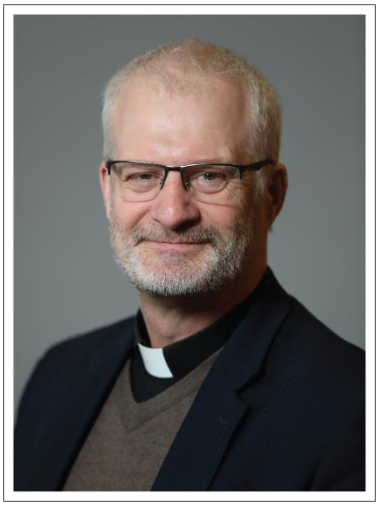
En paz,



Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop



2021 Assembly Report - Bishop Jon Anderson



As our Assembly, the election, and transition in the synod office approaches, this is a good time to remember we can trust God to guide us into God's preferred and promised future. God's Spirit is working to pull us together after the year of COVID-19 separation. God's creating love calls us to focus on the main things and remember God's callings for each of us, our congregations, and our synod. As some things end remember that like pruning opens space for new life and new emphasis, so also God will work in hidden and not so hidden ways to guide us through this time of change and new life.

I will build my closing Assembly report around our vision statement. The text is broken out in the boxes that follow.

Vision Statement

Walking together in Christ's mission the congregations and all the baptized who are the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are claimed by this mission: …

The word *synod* means, "on the road together or walking together". You are all synod ministers, all the baptized. The synod has a staff, a building, and a governance system. But the synod's most powerful expression is all the baptized living out their faith in daily life.

All the baptized ministers gather in communities of faith who have been stressed by our journey through the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been reminded that the church is not a building. Our Christian spirituality is not place-based nor are our communities of faith. We are Christ's disciples who gather at the foot of the cross. We have been reminded in this year that we follow and trust in Jesus to protect and guide us in the hardest seasons of life. We trust God's Spirit who calls us to faith and nurtures us in personal and household faith practices.

God's ongoing creative work has been more visible and obvious as we learned to be synod and congregations and Christians while not able to gather in larger groups. My prayer is that our personal and household forms of faith will continue to flourish as we return to our holy places and can gather in more normal ways as congregations.

I have been so grateful for the work of so many in the past year and years to sustain the faith lives of our people and engage our neighbors in need. God claims us in our baptism. God gives us all gifts to build up our communities of faith and our communities where we live. God decides to love and claim us day after day after day.

God places us in cities, farms, and towns together under one prairie sky.

We live in a time where people often feel like they are underappreciated. We are a synod with many diversities before we talk about the more obvious diversities of race, financial strength, and cultural context. I am thankful for the ministry of our open country, people, and congregations. I am thankful for those who reside in our cities and their ministry. I can see the churches in our towns and know their witness and ministry is strong like their siblings who God has called to serve in other contexts. I am thankful for the rich witness of you all.

The Risen Christ surprises us with opportunities to plant God's Word in the world.

I love to garden and propagate plants. This sentence always sings to me. During this year of COVID-19 my gardening and growing has been one of the things that gave me the most joy. God's grace is surprising. That God can use you, your congregation, our synod to love our neighbors and share the Good News we know through Jesus about God is a sweet surprise. We are called to share, encourage, love, forgive and challenge people to a deeper and wider faith, hope and love. Christ keeps planting.

Walking together in confidence,

Con (with)– fides (faith) With faith, we walk together. The Spirit calls us to faith, sustains our faith and guides us by faith. Our greatest treasure is the Good News we are saved and live by faith alone.

we cultivate life-giving congregations,

We are all called, as synod ministers in our baptism, to cultivate vibrant, life-giving congregational life. I want to express my gratitude to all the leaders in my eighteen years of serving as bishop who were key cultivators. I give thanks to God for presidents, council leaders, staff, pastors, quiet but important leaders who attend to the life of their congregation and encourage neighboring congregations as well.

I am remembering and giving thanks to God for eighteen years of walking together on the road of faith and through this chapter of the synod's history. It has been something. It has been a great challenge and an amazing privilege to serve in this way. May God continue to use you all to build up God's Church.

nurture partner ministries, and

We give thanks for our partners who enhance our mission, develop leaders, and sustain our rostered and lay ministers. We are thankful for our partners like Luther Seminary, Gustavus Adolphus College, Lutheran Social Service, Lutheran Advocacy of Minnesota, Green Lake Lutheran Ministries, Shetek Lutheran Ministries and Shalom Hill Farm. It has been a challenging year for us all.

cooperate in the life of the ELCA.

To speak for those in our synod in the moments of discernment and decision-making in our church body's life has been a rich privilege. I give thanks for our sister synods and the churchwide staff that support our work.

As I conclude my service later this summer, the legal team will be one of many folks who have walked with me (us) through times of serious challenge. Your synod bishop, staff and churchwide governance members like Church Council member, Cherrish Holland, bring your voice to the table.

By God's grace, together we have what we need.

I am confident the coming election process will not only open space for discernment about our coming chapter of synodical life, it will also provoke deep conversation as you call someone to serve as the bishop. I trust that the synod call committee of the Assembly will discern well and call a new synod pastor to walk with you. The staff and governance team of the synod will step forward to support this new leader and their staff team.

Your Synod's Vision Statement:

Embracing God's Mission and Equipping God's People

Equipping Congregations ✝ Engaging Leaders ✝ Enhancing Local and Global Mission.

Your synod office is thankful for your ongoing generosity and support. Your support of your congregation and your larger church has been heroic, noticed and appreciated.

People frequently talk about the synod like the synod is your bishop or the synod staff. I know the truth. It is a team of committed and caring people who each bring their gifts to our shared-life in Christ with a confidence that "together, by God's grace, we have all that we need."

This team also includes our council, deans, conference chair people, committee, task force, and board members. As I looked thorugh our calender for the past year thinking of the journey, deep gratitude washed over me for all the ways God has worked through the faithful to care for God's Church and God's world.

As I prepare to conclude my service as bishop, I need to take a moment to thank all the people who have been part of the synod staff in my watch. I think of the former synod staff that graciously welcomed me and taught me so many things. I will always be grateful for Paul, Larry, Stephanie, Marcus, David. We will try to bless the next team as well.

I want to thank the staff who have served in my early years, middle years, and later years. There is currently a core staff that carries much of the weight. Thanks Tammy Schacher, Sarah Hausken, Kristin Bakeberg, Kathryn Skoglund, Stephen Cook, Dee Pederson, and Maggie Berggren. We have others who help in smaller part-time roles but that make significant contributions - Art Weiss, Dwaine Bruns, Alli Schiller, Stephen Rasmussen, Andy Hermodson-Olsen, Keith Pearson, Kelly France, Donna Ihrke and Keith Klawitter. These teammates have made amazing sacrifices and investments in the life of leaders, congregations, institutions, our synod, our churchwide organization, God's Church and God's World.

I give thanks to God for the work of so many in our synod who are not on the staff but join us as they support lay and rostered ministers, care for congregations in good times and hard and invested themselves in the work of stewarding your synod in many different dimensions of life. I give thanks to God for the ways they have offered up their life energy to serve the Gospel and steward our synod.

I give thanks to God for all of you because you also are synod ministers, too. Thanks for everything you do in Christ's name. May God continue to bless and guide the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

Paul writes…
Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me.
- Philippians 4

Report of the Bishop Election Committee

Bishop Election Committee: Gwen Arneson (Committee Chair), Pat Branstad, Pastor Mike Carlson (until March 2021), Tom Gilbertson (Parliamentarian), Pastor Sue Grinde, Christina Nelson, Ferman Woodberry (Synod Vice President), Synod Staff Liaisons: Tammy Schacher, Pastor Steve Cook.

The Southwestern Minnesota Synod's Bishop Election Committee began their work in earnest in the summer of 2020 as the Synod anticipated an election for Bishop at the 2021 Synod Assembly. (A Bishop Election Task Force appointed by the Synod Council had laid some groundwork for the election process, bringing recommendations to the 2019 Synod Assembly for constitutional revision. Those recommendations were adopted and set in motion the work of the Bishop Election Committee.)

The Bishop Election Committee has met at least monthly since summer, 2020 and has participated in additional synod events for the purpose of broadly sharing information about the election process with the SWMN Synod. Highlights of the Committee's activities include:

- Developed a script and produced an informational video in September 2020 for broad use across the Synod, posted and archived on the Synod website
- Produced a letter that was sent to congregations/congregational presidents in November 2020, describing the election process
- Wrote prayers to be distributed for use in congregational worship services for the weeks leading up to the 2021 Synod Assembly and Bishop Election
- Developed the Bishop Biographical Information Form
- Developed the online Pre-Identification Submission Form
- Developed online Discernment Questions for Congregational Discussions
- Developed a Study Guide to be used by congregations in the pre-identification process
- Worked with a variety of formats for the 2021 Assembly due to uncertainty with COVID concerns (In-person; Totally online in a virtual Assembly; A hybrid mix of in-person and online) *The decision was made by the Assembly Planning Committee and Synod Council to have a Virtual Assembly.
- BEC members Gwen Arneson and Christina Nelson spoke to inform people across the synod at the November 10, 2020 Ministry Basics online event
- Recommended the first Ecclesiastical Ballot (and second ballot) for the Bishop Election be held several days in advance of the remainder of the Synod Assembly weekend in June
- Gwen Arneson interviewed four retired/interim bishops for a Ministry Basics Event on January 25, 2021 for lay leaders and rostered leaders. The four interviewed were: Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, Peter Rogness, Peter Strommen, and Larry Wohlrabe.
- Pr. Mike Carlson and Gwen Arneson interviewed former SWMN Synod Bishops Charles Anderson and Stan Olson as part of a Rostered Leaders Zoom Call on February 9, 2021
- Contacted those who were pre-identified to provide information, ask questions, and give support
- Developed additional questions and a plan for distribution to voting members and the synod, for all those who have been pre-identified prior to Synod Assembly
- Continued to plan for the interviewing of those who have been officially nominated on the Ecclesiastical Ballot on June 6, 2021 so that the voting members will have additional information about the nominees to consider in their discernment.
- Made plans to be on-site at Gustavus Adolphus College for the Synod Assembly to ensure the election process proceeds as smoothly as possible

Please keep the work of the Bishop Election Committee and the work of all behind the scenes at the 2021 Synod Assembly in your prayers as we approach this election for the one who will be called to the ministry of Synod Bishop.

Submitted by Gwen Arneson, Chair of the Bishop Election Committee

Pre-Identified Pastors for Bishop

Individual voting members, congregations, and conferences of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod pre-identified pastors who submitted their biographical information and are open to participate in the bishop election process for our Southwestern Minnesota Synod. These pastors are not automatically nominees for our bishop election, nor are they the only potential nominees for bishop. Their names, as well as any additional names from our voting members, must still be specifically "written in" for consideration on the first ecclesiastical ballot which will be taken on June 6, 2021. After that ecclesiastical ballot, members of the Bishop Election Committee will contact all the pastors whose names appeared on the ballot to ask whether they wish to continue in the election process or wish to withdraw from consideration.

It is the Bishop Election Committee's intent for you to become better acquainted with the pastors who were pre-identified by Individual members, congregations, or conferences, and then submitted their paperwork for the election process. You are encouraged to use these bios (and view the videos provided on our website) to further your discernment. All voting members should use this information, as well as prayer and thoughtful conversation with other members of the church to decide whom they wish to officially nominate on the first ballot.

The biographical information is posted in alphabetical order.

Recognitions for Assembly 2020

We thank the following Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service for their years of faithful and committed service.

They are a gift to Christ's Church.

10th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Andrew Schensted
Rev. Bruce Berg
Rev. Christa Forsythe
Rev. Dale Degner
Rev. Daryl Thul
Rev. Jennifer Thul
Rev. Joseph Midthun
Rev. Lori Wold
Rev. Nita Parker
Rev. Seyward Ask

25th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Audrey Zimmerman
Rev. Cynthia Hopp
Rev. Daniel Belgum
Rev. David Hall
Rev. Doris Weber
Rev. Julius Miller
Rev. Michael Nelson
Rev. Richard Ricker
Rev. Rochelle Anderson
Rev. Timothy Lindhorst
Rev. Todd Nelsen

50th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Harvey Pedersen
Rev. James Gronewold
Rev. Larry Glaeske
Rev. Larry Olson
Rev. Norman Fonss

60th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Alan Schmidt
Rev. Alvin Lewis Jr
Rev. Arlen Stensland
Rev. Charles Anderson

Announced Retirement from Assembly 2019 – June 30, 2020.

Rev. Bruce Berg, Rev. Charlie Stewart, Rev. David Sorensen, Rev. David Tonn, Rev. Gary Andersen, Rev. Greg Hall, Rev. Kathleen Soldwisch, Rev. Steve Olson, Rev. Ted Kunze and Rev. Vicki Toutges.

Recognitions for Assembly 2021

We thank the following Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service for their years of faithful and committed service.

They are a gift to Christ's Church.

10th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. William Miller
Rev. Janel Kuester
Rev. Kathleen Ulland-Klinkner
Rev. Laura Aase
Rev. Mark Kopka
Rev. Nancy Isaacson
Rev. Thomas Evenson

25th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Daniel Croonquist
Rev. Denise Hanson
Rev. Eugene Alms
Rev. Joy Ekstedt
Rev. Katherine Rood
Rev. Kathryn Hartley
Rev. Leonard Hummel
Rev. Mary Hovland
Rev. Roy Williams

50th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Darryl Torrin
Rev. Douglas Olson
Rev. Harvey Nelson
Rev. Robert Dahl

60+ Anniversary of Ordination

Rev. Charles Lindgren (60 years)
Rev. Robert Mader (60 years)
Rev. Alan Schmidt (61 years)
Rev. Alvin Lewis Jr (61 years)
Rev. Arlen Stensland (61 years)
Rev. Charles Anderson (61 years)
Rev. Paul Idstrom (62 years)
Rev. J. David Nelson (62 years)
Rev. Irven Nelson (64 years)
Rev. Paul Dumke (67 years)
Rev. Earl Peterson (68 years)

Announced Retirement from Assembly 2020 – June 30, 2021.

Rev. Joyce Graue, Rev. Bonnie Lomen, Deaconess Deborah Robinson, Rev. Ruth Kaden, Rev. Eric Midthun, Rev. Stephen Seiffert, Rev. LaDonna Ekern, Rev Karla Kirkeby, Rev Randy Chrissis, Rev Art Wiese, Rev Katherine Rood, Rev Stephen Bovendam, and Deacon Donna Jo Kopitzke.

Congregations Leaving a Legacy & Mission

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-4)

+ **Opdahl Lutheran Church, Sacred Heart ~ last service April 21, 2019.**
+ **Jevnaker Lutheran Church, Montevideo ~ last service May 3, 2020.**
+ **Our Saviour's Lutheran, Lake Crystal (Butternut) ~ last service August 31, 2020.**
+ **St. John's Lutheran, Appleton (Holloway) ~ last service September 13, 2020.**

*A Legacy of Hope

When the time came to close their doors and think about their legacy as a congregation, members of Eidskog Lutheran Church, rural Ortonville, MN,, wanted to pass on their assets for the benefit of another congregation. They decided to place an advertisement in the ELCA's magazine, The Lutheran, offering the altar, pulpit, lectern, organ, and pews in addition to other worship and kitchen items.

The ad was noticed by a member of Hope Lutheran Church in River Falls, WI. Hope Lutheran has worshiped as a community for 10 years and was in the process of working on a new building site. Eidskog members offered all items to Hope free of charge – which was gratefully accepted. Hope Lutheran now had everything needed to complete their new building.

When Eidskog Lutheran held their service of closing, some members from Hope traveled to worship with the congregation that Sunday. While members of Eidskog were saddened to have their congregation close, they were happy to share this legacy gift that will be used into the future.

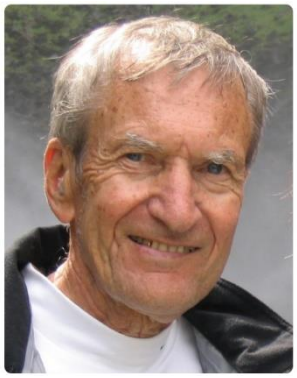
**Eidskog Lutheran was a congregation in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. This story is published in an ELCA resource for closing congregations.*

We Remember ~ 2019-2021

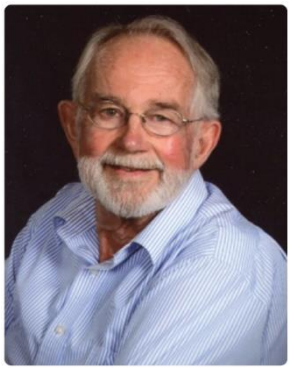
"I thank my God every time I remember you" - Philippians 1:3

Rev. Lester V. Meyer
March 23, 1935 –
June 1, 2019

Rev. Marlyn Sundheim
January 5, 1939 –
October 3, 2019



Rev. Carl J. Listug
April 18, 1937 –
October 24, 2019



Rev. Joseph P. Nystuen
August 6, 1937 –
November 10, 2019

Rev. David J. Webster
September 14, 1941 –
December 21, 2019

Rev. Edward Matthew Groop
October 24, 1936 –
July 10, 2020

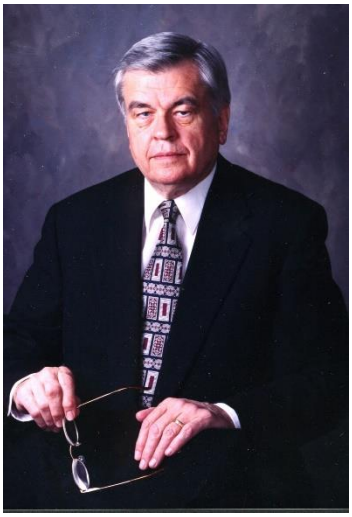
Rev. Norm Shomper
August 15, 1949-
May 20, 2020

Rev. Magnus "Bud" Peterson
November 19, 1931
February 22, 2021

To read full obituaries please go to the pre-assembly book online at www.swmnelca.org/synod-assembly.

Rev. Dr. Darold H. Beekmann

January 12, 1935 – January 13, 2021



Beekmann, Rev. Dr. Darold H. passed away on January 13, one day after his 86th birthday. He was preceded in death by his parents, Jake and Tena Beekmann, his three older siblings, Elmer, Hazel and George, and by his devoted first wife, Marlene Thews Beekmann. He was the beloved husband and Life Partner of his second wife, Gail Coffler; he doted on and was much loved in return by his daughter, Heidi Weippert (John), and his son, Tim Beekmann (Patrick Durkin), and his grandchildren, Nathanial Weippert (Sarah) & Allie Weippert. He was much loved also by his stepdaughter, Janna Coffler, his stepson, Doug Coffler (Kara) and step-granddaughters, Samantha and Jocie Coffler, and by several nieces and nephews.

Reverend Dr. Darold Beekmann was the 11th president of Gettysburg (now United) Lutheran Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, from 1990 to 2000. Rev. Michael Cooper-White, who succeeded Beekmann as president there, recently wrote, "During Darold's tenure, the seminary underwent significant changes, becoming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA's) center for diaconal ministry and expanding community service, particularly through a growing "Music Gettysburg!" concert program. "Under Beekmann's leadership, the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation was formed to preserve the iconic Civil War structures on Seminary Ridge, the site of the famed Battle of Gettysburg. Today's Seminary Ridge Museum traces its roots to the initiatives taken in the Beekmann era." The museum showcases the role played by the Seminary during the Battle, and especially the importance of the Old Dormitory which served as the battlefield hospital for both Union and Confederate wounded.

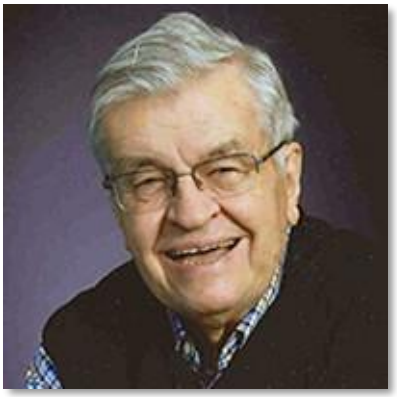
Darold Beekmann, the son of German immigrant tenant farmers, grew up in Pocahontas, Iowa, attended a one-room schoolhouse and lived throughout his school years in a house without indoor plumbing or electricity. He was called to the ministry and graduated from Wartburg College and Wartburg Lutheran Seminary, both in Iowa, and did advanced studies at Heidelberg University in Germany and Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

He was ordained a Lutheran minister in 1964 and considered himself first and foremost, a pastor. He served congregations in Colorado and Minnesota, was assistant to the bishop in Willmar and then was twice elected bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. It was in his second term as bishop that Darold was called to the presidency at Gettysburg Seminary, where he and Marlene lived in the president's house on the battlefield, on Seminary Ridge for ten years.

After his retirement in 2000, Darold and Marlene moved to Minneapolis to be near their children and grandchildren. Beekmann's successor, Rev. Cooper-White, went on to say, "It was a privilege to succeed Darold Beekmann at Gettysburg Seminary. Ever the gentleman and churchman extraordinaire, he was uncommonly graceful.... Each time I visited him following his retirement, I came away feeling uplifted and enlightened." Darold received an honorary doctorate from Wartburg College where he served on the Board of Trustees.

After the death of his first wife, Darold later married Gail Coffler in a small ceremony at ECLC church and together they enjoyed several fulfilling years of international and domestic travel, church programs near and far, and the full cultural life offered by the Twin Cities. They also continued Darold's relationship with the Lutheran Church in El Salvador, which Darold had visited several times, including a harrowing stay during their Civil War when he helped give amnesty to the Lutheran bishop and established a lasting friendship with him. The Presiding Bishop of El Salvador, Medardo Gomez, recently wrote of his special affection for Darold Beekmann "for being one of the people who accompanied my people and my church.... His footprints as a servant of God are planted in our history."

Condolences have poured in. Mark Hanson, former Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, expressed his "abiding gratitude for Darold--his theological wisdom, his intellectual curiosity, his passion for a just, inclusive world, his listening and his humility." A person of patient, steadfast, diplomatic character, Darold was highly regarded for his skills at conflict resolution. In retirement, he remained active in mentoring younger clergy. "Strong, loving, and wise...that was Darold. And he was truly valiant in enduring the health issues of these last years," said his wife, Gail. A private family service has been held. A church service and celebration of Life will be held later in the spring. Memorials could be given in his name to Gettysburg Seminary (now called United Seminary), to Edina Community Lutheran Church, to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, or to a charity or project of one's own choice.



"We give thanks to God for the life and witness of the first bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. God claimed Darold in his baptism and we trust in the promises of our resurrecting Lord Jesus which he proclaimed in his life and ministries. We are thankful for his careful and deep stewardship of the Gospel in his ministry here in this territory and also at Gettysburg Seminary where he served as President following his service as this synod's first bishop."
- Bishop Jon V. Anderson

Gratitude and Appreciation

If you made it this far in our Pre-Assembly Book, we are thankful for you! And even if you did not, we are still thankful for you! This Assembly would not have been possible without you! It takes ALL OF US, after all!

Thank you…. To all the voting members (pastors & lay members) of this Assembly for your participation and patience as we worked through a new way of coming together!

Thank you… to all our shared ministries who took the time to make videos for us to lift up their special gifts!

Thank you… to all the congregation secretaries and staff who contacted us and worked with us to get your voting members registered and set up to attend our Assembly.

Thank you…to all the Pre-Identified Pastors and other nominees for Bishop… for prayerfully considering to allow your name to go forward as Bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. Thank you for your grace and patience as we all learned this new process.

Thank you… to the Bishop Election Committee… (Gwen Arneson, Tom Gilbertson, Christina Nelson, Pat Branstad, Ferman Woodberry, Sue Grinde and earlier, Mike Carlson)… for all of your hard work and dedication to this process.

Thank you… to the Assembly Planning Team… (Rachel Rundquist, Matt Philaya, Erin Kuehl, Lisa Meshke, Curtis Ghylin, Ron Johnson, Heidi Hagstrom, Myron Crawford)… for all your thoughtful planning and dedication to this Assembly! Your hard work, time, and patience did not go un-noticed!

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With Gratitude,

Tammy Schacher
Synod Assembly Manager