2010 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

FALL SESSION: SEPTEMBER 25
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND

FALL SESSION SUMMARY

Report of the Bishop

We are in a time of great transition and change," stated the Rev. Richard H. Graham, bishop, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, although he indicated that he didn't think that was new news to the nearly 300 people gathered for the Fall Session of the 2010 Metro D.C. Synod Assembly ("the Assembly"). "Things are changing rapidly in the outside world and maybe even more rapidly in our beloved congregations and our synod and our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Some of the changes are truly huge, and they will take [for most of us] our lifetimes to resolve. We are in a time when the whole concept of what it means to be a Christian community in a country like this is being examined and reexamined, and talked about and talked about again. There's no point any more – as if indeed there ever was – in taking for granted what it means to be a Christian; certainly no point in taking for granted what it means to be a Lutheran Christian.

"And most of us are busily trying to decide how to get from 'Here I stand,' to 'Here we go.' We're trying to figure out how to use the things that are precious and important to us out of our particular style of Christian witness as Lutherans... and carry them into the future and yet not miss this particular moment."

The theme of huge changes resonated as the synod explored "The Year of the Young Adult." Bishop Graham also noted some things he deemed middle-size and small-size adjustments before us. In the latter categories:

- The synod office is going to move.
- Gifts of Hope and the United Lutheran Appeal, both synod initiatives, are merging. A catalog of gift-giving opportunities through Gifts of Hope was distributed at the Assembly.
- Rostered leaders new to the synod were introduced.

Using a lacrosse sports analogy, Bishop Graham said when what is expected of you is unknown, "you have to trust the people around you and trust your instincts, and take a risk sometimes. I want us to play well in transition. I want us to find in the fluidity of these present moments a deeper way to trust God."

Mission Spending Plan

The Assembly adopted a Mission Spending Plan (MSP) for 2011, which stewards just over $2 million. A significant change from prior years is a reduction to 50 percent from 55 percent of our income shared with churchwide ministries. "We

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didn't come to 50 just by splitting the difference between 45 [discussed in spring] and 55," said Bishop Graham of the MSP. "We had a real desire to support the ELCA as much as we possibly could." The adopted MSP is online.

After adoption of the MSP, Bishop Graham announced supplemental pledges of support for churchwide ministries from two synod congregations and a pastor, including $2,400 from Augustana. The additional funds were pledged "to demonstrate as we wrestle with new financial realities" that the synod is not expressing "anger, distress or dissatisfaction" but remains "proud members of the ELCA."

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Greetings from Namibia

Pastor Sylvia Shiwa Heita, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, brought greetings to the Assembly as she visited here from our Companion Synod. "I have been elected and sent by my church... to visit, to learn from one another, and to empower one another," she said. Pastor Heita works in the northern part of Namibia near the border of Angola.

Reminder from MEWG

Members of the synod's Middle East Working Group (MEWG) followed up on a resolution adopted in spring encouraging congregational discussion of the Kairos Palestine Document. The Rev. Paul Wee said the document, which is linked from www.metrodcelca.org, is written "from one Christian community to antoher" and gives us an opportunity to "listen to concerns of brothers and sisters in another part of the world" to which we can respond.

Melissa Graves of LSS/NCA invites all in the synod to "Compassion Walks."

Invitation from LSS/NCA

"We are good at sharing with people in need," said Melissa Graves, Executive Director, Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSS/NCA), but are "not so good at telling the story." To explore the impact of our legacy of service and grace and advance our ability to share the mission, she invited visitors to "Compassion Walks" at the LSS/NCA's northern Virginia office.

Dr. Rodger Nishioka helped us look at ministry with and to young adults.

Keynote Address

Calling on his academic expertise and experience as a professor and pastor, Dr. Rodger Y. Nishioka helped us expand our understanding of the theme of the Assembly, "Year of the Young Adult." Nishioka is Benton Family Associate Professor of Christian Education, Columbia Theological Seminary. Chock full of background and fresh ideas, video of Nishioka's morning keynote, "Stewardship and Young Adults," and afternoon address, "What Are Young Adults Seeking and How Do We Respond?" are available on www.metrodcelca.org. “We have young adults around us who are yearning for belonging and community, ethical vitality and integrity, theological vitality and integrity,” Nishioka concluded. “I'm not

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worried about us. May you and I have the courage and wisdom for the living of these days to respond as the Holy Spirit coaxes us, nudges us, cajoles us, sometimes works in spite of us, so that people may know Jesus lives. "

Workshops

Hallways buzzed as participants took boxed lunches with them to hear from various presenters. Topics included "Best Practices for Financial Stewardship," "Theological Education at the Crossroads," "Young Adults in Global Mission," and an opportunity to talk over the proposed Mission Spending Plan.

Elections

Synod leaders elected by the Assembly in Fall Session are:

Synod Council Members

- Fairfax Conference (clergy) – the Rev. John Bradford
- Maryland Conference (lay) - Margretta Williams

Synod Consultation Committee Members

- Clergy – the Rev. Carmelo Santos
- Clergy – the Rev. Paul Opsahl
- Lay – Sheila Bell
- Lay - Pamela Olson
- Lay - Wayne Ralston

The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli preached at closing worship. Find video online.

Ministry Milestones

Congregations recognized for celebrating anniversaries:

50th - Fellowship Square Foundation

75th - Christ, Bethesda

125th - Our Redeemer, D.C., which claims to be the oldest African American Lutheran church in the U.S., Bishop Graham noted

Rostered leaders:

25 years -	Ms. Mitzi Budde, AIM
	The Rev. Michael Kuchinsky
30 Years -	The Rev. Kimber Erno
35 Years -	The Rev. Thomas Omholt
	The Rev. Scott Ickert
40 Years -	The Rev. Thomas White

Two opportunities to participate in workshops took place in the Fall Session.

	The Rev. Elizabeth Platz
	The Rev. Michael Taylor
	The Rev. Paul Gysan
	The Rev. Thomas Andersen
	The Rev. Peter Bastien
45 Years -	The Rev. Ronald Christian
	The Rev. William Perry
	The Rev. M Gregory Shannon Jr
50 Years -	The Rev. Donald Piper
55 Years -	The Rev. Raymond Hartzell
	The Rev. Johnnie Glad
	The Rev. William Ridenhour
60 Years -	The Rev. Louis Almen
65 Years -	The Rev. Bertram Gilbert
	The Rev. John Muller
	The Rev. Ross Trower

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The landmark ordination of the Rev. Elizabeth Platz was marked with this gift.

In a special presentation, representatives of rostered women in the synod marked the 40th anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. Elizabeth Platz by presenting a chalice and paten handcrafted by the Rev. Sarah Scherschligt. Chaplain Platz was the first woman ordained in the Lutheran tradition. "You've been an inspiration for many of us. We thank you for paving the way," read a note accompanying the gift. During the closing worship service, Chaplain Platz used the gift while presiding at Holy Communion.

Looking Ahead to 2011

Mark the dates of the 2011 Metro D.C. Synod Assembly on your calendars. We will again meet in two parts: Spring Session on May 6-7 at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia; and Fall Session on September 24 at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in McLean, Virginia. The theme will be: “To See Ourselves as Others Do.”

Find videos, photos, blog posts and other information from the Fall Session at www.metrodcelca.org.

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God's work. Our hands.