

Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod

# MINUTES of the 2013 Synod Assembly

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

June 21-22, 2013

“Praying, Discerning, Renewing”

National Conference Center

Leesburg, Virginia



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### Introductory Activity

Prior to the Opening of the Synod Assembly, a Synod Council meeting was conducted. Amy Acland organized Registration. An Orientation for New Voting Members was conducted by Mr. Richard Ahlberg, Synod Assembly Parliamentarian, and the Rev. Doug Jones, Synod Assembly Chair. Training was also conducted for Worship Assistants in advance of the Festive Eucharist.

**PLENARY SESSION I  
FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2013  
National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

### Opening of Assembly

Bishop Richard Graham opened the Synod Assembly and called on the Rev. Kate Davidson, Worship Chair, to lead the Synod Assembly in devotions.

### Report of the Registrar

Present:	Lay Voting Members	145
	Rostered Voting Members	<u>82</u>
	Total Voting Members	227
	Visitors	16

**MOTION SA 13.06.01** to seat the Voting Members was adopted.

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### Reading of Excused Absences of Rostered Leaders

The Rev. Dean Anderson	The Rev. Myron Barbour
The Rev. Mark Blice-Baum	The Rev. John Bradford
The Rev. Bruce Burslie	The Rev. Roger Dahlin
The Rev. Harold Deal	The Rev. Wendy Deeben
The Rev. Nancy Eggert	The Rev. Brian Erickson
The Rev. Catherine Feil	The Rev. Gregory Gaertner
Ms. Kathy Garrison (Diaconal Minister)	The Rev. Sherman Hicks
The Rev. Lisa Hufford	The Rev. Wollom Jensen
The Rev. Stephanie Johnson	The Rev. Mary Kieser
The Rev. Michael Kuchinsky	The Rev. Chandra Sundram Lite
The Rev. Daniel Martenson	The Rev. John Muller
The Rev. Tom Omholt	The Rev. Geraldine Opsahl
The Rev. Paul Opsahl	Mr. Jeffrey Pannebaker (AIM)
Ms. Linda Pannebaker (AIM)	The Rev. Gary Rhinesmith
The Rev. Lee Ann Schray	The Rev. Lowell Schuetze
The Rev.. Ross Trower	The Rev. Susan Tyykila

## **2013 Synod Assembly Rules of Procedure**

01. To the extent consistent with the following rules of procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern.

### Voice and vote

02. All persons under call, on leave from call, and retired on the roster of this Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, in attendance at this assembly, shall have voice and vote at the proceedings of this assembly. All interim pastors serving congregations of this synod, at the time of the assembly, shall have voice and vote.

03. Alternate lay members shall be seated if the regular lay members are unable to serve.

04. Persons giving reports during this assembly's proceedings who are not members shall be given voice, no vote, during that portion of the assembly.

05. The parliamentarian appointed by the Synod Council shall be given voice, no vote (unless a member) during the proceedings of this assembly.

06. The Presiding Bishop, or his or her representative(s), and ecumenical representatives shall be given voice, no vote during the proceedings of this assembly.

07. Duly elected and serving members of the Synod Council shall have both voice and vote at the synod assembly, in accordance with S7.28 of the constitution of the synod.

### Quorum

08. One-half (1/2) of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

### Proxy

09. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.

### Items of Business

10. With the consent of this assembly, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order is deemed by the chair most expedient for the conduct of assembly business. The chair shall limit discussions to items germane to the issues before the assembly.

### Resolutions

11. Resolutions to be considered by the assembly shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod prior to the beginning of the assembly. In order to assure the resolution going to the floor of this assembly, such resolutions shall be presented in writing to the secretary, who shall refer them to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall report to this assembly with its recommendations; which shall constitute a motion to the floor of this assembly.

12. The deadline for submitting resolutions to the Secretary of this Synod will be 30 days prior to the first day of the Assembly. Any resolutions submitted after this date are not guaranteed a place on the agenda and must receive a two-thirds vote in order to be heard. Any resolution not receiving a two-thirds vote will be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.

13. Multimedia presentations will not be part of floor debate on resolutions.

#### Motions

14. All main motions, to be made, shall be in writing and presented to the Secretary of the Synod immediately (Constitution and Bylaw amendments require five (5) signatures of members).

15. Debate shall be limited to two (2) minutes per person, per speech.

#### Elections

16. Ballots shall be accepted only from those members who are seated within designated areas of the assembly hall.

17. Nominations from the floor shall be accompanied by the copy-ready vita, consent of the person to be nominated, both to be submitted to the secretary at the time of the nomination.

#### Election of the Bishop

18. Speeches by candidates for the office of Bishop, prior to the fourth ballot, shall be limited to seven (7) minutes per candidate.

#### Minutes

19. Minutes of this assembly shall be available for review by Synod Council by the following September 30th.

#### Committee on Reference and Counsel

20. The work of the Committee on Reference and Counsel will be guided by Synod Policy 2-02.

#### Applications for Displays

21. The Assembly Planning Committee shall determine the amount of space available for displays at each assembly site, year by year, and shall determine the fees charged for displays that are and are not directly related to the offices and divisions of this synod in coordination with the Synod Council.

Applications will be reviewed by the planning committee for content of display and how it relates to the Synod Assembly theme. Permission or license for displays at each assembly shall be given in light of the following priorities:

*First Priority: Synod divisions and offices.*

*Second Priority: Agencies and ministries directly affiliated with this synod, its congregations and/or the ELCA, including Augsburg/Fortress.*

*Third Priority: Independent organizations, services, or ministries related or useful to the ministry of this church (e.g. church fund raising organizations, ecclesiastical arts agencies).*

*In principle, display authorization at this synod's assemblies shall always be considered a privilege and shall never be considered a right of any organization not officially affiliated with this synod and/or the ELCA.*

*In accord with available "third party space," the Assembly Planning Committee shall choose as many as seems appropriate from among the applicants.*

*Organizations whose prior behavior or whose styles of ministry are thought to be or have been demonstrated to be demeaning of persons of differing viewpoints as to their worth as individuals, or their worthiness to hear the Gospel or to live in community with other believers, shall not be permitted the privilege of display at assemblies of this synod. Decisions of the Assembly Planning Committee in this regard are considered final.*

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**MOTION SA 13.06.02** approved the Registrar's Report, Synod Assembly Agenda, excused absences of rostered leaders and the Rules of Procedure.

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### **2012 Minutes**

**MOTION: SA 13.06.03** approved the Minutes of the 2012 Synod Assembly.

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### **Reception of Oromo Resurrection Evangelical Church**

The Rev. Philip Hirsch, Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, told the story of Resurrection Evangelical Church which, in Closing as an Act of Mission, passed on their building to the Oromo Resurrection Evangelical Church. The Oromo Resurrection Evangelical Church is filled to capacity on Sundays. Worshippers flow into the narthex. Currently, the Oromo Resurrection Evangelical Church is seeking to birth a new ministry. A choir from the congregation shared the gift of a song with the Synod Assembly.

The Synod Assembly received the Oromo Resurrection Evangelical Church as a congregation of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod by acclamation.

### **Introduction of Ecumenical Guests**

- The Rev. Jenee' Gilchrist brought greetings from the Virginia Council of Churches
- The Rev. Tom Andrews brought greetings from the Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Washington
- The Rev. Ralph Wiechmann brought greetings from the Rev. Dr. Jon Denninger, President, Southeastern District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

- The Rev. Dr. Christopher Agnew brought greetings from the Rt. Rev. Shannon Sherwood Johnston, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Virginia

### **Report of ELCA Churchwide Representative**

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, greeted the Synod Assembly in the name of the risen Christ. He presented greetings from the more than 10,000 congregations of the ELCA.

Presiding Bishop Hanson began by posing the question: "How is your soul?" He pointed out that to speak about the state of the church depends on the state of each individual in the ELCA. He then asked us to consider what we expected the Holy Spirit to do. He wondered if the ELCA has become a church of low expectations and observed that we may have become a church of low expectations and high anxiety. More strongly, however, he asserted that the Holy Spirit is writing a new chapter in the book of Acts for the ELCA.

Presiding Bishop Hanson stressed that we need to root ourselves in the Biblical narrative and God's faithfulness. This is where we find our identity. We are rooted in the Lutheran confessions and their emphasis on God's grace. We have an opportunity to give witness to the grace of God. Grace is the giftedness and the wonder of life. The grace of God is the Word made flesh and dwelling among us.

Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed the hope that, as Lutherans approach 2017, we would not quarrel over which church bodies are the true spiritual heirs to the Reformation. He would like us to make a unified evangelical witness. He expressed sadness that the president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod would not meet with him as previous presidents had done.

Presiding Bishop Hanson went on to talk about the ELCA's ecumenical activities. He noted that we have six new ecumenical partnerships with which we share ministry.

He also spoke about his recent participation in Lutheran World Federation (LWF) meetings and referred with sorrow to the actions of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in terminating relations with the ELCA and the Church of Sweden.

Presiding Bishop Hanson also gave thanks for the ministries of this synod. He highlighted today's reception of the Oromo Resurrection Evangelical Church and the new Tamil Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community that recently became a part of this synod.

He highlighted that God is always making things new. He also stressed all too often that we keep the good news to ourselves. He encouraged the Synod Assembly to proactively reach out to people and share God's good news.

He spoke also of the ways we generate Social Statements and noted that we are to be commended for tackling tough issues like genetics.

He also described the ELCA's work around the world through the LWF, through disaster relief and through military chaplaincy.

His prayer for the ELCA in the next 100 years is that historians would see us as a church that gives a faithful evangelical witness that is centered in the cross of Christ. He hopes that Lutherans will have the courage to be a voice of moderation in the face of extremism and



exclusion. He echoed the concern of John Douglas Hall that our focus is doing good deeds but we fail to proclaim the gospel. We need to be about proclaiming the Gospel to a world in need of healing. We need to be honest about human suffering, including our own. It is his prayer that we would boldly and imaginatively proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

He concluded that our hope is in the one who gives us hope. We are to be a sign of God's promised future.

### **Introduction of Synod Staff**

Bishop Graham invited staff members to be recognized by the Synod Assembly.

Administrative Assistant & Synod Assembly Coordinator	Ms. Amy Acland
Director for Evangelical Mission & Assistant to the Bishop	The Rev. Phil Hirsch
Assistant to the Bishop	The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli
Communications Coordinator	Ms. Karen Krueger
Synod Administrator	Mr. Harold Sargeant, AIM

### **Process of Electing a Bishop**

Presiding Bishop Hanson presented the process for election of a bishop. He compared the Synod Assembly to a Call Committee. It is a process that involves thoughtfulness, prayer and conversation.

He spoke briefly about the role of a bishop as a pastor for the synod. He also noted the role of the bishop as a connector and an administrator who oversees and stewards the life of the church.

### **Report of the Election Committee**

The Rev. Steven Buechler, chair of the Election Committee, presented the process for the first nominating ballot.

The registrar's report was updated as follows:

Present:	Lay Voting Members	163
	Rostered Voting Members	<u>89</u>
	Total Voting Members	252
	Visitors	30

Before the first ballot Presiding Bishop Hanson read from Ephesians 2 and led the Synod Assembly in prayer. The Synod Assembly cast the first ballot.

Presiding Bishop Hanson returned the chair to Bishop Graham.

Pr. Jones, chair of the Synod Assembly Planning Team, gave instructions for lunch.

**PLENARY SESSION II  
FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2013  
National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**Report of the Bishop**

Dr. John White, Vice President of the synod, assumed the chair and invited Bishop Graham to present his report.

Bishop Graham noted that his report took two forms, a written report and a video that had been posted on the synod website on the Shape of the Synod Task Force. He encouraged the Synod Assembly to read the report and listen to the video.

In addition to these reports, he shared the highlights from last summer's Companion Synod visit to Namibia. The people of Namibia suffered during the struggle for independence. Many, including Bishop Shanghala of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), lost loved ones to violence during that period of Namibian history. Bishop Graham noted that in many places of violence in the world Christians continue to make a faithful witness.

He also shared his experiences with In Christ Fellowship, a Tamil speaking, Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community of the Metro D.C. Synod. The people of In Christ Fellowship serve a meal after worship and invite all kinds of people to join them, including folks from a motorcycle gang.

Finally, Bishop Graham celebrated the Rev. David Bohannon's many years of faithful ministry at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Woodbridge, Virginia.

All of these ministries are expressions of the rich diversity of the Metro D.C. Synod.

**Greetings from the Lutheran Church in El Salvador**

The Rev. Norma Castillo offered greetings from Bishop Medardo Gomez and the pastors of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. Pr. Castillo reported that the church is growing and that there are now 57 congregations and 10 missions. She shared that it was a pleasure to represent the Salvadoran Lutheran Church at this assembly and to learn about the challenges that the church faces here in the United States.

As gifts to the synod, she presented a replica of the subversive cross that played such a significant role in the history of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church and a wooden wall hanging with an image of birds. In particular, Bishop Gomez reminded us of the story of the subversive cross. This cross is part of living out the Reformation in El Salvador. The image of the birds on the wall hanging represents family, and Pr. Castillo noted that we commend the care of our church families to Christ. She also reminded us of the words from Joshua 10:21, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous." These gifts were sent in the spirit of inclusivity and accompaniment.

Pr. Castillo concluded by reminding us that we are not alone. We walk together. Christ is our foundation. She shared her blessings with us and requested prayers for El Salvador as the country goes to the polls in 2014 to elect a new president.

### Introduction to Voting Devices

Ms. Jean Knight offered an introduction to the voting devices.

### Report of the Vice President

Dr. White commended his written report to the Synod Assembly. He shared his joy with working with the members of the Synod Council.

### Report of the Synod Treasurer

Mr. John Handley reviewed the financial reports for 2012. He noted that while we had to adjust expenditures somewhat, we were able to finish the year in the black. He thanked the assembly for its faithful support of the synod.

He mentioned the closure of Bethany Lutheran Church, Forestville, Maryland and subsequent sale of its property. The members of Bethany tithed from the net proceeds of the sale, tithed to the ELCA and donated the remainder of the proceeds of the sale to the synod to support new and renewing missions.

He noted that the synod's audited financial reports for fiscal year 2012 are available. He invited questions. There were none, and the Synod Assembly received the Treasurer's report with thanks.

### Introduction to Compensation Guidelines

The Vice President, Dr. White, presented the Rostered Leader Compensation Guidelines for 2014.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.04** to increase the base compensation for rostered leaders by 1.5 percent for 2014 was approved.

Yes	178
No	7
Abstain	7

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### First Report of Reference and Counsel

The Rev. Christine Stephan, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), reported to the Synod Assembly.

Each Resolution has two numbers. The R&C number will begin with 2013 dash followed by a number. These are numbered in the chronological order received. The second number is the secretary's number, which begins with a 7. These are the page numbers for the order they appear in the report. The Synod Assembly will receive each Resolution by giving the Synod

Assembly both numbers. The final Resolutions were all put on the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod website as part of the pre-assembly packet.

Pr. Stephan advised the Synod Assembly that if anyone knows that they intend to propose an amendment to any of the Resolutions, it would be helpful to have a written copy provided to the media coordinator as well as to the R&C Chair so that it may be prepared as it was written for the Synod Assembly. The amendment will not be shown until it is moved from the floor.

Pr. Stephan reminded the Synod Assembly that it is only the “Resolved” statements that are adopted. The “Whereas” statements are submitted as factual premises; they lay out the issue or concern at hand and lead to the proposed solution offered in the “Resolved” statements. Questions regarding statements in the “Whereas” clauses may be directed to R&C or the author(s).

Finally, Pr. Stephan advised that any Resolution arising out of the business of the Synod Assembly must be submitted in writing to the Secretary. Should anyone have questions, they can be directed to any member of the R&C Committee. The members who are present at the Synod Assembly are Mr. Phil Soucy, the Rev. Margrethe Kleiber, the Rev. Mark Edwards, the Rev. Sarah Lewis, the Rev. Tom Prinz and the chair, Pr. Stephan. Thanks to each of them for their time and gifts that were shared as part of this team.

Pr. Stephan explained that the R&C advises and assists those who ask for action from a Synod Assembly. When a Resolution meets the needs of the group asking for action, the R&C puts it in proper order; then moves the Resolution to the Synod Assembly. This action does not imply in any way that the R&C is in agreement with a Resolution; the process is simply in compliance with Robert’s Rules of Order for preparing and presenting Resolutions to the Synod Assembly.

Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution, “Greetings.”

**MOTION: SA 13.06.05** adopted the Resolution.

Yes	208
No	0
Abstain	9

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### **Greetings**

*WHEREAS, other synods throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gathering in assembly at the same time as the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod meets in Assembly, and*

*WHEREAS, we are partners in the Mission of the Gospel with other synods of this church; therefore be it*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Secretary of the Synod to extend best wishes to the: Caribbean Synod; and express to them our greetings in Christ as they gather in assembly.*

Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution, "Accompaniment, Awareness-Raising, and Advocacy for the People of the Holy Land."

Discussion followed. It was moved to amend the Resolution as follows:

To delete all of subheading 3) of the fourth Resolved after the word "endeavors." The text remaining would read: "3) encouraging individuals to invest in Palestinian economic endeavors."

**MOTION: SA 13.06.06** adopted the amendment.

Yes	121
No	75
Abstain	19

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**MOTION: SA 13.06.07** adopted the Resolution as amended.

Yes	154
No	51
Abstain	15

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***Accompaniment, Awareness-Raising, and Advocacy  
for the People of the Holy Land***

*WHEREAS, the prolonged Israeli occupation of and building of settlements in the West Bank and blockade of Gaza cause a great deal of suffering for Israelis and Palestinians; and*

*WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices that our Palestinian brother in Christ Bishop Munib Younan is president of the Lutheran World Federation and gives thanks for our special relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) that is marked by mutual love and concern for lasting peace with justice; and*

*WHEREAS, the Peace Not Walls campaign of the ELCA is focused on Accompaniment, Awareness-raising and Advocacy as three aspects of engagement in response to the situation in Israel-Palestine; and*

*WHEREAS, the 2011 Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution supporting positive investment in Palestinian goods and services and commending the "ELCA Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens" to its members, congregations, synods and agencies; and*

*WHEREAS, the 1995 ELCA Social Statement For Peace in God's World reminds us that bringing about peace with justice is the work of the church, and in support for just political structures "[acknowledges] that the responsible use of sanctions may on occasion be the most effective and least harmful measure to lead states to stop oppressing their people..." (5.C; p19); and*

WHEREAS, on October 5, 2012, fifteen U.S. Christian leaders, including ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, signed a letter urging Congress to “undertake careful scrutiny to ensure that our aid is not supporting actions by the government of Israel that undermine prospects for peace;” and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod at its 2011 Synod Assembly resolved the Kairos Palestine document to be “an authentic perspective of Palestinian Christians on the state of affairs in their homeland,” and “an expression of their commitment to finding peace, justice, and reconciliation with their brothers and sisters through the way of the Christ we follow together;” and

WHEREAS, the Middle East Working Group of this synod continues to offer resources and people to congregations to facilitate learning about these issues; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly affirm its support for the work of Peace Not Walls as the means by which the ELCA implements its strategy for engagement in Israel and Palestine, and for our sisters and brothers in the ELCJHL as they remain faithful to the Gospel amid the injustices of occupation.; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly direct the bishop of this synod to contact appropriate elected representatives in Congress for the states and districts covered by the Synod and encourages members of the synod to contact their elected representatives in Congress, urging them to hold hearings to examine Israel’s compliance with the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act and the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, as requested in the October 5, 2012 letter from Christian leaders.

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly direct the bishop of this synod to report to the 2014 Synod Assembly the number of congregations in each conference of this synod that have undertaken a study of the Kairos Palestine document.

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting August 2013 to commit to socially responsible economic practices by:

1. directing the Church Council to develop and implement social-criteria investment screens that pertain specifically to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and
2. urging members with money invested through Portico to make individual choices about how their retirement funds are invested so as to avoid supporting companies that benefit from the Occupation; and
3. encouraging individuals to invest in Palestinian economic endeavors.

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Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution, “The Community of St. Dysmas.”

**MOTION: SA 13.06.08** adopted the Resolution.

Yes	192
No	18
Abstain	15

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**The Community of St. Dysmas**

*WHEREAS, in Matthew's gospel [Matthew 25:34a, 36b, 39-40] we read, "Then the King will say... I was in prison and you came to visit me," and to the question, "When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" responded, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me"; and*

*WHEREAS, Hebrews 13: 3 calls us to "Remember those who are in prison, as if you were together with them in prison," and*

*WHEREAS, the Proposed ELCA Social Statement on Criminal Justice entitled The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries, to be considered for adoption at the church-wide assembly in August 2013, urges "Synods, congregations, and individuals" to "support and join in ministry to those incarcerated," and*

*WHEREAS, The Community of St. Dysmas, a congregation supported by both the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod and the Delaware-Maryland Synod and a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), is a unique congregation called to minister to inmates within correctional institutions of the Maryland Department of Corrections (currently serving in four locations in the Jessup and Hagerstown areas) and to those members who have been released to return to society; and*

*WHEREAS, The Community of St. Dysmas seeks to affirm and extend the love of God's creation, encourage spiritual growth, and enable people to live lives of service and witness by providing weekly offerings of Word and Sacrament, Bible studies, and other spiritual teachings; and*

*WHEREAS, The Community of St. Dysmas has, for over twenty-eight years supported the faith journeys and enriched the spiritual lives of many, both inside and outside these correctional institutions by proclaiming the Gospel and administering the sacraments according to Lutheran teachings; and*

*WHEREAS, Christian believers both receive and give blessings by worshipping with other believers within the prisons, by welcoming those brothers and sisters who are returned to us, and by praying for the ministry of The Community of St Dysmas to those who are incarcerated in the correctional institutions; therefore, be it*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly encourage its members and congregations to designate the third Sunday in October , 2013 and in years following as "Community of St. Dysmas Sunday" by*

- *Publicizing Community of St. Dysmas Sunday in church communications,*



- *Inviting congregational members to share their talents of leading worship, providing music, leading Bible studies, assisting with financial record keeping, mentoring and to testify to the ministry in their local congregations enabling awareness of St. Dysmas' witness among the incarcerated,*
- *Designating a special offering on that day for The Community of St. Dysmas,*
- *Considering the addition of The Community of St. Dysmas as a ministry line item in the congregation's budget and committing to the Community of St. Dysmas with an annual pledge,*
- *Offering prayers for the members and ongoing ministry of The Community of St. Dysmas,*
- *Promoting an ongoing awareness of The Community of St. Dysmas within the congregation in the worship and educational settings, through written and spoken communication provided by the Community of St. Dysmas and by inviting the pastor or other St. Dysmas representatives to speak at your Adult Sunday Forum and/or preach at your worship service.*

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### **Additional Resolution Proposed from the Floor**

The Rev. Michael Wilker moved that the Synod Assembly consider an additional Resolution in recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. It was seconded and the Synod Assembly voted to accept an additional Resolution.

MOTION: SA 13.06.09 adopted consideration of the Resolution.

Yes	194
No	24
Abstain	3

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### **Introduction of the Mission Spending Plan**

The Rev. Greg Durig presented the 2014 Mission Spending Plan. There is a traditional line item spending plan for review. There is a modest increase of about 2% over the 2013 Mission Spending Plan. He highlighted the increase in congregation support and development.

There is also a Narrative Budget that explains the reasoning behind the line item budget.

He introduced members of the synod Finance Committee.

Mr. John Handley	Ms. Anita Nolan
Ms. Karen Consiglio	Mr. Jim McGee
The Rev. Phil Hirsch	The Rev. Darcy Tillman



### Report of the First Ballot for Bishop

Presiding Bishop Hanson called on Pr. Buechler to report on the first ballot. Pr. Buechler presented the following:

240 valid votes were cast. 180 needed for election. The results were as follows:

The Rev. Richard Graham	176
The Rev. Phil Hirsch	12
The Rev. Emmanuel Grantson	7
The Rev. Ron Qualley	7
The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli	5
The Rev. Brent Thalacker	3
The Rev. David Bohannon	2
The Rev. John Kidd	2
The Rev. Tom Knoll	2
The Rev. David Lose	2
The Rev. Ray Michener	2
The Rev. Connie Miller	2
The Rev. Wendy Moen	2
The Rev. Beth Neubauer	2
The Rev. Tom Prinz	2
The Rev. Linda Thurston	2
The Rev. Suzanne Blume	1
The Rev. James Cobb	1
The Rev. Anne Dwiggin	1
The Rev. Mark Hanson	1
The Rev. Robert Lewis	1
The Rev. Mark Olsen	1
The Rev. Carmelo Santos	1
The Rev. Robin Steinke	1
The Rev. Christine Stephan	1
The Rev. Joe Vought	1
Total	240
Blank ballots	6
Invalid ballots	2

Pr. Buechler announced that the deadline for withdrawal would be 4:15 pm, Friday, June 21, 2013.

It was announced that Bishop Lozada-Montañez of the Caribbean Synod was reelected to a second term.

### Shape of the Synod Task Force

Mr. Tom Kern and Ms. Barbara Topel presented an overview of the work of the Shape of the Synod Task Force.

They highlighted that the Gospel calls us to serve the poor and to make disciples. Lutherans are good at serving the poor. We are not so good at making disciples.

Mr. Kern and Ms. Topel went on to highlight the different initiatives undertaken by the task force. Members of the task force visited 14 congregations over the past year. They found that making disciples pushes us outside of our comfort zones. As a synod and as congregations we need to rethink our efforts, for example, focusing on small groups, thinking up ways to free pastors for mission, etc. They made it clear that we also need to customize our approach depending on community context.

Members of the Shape of the Synod Task Force:

Ms. Barbara Topel  
Mr. Tom Kern  
The Rev. Tom Knoll  
The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli  
The Rev. Phil Hirsch  
Bishop Richard Graham

### **Additional Introductions**

The Rev. Eric Wester was introduced as the Chaplain of the Synod Assembly. He is Director of the ELCA Bureau of Chaplaincy Ministries.

Ms. Ione Hanson, wife of Presiding Bishop Hanson, was introduced and thanked for her ministry of support both to Presiding Bishop Hanson and to the ELCA. It was duly noted that today, Friday, June 21, 2013, is the Hansons' 43rd wedding anniversary.

### **Report of the Nominating Committee and First Ballot**

The Rev. Wendy Moen presented the report of the Nominating Committee.

#### **SYNOD COUNCIL NOMINATIONS**

##### Office of Vice President

Mr. Benjamin Cutler  
Dr. John White

##### D.C. Conference – Lay

Mr. Larry Evans  
Mr. Morris Goff

##### Fairfax Conference - Rostered

The Rev. Gerard Johnson

##### Maryland Conference-Rostered

The Rev. Emmanuel Grantson

##### Montgomery Conference-Rostered

The Rev. Christine Stephan

Potomac Conference-Rostered

The Rev. Charles Oberkehr

Virginia Conference-Lay

Mr. Stanley Rufus Medikonda

At Large-Lay

Mr. Kurtis Lowe

At Large-Rostered

The Rev. Margrethe Kleiber

Youth Representative

Mr. Jack Hill

STANDING COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Committee on Discipline-Clergy

The Rev. Suzanne Blume

The Rev. Doug Jones

The Rev. Renata Eustis

Committee on Discipline-Lay

Mr. Marshal Love

Ms. Paula Wester

There was a nomination from the floor of Mr. Michael Philpy for the Virginia Conference Lay position on Synod Council. His nomination form will be copied and distributed.

Pr. Moen moved that all uncontested positions be elected by acclamation. It was seconded and by vote taken by voice.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.10** adopted the Resolution by acclamation.

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**Report of Gettysburg Seminary**

The Rev. Michael Cooper-White, President of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, brought greetings from the faculty and students of the seminary. He also brought greetings from colleagues of the other ELCA seminaries. President Cooper-White thanked the Synod Assembly for the Synod's ongoing financial support of the seminary. He also thanked the members of this synod who have served on the seminary board as well as others who contribute to the life of Gettysburg Seminary.

He spoke on the role of the seminary in leadership development during these challenging times. He noted that all the seminaries have experienced enrollment declines. He encouraged members of the Synod Assembly to seek out people with leadership potential to consider vocation and entering seminary.

Next week the seminary will also be opening the Seminary Ridge Museum. It will explore questions of war and peace. They anticipate tens of thousands of visitors. They have garnered \$8.5 million in public/private funds for this project.

President Cooper-White also highlighted a number of innovative ideas and activities taking place on campus.

- In partnership with the Odyssey Network, Gettysburg developed a course on religion and the media.
- Gettysburg has initiated a program called Scholars of Abundance. Seminarians who complete internship will get their fourth year free.
- Gettysburg has also been recognized for campus greening efforts, including the use of geothermal heating and cooling.

### **Second Ballot for Synod Offices**

Pr. Buechler introduced the next round of elections. The Synod Assembly cast its vote for Synod Vice President and D.C. Conference Lay seat on the Synod Council. On the ballot for these positions...

#### Synod Vice President

Mr. Benjamin Cutler  
Dr. John White

#### Synod Council D.C. Conference Lay

Mr. Larry Evans  
Mr. Morris Goff

The election for the Virginia Conference Lay Council seat was postponed until the Synod Assembly receives the nomination forms for Mr. Philpy. On the ballot for this position...

#### Synod Council Virginia Conference Lay

Mr. Stanley Medikonda  
Mr. Michael Philpy

### **Anniversary Recognition**

25th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Karis K. Graham The Rev. Robert C. Layman
30th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Joseph M. Vought The Rev. Mark D. Blice-Baum The Rev. Sue Tyykila
35th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Bishop Richard Graham The Rev. James B. Vigen The Rev. James P. Wind The Rev. Thomas A. Prinz
40th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Bruce L. Burslie

	The Rev. Leonel A. Cruz The Rev. Raymond W. Michener The Rev. Robert M. Holum The Rev. Sherman G. Hicks The Rev. Stephen J. Heetland
45th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. David M. Bohannon The Rev. George W. Schwantes The Rev. Lowell E. Schuetze The Rev. Myron L. Barbour Jr.
50th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Neal R. Davidson The Rev. Richard Reichard
55th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Barron B. Maberry The Rev. James T. Heinemeier
60th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Harold S. Goers The Rev. Kenneth L. Mahler
65th Anniversary of Ordination	The Rev. Ross Forcey

**PLENARY SESSION III  
FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2013  
National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**Second Ballot for Bishop**

The registrar's report was updated as follows:

Present:	Lay Voting Members	168
	Rostered Voting Members	<u>93</u>
	Total Voting Members	261
	Visitors	31

The following individuals remained candidates for the office of Bishop of the Metro D.C. Synod:

The Rev. David Bohannon  
The Rev. James Cobb  
The Rev. Richard Graham  
The Rev. Emmanuel Grantson  
The Rev. Raymond Michener  
The Rev. Linda Thurston

Presiding Bishop Hanson read from 2 Timothy and led the Synod Assembly in prayer. Following this, the Synod Assembly cast the second ballot.

**Report of Elections**

The results of the first election were as follows:

Synod Vice President

221 votes were cast. 111 votes were needed for an election.

Mr. Benjamin Cutler	91
Dr. John White	130

Synod Council D.C. Conference Lay

199 votes were cast. 100 votes were needed for an election.

Mr. Larry Evans	112
Mr. Morris Goff	87

The election for Synod Council Virginia-Lay seat was again postponed until candidate forms could be provided.

Dr. White and Mr. Evans were declared elected.

## Second Report of Reference and Council

Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution: "A Memorial Calling for Conversations about Ministering to Same-Gender Couples and Families."

**MOTION: SA 13.06.11** adopted the Resolution.

Yes	177
No	29
Abstain	12

.....

### ***A Memorial Calling for Conversations about Ministering to Same-Gender Couples and Families***

*WHEREAS, the ELCA, meeting in Assembly (2009) resolved to "commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships;" and*

*WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (2009) states that*

- 1. "the ELCA recognizes that it has a pastoral responsibility to all children of God." (p. 19)*
- 2. "supports legislation and policies to protect civil rights" for all and has also "called upon congregations and members of this church to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection." (p. 19, emphasis added)*
- 3. "will attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law" for all (p. 33); and*

*WHEREAS, marriage has been recognized for same-gender couples in nine states and the District of Columbia and within the territory of twelve synods of the ELCA, which together minister to over 650,000 Lutherans (about 15% of total ELCA membership); and*

*WHEREAS, seven additional states (Illinois, Minnesota, Delaware, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Oregon, and New Jersey) are widely expected to consider legislation recognizing marriage for same-gender couples between 2013 and 2015, encompassing twelve additional synods that minister to over 1.1 million Lutherans (about 25% of total ELCA membership); and*

*WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States is currently considering whether to declare two laws unconstitutional: the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and California's Proposition 8, both of which restrict the individual and family protections afforded by marriage; and*

*WHEREAS, individuals, congregations, and pastors have requested advice and resources to assist in their mission to support same-gender couples and their families; therefore be it*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:*

1. *to invite and encourage conversations among this church's congregations, rostered leaders, and the Conference of Bishops regarding the growing trend in state and federal laws towards marriage equality and how all the expressions of the ELCA can respond to the needs of the neighbor, including discussion and sharing of resources that would be most helpful for those wishing to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and couples and their families as we seek to grow into this new reality; and*
2. *to invite and encourage conversations among this church's congregations, rostered leaders, and the Conference of Bishops regarding ways that this church can advocate for equal protection under the law for same-gender couples and their families; and*
3. *to invite and encourage the ELCA Church Council and the churchwide organization to make provision for Voting Members to engage in these conversations at the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, as the church continues to discern its ministry in the emerging context.*

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Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution: "Memorial in Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity."

**MOTION: SA 13.06.12** adopted the Resolution.

Yes	195
No	29
Abstain	5

.....

***Memorial in Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination  
on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity***

*WHEREAS, it is currently legal in 29 states to discriminate in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation, and in 34 on the basis of gender identity; and*

*WHEREAS, employees should be judged on the quality of their work and nothing more; and*

*WHEREAS, legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for a broad religious exemption, has been introduced in every Congress since 1994; and*

*WHEREAS, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 1397/S. 812) is an example of such legislation; and*

*WHEREAS, the ELCA's Social Statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust states that "While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues" (p. 19). This church:*

1. *"supports legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services." (p. 19)*



2. *“has called upon congregations and members of this church to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection.”* (p. 19)
3. *“will advocate for public policies that support and protect families.”* (p. 24)
4. *“will attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity. Such individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse;”* and

WHEREAS, *the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial by 79.8% to endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and to affirm advocacy “in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation” (see CWA resolution CA97.06.29), therefore be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon Congress to take up and pass legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, to urge the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synodical bishops, clergy, and other church leaders to speak publicly in support of legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the laity to make this Assembly’s position and the ELCA’s position known to their Members of Congress in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate.*

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Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution: “Memorial in Support of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA).”

**MOTION: SA 13.06.13** adopted the Resolution.

Yes	195
No	22
Abstain	15

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**Memorial in Support of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)**

WHEREAS, *under current U.S. immigration law, a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident is permitted to sponsor his or her spouse, child, or parent for permanent resident status; and*

WHEREAS, *U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents are not permitted to sponsor their same-gender partners for permanent resident status; and*

WHEREAS, *twenty-five other countries allow their citizens to sponsor their same-gender partners in the immigration process(1); and*

WHEREAS, *there are approximately 36,000 bi-national, same-gender families in the U.S.(2); and*

WHEREAS, *35% of male bi-national couples and 39% of female bi-national couples are raising more than 17,000 children(3); and*

WHEREAS, *due to the inability of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to sponsor their same-gender partners, these families can be forced to live abroad, thus uprooting their children, disrupting their careers, and breaking ties with their families, communities, and places of worship; and*

WHEREAS, *current immigration law does not provide for equal justice and equal protection for gay and lesbian citizens and legal permanent residents; and*

WHEREAS, *the ELCA has a long-standing commitment to comprehensive federal immigration reform; and*

WHEREAS, *a bill called the Uniting American Families Act (UAFAs) has been introduced in the Federal legislature to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate discrimination in immigration by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and of lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and of lawful permanent residents and to penalize immigration fraud in connection with permanent partnerships; and*

WHEREAS, *the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, in assembly in 2012 memorialized the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly “to join the Faith Coalition for the Uniting American Families Act in support of passage of the Uniting American Families Act and its inclusion in comprehensive immigration reform,” therefore be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon President Obama and elected officials in Congress to support and to press for passage of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFAs) or its equivalent as a component of comprehensive immigration reform; and be it further*

RESOLVED, *that if a bill for comprehensive immigration reform is passed before the start of the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and if the bill does not include UAFAs or its equivalent, the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call for the reintroduction of UAFAs in the U.S. legislature; and be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to commend*

*Bishop Thomas M. Aitken, Northeastern Minnesota Synod,*

*Bishop James A. Arends, La Crosse Area Synod,  
Bishop David H. Brauer-Rieke, Oregon Synod,  
Bishop Jessica R. Crist, Montana Synod,  
Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod ,  
Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod,  
Bishop Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane, Delaware-Maryland Synod,  
Bishop Mark W. Holmerud, Sierra Pacific Synod,  
Bishop Felipe Lozada-Montañez, Caribbean Synod,  
Bishop Dean W. Nelson, Southwest California Synod,  
Bishop Margaret Payne, New England Synod,  
Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, Metropolitan New York Synod,  
Bishop Michael Rinehart, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod,  
Bishop Stephen S. Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod, and  
Bishop Martin D. Wells, Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod*

*for their courageous witness and their stand for justice in adding their names to the February 2013 Faith Coalition for UAFA letter (4); and be it further*

**RESOLVED,** *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in assembly, memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage the clergy and other leaders of congregations in this church to support the Uniting American Families Act in writing, preaching, praying, and teaching; by financially supporting organizations working for immigration reform; by participation in public discussions and rallies in support of immigration reform and the UAFA; and by communicating with their elected representatives encouraging them to co-sponsor and to support a just, comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration law that includes the principles of UAFA.*

*(1) Immigration Equality Action Fund (<http://immigrationequalityactionfund.org/legislation/summaries/>)*

*(2) Ibid.*

*(3) Ibid.*

*(4) Immigration Equality Action Fund  
([http://immigrationequalityactionfund.org/images/FaithCoalition\\_SignOnLetter.pdf](http://immigrationequalityactionfund.org/images/FaithCoalition_SignOnLetter.pdf))*

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Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution: "Safe and Responsible Use of Firearms."

**MOTION: SA 13.06.14** adopted the Resolution.

Yes	193
No	33
Abstain	6

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### **Safe and Responsible Use of Firearms**

**WHEREAS** *,in Christian faith, we are called to trust in God, to worship the One who comes as Prince of Peace and to serve as peacemakers, seeking God's shalom for all the world; and*

- WHEREAS, *the Lutheran understanding of freedom is that God makes us free but that with freedom comes the responsibility to serve one's neighbor in love; and*
- WHEREAS, *we grieve with those in Newtown, Connecticut and other communities who have suffered from gross acts of violence involving irresponsible use of firearms; and*
- WHEREAS, *United States Supreme Court decisions have upheld the "right to keep and bear arms," these decisions also have made it clear that this right is not unlimited (1); and*
- WHEREAS, *every day, on average, 86 people in the United States die from gun violence and another 196 are shot and survive (2) and victims are "disproportionately young," making firearms a leading cause of death among juveniles; (3) and*
- WHEREAS, *in addition to injury and death, gun violence contributes to other economic losses involving medical expenses, lost productivity, lower property and tax values, the cost of which has been estimated at \$325 per resident per year; therefore, be it*
- RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, urge the people of its congregations to demonstrate responsible use of any guns in their possession and responsible stewardship in the storage and use of their guns, and be it further,*
- RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, urge its congregations to engage people in their communities in a year of prayer, reflection and education on ways to curb gun violence, and to assure responsible use of guns in service of our neighbors, be it further,*
- RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, urge congregations to partner with other faith communities to call for an end to gun violence, and be it further,*
- RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, direct our bishop and encourage members of the synod to urge elected officials at state and federal levels of government to develop and enact legislation to promote gun safety including: tighter regulation and oversight of gun sellers; require background checks for everyone purchasing a gun, including private transactions; require firearms handling safety classes for all firearms purchasers; ban military style high capacity weapons and high-capacity magazines more than 10 rounds; prohibit firearm purchases for high-risk groups and enact stronger child access to guns prevention laws (5), and be it further,*
- RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, meeting in Assembly, memorialize the 2013 ELCA Churchwide assembly to develop an investment screen for civilian firearms to be used by those responsible in the ELCA to invest church funds and by Portico Benefit Services as it develops criteria for the ELCA Retirement Social Purpose Funds.*

(1) Webster, DH, Vernick, JS, Vitti, K., McGinty, EE, Teret, SP, and Frattaroli, S. *The Case for Gun Policy Reforms in America*, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, Bloomberg School of Public Health; October, 2012.

[http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-gun-policy-and-research/publications/WhitePaper102512\\_CGPR.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-gun-policy-and-research/publications/WhitePaper102512_CGPR.pdf)

(2) CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System; Reported in Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence [www.bradycampaign.org/XShare/Facts/Gun\\_Death\\_and\\_Injury\\_Stat\\_Sheet\\_3\\_Year\\_Average\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.bradycampaign.org/XShare/Facts/Gun_Death_and_Injury_Stat_Sheet_3_Year_Average_FINAL.pdf). Retrieved 04/22/13.

(3) Webster et al; *The Case for Gun Policy Reforms in America*.

(4) Shapiro RJ, Hassett KA. *The Economic Benefits of Reducing Violent Crime: A Case Study of 8 American Cities*. Center for American Progress, Washington, DC, June, 2012; cited in Webster et al.

(5) Recommendations offered by the Children's Defense Fund: *Protect Children, Not Guns; The Truth About Guns* (March 29, 2013)

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### **Third Ballot for Synod Office**

The Synod Assembly voted for the Virginia Conference-Lay member of Synod Council.

### **Worship**

Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson was the preaching minister and Bishop Richard Graham served as the presiding minister.

Dinner followed.

**PLENARY SESSION IV  
FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2013  
National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**Report of the Elections Committee**

Pr. Buechler reported on the election for Synod Council Virginia Conference-Lay.

The results of the first election were as follows.

229 votes were cast. 115 were needed for election. The results were as follows:

Mr. Stanley Medikonda	122
Mr. Michael Philpy	107

Mr. Medikonda was declared elected.

**Report of the Second Ballot for Bishop**

Presiding Bishop Hanson presided over the report relating to the election of the Bishop. Pr. Buechler reported on the second ballot for bishop.

238 votes were cast. 172 votes were needed for election. The results were as follows:

The Rev. David Bohannon	9
The Rev. James Cobb	2
The Rev. Richard Graham	211
The Rev. Emmanuel Grantson	7
The Rev. Raymond Michener	4
The Rev. Linda Thurston	5

Bishop Graham was declared elected to a six-year term as Bishop, effective September 1, 2013.

Bishop Graham reassumed his role as chair of the Synod Assembly and spoke briefly after the results of the election. He read from Hebrews, Chapter 12.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.*

He paid tribute to those bishops who had gone before him. Highlighting the phrase “let us run with perseverance,” Bishop Graham affirmed his commitment to persevering in the tasks of the synod and invited the Synod Assembly to join in this work.

### Proposed Constitutional Changes

Pr. Sevimli presented the proposed changes to the Constitution. The purpose of these changes is to bring the synod constitution in line with the changes made by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

These changes were moved by action of the Synod Council and brought before the Synod Assembly for a vote.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.15** to bring our synod's constitution in line with the changes to the model constitution enacted by the ELCA 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

The motion was adopted unanimously with 205 votes cast.

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### Proposed Changes to Bylaws

Pr. Hirsch presented the proposed changes to the bylaws. The synod's structure has remained the same since the establishment of the ELCA in 1988. However, the synod's practices have changed. There are two primary reasons for changing the bylaws.

1. To bring synodical structures in line with synodical practice
2. To ensure that the bylaws accurately articulate the synod's priorities for mission

Pr. Hirsch called the Synod Assembly's attention to p. 32. The synod is no longer using the terminology of divisions and offices but is moving to the language of table and team.

In the discussion that followed members of the Synod Assembly raised questions about the implications of the changes.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.16** to cease debate on the motion was made.

Yes	120
No	78
Abstain	1

The motion failed for lack of the required two-thirds majority.

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**MOTION: SA 13.06.17** to table the matter was approved by a voice vote.

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### Third Report of Reference and Council

Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution, "Resolution on Criminal Justice."

Discussion followed. It was moved to amend the Resolution by striking paragraph a of the final resolved.



**MOTION: SA13.06.18** approved the amendment.

Yes	110
No	68
Abstain	13

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**Resolution on Criminal Justice**

*WHEREAS, in April 2013 a Proposed Social Policy The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries was approved by the ELCA Church Council for presentation at the August 2013 Churchwide Assembly, and*

*WHEREAS, this Statement resulted from an earlier Draft Policy Statement on Criminal Justice which was reviewed and commented upon by many throughout the church; and*

*WHEREAS, this Proposed Social Policy reflects the input of commentary by members of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod as well as others throughout the church, and*

*WHEREAS, there is evidence that concern regarding inequities and inefficiencies of the US criminal justice system has been receiving considerable discussion in the public forum, for example:*

- An increasing number of civic advocates have called for a comprehensive review of the effectiveness, efficacy and justice of the U.S. prison system;*
- The United States Sentencing Commission has called for a return to judicial discretion for many crimes now covered under mandatory sentencing guidelines that have resulted in a drastic increase in the number and duration of incarcerations; and*
- The ELCA was a signatory organization supporting the passage of the Second Chance Act of 2008, which provides for increased services to prevent recidivism and to assist former prisoners to make successful transitions to community life; and*

*WHEREAS, a series of implementing resolutions regarding the Proposed Social Policy The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries will be presented to voting members of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August, 2013, be it therefore,*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly, express gratitude to the ELCA Task Force on Criminal Justice for the good work done in developing The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries, and be further*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly extend its efforts to discuss and articulate an effective and faithful approach to criminal justice in our society today by doing the following:*

- A. Encourage synod-wide and/or regional gatherings of persons and organizations that have long been active in criminal justice reform and services, to raise awareness and develop working relationships among our members and the wider community*



- B. *Facilitate the use of social media (e.g., the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod website, web-conferencing, Facebook, and so forth) to facilitate networking and dissemination of knowledge regarding the issues raised in the Proposed Statement so as to equip our membership and others of good will for ministry and advocacy concerning criminal justice ; and*
  
  - C. *Encourage congregations of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to commit themselves to pray for healing, justice and reconciliation for all touched by the criminal justice system, including those who work in and set policy, crime victims, those incarcerated and their families.*
- 

**MOTION: SA 13.06.19** adopted the Resolution as amended.

Yes	181
No	6
Abstain	6

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The Synod Assembly's activities concluded for the evening.

**PLENARY SESSION V  
FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2013  
National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**Morning Devotions**

Presiding Bishop Hanson gave a morning devotion from Lamentations, reminding us that “the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.” He noted that we may need to relinquish the past to make way for the renewing work of God.

**Report of Assistant to the Bishop, the Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli**

Pr. Sevimli referred to her written report and invited the members of the Synod Assembly to read it.

Citing an article from the Atlantic magazine titled Listening to Young Atheists: Lessons for a Stronger Christianity, Pr. Sevimli challenged the members of the Synod Assembly to consider how we present the faith to those around us. The author of the article found that young people do not feel that their experience in church is reflective of a Triune God. It is not just atheists who are giving this critique of the church. For many, the church does not convey that Jesus really matters. The church is perceived as religious without being spiritual.

As part of her report Pr. Sevimli invited participants who went on the synod sponsored Young Adult trips to the U.S. Mexico Border and the Holy Land to share some of the highlights from their experiences.

Lindsay Parsons from Faith Lutheran Church in Arlington shared stories from her trip to Ciudad Juarez and the community of Cristo del Rey. She spoke of the importance of being vulnerable to build genuine connections among people.

Heidi Eickstadt and the Rev. Ray Ranker shared stories about their journey to the Holy Land. They described the hardships experienced by the Palestinian people as well as stories of the people, both Palestinians and Israelis, who work for peace.

Pr. Sevimli concluded her report with a few comments on Project Connect, the Synod Youth Protection Policy and The Journey, a training for pastors and congregation leaders taught by the Rev. Chris Nelson and the Rev. Mary Pechauer. Details about these initiatives can be found in her written report.

**Bylaw Revisions Continued**

The Synod Assembly resumed discussion about the revisions to the bylaws.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.20** referred the bylaw changes to the Synod Council for additional work and to report back to the 2014 Synod Assembly.

Yes

189

No	35
Abstain	6

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**Report of Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop, The Rev. Philip Hirsch**

Pr. Hirsch described the work of the New and Renewing Mission Table and referred the Synod Assembly to his report and the report of the New and Renewing Mission Table.

Pr. Hirsch invited the Rev. Dave Sonnenberg to provide an update on the work of the synod's Stewardship and Support Table. Pr. Sonnenberg noted that the Table's purpose is to be a resource to congregations in their stewardship ministry as well as grow the financial resources of the synod. One of the synod's goals is to help people grow in generosity. He called the Synod Assembly's attention to the Embrace Generosity resource in the Synod Assembly download.

Pr. Hirsch continued his report by sharing the recent statistics regarding church growth and worship attendance in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod. The number of people joining our congregations by affirmation of faith or adult baptisms is flat or diminishing. Collectively, there are about 10,000 people worshipping in the Metropolitan Washington, D. C. Synod congregations on a Sunday morning. Worship attendance is down across the country and across denominations.

Nonetheless, there are new initiatives and new growth taking place. Pr. Hirsch cited the example of the Rev. Connie Thomson who proactively shares Jesus out of compassion. He challenged members of the Synod Assembly to look at ways Christ can work through us. How can we offer Christ out of compassion for others?

Finally, Pr. Hirsch invited the Rev. Mike Gutzler and the Rev. Kate Davidson to describe the 2014 re-launch of Together in Mission. It is scheduled for January 25, 2014, at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. It will be organized in cooperation with the VTS and will utilize a TED talk format. The 2014 TIM talks will invite between 20-30 speakers to share their best ideas for mission.

**Offering**

The offering taken during Friday's worship service totaled \$2,393.71. It will be entrusted to Presiding Bishop Hanson to support ministry in the ELCA as he sees fit.

**ELCA Foundation**

Ms. Alice Benson provided a quick update on the ELCA Foundation, emphasizing that the Foundation is a tool for ELCA congregations and members.

**Adoption of the Mission Spending Plan**

Pr. Durig presented for a second time the 2014 Mission Spending Plan.

Bishop Graham invited discussion. Pr. Durig emphasized how reorganizing the items in the line item spending plan reflects synodical priorities. He also described how the narrative budget provides background on these priorities.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.21** approved the 2014 Mission Spending Plan.

Yes	195
No	0
Abstain	1

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**2014 Mission Spending Plan**

<b>Receipts from:</b>	
Congregational Benevolence	1,838,000
Interest & Other Congregational Support	\$15,800
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$ 1,853,800</b>
<b>Expenditures for:</b>	
<i>Churchwide Support (50% of Benevolence)</i>	<i>\$ 919,000</i>
New Congregational Development	70,000
Congregational Redevelopment	20,000
Congregational Renewal	10,000
<i>New &amp; Renewing Missions Table</i>	<i>\$ 100,000</i>
Gifts of Hope	6,000
Other Stewardship & Mission Support	1,000
<i>Stewardship and Mission Support</i>	<i>\$ 7,000</i>
Ecumenical Affairs	4,500
Candidacy	6,000
Gettysburg Seminary (5% of Benevolence)	91,900
Seminary Student Financial Aid	12,000
First Call Theological Education	2,000
Synod Young Adults Initiative	5,000
Bishop's Emergency Fund	250
<i>Office of the Bishop</i>	<i>\$ 121,650</i>
<i>Global Mission &amp; Companion Synods</i>	<i>\$ 6,000</i>
Synod Supported Camps	18,000
Synod Supported Campus Ministries	65,000
<i>Camp and Campus Ministry Support</i>	<i>\$ 83,000</i>
Region 8 Support	7,960
Ordained Staff Comp. & Benefits	263,000
Office Staff Comp. & Benefits	176,000
Office Operations	85,000

Occupancy Costs	85,000
<i>Administration &amp; Operations</i>	<i>\$ 616,960</i>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 1,853,610</b>
<b>RECEIPTS LESS EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 190</b>

**Creation Care Team**

The Creation Care team provided an update on its work in the synod.

**Lutheran World Relief**

Representatives from Lutheran World Relief gave thanks to members of the Synod Assembly for their ongoing and continued support.

**Portico Benefit Services**

Ms. Barbara Debski, representative of Portico Benefit Services, brought greetings and news from Portico. She provided an update on changes related to the Affordable Care Act. Portico remains committed to its members and will continue to provide benefits to those covered by the ELCA health plan. This fall there will be an open enrollment with changes going into effect in 2014. The health plan will go from offering one option to four options. Details will be available after the Churchwide Council meets. Portico will provide this information to plan members and congregations as soon as it is available.

She invited members of the Synod Assembly to stop by the Portico table for additional information.

**Fourth Report of Reference and Counsel**

The Resolution, "Giving Thanks and Praise to God for LIRS 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," was considered.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.22** approved the Resolution.

Yes	201
No	0
Abstain	5

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***Giving Thanks and Praise to God for LIRS 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

*WHEREAS, in 1939, as Europe was once again engulfed in war, Lutherans in the United States were compelled by their faith to organize a joint effort to welcome refugees to this country and to offer hospitality in their local communities; and*

*WHEREAS, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), in partnership with Lutheran congregations and social ministry organizations in the Metropolitan, Washington,*

*D.C. Synod and across the country, has resettled over 400,000 refugees in its 75 years of ministry; and*

*WHEREAS, LIRS, in partnership with Lutheran congregations and social ministry organizations, continues to serve over 10,000 newly arrived refugees and 20,000 detained torture survivors, victims of trafficking, and unaccompanied children every year; and*

*WHEREAS, we have just commemorated World Refugee Day (June 20) – praying for those who are fleeing and in danger, remembering those who wait and are separated from loved ones; and celebrating the gifts that our new refugee neighbors are; and*

*WHEREAS, we fulfill the call to love the neighbors God gives to us by embracing refugees and migrants as assets in our communities and congregations, and accompanying them as they build new lives in America; and*

*WHEREAS, the mission of LIRS invites us to join in witnessing to God's love for all people, by standing with and advocating for migrants and refugees, transforming communities through ministries of service and justice; therefore be it*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod commit itself to commemorating World Refugee Day in 2014 and to encourage all congregations to celebrate Sunday, June 22, 2014, as Refugee Sunday in which congregations offer thanks and praise to God for the 75 years of welcoming migrants and refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in cooperation with Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area;*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the 2013 Churchwide Assembly to declare Sunday, June 22, 2014, as Refugee Sunday in which congregations offer thanks and praise to God for the 75 years of welcoming migrants and refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; and direct the Presiding Bishop to:*

- invite congregations to tell the stories of their acts of welcome to refugees and migrants—signs of witness, mercy, and life together;*
- utilize ELCA communications mechanisms to share these stories and inspire action throughout 2014; and*
- encourage congregations and organizations to engage with and support the LIRS mission of welcoming the stranger through gifts of time, talent, and treasure.*

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Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution, “Expression of Thanks and Gratitude for Service of Harold Sargeant, Associate in Ministry (AIM),” and proposed the Synod Assembly vote by acclamation.

**MOTION: SA 13.06.23** approved the Resolution by acclamation.

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**Expression of Thanks and Gratitude  
for Service of Harold Sargeant, Associate in Ministry (AIM)**

WHEREAS, *Mr. Harold Sargeant, AIM, has served the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod for 6 years as the Synodical Administrator and has faithfully carried out his duties with care and diligence; going above and beyond expectations on a regular basis and;*

WHEREAS, *he has served God's church in many and innumerable ways which have advanced God's kingdom and, with a special recognition to his home congregation St. Mark's in Springfield, Virginia;*

WHEREAS, *his gentle nature and dry humor always made others comfortable and made to feel welcome and;*

WHEREAS, *he is retiring from his position to enjoy life to the fullest in Pennsylvania therefore be it:*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod expresses its sincere appreciation and love for his contribution to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and further be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod extends blessings to him, Donita, and his entire family for good health and best wishes for the future.*

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Pr. Stephan moved the Resolution, "Expression of Thanks and Gratitude."

**MOTION: SA 13.06.24** adopted the Resolution.

Yes	206
No	1
Abstain	2

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**Expression of Thanks and Gratitude**

WHEREAS, *the staff of the National Conference Center in Landsdowne, Virginia have served as gracious hosts for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, providing facilities and support for this 2013 Synod Assembly; and*

WHEREAS, *the 2013 Synod Assembly Planning Committee and many others have worked many hours to prepare for this assembly; therefore be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly express its gratitude and extend its heartfelt thanks to God and to all whose support and efforts have made this Synod Assembly an efficient and joyful gathering of God's people, including:*

- *the staff of the National Conference Center in Landsdowne, Virginia;*

- *the Reverend Mark S. Hanson, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for his leadership and guidance; the Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop; the Reverend Philip C. Hirsch, Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod; Dr. John White, Vice President of the Synod; the Reverend John Bradford, Secretary of the Synod; and Mr. John Handley, Treasurer of the Synod; Ms. Amy Acland for registration and on-site administrative support; the Synod office staff: Ms. Amy Acland, Ms. Karen Krueger, Mr. Harold Sargeant and their team of volunteers for their “behind the scenes” work so important to this assembly;*
- *With a special ‘shout out’ to the Reverend Margarthe Kleiber for her quick typing skills and willing heart as the secretary pro tempore; and Mr. Kevin Anderson for his willingness to provide additional secretarial skills.*
- *the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Douglas Jones: Ms. Amy Acland, the Reverend Kate Davidson, the Reverend Steve Buechler, the Reverend Christine Stephan, the Reverend Sandra Shaw, Ms. Karen Krueger, the Reverend Stephanie Johnson, the Reverend Wendy Moen, Mr. Phillip Meuschke, the Reverend John Bradford*
- *the Media Coordinators for their volunteer service with communications: Mr. David Carlson, Ms. Rose Beeson, Mr. Philip Meuschke with Communications;*
- *the Nominating Committee under the leadership of the Reverend Wendy Moen; the Reverend Jeff Wilson, the Reverend Doug Jones, the Reverend Yvette Schock, the Reverend Wendy Deeben, the Reverend Sarah Lewis*
- *the Elections Committee under the leadership of the Reverend Steve Buechler: the Reverend Susanne Blume, the Reverend Jane Halpern, the Reverend Mitch Watney, Mr. Larry Evan, Ms. Paula Green; Ms. Lynn Kingsley, Mr. Larry Evans, Ms. Loretta Walker; and Interns of this Synod: Gloria Cline-Smythe, Karen Sease, Deb Haynes, Amy Feira*
- *the Reference and Counsel team under the leadership of the Reverend Christine Stephan: the Reverend Mark Edwards, the Reverend Margarthe Klieber, the Reverend Sarah Lewis, the Reverend Thomas Prinz, Mr. Phil Soucy*
- *the Assembly parliamentarian, Mr. Richard Ahlberg;*
- *the Assembly Worship Planning Team, led by the Reverend Kate Davidson:*
  - *the Reverend Mark S. Hanson for preaching at the Eucharist and leading worship.*
  - *the Reverend Richard Graham for celebrating the Eucharist;*



- *The Reverend Eric Wester for leading closing worship and the Reverend Mike Wilker for assistance with coordinating worship.*
- *All others who served in worship leadership roles including the lectors, ushers, and communion assistants.*
- *Mr. Jeremy Shoop for his excellent musical leadership throughout worship and the assembly.*
- *the Reverend Eric Wester for his willingness to serve as chaplain for this assembly and his work for the bureau for federal chaplaincy.*
- *All those who permitted their names to be placed before this assembly for consideration as Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit;*
- *For those who permitted their names to be placed before the assembly for consideration for election to the Synod Council,*
- *For those who are completing their terms of service on the Synod Council:*
  - *Amanda Wahlig, Bill Johnson, and Shirley Gibbs*
- *Ecumenical and other invited guests who attended the assembly:*
  - *the Reverend Ralph Weichmann, the Reverend Doctor Christopher Agnew, Father Tom Andrews, the Reverend Jenee Gilchrist*
- *A special thank you to Mrs. Ione Hanson for being with us and many blessings to her and Bishop Hanson as they celebrate their wedding anniversary.*
- *the Reverend Richard H. Graham, Bishop of the Synod, for his leadership of this assembly, and his wife, Nancy Ann, for her faithful support of our bishop and this church.*

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### **Concluding Comments from Presiding Bishop Hanson**

Presiding Bishop Hanson expressed gratitude to Bishop Graham and for his leadership of the Synod Assembly and the synod and for his leadership in the Conference of Bishops and the ELCA. He also commended the Synod Assembly for its wise choice of reelecting Bishop Graham. He also expressed thanks to Nancy Ann Graham for her support of the Bishop and this synod and the wider church.

He expressed gratitude for the leadership in this synod. He particularly mentioned Pr. Sevimli and Pr. Hirsch. He sees in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod signs of the future of the church. He described the people of this synod as living stones, as a cairn – a gathering of stones that someone has piled up. He noted that sometimes a cairn is a memorial to the past, a sign honoring those who have gone before us. On other occasions a cairn points the way. He went to say that we are to be living stones, to be a cairn that points the way to Jesus Christ; that points the way to a church that is hospitable to immigrants; that points the way to care for God's creation.

Presiding Bishop Hanson concluded by giving thanks for being gathered with us in the cairn that is the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod.

### **Concluding Comments from the Bishop Graham**

Bishop Graham shared thoughts about what it means to be a synod, about being on the road together.

He described congregations of the synod as missional outposts. He noted that we are never going to have all the money we want but that we have all the money we need. Therefore, we can afford to be generous. With God's blessings come great responsibilities. God expects us to be faithful and generous in return. As a synod we need to have new ideas and undertake experiments. The role of the bishop is to be the "cheerleader-in-chief" for people who want to struggle together as we grow in faith hope and love.

### **Report from the Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries**

The Rev. Eric Wester, Director of the ELCA Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries, described the breadth of ELCA federal chaplaincies. Chaplains walk with members of the U.S. military, veterans and their families. ELCA chaplains are ambassadors of our church.

He highlighted the new ELW Prayer Book for the Armed Services. He challenged the congregations of the synod to provide copies of this resource to members of their congregation who serve in the Armed Forces.

Finally, he talked about how our ELCA chaplains live out our full communion partnership with the Episcopal Church USA, sharing in various chaplaincy ministries and participating in common retreats.

### **Service of Installation and Sending**

Pr. Wester led the worship service concluding the Synod Assembly.

The Synod Council was installed at this service.