

Minutes of the Thirtieth Synod Assembly of the
Southern Ohio Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Theme:
Abundance

Biblical Text: John 6:1-15

Virtual Assembly Via Zoom
June 4-5, 2021

Evening of June 4, 2021, Session 1

Opening Worship with Opening of Assembly

Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt led a 7:00 P.M. Worship. The worship service was streamed on Facebook and YouTube not only for members of the Assembly but for all Southern Ohio Synod congregation members.

At 7:45 P.M., Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt opened the Synod Assembly with opening remarks. The Bishop welcomed special guests Rev. Mike Ward, our keynote speaker; ELCA Representative, the Rev. William Gafkjen, Bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod; and the two Assembly Parliamentarians, Pr. Craig Richter and Mr. Tim Skamfer.

The Bishop Dillahunt reminded Assembly members that three key words for this Assembly are: Patience, Grace, and Humor.

The Bishop called on Synod Council Vice-President, Marjorie Ellis. Ms. Ellis made welcoming remarks on behalf of the Synod Council, read the names of all current Council members, and thanked them for their work this year: Rev. Matthew Byrd, Rev. Mark Combs, Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Mr. David Drumm, Ms. Marjorie Ellis, Ms. Holly Fischer, Mr. Steve Goff, Ms. Jeni Gray, Mr. Roy Hart, Rev. Stephen Kimm, Mr. Imanuel Lyatyuu, Rev. Laura Leach-Shreffler, Ms. Abbie McCandlish, Mr. Kevin Pyle, Ms. Michelle Riesbeck, Ms. Laura Schmidt, Mr. Steven Schnittke, Ms. Cindy Schrader, Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler, Ms. Kathie Skamfer, Ms. Morgan Walker, Mr. Doug Ware, Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Witt, Rev. Ralph Wolfe, and Ms. Susan Wyckoff.

Voting Procedures; Report of the Credentials Committee

Bishop Dillahunt introduced Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chairperson of the Elections Committee, upon whom she called to provide the members of the Assembly with a tutorial in using the Vevox application for voting. Rev. Grate then provided a Credentials Report. Rev. Grate reported that at 8:10 P.M. there were 181 voting members registered and present. *A quorum existed to conduct the business of the Synod.*

Bishop Dillahunt requested whether there was unanimous consent to adopt Synod Council's Continuing Resolution to allow for the assembly to be held virtually.

SA.21.06.01

To adopt the following Continuing Resolution, adopted by Synod Council on December 5, 2020: "In accordance with R.C. Chapter 1702, the Synod Assembly meeting may be conducted using authorized communications equipment, as defined in R.C. 1702.01, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communications, to the full extent permitted by Chapter 1702., ORC."

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Bishop Dillahunt requested whether there was unanimous consent to adopt the Rules of Procedure as submitted. It appeared there was an objection (*it is noted for purposes of the minutes that later it was determined there was not an objection, however, the item proceeded to vote rather than being approved by unanimous consent*).

VOTED

SA.21.06.02

Secretary Fischer moved that the Assembly approve the Rules of Procedure as submitted. 2nd: Pr. Aaron Layne.

APPROVED

It is further noted for purposes of the minutes that the Vevox vote was re-voted as the first vote showed 188 votes, exceeding the number of registered voters. The re-vote showed the motion passed by 180 votes.

Bishop Dillahunt requested whether there was unanimous consent to approve the pre-assembly printed Agenda for the 2021 Synod Assembly as approved by the Southern Ohio Synod Council on April 24, 2021.

SA.21.06.03 **To approve the pre-assembly printed Agenda for the 2021 Synod Assembly as approved by the Southern Ohio Synod Council on April 24, 2021.**

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Bishop Dillahunt requested whether there was unanimous consent to adopt the Bylaw as recommended in the Resolution adopted by Synod Council on December 5, 2020, regarding inclusion of two lay voting members from recognized Campus Ministry sites. The Bishop asked Rev. Robert Abrams to provide background information. Rev. Abrams indicated that this Resolution reflects the prioritizing of participation of young adults in the Church, and was requested by five campus ministries programs in southwestern Ohio, who brought the request to Synod Council.

SA.21.06.04 **To adopt the following Bylaw, as recommended in the Resolution adopted by Synod Council on December 5, 2020:**

“†S13.02.01. The recognized Campus Ministry Sites within this synod may each elect from among its baptized participants not more than two lay voting members to the Synod Assembly. The persons elected under this section shall, when possible, include persons of different genders, and shall not have attained the age of thirty (30) years at the time of the said Synod Assembly.”

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

The Bishop indicated that this Bylaw will be codified and submitted by Secretary Fischer to the ELCA.

Bishop Dillahunt requested whether there was unanimous consent to adopt the April 24, 2021 recommendation of Synod Council to receive Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster on the roster of congregation of the ELCA and to recognize Tikkun Farm as a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community.

SA.21.06.05 **To adopt the April 24, 2021 recommendation of Synod Council to receive Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster onto the roster of congregations of the ELCA; and to recognize Tikkun Farm as a Synod Authorized Worshipping Community.**

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

The Bishop welcomed Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster to the Synod and ELCA, and indicated with the addition of this congregation, the total congregation membership in the Southern Ohio Synod mission territory is 186.

The Bishop provided an overview of the process for receiving nominations. Nominations from the floor must be submitted by email to kuemura@southernohiosynod.org no later than the close of this evening's session, including the nominee biography.

Nominations Committee Report for Synod Council (4 Year Term)

The Bishop introduced Mrs. Michelle Riesbeck, Chair of the Nominations Committee. Mrs. Riesbeck read the names of all nominees for the General Ballot. After the slate of candidates for each position was read, Bishop Dillahunt asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor.

Positions and Candidates:

Central Ohio Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Bonnie Gerber

Central Ohio Conference Lay Man

Stephen Goff

Dayton Conference Lay Man

Rick Davila

Muskingum Conference Lay Man

David Miser

Scioto Conference Lay Woman

Abbie McCandlish

At Large Rostered Minister

Pr. Laura Leach-Shreffler

Pr. Larry Novak

Deacon Nancy A. Trimble

At Large Lay Man

Immanuel Lyatuu

Bennett Whitaker

At Large Lay Woman

Hilda Fohs

Martha Ward

Nominations Committee Report for Churchwide Assembly Positions

Ms. Riesbeck then read the names of all nominees for Churchwide Assembly Positions. After the slate of candidates for each position was read, Bishop Dillahunt asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor.

Positions and Candidates:

Central Ohio Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Elizabeth Clothier

Pr. Bonnie Gerber

Pr. Aaron Layne

Pr. Scott Nellis

Pr. Steve Wachtman

Central Ohio Conference Lay Man

Neil Coryell

Matthew Hazard

Cincinnati Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Jodi Keith

Pr. Corey Wagonfield

Cincinnati Conference Lay Woman

Abby Gaide

Amy Morris

Dayton Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Richard Freudenberger

Pr. Carey Hovland

Pr. William Schwochow

Dayton Conference Lay Man

Nolan Lester

Greg McCullough

Muskingum Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Mark Combs
Pr. Kenneth Hacker

Muskingum Conference Lay Man

David Miser
Steve Schnittke

Northwest Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Larry Novak

Northwest Conference Lay Woman

Cynthia Weikart

Scioto Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Chad Huebner
Pr. Roger Quay

Scioto Conference Lay Woman

Patti Morrow
Kris Hoffman-Thrush
Rebecca Witt

Young Adult

Elizabeth Gilbert
Ethan Roberts

Youth

Caden Lane

Bishop Dillahunt thanked Ms. Riesbeck and the members of the Nominations Committee for their work. The Bishop indicated that the Churchwide Assembly in 2022 is planned to be held in Central Ohio, and information will be forthcoming regarding whether the event will be live or conducted virtually.

Bishop Dillahunt then asked Rev. Christie Beckman to close this evening's session with prayer.

At 8:40 P.M., the Bishop called a recess until 9:00 A.M. on June 5, 2021.

Morning of June 5, 2021, Session 2

At 9:02 AM, the Bishop Dillahunt convened the Assembly. Prior to the opening, Rev. Christie Beckman lead with a scripture reading and prayer. Scripture from: Matthew 6:25-29, 33.

The Bishop addressed the vote yesterday evening regarding Trinity Lutheran, Lancaster and Tikkun Farm, noting that it was important to conduct the vote early in the agenda so that those congregation representatives could participate in the Assembly today. The Bishop reminded all participants that after check-in occurs and a Credential Report is conducted, voting eligibility is closed.

It is noted for purposes of the Minutes that written reports of Synod Council Vice-President Marjorie Ellis and Secretary Holly Fischer, the Candidacy Committee, Thrive!, Cultivate, Lutheran Men in Mission, Women of the ELCA, the Stewardship Committee, and the Hunger Task Force were provided prior to the Assembly and are attached hereto. In addition, written ELCA Reports and Partner & Affiliate Reports were provided prior to the Assembly as noted in the Assembly materials Table of Contents.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Rev. Rebecca Grate reported that at 9:02 A.M. there were 172 voting members e registered and present.

Reference and Counsel Committee Report

Bishop Dillahunt called Rev. Craig Richter and introduced him as the Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee. Rev. Richter reported that the Reference and Counsel Committee had received no proposed resolutions.

The Bishop Dillahunt indicated that if congregations or voting members wish to submit Memorials for consideration, to send these to Southern Ohio Synod Vice-President Ellis and Bishop Dillahunt, who will bring the proposal to Synod Council for review; Council would then submit the Memorial to the ELCA Church Council.

Synod Council Four-Year Term (2021 – 2025) Elections

Bishop Dillahunt called Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chair of the Elections Committee, to conduct Synod Council Elections for terms from 2021 – 2025.

The following positions had only one candidate. Rev. Grate asked for approval of the candidates by unanimous consent. After each candidate's name was read, Rev. Grate asked if there were any objections. There were none.

The following candidates were declared elected by Bishop Dillahunt pursuant to unanimous consent:

Central Ohio Conference Rostered Minister: Pr. Bonnie Gerber

Central Ohio Conference Lay Man: Stephen Goff

Dayton Conference Lay Man: Rick Davila

Muskingum Conference Lay Man: David Miser

Scioto Conference Lay Woman: Abbie McCandlish

The following positions with more than one candidate were voted upon individually via the Vevox application. Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chair of the Elections Committee, supervised the election process and announced the results of the First Ballot of the General Election for the Synod Council positions following the vote for each individual position. Rev. Grate explained that a simple majority vote was required for each position to be elected. The results were:

*At Large Rostered Minister

Pr. Laura Leach-Shreffler

Pr. Larry Novak

Deacon Nancy A. Trimble

*It is noted for purposes of the minutes that upon the first vote, 188 votes were cast exceeding the total number of credentialed voters (172). A re-vote was conducted with 186 votes cast, again exceeding the total number of credentialed voters. Upon a third re-vote, Pastor Dillahunt moved to obtain unanimous consent to amend the agenda to authorize a new Credential Report, as follows:

SA.21.06.6 To amend the Agenda for the 2021 Synod Assembly to conduct another Credential Report.

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Report of the Credentials Committee

Rev. Rebecca Grate reported that at 9:17 A.M. there were 206 voting members registered and present. A re-vote was conducted with results as follows:

At Large Rostered Minister

Pr. Laura Leach-Shreffler – 40.96%

Pr. Larry Novak – 26.06%
Deacon Nancy A. Trimble – 32.98%

Bishop Dillahunt declared that a second ballot would be conducted later in the agenda, between the following two candidates: Pr. Leach-Shreffler and Deacon Nancy A. Trimble.

At Large Lay Man

Immanuel Lyatuu	82.38% Elected
Bennett Whitaker	17.62%

At Large Lay Woman

Hilda Fohs	40.54%
Martha Ward	59.46% Elected

Churchwide Assembly Elections

Bishop Dillahunt called Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chair of the Elections Committee, to conduct Churchwide Assembly Elections.

The following positions had only one candidate. Rev. Grate asked for approval of the candidates by unanimous consent. After each candidate’s name was read, Rev. Grate asked if there were any objections. There were none.

The following candidates were declared elected by Bishop Dillahunt pursuant to unanimous consent:

Northwest Conference Rostered Minister: Pr. Larry Novak

Northwest Conference Lay Woman: Cynthia Weikart

Youth: Caden Lane

Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chair of the Elections Committee, then supervised the election process and announced the results of the First Ballot of the Churchwide Assembly Elections. She reiterated that a majority vote prevailed. The results are:

Central Ohio Conference Rostered Minister
Pr. Elizabeth Clothier 21.16 %

Pr. Bonnie Gerber	16.4%
Pr. Aaron Layne	41.8%
Pr. Scott Nellis	8.47%
Pr. Steve Wachtman	12.17%

Bishop Dillahunt declared that a second ballot would be conducted later in the agenda, between the following two candidates: Pr. Aaron Layne and Pr. Elizabeth Clothier.

Central Ohio Conference Lay Man

Neil Coryell	34.97%
Matthew Hazard	65.03% Elected

Cincinnati Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Jodi Keith	43.46%
Pr. Corey Wagonfield	56.54% Elected

Cincinnati Conference Lay Woman

Abby Gaide	56.28% Elected
Amy Morris	43.72%

Dayton Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Richard Freudenberger	33.33%
Pr. Carey Hovland	49.23%
Pr. William Schwochow	17.44%

Bishop Dillahunt declared that a second ballot would be conducted later in the agenda, between the following two candidates: Pr. Freudenberger and Pr. Hovland.

Dayton Conference Lay Man

Nolan Lester	51.41% Elected
Greg McCullough	48.59%

Muskingum Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Mark Combs	77.6% Elected
Pr. Kenneth Hacker	22.4%

Muskingum Conference Lay Man

David Miser	41.9%
Steve Schnittke	58.1% Elected

Scioto Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Chad Huebner	66.48% Elected
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Pr. Roger Quay 33.52%

Scioto Conference Lay Woman

Patti Morrow 19.34%
Kris Hoffman-Thrush 19.89%
Rebecca Witt 60.77% Elected

Young Adult

Elizabeth Gilbert 61.83% Elected
Ethan Roberts 38.17%

The Bishop called a recess at 9:42 A.M.
The Bishop reconvened at 9:45 A.M.

The Bishop welcomed keynote speaker, the Rev. Mike Ward, CFRE. Rev. Ward's background is included in the pre-assembly materials; he is the author of *Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity* (Fortress Press 2020), the publisher's top title of 2020.

Rev. Mike Ward, Part 1 – Abundance

Rev. Ward framed the first part of his presentation by describing “scarcity thinking.” He discussed the typical congregational plea for assistance as the “we are out of money” letter. This kind of communication may not have the desired effect of promoting increased support. The problem is this kind of letter does not convey the real story - which is one of abundance. Giving has more to do with generosity than wealth, and people are in different places in their generosity journey. The message needs to speak to where people are. Rev. Ward discussed research into the factors that contribute to holding back from generous giving, the most frequently cited being “I can't afford this.” To promote generosity, individuals need inspiration, rather than to be scared or shamed into giving. Similarly, church messaging/weekly bulletins should not convey scarcity, or be simply a listing of information, but provide stories that share outcomes. For example, rather than posting the need to “fill the altar guild position”, allow a current altar guild volunteer to share how much the work has meant in their faith journey. Or share how financial resources were used to meet the needs of a mission project. In conclusion, stewardship/generosity needs to be mentored and taught.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Rev. Rebecca Grate reported that at 10:30 A.M. there were 241 voting members registered and present. Bishop Dillahunt called Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chair of the Elections Committee to conduct a Second Ballot, with the following results:

Second Ballot Synod Council Four Year Term:

At Large Rostered Minister

Pr. Laura Leach-Shreffler	61.29% Elected
Deacon Nancy A. Trimble	38.71%

Second Ballot Churchwide Assembly Elections

Central Ohio Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Elizabeth Clothier	35.11%
Pr. Aaron Layne	65.89% Elected

Dayton Conference Rostered Minister

Pr. Richard Freudenberger	39.89%
Pr. Carey Hovland	60.11% Elected

The Bishop called a recess at 10:36 A.M.
The Bishop reconvened at 10:41 A.M.

Report of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, Part 1

Bishop Dillahunt referred to her written report that is included in the pre-assembly materials and then addressed the Assembly. As noted in her report, 2020 showed us several things: **Opportunities, Pivots, Thinking Differently and Abundance** for the sake of the mission and vision of the Southern Ohio Synod and the Church.

The Bishop spoke to the impact of change since the last Synod Assembly, notably the world-wide pandemic and wide-spread social issue demonstrations. Church life has been greatly impacted with the new use of virtual meetings. In addition, in the midst of this the Southern Ohio Synod offices were moved to a new home. The Bishop emphasized that what has not changed is Jesus Christ, the message of the Gospel, and God's Abundance. We are Stronger and Better Together.

The Bishop extended her thanks to Aaron Layne, Josh Brodbeck, and for all who prepared videos for this Assembly and contributed to make the Assembly production successful.

The Bishop shared that through the Thrive! Campaign, despite the pandemic the Southern Ohio Synod has been able to not only continue to support current ministries, but has started new ministries. With the theme Stronger and Better Together, 40% of unrestricted monies received by the Synod are sent to the ELCA to support missions beyond the walls of individual congregations, our territory, and out into the world. We share because of God's Abundance. The Bishop noted the Assembly written materials include a report detailing the mission support of all congregations in the Southern Ohio Synod.

Bishop Dillahunt shared a video presentation by Pr. Jacqui Buschor, Oakland Park (formerly Linden) Lutheran Church. This church, located in a historic urban neighborhood, has experienced much change since its inception relative to the changing demographics of the neighborhood. The video shares how the church has supported the local community with a food pantry and many resources throughout recent years. To summarize: “The church has left the building.” Rev. Kerrigan also spoke to the story of Oakland Park Lutheran, and how mission support has made this congregation “Stronger and Better Together.”

Bishop Dillahunt thanked the Stewardship Team Chaired by Pr. Michelle Terry, and staffed by Rev. Althaus, Ms. Josselyn Bennett, Rev. Kerrigan, Mr. Nick Kiser, Rev. Layne, Rev. Wagonfield, and Mr. Doug Ward; and the Finance Team, Chaired by Ms. Becky Witt, and staffed by Mr. Christopher Clothier, Pr. Jonathan Bull, Mr. Kevin Pyle, Pr. Katie Kerrigan, Mr. Josh Brodbeck, and Bishop Dillahunt.

The Bishop introduced the Southern Ohio Synod team: Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Robert Abrams; Director for Evangelical Ministry, Rev. Katie Kerrigan; Director of Candidacy and Leadership Development, Rev. Dr. Lynn Nakamura; Director of the Southern Ohio Synod Leadership Academy, Deacon Dr. Corey Driver; Youth and Family Ministry Coach, Mr. Gary Pecuch; Administrative Assistant to the Bishop and Finance Team, Ms. Kim Uemura; Director of Operations/Administration and Worship Director, Mr. Joshua Brodbeck; Thrive! Campaign Manager Pr. Larry Donner; and Ms. Joy Hacker, Synod Accountant. The Bishop expressed her thanks for this team.

The Bishop congratulated Sister Sally Berk, who retired December 31, 2020, for having served for 25 years as Pulpit Supply coordinator.

The Bishop called on Pr. Larry Donner to share a verbal report on the Thrive! campaign, in addition to his written report provided in Assembly materials. Pr. Donner shared a video presentation by St. Paul Lutheran, discussing programs sponsored by Thrive! including Stewardship for All Seasons. Despite the pandemic, giving was 10% higher than the previous year. Thrive! makes us stronger and better together as Lutherans and Christians. Pr. Donner highlighted 2019 and 2020 early supporting congregation campaigns and other statistics demonstrating the generosity of many congregations. We now have over \$700,000.00 in commitments, of which over \$400,00.00 has been received - which is amazing. Pr. Donner shared upcoming and ongoing opportunities provided by Thrive! to assist congregations, rostered ministers and lay leaders at all levels.

The Bishop shared a video presentation by Youth and Family Ministry Coach, Mr. Gary Pecuch, and Pastor Kelly, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Cincinnati on the theme: Adapting Children’s Ministry During a Pandemic. Pastor Kelly shared how the church was able to conduct a vibrant children’s ministry through virtual and other methods during the pandemic.

Bishop Dillahunt thanked all youth ministers in our territory who pivoted in the pandemic to provide a new and different ministry experience.

The Bishop then congratulated the following significant anniversaries for congregations and rostered ministers in 2020 and 2021:

2020 CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

25th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Faith Lutheran, Baltimore

75th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Dayton

150th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Philadelphia Lutheran Church, Bellefontaine

175th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Harmony Lutheran Church, Buffalo
St. John Lutheran Church, Logan

200th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lancaster
Zion Lutheran Church, Dayton

2021 CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

50th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Cincinnati

100th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Hope Lutheran Church, Columbus

125th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Christ Lutheran Church, Dayton
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Botkins

175th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Messiah Lutheran Church, Urbana

200th CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

St. Mark Lutheran Church, Delaware
St. Jacob Lutheran Church, Miamisburg

2020 ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

25th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Martha Fisher
Rev Mary Laymon
Rev Jeffrey Wise

35th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Patricia Badkey
Rev Craig Fourman
Rev Susan Nelson
Rev Thomas Rutherford Jr
Rev Kenneth Witt
Rev Cathleen Thompson

40th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev David Buchenroth
Rev Frederick Cook
Rev Kenneth Hacker
Rev Callon Holloway Jr
Rev Ronald Murdock

50th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Wayne Hoedt
Rev J Weston Jones Jr
Rev William Rauch

60th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Rudy Featherstone
Rev Dwight Hedrick
Rev Ronald Redder
Rev John Ware

65th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Earl Fritz
Rev David Risch
Rev Kenneth Sauer

70th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Paul Klopfer

2021 ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

25th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Charla Grieves
Rev Janet Hatch
Rev William McKee
Rev Blair Miller
Rev Robert Miller
Rev Alicia Nierman
Rev Christine Widrig

35th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Karen Asmus-Alsnauer
Rev Brian Dillahunt
Rev Larry Donner
Rev Martin Francis
Rev Timothy Iseringhausen
Rev Stephen Kimm
Rev Gil Santiago
Deacon Shirley Smith
Rev Rachel Sandum Tune

40th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Douglas Jacobs
Rev Kurt Keljo
Rev Andrew Mazak
Rev Janice Peterson
Rev Bruce Quatman
Rev Carl Rayburn

Rev Timothy Thoresen
Rev Frederich Weber
Rev Mark Wildermuth
Rev F. Edward Williams

50th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Thomas Heil

60th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev Robert Willauer

65th ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev J William Kerrick
Rev Reuben Mellum

NEW TO THE SYNOD

The following 30 rostered ministers were welcomed to the Synod:

- Rev Gail Ahern
- Rev Joan Armstrong
- Rev Rita Bair
- Rev Robert Bresemann
- Rev Nancy DeStefano
- Rev Steve Edmiston
- Rev David Eidson
- Rev Richard Freudenberger
- Rev William Funk
- Rev Gary Greiger
- Rev Dan Hille
- Rev John Hitzeroth
- Rev Chad Huebner
- Rev Warren Huestis
- Rev David Kamphuis
- Rev Alvin McCay
- Rev Dr Lynn Nakamura
- Rev Scott Nellis
- Rev Anne Pairan
- Rev Thomas Pairan
- Rev Rachel Patterson
- Rev Benjamin Prill
- Rev Steve Rice
- Rev Joel Ritcher
- Rev Ali Rode
- Rev David Sanders
- Rev Julianne Smeck

- Rev Alan Swartz
- Rev Corey Wagonfeild
- Rev Ann Marie Winters

Bishop Dillahunt then concluded this portion of her report by thanking everyone for what we have accomplished together.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Report

The Bishop welcomed the Rev. William Gafkjen, Bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and ELCA Representative, to address the Assembly. He commenced his remarks by stating that he was very grateful for Bishop Dillahunt's leadership, not only in the Southern Ohio Synod but across the Church.

The Bishop Gafkjen shared a video presentation by Bishop Eaton. The Bishop Gafkjen shared the mission vision plan and thanked everyone for implementing God's plan. Rev. Bishop Gafkjen shared that over \$628,000.00 was sent from the Southern Ohio Synod to the ELCA as mission support. This support breathes life into ministries both in the Southern Ohio Synod and across the world. Bishop Gafkjen shared a video demonstrating how the generosity of the Southern Ohio Synod has accomplished this. Over \$1.8 million dollars was raised in the Covid-19 Response Fund during the pandemic. This has been used to address world hunger and other hardships exacerbated by the global pandemic. God is Good and Grace is Abundant!

Bishop Gafkjen shared that Covid-19 Response Funds have also supported the expansion of digital ministries, as well as providing assistance with food and housing. This generosity has multiplied and spread to so many. In the future, we need to work to raise up and support faithful, wise and courageous leaders for the emerging church and wider world. The Bishop shared a video emphasizing the need for visionary leaders. Over \$2.8 million in scholarship support has been provided to ELCA seminary students through the Fund for Leaders.

Bishop Gafkjen noted that the Southern Ohio Synod has two scholarship recipients currently. He emphasized that we need to continue to develop training and formation for lay leaders in congregations, and to continue to support our youth. He shared that the next Youth Gathering will be held in Minneapolis July 24-28, 2022.

The Bishop Gafkjen extended his deep appreciation for the Southern Ohio Synod Team's partnership in ministry with the ELCA, and for Bishop Dillahunt's leadership and friendship. He thanked all members of the Assembly and their congregations for their energetic partnership in ministry.

Bishop Dillahunt then declared a recess for lunch at 12:00 PM.

Bishop Dillahunt reconvened the Assembly at 1:00 P.M. Rev. Grate provided an additional refresher exercise in the Vevox voting application.

Report of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, Part 2

The Bishop commented on the work of the Congregational Resource Team (CRT), which has continued to serve congregations throughout the pandemic with the leadership of Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Robert Abrams, along with other Synod team members. The CRT has shared multiple resources with congregations over the past two years (for example, the “Congregation Boot Camp” project). She invited everyone to participate in an upcoming (August 2021) workshop for congregation council development. The Bishop invited Rev. Abrams to speak on mission support. Rev. Abrams discussed his participation in the ELCA Systems Academy, a four-year training program. He discussed how the CRT supports/assists congregations who are “stuck” and need an outside perspective. Rev. Abrams shared a video sharing the experience of Pr. Leslie Fox Lott, Interim Pastor, David Evangelical Lutheran Church, Canal Winchester. Rev. Abrams shared another video featuring Pr. Mike Weaver, St. Luke Lutheran, Gahanna, one of several ministry coaching resources. Pr. Weaver shared how having a ministry coach increased his adaptive capacity, help him to develop trust, and ultimately become the rostered leader he was called to be. Rev. Abrams shared the Synod Mission Statement: Stronger and Better Together, encouraged rostered ministers to reach out for assistance, and shared contact information for the Resource Team.

Bishop Dillahunt expressed her excitement to announce that that the Southern Ohio Synod has a new regional gift planning partner to assist individuals and congregations, Pr. Karl Beirmann, and the Bishop welcomed Pr. Beirmann to speak. Pr. Beirmann stated the goal of the ELCA Foundation is that there be a plan associated with generosity - to give a purpose to giving. Pr. Beirmann shared that he is a graduate of Trinity Seminary, Columbus and interned at Holy Trinity Lutheran. He looks forward to serving with all.

Bishop Dillahunt shared a video on “Adapting Responsibility” featuring Youth and Family Ministry Coach Gary Pecuch, and two youth leaders who shared their experiences in youth ministry during the pandemic. Bishop Dillahunt thanked all of our youth ministry leaders.

The Bishop Dillahunt addressed the systemic racism that exists in our communities. She encouraged everyone to take advantage of opportunities for education offered by the ELCA. The Bishop shared the work that began in early 2021 with ecumenical ministry partners in the Catholic Diocese, Methodist and Episcopal churches to address societal justice issues.

The Bishop shared a video regarding congregational experiences with successful stewardship campaigns (Stewardship for All Seasons) over the past two years. For more information the Bishop encouraged congregations to contact Rev. Katie Kerrigan.

Bishop Dillahunt introduced Pr. Larry Donner to report on what’s next with Thrive!. Pr. Donner indicated that he has served three congregations with very different demographics, but despite differences, all three were energized, unified and blessed. He shared a video featuring Thrive! campaign managers from Trinity Lutheran, Marysville. Pr. Donner

congratulated this congregation for approximately \$51,000.00 in contributions through Thrive!. Pr. Donner shared that all resources necessary for a successful campaign will be provided through Thrive! and it really is a simple process. Pr. Donner challenged congregations to consider a campaign with a goal of adding at least 30 congregation participants during the Assembly by responding via Zoom chat. Following a short video, Pr. Donner expressed thanks to multiple congregations who responded to this challenge.

Bishop Dillahunt discussed the work of the Outside the Box (OTB) team led by Chris Clothier and invited him to speak. Mr. Clothier shared many of the successes in assisting churches with digital technology, financial and worship experience support. Chris shared that the OTB Team was able to secure an ELCA technology grant and began conducting mentoring sessions with congregations both individually and jointly with other congregations. This congregational network has continued. Chris shared two videos featuring positive congregational experiences with these mentoring programs. Chris expressed his appreciation for all the members of the OTB Team.

Bishop Dillahunt recessed for a break at 1:59 P.M.

Bishop Dillahunt reconvened at: 2:04 P.M.

Bishop Dillahunt welcomed keynote speaker Rev. Mike Ward.

Rev. Mike Ward, Part 2 – Abundance

Continuing on the theme of generosity, Rev. Ward provided illustrations of generous giving during the Covid-19 pandemic. He emphasized the importance of sharing these stories to enable individuals to make decisions about giving. Giving is not a financial transaction – it is an opportunity to make a difference in the world. Rev. Ward shared some of his favorite Biblical and theological bases for giving, including Matthew 6:25-29, which illuminates that we need to let go of our fear and trust God in giving. Rev. Ward defined Abundance as recognizing that God provides us everything, and that is enough – and it is enough to share. Rev. Ward discussed two kinds of stories that can be shared: “outcome stories” and “generosity stories”, and how telling these stories models and cultivates generosity and best practices in stewardship. Rev. Ward encouraged building endowment funds through estate plan giving, and cited Pr. Karl Beirmann, ELCA Foundation, as an excellent resource. In closing, Rev. Ward reminded participants about upcoming programs including Building a Culture of Generosity, Council Leadership, and Stewardship for All Seasons.

Bishop Dillahunt expressed appreciation for Rev. Ward’s remarks and time.

Bishop Dillahunt then thanked the Compensation Guidelines Committee, chaired by Rev. Peter Kruse, for its work in preparing the 2022-2023 Guidelines.

Bishop Dillahunt asked whether there was unanimous consent to adopt the 2022-2023 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Pulpit Supply Rates as approved by Synod Council on April 24, 2021.

SA.21.06.07

To adopt the 2022-2023 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Pulpit Supply Rates, as approved by the Synod Council on April 24, 2021.

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

The Bishop asked that Chris Clothier, Chair of the Audit Committee, present information related to the Auditor's Report (January 31, 2021 and 2020). Mr. Clothier noted that the Report reflects the third year that the Southern Ohio Synod has received an "unqualified" report, meaning all financial statements are accurate. The auditors also provided an opinion that the Synod's controls are compliant with best practices. Mr. Clothier noted that since the Audit Report was received, the "PPL" program loan has been forgiven.

Bishop Dillahunt requested whether there was unanimous consent to accept the Auditor's Report (January 31, 2021 and 2020), as accepted by the Synod Council on April 24, 2021.

SA.21.06.08

To accept the Auditor's Report (January 31, 2021 and 2020), as accepted by the Synod Council on April 24, 2021.

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Bishop Dillahunt then called upon Ms. Becky Witt, Chair of the Synod Council Finance Team, to provide information concerning the Mission & Ministry Plans. Ms. Witt acknowledged Finance Team members Rev. Jonathan Bull, Rev. Katie Kerrigan, Ms. Joy Hacker, Mr. Christopher Clothier, Mr. Josh Brodbeck, along with Bishop Dillahunt and Treasurer Kevin Pyle. Ms. Witt shared a power point presentation with an overview of Directional Changes. Because the Synod will not be holding a 2022 Assembly, it's necessary to vote upon two (2) two-year plans at this time.

The proposed 2022-2023 Mission and Ministry Plan is based upon a budget of \$1,845,600, which is an increase of 3% over the 2021-2022 Mission and Ministry Plan. Of this \$919,017 or approximately half of the funds are allocated toward mission and ministry. The proposed 2023-2024 Mission and Ministry Plan is based upon a budget of \$1,885,600, of which \$940,001 is allocated toward mission and ministry, and represents a 3% increase over the 2022-2023 Mission and Ministry Plan.

The Bishop noted both Plans are built upon offerings from congregations, and that the Southern Ohio Synod provides approximately 40% of the total to ELCA Churchwide mission support.

A member of the Assembly asked what the difference is between “Leadership” and “Management” costs. Ms. Witt explained that Leadership costs include items such as candidacy, Synod Council and Assembly costs, while Management costs are operational, (including for example real estate, utilities, and technology costs).

Bishop Dillahunt requested whether there was unanimous consent to adopt the Mission & Ministry Plan for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, as approved by Synod Council on April 24, 2021.

SA.21.06.09 To adopt the Mission & Ministry Plans for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, as approved by the Synod Council on April 24, 2021.

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Report of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, Part 3

The Bishop Dillahunt shared a Vibrant Church Conference Team video presentation. The Team has been working since 2019 on the first annual conference for equipping congregational lay leaders. With the pandemic, the Team quickly pivoted to an online version including a monthly online workshop featuring multiple topics. The SOS website has archived these resources from 2020-2021 and includes links to register for upcoming workshops this summer, for example, “Plant a Community Garden” (August 2021).

The Bishop asked Rev. Katie Kerrigan to share information and a video presentation on the “Cultivate (emerging Lutheran communities)” initiative. Establishing new worshipping communities is one of five of the Thrive! goals. In the past year, we have engaged in a listening campaign for strategic development. The video shared the story of two very different worshipping communities: Gathering Cincinnati, a gathering place for young adults to encourage their faith development; and Tikkun Farm, a restorative and reparative ministry serving individuals in interaction with the environment. Rev. Kerrigan expressed her appreciation for both of these new ministries, and Bishop Dillahunt thanked Rev. Kerrigan for the work of the Cultivate initiative.

Bishop Dillahunt next called on Dr. Rev. Lynn Nakamura, Director of Candidacy and Leadership Development, to discuss the Leadership Academy. Dr. Rev. Nakamura shared that many congregations are without a rostered ministers and the training of Lay Worship Leaders and Synod Authorized Ministers serves a critical function. Rev. Nakamura shared a video presentation featuring Dr. Corey Driver, Director of the Southern Ohio Synod Leadership Academy, who presented information on the progress of the Academy. The Bishop encouraged all who are called to be rostered ministers, or to participate in another capacity such as serving as lay worship leaders or Synod Authorized Ministers, to contact the Synod.

The Bishop invited everyone to explore the Southern Ohio Synod’s new website. The website is re-designed to be extremely user-friendly and to serve as a comprehensive

resource. The Bishop asked Mr. Josh Brodbeck to speak about the website. Mr. Brodbeck noted that an email will be sent to the entire SOS when the new website is up and running. As discussed in the Bishop's written report, the SOS is developing a resource within the website called "The Sandbox". The intention is to gather resources in one location for the benefit of Southern Ohio Synod churches and their members. The site will be for all ages and will include a virtual smorgasbord of faith-related topics and materials including but not limited to resources for worship, devotionals, a Bible study series, discipleship, education, digital church, technology, marketing, community engagements, stewardship, curriculum/resources for children's, youth and/or family ministries and confirmation materials. There is no cost to access the Sandbox! The Bishop encouraged all to be creative and utilize the Sandbox as a resource for congregational ministries.

The Bishop called upon Vice President Ellis to announce the Southern Ohio Synod's version of the "The Oscars": best of category awards for good work over the past two years. Ms. Ellis announced the following awards:

- For Best Cinematography: St. Luke, Marietta
- For Best Worship Video Library: Pastor Joe Wolfe and his site, visual-word.com
- For Best Digital Bible Study Series: The Ten Commandments, designed and presented by Pastor Peter Rudowski
- For Best Online Confirmation Program: St. Paul, Westerville, led by Pastor Rebecca Grate
- For Best Resource-Sharing Forum for Socially-Distant Ministry: The Ministry Ideas During Social Isolation Facebook Group, established by Pastor Michelle Terry of Bethlehem, Middletown
- For Best Collaborative Online Worship Service: We have a tie between DULA (the Dayton Urban Lutheran Allies) and Lutheran Saints in Ministry, Fairborn
- For Best Collaborative Online Worship Series: The Cincinnati Conference's Lenten Series
- For Best Collaborative Devotional: LLT Lancaster Lutheran Together's Holy Week Devotions
- For Best Children's Online Worship Offering: Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Cincinnati
- For Best Collaborative Worship Resources: The Worship Companion, edited by Pastor Dan Hille, Faith, Whitehall
- For Best Sermon Series: Pr. Al Debelak, who provided online sermons for congregations without pastors.
- For Best Synod-wide Digital Mentoring Program: The volunteers of our Out of the Box Task Force, who provided mentoring digital ministry to 28 congregations and \$7750 in small grants to those who applied.

And finally, for Best Supporting Actors for those congregations who provided support to other congregations in expanding their digital ministries. We asked for your nominations, and—in our opinion—each one is a winner:

- St. Jacob, Anna for assistance provided to assistance to Emmanuel, Germantown
- Lord of Life, West Chester for assistance provided to Vida Eterna Iglesia Luterana
- Epiphany, Centerville for assistance provided to Trinity Episcopal Church in Troy
- Advent, Columbus for assistance provided to All Saints, Worthington

Following her report, the Bishop installed the new Synod Council and Team members and express appreciation for returning and departing Council members. The Bishop offered special thanks to departing member Pr. Ralph Wolfe, who has served on Synod Council and the Executive Committee for eight years.

Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt then conducted the closing worship service, including a reading from Romans 12:6-8, and the 2021 Synod Assembly was adjourned at 3:47 PM on June 5, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,



Holly R. Fischer
Southern Ohio Synod Council Secretary