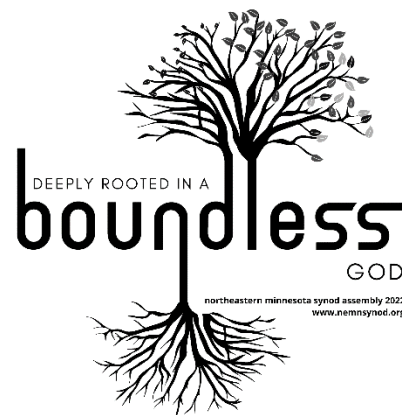


“Deeply Rooted in a Boundless God” – 2022 Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly Synopsis

On April 29-May 1, 2022 the Northeastern Minnesota Synod gathered for their 35th Annual Synod Assembly. This was the first assembly to be held in person since 2020 and the first time the assembly offered a hybrid option. The theme verse for the assembly was Ephesians 3:17b (CEV), “*Stand firm and be deeply rooted in God’s love.*” Bishop Amy Odgren welcomed everyone and chaired the assembly. Bishop Amy thanked everyone for participating, “*We are people of the resurrection and new life is a promise.*” Reflecting on her 2020 Call to serve as Bishop during COVID times, she lifted up the many ministry partners for the good work we share together. “*This Call to serve as your Bishop has been humbling, daunting, yet joy filled as we remain hopeful in the gospel,*” Odgren shared.



Format

This was the first ever hybrid assembly with 77 participants gathering on Zoom and 197 in-person participants at Cragun’s Resort in Brainerd. The Quilt Auction and Marketplace were back but bidding was done online. Zoom participants had the opportunity to ask their questions and their faces were seen on the plenary screens.

Worship Services & Devotions

All spoken portions of the worship services and daily devotions were based on the [NE MN Synod Journey](#) scripture text and were led in person. Thank you to the many vocalists, choirs, musicians, directors, accompanists who provided videos or mp3’s for our worship music. (You will see these running on the Synod website and FB page.) Thank you too, to Bethany Lutheran in Cromwell for the use of their processional cross and to Salem Lutheran in Deerwood for the use of their baptismal bowl. Bishop Amy Odgren preached at the Sunday morning service (video/manuscript available on the website) and led the assembly in an Affirmation of Baptism. Fourteen congregations provided music videos for the worship services and devotions and more than 23 congregations were represented by the leaders for worship, devotions, IT, registration, etc. A huge Thank You to Legacy Productions and the tech/IT team for a job well done throughout the services and assembly!

Dwelling in the Word

Catherine Anderson, Synod Minister for Discipleship & Christian Community, along with Pastor Erika Nilsen, Lord of Life – Baxter, led the assembly in a variety of methods of encountering scripture utilizing curriculum based on the NE MN Synod Journey/2022 ELCA Youth Gathering curriculum. Participants were deeply rooted in faith and connected to God and each other through table discussion and Zoom breakout conversations. You can download the curriculum to use with your adults and youth at www.nemnsynod.org/Curriculum.

Plenary Sessions

The Assembly Rules & Procedures, the 2022 Agenda, and the 2021 Synod Assembly Minutes were approved by unanimous consent. Any uncontested position in the election was also approved by unanimous consent. Pastor Matt McWaters, Chair-Synod Council Finance Team presented the 2023 Synod Budget and Deacon Brenda Tibbetts, Synod Minister for Leadership Support presented the 2023 Synod Guidelines for Salary, Benefits and Compensation. Voting took place on Sunday and both were passed.

Resolutions

- 22-1A Memorial Calling for a Just Transition to 50% Reduction in US Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030** (from EcoFaith Network, supported by Heartland Conference)
After much discussion, **Memorial passed:** **232 Yes** **16 No**
- 22-2A Resolution: Afghan Adjustment Act - Caring for our Afghan Neighbors** (from Heartland Conference) **Resolution passed:** **242 Yes** **0 No**
- 22-3A Resolution: Supporting Refugees from Ukraine** (from Heartland Conference) (from Heartland Conference) **Resolution passed:** **250 Yes** **0 No**

Approved Resolutions can be found at on the [SA 2022 website/Resolutions](#).

Ministry Partner Presentations:

A blend of live in-person, video presentations and ministry tables provided opportunities to learn more about what we do together as synod and what we do together as the ELCA.

- * **The Rev. Barbara Lund, the ELCA's Sr. Director for Service and Justice** brought greetings from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and shared stories of how God's work is being done throughout the world through our hands. The Northeastern Minnesota Synod's mission support to the ELCA was \$467,000 in 2023. From March 1-14 and from across the ELCA, over \$4.5 million dollars were raised for Lutheran Disaster Response in Eastern Europe. On May 7, nine women will be ordained as Lutheran pastors in Poland. The Northeastern Minnesota Synod has three Fund for Leaders Scholars in Meagan Esterby (called to serve in Philadelphia, PA), Laura Anderson (graduating this spring from Wartburg Seminary and assigned to our synod), and Lars Anderson (completed internship now hired by LCM-Missoula, Montana). Pastor Barbara also provided updates on the YAGM opportunities, AMMPARO, Peace Not Walls, EcoFaith, Advocacy Ministries and Lutheran Disaster/Hunger Response.
- * **SALC Greetings.** The Rev. Anoop David Entrapati from our South Andhra, India Lutheran Church brought special greetings from Bishop Vijayabhaskar Entrapati. Pr. Anoop shared, *"When God's love is manifested, there is justice. At the right moment, your love for me manifested God's love. Thank you for giving hope to people like me."* Pastor Anoop is furthering his graduate studies at Luther Seminary in St. Paul and was hosted by Rev. Mark and Brenda Wagner. Pastor Anoop served as the worship assistant for the Sunday morning closing worship service.
- * **LSS (Lutheran Social Service) Servant of Christ Award** was presented to Knife River Lutheran Church for their outreach work by honoring more than 80 Lake County First Responders & Law Enforcement Officers.
- * **Holy Cow! Look What We Did for Hunger** award was presented to Salem Lutheran, Longville whose hunger gifts averaged \$70.27 per confirmed member.
- * **WELCA Greeting** "Just This, Just Now" presented by SWO President Lynda Lochner who announced that the Northeastern Minnesota Women of the ELCA have already raised \$10,000 for the Circle of Welcome, a partnership with LSS in sponsoring in Afghan family in Minnesota.
- * **LEAD Core Team** (Strategic plan development team) chairperson Deacon Susan Williams provided a PowerPoint presentation on the listening sessions which took place this past year to assist in formulating a synod wide strategy for ministry in the coming years. Participants were also encouraged to provide their input based on the 11 values listed in the report. The link for the full report is on the [synod website/Home](#).
- * **Synod Minister for Discipleship and Christian Community** Catherine Anderson shared some sobering statistics regarding the loneliness among young people in her report, and how important it is we focus on developing relationships, discipleship practices, and leadership development to deeply root youth and adults in a better story. With these in mind, faith formation plans are moving forward in the coming year expanding the Leadership Camp pilot to include all youth and offering an All-Youth Gathering in November. You can [read the full report here](#).
- * **New Ministry Opportunity!** Amazed and excited at how the Holy Spirit works and puts people and resources into place, Director of Evangelical Mission/Synod Minister for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Deacon Colleen Bernu shared exciting news of a new partnership between CHUM, the Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC) and the Northeastern Minnesota Synod and with the Rev. Victor St. George, the first rostered chaplain to serve NERCC in over 10 years. Pastor Victor, an ELCA Minister of Word & Sacrament, will expand the ministry to include sacraments at the request of those living in NERCC and explore how to develop a soft re-entry program that includes a worshipping community. Ordained in 1988, Pastor Victor has served ELCA congregations in North Dakota and Wisconsin, is trained to utilize trauma informed care, and has worked with people in recovery. The cost of \$6,000 financially supports this work for 1 month; \$1,500 financially supports his work in this ministry for one week; and \$200 for one day. You are invited to join in this ministry through prayer and financial support. Contributions can be sent to the NEMN Synod office, 1105 E. Superior St., Upper Suite, Duluth, MN 55802. Please write "NERCC Ministry" on the memo line.
- * **Other Ministry Partners** i.e. Lutheran Campus Ministry, Ministry to Seafarers, EcoFaith, Lay Leader Network, Lutheran Advocacy Minnesota, Together Here Ministries, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, Companion Synods in Honduras, India and Ingria-Russia, Welcome & Reconciling LGBTQIA+, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services, Twin Ports Peace Not Walls, and more can be found in the Bulletin of Reports and links on the [synod website/Ministries](#).

Anniversaries of Ordination and Congregations were also recognized with PowerPoint photos. For a complete list along with the Synod Assembly Photo Album click [here](#).

A **Bishop's Celebratory Reception** was held on Saturday evening in the Sports Centre. Bishop Odgren's Installation took place in November 2020 with a limited amount of people in attendance due to COVID. A very lovely reception was

enjoyed by all this year as we could gather together in person. Thank you to Pastor Erika Nilsen, Pastor Kristin Oltman and Susanne Hinrichs for their creative planning and for the others who assisted as well. You are all greatly appreciated!

Northeastern Minnesota Synod's Representative on the ELCA Churchwide Council

Loren Solberg, Bethel-Trinity, Bovey, was available Saturday evening for an open mic time of discussion regarding the upcoming Social Statement on Church & State and Civic Participation. Solberg is serving on the Task Force working on this document and will be setting up listening sessions around the synod in the coming months. Your input will be greatly appreciated.

Quilt Auction and Market Place

Beautiful quilts and Marketplace items graced the Centre Space and were also available to view and bid online. The Quilt Auction brought in \$10,386; the Marketplace items brought in \$702; plus Hunger gifts of \$80 for a total of: **\$11,168 designated for World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Relief.**

Offerings - designated to Seminary Scholarship Fund and the Seminary Debt Relief totaled: \$4897.

Intern Tauna Roth and Pastor Amy Janssen both shared how grateful they and other seminarians and first call rostered ministers are for these financial gifts that enable them to continue their education and to serve.



If you still wish to contribute an offering you can do so here:

More Information

For more details, information and photos, we encourage you to visit [the Assembly page](#) on the synod website where all documents have now been archived and more pictures/videos will be posted.