



2017 SYNOD ASSEMBLY WRAP UP

Metro D.C. Synod Assembly • June 16-17, 2017

We are more connected yet feel more disconnected than ever. “God has something to say about that. We’ve work to do,” said the Rev. Phil Hirsch, our synod’s Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop, when introducing a concerted campaign in our synod during assembly to make New Connections. With the theme of “Freed in Christ, Bound by Love,” we enthusiastically accepted not only a vision for reaching new neighbors but also inspiration from a new Swahili-speaking Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC), a talk by Dr. Reggie Williams drawing from his insights on Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s encounter with the Harlem Renaissance, resolution to use our constitutions to clarify insistent welcome to all, and much more. Having the ELCA presiding bishop preach, informally share meals, and adeptly engage us in Q&A was the cherry on the sundae.

Here are some specifics describing how the approximately 270 people gathered spent our time together at the 2017 Synod Assembly at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia.

WORSHIP

A Synod Assembly may constitutionally be our “highest legislative authority,” but we center our time together in worship. Opening and closing worship framed the agenda, with a Holy Communion Service on our first evening together, enhanced by hearty congregational singing and ethereal musicians. Sermons by Bishop Richard Graham and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton can be viewed on the synod YouTube site (www.youtube.com/user/metrodcsynod).

NEW CONNECTIONS

With pilot congregations, early financial commitments and poised mentors, the synod’s New Connections Campaign has hit full launch. The communities and people our synod serves are among the most diverse areas in the country, and the opportunities to live out our faith are significant. We aim to connect 3,000 new people—a 10% growth across our synod—to engage in the ministry in our existing congregations.

To further God’s work beyond our synod a tithe from New Connections fundraising will be directed to the Campaign for the ELCA. Presiding Bishop Eaton was presented the first such check for \$10,698.

Use the new website, www.newconnectionsmetrodc.com, to see introductory campaign videos in English and Spanish and to see the debuted “Ministry Moment” videos that give a taste of what’s happening which were shown on site.

REPORTS

Nicknamed “BORE” in some synods (Book of Reports), reflections – print, verbal and video – were far from boring at this year’s Synod Assembly. Grieving and being hopeful were touched on in Bishop Graham’s written reflections (find his with the written reports at <https://metrodcelca.org/events/synod-assembly/2017-synod-assembly-materials/>) and from the podium. We heard about the shaping of the United Lutheran Seminary, a theological school combining Gettysburg Seminary and Philadelphia Seminary; Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area’s inspiring work; transformative ministry with the Community of St. Dysmas and more. Link to shown video presentations from a



“From the Floor” blog posting -
<https://metrocelca.org/category/17synasmblog/>

POCKETBOOK ACTIONS

Among decisions made by Voting Members were adjusted 2018 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and a 2018 Mission Spending Plan (MSP). Both documents, including table and narrative forms of the MSP, are found under the “For Congregations” tab on the synod website. The MSP indicates generous giving by congregations will likely exceed \$1.6M, stewarded in support of our collective work of the Gospel.

SPECIAL GUEST

At the invitation of the Racial Equity Team, a stimulating, image-rich presentation by Dr. Reggie Williams, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics at McCormick Theological Seminary, invited reflections on themes from Dr. Williams’ book, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance*. Warm and insightful, Dr. Williams did not let a significantly delayed flight slight his presentation to us. Find his talk and most of the Q&A time in video from www.youtube.com/user/metrodcsynod.

RESOLUTIONS/MEMORIALS

Five Resolutions/Memorials were adopted this year: Greetings to Other ELCA Synods Meeting in Assembly; Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Gifts of Hope Program gratitude; Membership in ELCA Congregations; Special Expression of Thanks and Gratitude for Dr. John White; and Expression of Thanks and Gratitude for Synod Assembly key participants. Find exact texts in the “From the Floor” blog post -
<https://metrocelca.org/category/17synasmblog/> .

ELECTED LEADERSHIP

Among leaders concluding their service in elected synod roles were the Rev. Tom Knoll, treasurer,

and Dr. John White, vice president. Appreciation was expressed on the dais to both.

After installation at our closing worship service, our synod has two new officers. Evelyn Crenshaw of Hope Lutheran in Clinton, Maryland, is our Vice President; and Julie Hamre of Luther Place Memorial in D.C. is our Treasurer. Also joining our Synod Council are the following elected members: D.C. Conference Lay Rep Michael Sonnenberg, Fairfax Conference Clergy Rep the Rev. Albert Triolo, Maryland Conference Clergy Rep the Rev. Gary Rhinesmith, Montgomery Conference Clergy Rep the Rev. Sarah Lewis, Potomac Conference Clergy Rep the Rev. Robert L. Lewis, Jr., Virginia Conference Lay Rep Barbara Bilodeau, At-Large Rep Paul Culler, At-Large Rep the Rev. Elijah Mwitanti, and Youth/Young Adult Rep Samuel S.

PLUS

Not nearly everything can be covered by this overview. Fascinating displays, affirming interfaith and ecumenical guests, Reformation anniversary opportunities, even healthy snacks and perhaps the best mac and cheese in the area come to mind. Ask someone who was there for their impressions!

Around Synod Assembly – and year-round – learn more about synod ministry on Facebook, Twitter, our Flickr photo stream (jump there from pics on the metrocelca.org home page), YouTube Channel, blogs or even call. We are glad to be “Freed in Christ, Bound by Love” in the Metro D.C. Synod.