

## 2010 Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA



The Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met in assembly for the twenty-third time on June 4 and 5, 2010, at the Crowne Plaza O'Hare Hotel, 5440 River Rd., Rosemont, IL 60018. This year's assembly theme was "You will be my witnesses." The assembly began at 9 a.m. on June 4 with an opening Eucharist with the Order of the Opening of an Assembly. Bishop Wayne N. Miller presided over and gave the sermon for the service. The sermon was titled "Bring Forth What Is In You," and was based on Luke 24:44-53. The choir of Ashburn Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill., Cynthia Nunn, conductor, provided special music during the service. The offering taken at the opening worship was designated, with gratitude, for the three choirs that provided music during the assembly's worship services.

After opening business, the Rev Dr. Kurt K. Hendel, Bernard, Fischer, Westberg Distinguished Ministry Professor of Reformation History, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, gave the opening plenary address. Drawing from Luther's writings, including the Large Catechism and *On the Bondage of the Will*, Hendel examined how Lutherans can remain faithful witnesses, true to Lutheranism's confessional heritage, in an increasingly pluralistic world.

The assembly then transitioned to lunch and conference meetings followed by the second plenary session which included reports from synod vice president, Ms. Nanette Dahlke, the report of the synod treasurer, Ms. Yvette NewberryWhite, introduction of the 2011 synod budget, report on the synod's stewardship strategy, and the introduction of the synod's Latino strategy. Two sessions of workshops and hearings completed the balance of the afternoon, along with election of voting members to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly, debate on resolutions, and the report of ministry through the churchwide organization, given by Ms. Cindy Halverson, president of the ELCA Foundation. Halverson's remarks included gratitude to the congregations of the synod for their continued strong mission support of the larger work of the ELCA. The report included a video greeting from ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and examples of how the ELCA engages in ministry and mission both here and around the world. A special segment highlighted how the ELCA's work in Haiti continues.

The day ended with Evening Prayer. Special music was provided by the Youth Choir of Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, Ill., Lori Bormet, conductor.

Saturday, June 5, opened with Morning Prayer at 8:30 a.m. Special music was provided by the students of Holy Family Christian School, Chicago, Ill., Viola Collins-Brown, conductor. The sermon was provided by the Rev. Trudy Stoeffel, pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Woodridge, Ill. The day continued with the report of the first (and only) ballot for voting members to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. Elected were Nile Eastman (W), Doug Dill (NW), Ken Olson (NW), Ron Laudert (NE), Jason S. Glombicki (214), Terry Henderson (SW), Booker Vance (S),

Erik Christensen (C), Carlos Ortiz (NrW), Ben Bergren (NW), Dina Tannous (NE), Judi Keippel (C), Michele Arnison (NE), Mary Anderson (N), Betsy Schurke (SW), Viola Collins-Brown (NE), Kathy Nolte (NrW), Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (NW), Rebecca Thomas-Templeton (S), and Megan J. Jones (NE).

The assembly passed eight resolutions

- ASMB. 01-10 Faithful Journey - Deepening the Welcome
- ASMB. 02-10 Memorial to Encourage Full Implementation of the Social Statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust"
- ASMB. 03-10 Fair Trade
- ASMB. 04-10 Resolution of Thanksgiving and Appreciation
- ASMB. 05-10 To Encourage Understanding of and Endorsement of the Kairos Palestine Document 2009

The link to the Kairos Palestine Document is available at

<http://www.kairospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>

- ASMB. 06-10 To Promote Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in the Holy Land
- ASMB. 07-10 Encourage Energy Stewardship
- ASMB. 08-10 Memorialize Energy Stewardship

A resolution presented at the assembly, 09-10 Responding to the Attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla was referred to the synod council.

The assembly was, throughout, punctuated by "Mission Moments," brief reports from congregations of the synod discussing mission and ministry programs illustration how we are doing God's work with our hands.

The assembly took a moment to acknowledge rostered leader and congregational anniversaries, as well as rostered leaders new to the synod. Rostered leaders celebrating significant anniversaries were the guests at a lunch with the bishop, held in their honor, on May 18, 2010.

Bishop Miller gave his report, opening with a re-telling of the conversion of Cornelius found in Acts 9:45-53. His report, "Into the World," was grounded in Acts 10:1-11:18. Bishop Miller asked the assembly to be confronted by and answer the questions, "Who are you?" and "What are you here for?" He continued by exploring grace, faith, and Jesus Christ, noting:

- **Grace is:**  
The love of God accepting us as we are AND  
The love of God calling us to be more than we have ever been before.
- **Faith is:**  
A relationship based on surrender of ego to the love and power of a God we cannot fully comprehend.
- **Christ is:**  
Both the path to God and the fullness of God – both the destination and the journey.

He noted further that Peter was, and we are, here:

- To bear witness to the love and power of Jesus
- To call others into the embrace of the love and power of Jesus
- To dismantle the barriers that prevented others from being embraced by the love and power of Jesus.

Noting that conversion, formation, action, and transformation are necessary parts of the Christian experience, he indicated that the process continues with reformation, "to change the inside through its engagement with the outside, and to prepare it for its next launch ever further out... until the whole world is blanketed with Christian disciples joyfully bearing witness to the love and power of Jesus."

We have the resources, the bishop asserted, but there are no shortcuts. He concluded by stating, "And for this we need stories... stories of growth and transformation... stories that open hearts again in a new way... the stories of our very own 'book of acts' to inspire each other and to call us out of our sealed rooms. On fire with the Spirit, we are the stewards of a church that grew into being by following voices and dreams to strange unknown lands." The full text of the report and accompanying PowerPoint (available in PDF format) are available online at <http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/>.

Following a break, the synod secretary, the Rev. Steve Srock, gave his report. Final business included the adoption of the budget as presented, adoption of the stewardship strategy, approval of a resolution to formally establish the Latino strategy, resolution of thanks, and a closing prayer and Order for the Closing of an Assembly.

The adopted budget adopted resolutions, and final results of the ballot for voting members to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly, are available online at <http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/>. Information about the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly in 2011 will be shared as it becomes available.

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