



Northeastern Minnesota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Churchwide Assembly 2019 Story

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly is over! Here are the Voting Members from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod who spent the week with 900-some other Voting members in long hours in careful deliberation and prayer during the week in Milwaukee:

Michael Olson (Youth Voting member), Pr. Steve Rye, Donna Bergstrom, Pr. Amanda Kossow, Rachel Berry (Vice President of our Synod), Suzanne Rye, Pr. John Dietz, Jennifer Simonson, (Deacon Candidate), Kari Olson (Deacon Candidate) Pr. Rollie Bockbrader (Sec. of our Synod), Pr. Kimberly Sturtz, Hannah Bockbrader (Candidate for Word and Sacrament Minister), Brenda Wagner (Synodically Authorized Minister), and myself, your Bishop.

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was re-elected Presiding Bishop of the ELCA and Deacon Sue Rothmeyer (Our Keynote speaker back in May at our own Synod Assembly) was elected the new Secretary of the ELCA ! In the midst of some difficult church decisions, daily worship empowered us, and centered us on why being Lutheran Christians in the world matters – namely - the gospel of Jesus Christ and God’s reconciling grace for the whole world – no exceptions. We passed bold historic initiatives/decisions and resolutions, heard engaging reports of our worldwide ministries in this church, and delighted in the company of over 1,000 other ELCA Lutherans at mealtime, Bible study and breaks. We passed a new Social Statement, “Faith, Sexism and Justice.” <https://tinyurl.com/y3b3ttc2>. We passed a Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment” <https://tinyurl.com/y4gyfjif> and, with tears of joy, applauded the 50-some Religious leaders on stage that we have vowed to work with as partners in promoting the goodness of God to all.

Note this: We Repudiated Racism and White Privilege, passed a Declaration to people of African Descent, <https://tinyurl.com/yxv4agku> and established June 17th as a Feast Day in remembrance of the “Emmanuel 9.” Of particular and wonderfully scandalous importance, we declared the ELCA to be a Sanctuary Church Body! (More on what that means that will be forthcoming in our Synod Online communications each week – stay tuned!) I, along with over 700 people marched to the local ICE Office to call for an end to separation of families at the border and the closing of detention camps.

You may have watched the live streaming of the Assembly or have been following our own NE MN Synod Facebook or Twitter. We worked hard and well together. Your Voting members will share experiences online in the coming weeks. I encourage each of you to go to our ELCA Website to find all the news; It’s well worth doing to see the breadth and depth of this church we belong to!

+Bishop Thomas M. Aitken (Glad to be an ELCA Lutheran)