

Minutes of the 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly

Northern Illinois Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Thirty-Third Annual Assembly June 18-19, 2021 via Zoom

Plenary Session 1- Friday, June 18, 6:30 p.m.

Opening Worship/Opening of the Assembly

After a note of welcome, Bishop Clements invited the assembly to join in worship through a video. Following the worship video, the bishop led the assembly in the “Opening of the Assembly” liturgy and prayer. Bishop Clements welcomed and thanked everyone for their participation as members of the Body of Christ. He gave a brief preview of the Assembly, including information on how this Zoom assembly would be conducted.

Credentials Report

The bishop presented the Credentials Committee report, noting that there were 193 Lay Voting Members (61%) and 125 Rostered Ministers (39%) in attendance. The bishop thanked the members of the Credentials Committee and declared a quorum was established.

Adoption of the Rules of the Assembly

Secretary Don Knowles, on behalf of the Synod Council, moved the adoption of the rules of the 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly as found in the Bulletin of Reports. The bishop explained that no second was required as the Rules were coming from the Synod Council.

ACTION SA-21-06-01 The Rules of the Assembly were adopted.

Adoption of the Agenda

Secretary Knowles, on behalf of the Synod Council, moved that the agenda for the Synod Assembly, as found in the Bulletin of Reports, be adopted as the agenda for the 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly. No second was required.

ACTION SA-21-06-02 The motion to adopt the agenda was approved.

Video Report

Following a brief break, a video report from LSSI was presented and the bishop led the assembly in prayer.

Vice-President’s Report

A video report from Vice-President Minnette Scott was received. The bishop thanked the Vice-President for her work among us.

Certification of the 2019 Synod Assembly Minutes

The bishop reported that the Minutes Review Committee had reviewed the minutes of the 2019 Northern Illinois Synod Assembly and found them to be a fair and accurate representation of the assembly and moved to approve the minutes. No second needed.

ACTION SA-21-06-03 The 2019 Synod Assembly minutes were adopted, as presented.

Secretary's Report

A video report from Secretary Knowles was received. The bishop also noted that the Report of the Synod Council, provided by the secretary, could be found in the Bulletin of Reports. The bishop thanked Pastor Knowles for his work.

Adoption of Salary Guidelines

Secretary Knowles, on behalf of the Synod Council, moved to adopt the proposed 2022 Rostered Minister Salary Guidelines which could be found in the Bulletin of Reports. No second needed.

ACTION SA-21-06-04 The 2022 Rostered Minister Salary Guidelines were adopted.

Adoption of Northern Illinois Synod Constitution

On behalf of the Synod Council, Secretary Knowles moved to substitute the proposed 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Constitution for the 2019 Northern Illinois Synod Constitution. No second needed.

The following discussion took place:

- Brandon Graves (Salem, Sycamore) moved the following amendment to be added at 8.51.01: "An officer shall not be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms." The motion was seconded.
Brandon Nelson spoke in favor of the amendment, saying that without a term limit officers could remain in office for a long time. This amendment would allow more people to participate.
- Chris Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) asked if this amendment would apply to current officers. Brandon Nelson said his intention was that current officers would be exempt.
- The Rev. Jacob Gawlik (St. John, Sterling) asked for a point of clarification.
- The Rev. Bret Reedy (Plattville, Minooka) asked for a clarification on the wording of the amendment.
- Terry Miller (Zion, Belvidere) asked for additional clarification on the wording of the amendment.
- Diane Anderson (Capron, Capron) expressed a concern about a continuation of synod staff if all the terms ended at the same time. The bishop said that issue would be addressed so that it would not happen.
- The Rev. Zach Baer (Living Waters, Crystal Lake) said that technically a bishop is called and believed that a limit to the number of terms would be contrary to a sense of call.
- The Rev. Roger Asplund (Trinity, Mt. Morris) asked for additional clarification on the wording of the amendment.

- Jason Gustafson (Cambridge, Cambridge) recommended that the word “may” be changed to “shall.” The mover allowed that change as a friendly amendment.
- The Rev. Bret Reedy (Plattville, Minooka) commented on the distinction between the bishop being elected to the office and not called.
- Jim Spring (Bethany, Leland) questioned the distinction between “shall” and “may.”

The bishop did not recognize any other speakers for the amendment and called for a vote. The proposed amendment was defeated.

Discussion continued on the Proposed Constitution.

- Mary Foskitt (Immanuel, Rock Falls) asked for clarification regarding S8.11.01, wondering what the special circumstances might be in which a bishop would receive pay for work with another expression of this church. The bishop explained the intent behind the article.

Point of Order:

- Chris Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) said that there appeared to still be people waiting to speak to the term-limit amendment and asked if that did not make the previous vote invalid.
- After consulting with the parliamentarian, the bishop declared the previous vote on the term-limit amendment invalid.

Discussion on the proposed amendment was resumed.

- Ron Simmons (Zion, Rockford) spoke in favor of the amendment saying that term limits would provide greater inclusivity and diversity in the officers of the synod.
- The Rev. Ken Storck (Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford) agreed that term limits could lead to greater inclusivity.
- The Rev. JoAnna Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) spoke in favor of the amendment, saying that she understands that bishop is already under a term call.
- The Rev. Joseph O’Donnell (St. Paul, Dixon) called the question.

The assembly voted to end discussion on the amendment.

ACTION SA-21-06-05 Motion to amend the proposed constitution with the addition of 8.51.01 was adopted.

Discussion of the proposed constitution, as amended, continued.

- The Rev. Jeff Schlesinger (Heart of Illinois Parish, Compton & Lee) moved an amendment to S12.02 adding the following after the word “intervals,” “or at the formation of, or for the benefit of, shared ministries between congregations who exist in different conferences.”

Pastor Schlesinger spoke in favor of the amendment, saying that conference boundaries should consider parish/shared ministries in which the cooperating congregations may be in different conferences.

- The Rev. Andrew Kayes (Emmanuel, Oregon) suggested that the word “exist” be changed to “reside.” Pastor Schlesinger accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment.

With no further discussion, the assembly voted on the amendment to S12.02 which reads, “or at the formation of, or for the benefit of, shared ministries between congregations who reside in different conferences.”

ACTION SA-21-06-06 Motion to amend the proposed constitution with an amendment to S12.02 was adopted.

Discussion on the proposed constitution, as amended, continued.

- Brandon Graves (Salem, Sycamore) called the question.

The assembly voted to end discussion on the proposed constitution.

The assembly adopted the proposed 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Constitution with 86% of voting members voting in favor.

ACTION SA-21-06-07 The proposed 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Constitution, as amended, was adopted.

Following a break a video report from Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center was shown.

- John Hoelzer (Immanuel, Compton) raised a point of order, expressing disappointment with the abrupt end to the discussion regarding the constitution. He noted he had concern about some ambiguity in the language of the constitution regarding young adults that could not now be addressed. The bishop asked Mr. Hoelzer to forward those concerns to his office.
- Chris Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) raised a point of order, asking if there may an icon available in Zoom that could be used to distinguish whether a person wished to speak for or against a motion versus someone who wished to raise a point of order. The bishop responded that the staff had explored that possibility earlier and it was not feasible.
- The Rev. John Cunningham (Bethany, Crystal Lake) also asked if there might be a way to distinguish the reason someone had entered the queue to speak.
- Evelyn Volz (First, Monmouth) also expressed displeasure with the process of voting and the end of the discussion.
- Vicar Kyle Johnson (Grace, Wilmington) agreed with the previous speakers.
- The Rev. Andy Tyrell (Grace, Richmond) raised a point of order and asked to have the assembly return to the agenda.

Affirmation of 2022 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members Elected by Conferences

On behalf of the Synod Council, Secretary Knowles moved that the eight members elected by the conferences and affirmed by the Synod Council be affirmed by the assembly to serve at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. The eight members are:

- Elaine Gallenbeck, (Emmanuel, Oregon – Central Conference)
- Nathaniel Knutson (Peace, New Lenox – East Conference)
- The Rev. Bill Dahlberg (Salem, Rockford – North Conference)
- Maria Bruno (Bethany, Crystal Lake – Northeast Conference)
- The Rev. Karen Tews (Prince of Peace, Freeport – Northwest Conference)
- The Rev. Tom Redig (St. John's, Peru – Central Conference)
- Kent Kindelsperger (Swedona, Lynn Center – Southwest Conference)
- Sharon Varallo (St. John's, Rock Island – West Conference).

ACTION SA-21-06-08 The motion to affirm 2022 Churchwide Voting Members elected by the conferences was adopted.

- The Rev. Scott Benolkin (Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford) raised a point of order, asking if there is no way to distinguish the reason that someone has joined the queue to speak, can the assembly proceed and still follow Robert's Rule of Order. The bishop stated he believe we could and assured the assembly that the staff, before the assembly resumed on Saturday, would discuss the issue of identifying speakers who wish to raise a point of order.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tammie Farley's video report was presented. Ms. Farley also reviewed the financial reports as found in the Bulletin of Reports. The report was received, and Bishop Clements thanked the treasurer for her ministry among us.

Celebrations

A number of celebrations were recognized through video reports.

- Congregation Anniversaries:
 - Trinity, Mt. Morris – 175 years
- 50 (and 51) Years of Service, including those who could not be recognized in 2020:
 - Deacon Bob Haak
 - The Rev. Dr. John Heins
 - The Rev. Rob Kinnear
 - The Rev. Neville Kretzmann
 - Deacon Carol Ann Ostrom
 - The Rev. Jim Roberts
 - The Rev. David Nelson

Prayers of Remembrance

A video worship remembering those rostered ministers of the synod who had died since the 2019 Synod Assembly. Those remembered were:

- The Rev. Richard Housman
- The Rev. William Wittig
- The Rev. Troy Hedrick
- The Rev. Charles Steinke
- The Rev. Howard Jacobson
- The Rev. David Rasmussen
- The Rev. Paul Wolff
- The Rev. Virgil Juliot
- The Rev. Linda Kersten
- The Rev. Gene Peisker
- The Rev. Kenneth Swanberg
- The Rev. John Leaf
- The Rev. Jane McChesney
- The Rev. Arthur Stees

With the conclusion of the Prayers of Remembrance Plenary Session 1 ended.

Plenary Session 2- Saturday, June 19, 8:30 a.m.

Plenary Session 2 began with worship via video, with the Rev. Janet Hunt as the preacher. Following the worship, the bishop welcomed everyone back to the assembly.

Credentials Report

Bishop Clements read the credentials report indicating there were 197 (60%) lay voting members and 130 (40%) rostered ministers credentialed. The bishop declared a quorum had been established.

Bishop's Report

The bishop asked Vice-President Scott to assume the chair of the assembly. Bishop Clements began his report by offering thanks to the synod staff for their work throughout the pandemic, to those who helped make this synod assembly possible, to the congregations of the synod that remained faithful to their ministries during the past year, and to Paulette, his wife, for her support. In the rest of his report, which was in the form of a video, the bishop reminded congregations that they have a history that has led them to this moment in the post-pandemic world. Through the challenges of the pandemic, congregations have learned how to do ministry in new ways that will continue to benefit their ministry. The bishop encouraged congregations to consider why they were planted where they are and how they can continue to serve in that context.

Vice-President Scott relinquished the chair back to the bishop.

Video Reports

Video reports from Light Youth Ministry and the Northeast Conference were presented.

Following a brief break, the bishop gathered the assembly back together with prayer.

Adoption of Nominations and Official Ballot

After thanking the members of the nominating committee and those willing to stand for election to various offices in the synod, the bishop read the names of those who were nominated, the office for which they were nominated, and the term. With each office he asked if there were further nominations from the floor. After all nominations were read, and with no nominations from the floor, Secretary Knowles moved that these nominations be the official ballot of the Synod Assembly. No second was needed.

- John Hoelzer (Immanuel, Compton) asked for a definition of “Young Adult.” The bishop explained that term is defined by the ELCA.
- Chris Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) asked if a unanimous ballot could be cast. The bishop ruled that there must be a vote.
- Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock) expressed concern about the stipulation that the synod’s churchwide voting members be youth/young adults or a person of color in order to meet churchwide assembly goals. He asked if that can be changed in three years to provide opportunities for others to participate in the churchwide assembly. The bishop promised to look into the matter.

The assembly voted to adopt the official ballot of the assembly as read by the bishop.

ACTION SA-21-06-09 The nominations, as presented, were approved as the official ballot of the Synod Assembly.

Video Report

The Social Ministry Committee video report was presented.

Bible Study

Bishop Clements led the assembly in prayer and then introduced Dr. David Lose, senior pastor at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, as the assembly’s Bible study leader. The Bible study was presented via video.

Dr. Lose focused his study primarily on the resurrection story from Luke 24, highlighting three sections, verse 11, verse 41 and verses 13-35 in which he emphasized that God was at work differently than the way “they had hoped.”

After the Bible study the bishop invited the members of the assembly to take a short “stand and stretch” break.

Video Report

The Congregational Life Committee video report was presented followed by prayer led by Bishop Clements.

Adoption of the 2022 Proposed Budget

On behalf of the Synod Council, Secretary Knowles moved that the budget prepared by the Finance Committee and adopted by the Synod Council, as it appeared in the Bulletin of Reports, be adopted as the budget for Fiscal Year 2022 for the Northern Illinois Synod. No second needed.

Treasurer Tammie Farley commented on the current fiscal position of the synod and noted that the synod received a clean audit report. She thanked the Finance Committee for their work. She then spoke about the budget in broad categories, highlighting that the Northern Illinois Synod continues to support the ELCA at 55%. She noted that the 2022 budget is not significantly different than the 2021 budget.

- Chris Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) asked if there was money budgeted for new and emerging ministries, which is an emphasis in the synod’s mission statement. Treasurer Farley responded that money for such ministries is available through funds listed in the synod’s policy statements and through the work of the various committees.
- The Rev. Zach Baer (Living Waters, Crystal Lake) asked how a budget that is essentially the same as the previous budget allows for innovation. He encouraged the Synod Council to include innovation in future budget plans.

With no further discussion, the bishop led the assembly in prayer, then called for the vote on the proposed budget.

ACTION SA-21-06-10 The 2022 Northern Illinois Synod budget was adopted as proposed.

Video Report

The Global Mission Committee video report was presented.

Elections

After explaining the process for casting a ballot, the bishop offered a word of prayer. Assembly voting members were then invited to cast their ballots and then break for lunch.

Video Report

Following the lunch break the video, “Peace, Not Walls” was presented.

Report of Elections

The bishop offered a word of prayer then presented the results of the election and declared the following as elected:

Elected to Synod Council (2-year terms):

- Carol Swenson – Our Savior’s, Rockford
- Ryan Mackey – Trinity, Manlius
- Monique Castillo - Immanuel, Rock Falls
- Taylor Ufkin – Immanuel, Dixon
- The Rev. Cathy Daharsh – Bethany, Crystal Lake

Elected to Synod Council Youth Representative (1-year term):

- Madi Casteel – Cambridge, Cambridge

Elected to Synod Council (3-year terms):

- Nancy Lillevold – Prince of Peace, Freeport
- Jim Spring– Bethany, Leland
- The Rev. Andy Tyrrell – Grace, Richmond
- The Rev. Brad Haugen – Followers of Christ, Plainfield

Elected to Congregational Life Committee (2-year terms):

- Georgiana Grossman – Immanuel, Amboy
- Brandon Graves– Salem, Sycamore
- The Rev. Christopher Lee – First, Rock Island

Elected to Congregational Life Committee (3-year terms):

- Carol Johnson – Prince of Peace, Freeport
- Kent Kindelsperger– Swedona, Lynn Center

Elected to the Global Mission Committee (1-year term):

- The Rev. Tammy Anderson- Bethesda, Morrison

Elected to the Global Mission Committee (2-year terms):

- Janet Larson – First, Geneseo
- Mike Wadle– First, DeKalb
- The Rev. Chris Schoon – St. John’s, Somonauk

Elected to the Global Mission Committee (3-year terms):

- Dr. Alan Esker – Good Shepherd, Lena
- The Rev. Makayla Dahleen– St. Paul’s, Sterling
- The Rev. Tucker O’Leary – Grace, Knoxville

Elected to the Ministry Support Committee (1-year term):

- The Rev. Sharon Rogers – First, DeKalb

Elected to the Ministry Support Committee (2-year terms):

- Jim Cantrell – Peace, Morris
- The Rev. Jen Beamsley - St. John, Joliet
- The Rev. Doug Liston – Joyful Harvest, Johnsburg

Elected to the Ministry Support Committee (3-year terms):

- Julie Eshleman – St. Mark, Rockford
- Bill Nelson – First, Geneseo
- The Rev. Vince Marolla – First, Galesburg

Elected to the Outreach Committee (2-year terms):

- Lisa Gerloff-Banker – Grace, Woodstock
- The Rev. Stacie Fidler – St. John’s, Rock Island

Elected to the Outreach Committee (3-year terms):

- The Rev. Sarah Wilson – St. Barnabas, Cary
- The Rev. Brandon Nelson - GPS Faith Community, Machesney Park

Elected to the Social Ministry Committee (2-year terms):

- Annette Petersen – Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley
- Dr. Peter Kivisto – St. John’s, Rock Island
- The Rev. Carol Soderholm – Trinity, Mt. Morris
- The Rev. Scott Ralston – Faith, Forreston

Elected to the Social Ministry Committee (3-year terms):

- Larry Cording – Shepherd of the Hills, Scales Mound
- The Rev. Jacob Gawlik – St. John’s, Sterling

Elected to the Consultation Committee (2-year terms):

- The Rev. Frank Langholf – Emmanuel, Rockford

Elected to the Social Ministry Committee (6-year terms):

- Donna Kelly – Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley
- Trenton Ferro – St. John, Joliet
- The Rev. Lu Cantrell – Peace, Morris
- The Rev. Eric Lemonholm – LC of the Good Shepherd, Rockford

Elected to the Discipline Committee (6-year terms):

- Susan Gavle – Bethany, Crystal Lake
- Maurice Nelson – First, Geneseo
- The Rev. Jill Flynn – Gloria Dei, Rockford
- The Rev. Nord Swanstrom – First, Pecatonica

Elected to serve as 2022 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members:

- Christina King – First, Galesburg
- Kurtis Arndt – Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley

- The Rev. Mack Patrick – First, DeKalb
- Madi Casteel – Cambridge, Cambridge
- The Rev. José Cortes – Messiah, Aledo/San José Abreo, Moline

Video Report

The video report from Portico Benefit Services was presented.

Resolution R-1

The bishop introduced Mr. Steve Larsen, chairperson of the Resolutions Committee and invited him to read the resolves for R-1.

R-1: Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings

WHEREAS, anti-Semitic words, deeds, and attitudes do real harm to our Jewish neighbors, and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has repudiated anti-Semitism and expressed its desire to live in “love and respect for the Jewish people” (Declaration to the Jewish Community, 1994), and

WHEREAS, passages of the New Testament which can be interpreted as anti-Jewish or supercessionist (i.e. supporting the idea that God has rejected the Jews) are included in our lectionary, and

WHEREAS, in the time in which the New Testament was written, the word Ἰουδαῖοι (ee-oo-DIE-oy), was used as a marker of geographic and ethnic identity (that is, it denoted people from Judaea as distinct from Galilee, Samaria, or other parts of the world) and “Israelite” was used to identify the people who worshiped the God of Israel wherever they lived, that is the people whom we today would identify as “Jewish,” and

WHEREAS, the word “Jews” in the New Testament is usually an inaccurate translation of the Greek Ἰουδαῖοι, and

WHEREAS, the preferred translation used by Augsburg Fortress is the NRSV, which uses the inaccurate and potentially harmful translation “Jews” in almost every instance;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the preachers and teachers of the Northern Illinois Synod be encouraged to address the issues of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology (such as the teaching that the Jewish people are responsible for the death of Jesus and/or the idea that God has rejected the Jews); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the preachers, and teachers of the Northern Illinois Synod consider what is written in the texts that include Ἰουδαῖοι, what the texts meant when they were written, and what they have come to mean in relationship to anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology, and how they might be understood in ways that contribute to dismantling anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology in proclamation and teaching: and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that preachers, teachers, and lectors of the Northern Illinois Synod be encouraged, when reading in public, to substitute a more appropriate translation of Ἰουδαῖοι where the English translation uses the word “Jews.” Examples include “Judeans,” “Religious Leaders,” and “locals;” and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for referral and disposition to the appropriate unit or office of the churchwide organization in accordance with the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church in order to address the issues of anti-Jewish language in our lectionary and teaching materials.

- The Rev. Brant Clements (Trinity, Mt. Morris), as one of the drafters of the resolution, spoke to resolution. He noted that there are different understandings of the word Ἰουδαῖοι in scripture, depending on the context. Using the word “Jews” in all instances can lead to anti-Semitic interpretations. R-1 seeks to address those concerns and proposes using translations that avoid anti-Semitic interpretations.
- The Rev. Frank Langholf (Emmanuel, Rockford) moved to amend R-1 with the addition of the following, to be the second “Resolved:”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the preachers and teachers of the Northern Illinois Synod consider what is written in the texts that include Ἰουδαῖοι, what the texts meant when they were written, and what they have come to mean in relationship to anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology, and how they might be understood in ways that contribute to dismantling anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology in proclamation and teaching.
- Jim Spring (Bethany, Leland) spoke in support of R-1, especially as an opportunity to teach about anti-Semitism.

With no further discussion, the assembly voted to adopt the amendment to R-1.

Discussion continued on R-1 as amended.

- The Rev. Scott Benolkin (Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford) raised a point of order, noting the entire amendment was not printed on the voting screen. The bishop informed the assembly that there is a limit to the number of characters allowed on that particular screen.
- Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock) asked who would be responsible for editing the text for worship.
- The Rev. Brant Clements (Trinity, Mt. Morris) said that he intended to create a list of appropriate substitutions that would be published by the synod.
- Vicar Kyle Johnson (Grace, Wilmington) asked for a point of information. He wanted to know what the distinction was between “encouraged” and “expected.”
- The Rev. Brant Clements (Trinity, Mt. Morris) said the wording in the resolves would take precedence.
- Harlan Johnson (Emmanuel, Rockford) spoke in favor of R-1.
- The Rev. Zach Baer (Living Waters, Crystal Lake) asked if congregations should be expected to change.

- The Rev. Frank Langholf (Emmanuel, Rockford) suggested that Pastor Baer could introduce an amendment.
- The Rev. Roger Asplund (Trinity, Mt. Morris) referred to the title of R-1 which suggests that the actions of change fall primarily to rostered leaders.
- Chris Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) called the question.

The assembly voted to end discussion on R-1

ACTION SA-21-06-11 R-1 Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings was adopted as amended.

Churchwide Representative

Bishop Clements introduced the Churchwide Representative, Ms. Victoria Flood, who is the Director for Mission Support. Ms. Flood’s report was via video and emphasized our ministries together. The presentation included videos from ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton, The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla (Executive Director for Service and Justice), John Weit (Executive for Worship), Bill Horne (Vice President of the ELCA), and Rachel Wind (Executive for Philanthropy).

- The Rev. Ken Storck (Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford) encouraged members of the synod to use their assets in support of the ELCA through use of the Mission Investment Fund.
- Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock) asked if the time of the pandemic led people to realize the importance of church more than at other times. Ms. Flood replied that she believed the time of the pandemic helped people to see connections with the wider church.

Video Report

Following a brief break, a video report for Grace Place Campus Ministries was presented, followed by prayer by the bishop.

Resolution R-2

The bishop invited Mr. Steve Larsen to read the resolves for R-2.

R-2 ELCA Advocacy Support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act

WHEREAS, God created heaven and earth and everything therein and proclaimed it good (Gen 1:1ff); and God has entrusted humankind with the care of the earth (Gen 2:15); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has adopted social policy statements, “Caring for Creation” (1993) and “Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood” (1999) that call for economic and environmental justice, to protect the health and integrity of creation both for its own sake and for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, and for economic justice, to consider how our actions affect the ability of

all people to provide for their material needs and the needs of their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, in 1993 with the Caring for Creation social statement, we realized the urgency was already “widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of] dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide” from the burning of fossil fuels, and that “action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children’s children. Time is very short;” and

WHEREAS, carbon pricing is one policy tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion, which complements other tools like regulations on polluting industries and tax incentives encouraging investment in energy efficiency and renewable forms of energy production; and

WHEREAS, in January 2019, over 3,500 of our nation’s leading economists across the political spectrum, including 28 Nobel Laureates and 4 former chairs of the Federal Reserve, issued a joint “Economists’ Statement on Carbon Dividends” that argued “A carbon tax offers the most cost-effective lever to reduce carbon emissions at the scale and speed that is necessary,” but also recommended “the revenue should be returned directly to U.S. citizens through equal lump-sum rebates,” and concluded “The majority of American families, including the most vulnerable, will benefit financially by receiving more in ‘carbon dividends’ than they pay in increased energy prices;”[1] and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the Churchwide Assembly received with gratitude a memorial from the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin regarding a Carbon Fee and Dividend, and the Church Council directed the Domestic Mission unit to develop “a plan that promotes educational resources on Carbon Fee and Dividend to assist in forming the basis for any potential advocacy strategy;”[2] and

WHEREAS, in October 2019 ELCA Advocacy published a primer on “Carbon Pricing Basics” that provides an overview to the topic and identifies several principles rooted in ELCA social statements that should be used to assess carbon pricing proposals;[3] and

WHEREAS, the “Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019”[4] has received bipartisan support in the last two sessions in Congress and is consistent with the principles outlined in ELCA Advocacy’s “Carbon Pricing Basics;” and

WHEREAS, ELCA Advocacy does advocate for particular pieces of legislation after careful review and moral grounding in the ELCA’s social statements;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod urge ELCA Advocacy to advocate for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, or similar legislation during the 117th United States Congress and, if necessary, future Congresses; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the congregations in our synod be encouraged to utilize “Carbon Pricing Basics” in adult education opportunities, and that the Creation Care Committee be directed to provide a synod wide study of the same document; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Council receive this resolution at their next meeting and forward it to the ELCA Church Council or its Executive Committee for further action by directing ELCA Advocacy to advocate for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act or similar legislation.

[1] Climate Leadership Council, “Economists Statement on Carbon Dividends,” January 17, 2019.

[2] Report of Actions of the Church Council (November 12-14, 2020).

[3] ELCA Advocacy, “Carbon Pricing Basics,” October 2019.

[4] H.R. 763, Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019.

- The Rev. Jeff Schlesinger (Heart of Illinois Parish, Compton & Lee), as one of the authors of the resolution, spoke to the resolution. He acknowledged that this resolution was asking to advocate for a political policy, but there would be benefits in altered behavior.
- Chris Patterson (Grace, Loves Park) ask for a clarification. He wondered if the resolution was addressing a specific bill in congress and if there was a legal liability in advocating for a specific bill.
- The Rev. Jeff Schlesinger (Heart of Illinois Parish, Compton & Lee) said there is no current bill related to this resolution. The resolution calls for advocating for a policy.
- Harlan Johnson (Emmanuel, Rockford) voiced strong support for the resolution and noted that it was advocating something different from “cap and trade.”
- Joan Soltwisch (Resurrection, Channahon) related some of the science related to climate change as she spoke for the resolution.
- The Rev. Scott Benolkin (Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford) noted that current economic analyses indicate that the benefits of controlling greenhouse gases outweigh the costs.
- Paul Lockwood (Grace, Woodstock) wondered why the resolution did not call for memorializing the Churchwide Assembly instead of forwarding it to the ELCA Church Council. The bishop indicated that going to the Church Council would result in more immediate consideration.

With no further discussion, following prayer, the bishop called for a vote on R-2.

ACTION SA-21-06-12 R-2 ELCA Advocacy Support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act was adopted.

50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women

A video celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women was presented.

Bishop's Announcement

After thanking Our Savior's, Rockford for hosting the Synod Assembly, the synod staff for their work in preparing the assembly, and all the volunteers who worked on the assembly, the bishop announced that, at the 2022 Assembly, he would not seek a second term as bishop.

A motion to adjourn was received and seconded. The assembly voted to adjourn at 2:25 p.m.

The bishop led the assembly in the Order for the Closing of the Assembly.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Donald Knowles
Secretary of the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA

- ACTION SA 21-06-01 The Rules of the Assembly were adopted.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-02 The motion to adopt the agenda was approved.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-03 The 2019 Synod Assembly minutes were adopted, as presented.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-04 The 2022 Rostered Minister Salary Guidelines were adopted.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-05 Motion to amend the proposed constitution with the addition of 8.51.01 was adopted.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-06 Motion to amend the proposed constitution with an amendment to S12.02 was adopted.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-07 The proposed 2021 Northern Illinois Synod Constitution, as amended, was adopted.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-08 The motion to affirm 2022 Churchwide Voting Members elected by the conferences as adopted.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-09 The nominations, as presented, were approved as the official ballot of the Synod Assembly.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-10 The 2022 Northern Illinois Synod budget was adopted as proposed.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-11 R-1 Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings was adopted as amended.**
- ACTION SA-21-06-12 R-2 ELCA Advocacy Support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act was adopted.**