



**Living in God's
Amazing Grace**

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Metro D.C. Synod Assembly
Roanoke College • Salem, Virginia
June 8-10, 2006

Synod Assembly Wrap-Up 2006

METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD

Living in God's Amazing Grace

Over 300 voting members and visitors from the Metro D.C. Synod gathered at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia for the 2006 Synod Assembly. The Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the synod. Many traveled routes south taking them along the awe-inspiring Blue Ridge Mountains, with both sun and cloud bursts to greet them. Together they worshiped, conducted business, attended workshops, feasted and conversed; sharing knowledge and inspiration, building relationships and shaping the ministry of the synod for the year to come.



Our numbers grew as the Metro D.C. Synod convened on the lovely grounds of Roanoke College.

Many Resolutions Adopted

Business was brisk in sessions addressing several areas of synod ministry. The following resolutions were adopted by official action of the assembly.

- X *Campus Ministry* - This resolution raises awareness of the presence of Lutheran Campus Ministry and calls for celebration of the centennial of its existence in 2007.
- X *Communication within the Churchwide Structure* - Our synod expressed appreciation through this resolution for collegiality, professionalism and support our synod has experienced when interacting with various churchwide entities.
- X *Expression of Thanks and Gratitude* - This tradition action acknowledges the contributions of many who prepare and orches-

trate the assembly event.

- X *Greetings* - In a traditional action, the 12 synods holding assemblies in the overlapping period as Metro D.C. are greeted.
- X *Hunger-Free Communities Act* - Bishop Schneider was directed to write in support of this hunger reducing and eliminating legislation being considered by both houses of Congress and encourages like letter-writing by congregations and their members.
- X *Immigration* - The bishop, synod clergy and laity, the presiding bishop and ELCA Church Council are encouraged to express strong opposition to heightened criminal penalties against unauthorized aliens and those who minister with them

and strong support for just legislative consideration of immigration reform.

- X *Memorial to Amend "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline" and "Visions and Expectations"* - Language in both documents precluding "practicing homosexual persons" from ordained ministry in the ELCA is suggested for removal in contemplation of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly in this resolution.
- X *Millennium Development Goals* - The set of eight international development goals combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women known as the Millennium Development Goals are affirmed in this resolution as is synod member participation in

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Luther's Educated Citizen Yesterday and Today

A primer on Luther's understanding of education became an energizing call to realize our freedom and support the purposeful higher education institutions of the ELCA in the keynote address of Sabine U. O'Hara, president, Roanoke College. "For Luther, the reformation of the church and the reformation of the education system were inseparably linked," said O'Hara. "To be the priesthood of all believers, people needed to be knowledgeable..."

In her address, O'Hara observed, "[T]he educated citizens that Luther describes have one key characteristic: they are active citizens who use their education not simply as a spring board for personal success, but they use their education to advance society and the common good." She

quoted Luther's writing: *A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.* "Freedom for Luther is clearly freedom from – freedom from fear, freedom from oppression, freedom from limiting mindsets of traditions, customs and superstitions; but it is also freedom for – freedom for service, for the community for the advancement and welfare of all. Only when it finds its expression in service is freedom truly real-

ized," she said.

O'Hara expressed excitement about the education of young men and women at Roanoke College. "[I]t is when you see that spark, when you see them find their passion, when they are set free to find their own voice – it is then that we remember again and again why we are committed to our vocation as educators in a liberal arts college," she said. Roanoke College's mission reflects education according to Lutheran ideals.



Dr. Sabine U. O'Hara, president, Roanoke Col-

"Lutherans hold worship and work together — we don't separate Sunday from Monday."

• **Stanley N. Olson**

Churchwide Representative Reflects on Vocation

The Rev. Stanley N. Olson, Executive Director for Vocation and Education, attended the Metro D.C. Synod Assembly as our representative from the churchwide expression of the ELCA. In this capacity, he brought greetings and presented video from the ELCA's presiding bishop, the Rev. Mark S. Hanson (available from www.elca.org).

On our final meeting day, Olson shared an interactive address on *The Vocations We all Have: A Lutheran View* (full text at www.metrodcelca.org). "Luther said to every Christian, 'How can it be that you are not

called...?' You don't have to leave your work, you don't have to give up marriage and family life and enter a monastery to live a God-pleasing life. You are called, Luther said, where you are – in the places you occupy and those you may occupy – and you respond to opportunity and need," summarized Olson. "Lutherans hold worship and work together – we don't separate Sunday from Monday. We don't treat one as more important than the other to God."

Olson summarized our diverse responsibilities as Christians with what he called a cate-

chetical statement: Because of Christ, the world; because of the world, vocation; and because of vocation, education. "My friends, each of you is called. In the many roles of your life, you have the privilege of pleasing God . . . Christ is present in your being, your doing, your learning."



The emblem of the ELCA is a stylized globe with a cross, "a fitting emblem for our understanding of Christ's work — it is of the world and for the world," said Olson.

the related "ONE Lutheran Campaign."

X *Namibian Lutheran Churches* - Building on existing Companion Synod relationships with Lutheran Church bod-

ies in Namibia, the synod will now be in formal relationship with the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia and encourage movement to-

ward unity among our Companion Synods in Namibia.

X *Outdoor Ministries* - Increased

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Accomplishments in Ministry Recognized

Several milestones in ministry were recognized at this year's event as Bishop Schneider presented plaques and called for applause for the accomplished recipients.

- ✦ The Rev. Franklin G. Senger, III - 55 years of ordained ministry
 - ✦ The Rev. George E. Handley - 50 years of ordained ministry
 - ✦ Ms. Alfreda Rulis, Associate in Ministry - 30 years of consecrated ministry
 - ✦ The Rev. Craig M. Endicott - 25 years of ordained ministry
- Three synod congregations

marked 50 years of ministry in 2006. These are:

- ✦ Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Vienna
- ✦ Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, McLean
- ✦ Trinity Lutheran Church, North Bethesda

Emmanuel Lutheran gathered an anniversary offering to celebrate their landmark, presenting part of it to the synod for seeding a Loudon County Mission.

The Lutheran Theology Seminary at Philadelphia forwarded their Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Medal to the assembly to present to:



Ms. Alfreda Rulis is recognized for 30 years

- ✦ The Rev. George Evans for exemplary congregational ministry. Evans has retired from parish ministry at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in McLean. Bishop Schneider placed the ribbon medallion on Evans.

Elections Held for Synod Leadership

Several positions of synod leadership were filled following assembly elections.

- ✓ *Secretary* - The Rev. Mark Olsen

Pr. Olsen will succeed the Rev. Ivan Ives, who was acknowledged with a standing ovation following his report to the Assembly. "Ivan Ives brings the institutional memory of so many years in the life of the Synod," said Bishop Schneider. "This synod is profoundly indebted to you."

- ✓ *Synod Council* - D.C. Conference: the Rev. Renate Eustis, Philip Moeller; Fairfax Conference: Harold Sargeant; Maryland Conference: The Rev. Elizabeth Platz; Montgomery Conference: Kevin Anderson; Potomac Conference: Philip Soucy; Virginia Conference: The Rev. Tiffany Towberman; At-Large: Shirley Gibbs, Robert Joppa; Women's Organization: Marcia Ihnen; Youth Organization: Christopher

Rick

- ✓ *Consultation Committee* - Clergy: The Rev. Jane Halpern, the Rev. Thomas O'Brien; Lay: Judith Baker
- ✓ *Voting Members to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly* - Clergy: The Rev. Scott McAnally, Bishop Schneider (ex officio), the Rev. Darcy Tillman; Lay: Lorna Abernathy, Kevin D. Anderson, Robert Joppa, Ruth Manchester, Tommie Robinson (ex officio as vice president)

Regional Realities Reflected in New Compensation Guide

The structure of the synod's Compensation Guidelines for rostered leaders received an overhaul by a Blue Ribbon Task Force formed in response to action generated by the 2005 Metro D.C. Synod Assembly. The high cost of housing in our territory was a primary factor in defining this need.

The 2006 Assembly adopted the revised compensation guide developed by the Task Force and praised the thoroughness of their work. This document can be found at www.metrodcelca.org.

Premises behind the new guidelines are: experience is val-

ued, leaders of large churches have increased responsibilities, pastors should live close to the churches they serve, lifelong learning should be encouraged, long-term pastorates are associated with congregational growth, and relevant prior experiences can help. Rostered lay guidelines follow similar principles.

**[S]trengthen us all
in our Christian
vocation of witness
to the world and of
service to others.
• from Prayer of
Installation**

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Worship Invites Spirit in Our Life Together

**“We must be a
Pentecostal Church!
(My Lord! I never
thought I would
hear myself say that
about Lutherans!)”
• Bishop Schneider**

The 2006 Synod Assembly gathered for an Opening Eucharist at St. Andrew’s Catholic Church high on a hill in Roanoke on our first night together. Song and prayer resonated beneath the cathedral’s vaulted ceiling. Bishop Schneider used lessons including John 7:27-29 for his sermon, exploring *The Spirit: A Presence and a Player* (full text at www.metrodcelca.org).

“Just as the Spirit has been a presence and a player in every age, that Spirit must be present in this church, this synod . . . gusting freely and powerfully and flaming brightly in the ardor of our people,” Schneider preached.

“We must be a Pentecostal Church! (My Lord! I never thought I would hear myself say that about Lutherans!)” he continued. “[T]hat’s the crying need for this Church . . . the power of the Spirit of wind and fire that turns those who say they believe from *believers* to *disciples* who are ready to proclaim to any and to all the Good News of what it means to be ‘Living in God’s Amazing Grace.’”

Specifically, Schneider called on the synod together in the Spirit to be 1) a church in prayer for the renewal and increase of the gifts of the



Busses brought assembly participants to St. Andrew’s Catholic Church for the Opening Eucharist.

spirit; 2) a transformed and welcoming church; 3) caring for our rostered leaders; 4) welcoming congregations in a welcoming synod. Worshipers joined Schneider in gently singing a verse of “Spirit of the Living God, Fall Fresh On Me” before the sermon concluded.

use of the fine outdoor facilities of Mar-Lu-Ridge and Caroline Furnace by synod programs, congregations and members is encouraged with this resolution.

- X *Pastoral Care for Gay and Lesbian Persons in our Synod* - Thankfulness was expressed for the synod’s receipt of gifts from all

people, “including the gay and lesbian persons among us.”

- X *Peace in Darfur* - The desperate humanitarian situation in Darfur is highlighted in this resolution which encourages various specific communications by the bishop and synod members re actions designed to encourage solving the situation.
- X *Service of Partnered Gay and Lesbian Persons in Rostered Ministry* - In amended language, the assembly “encourages restraint” in the administration of policies applicable only to

gay and lesbian rostered persons.

- X *Stewardship* - A goal of 10% synodical benevolence was set with this resolution to support programs and ministries of the synod.
- X *Synod Ministry Audit* - In anticipation of the election for synod bishop in 2007, this resolution calls for an ELCA Offices of Research and Evaluation- and Synodical Relations-led process to reflect on leadership needs in our synod.

See full resolution texts at www.metrodcelca.org.