

Stream of Information

Upper Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

“The Church Must Be Planted.”

Rooted in Christ, Re-rooting for Mission.

2011 Synod Assembly Summary

The 24th Annual Assembly of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was held at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, PA, on June 17 and 18, 2011. Bishop Robert L. Driesen led the proceedings, which included reports of various synod organizations and committees. Approximately 265 lay persons and clergy who are members of congregations of the synod attended plenary sessions, workshops, Bible studies, and worship during the two-day event. The Bible study leader and ELCA Churchwide Representative was the Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director for Congregational and Synodical Mission. The theme this year was “The Church Must be Planted. Rooted in Christ, Re-rooting for Mission.”

In assembly business, a resolution regarding family leave for pastors and lay rostered persons in the Upper Susquehanna Synod was adopted, as was a memorial on clergy retirement. Defeated was a memorial on the ELCA Draft Social Statement on Genetics. The assembly also adopted 2012 Budget of just over \$1.1 million and a revised 2011 budget. The revised budget takes into consideration an expected decrease in mission support income since the budget was originally adopted in June 2010. The assembly also adopted the 2012 Salary and Housing Guidelines for rostered leaders with a 1.5 percent increase in the first step for rostered leaders and no additional increase in the annual step and a small housing allowance increase. The base salary for an Associate in Ministry was also increased by 1.5 percent.

Two in-gathering offerings were received. On Friday, the offering totaled \$1,557.24 for Lutheran World Relief. Saturday's offering of \$1,210.10 went to Kathryn's Klosef. It was also announced that 2,024 Lutheran World Relief health kits were collected by 57 congregations and brought to the assembly. This synodwide drive continues, hoping to reach 3,365 kits (which was the average number of kits distributed by LWR in one week in 2010). A similar collection of Christmas gift items is now being done for Seafarers International. A representative of Seafarers addressed the assembly, relating that it was that ELCA-affiliated organization's first visit to this synod. A lighter moment of the assembly was when this new project for Seafarer's was announced, as Pastor Eric Deibler came onto stage, “riding” in a canoe.

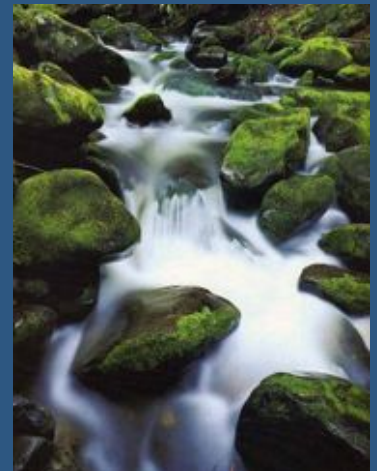
Representatives from the synod's two global companion synods also brought greetings to the assembly. Bishop Sumoward Harris from the Lutheran Church in Liberia presented Bishop Driesen with a large cross constructed from a shell casing, a tragic reminder of the recent civil war in Liberia and a sign of hope lived under the cross of Christ. David Kuhn from the Ansbach-Würzburg Kirchenkreis in Germany spoke to the assembly as well. Kuhn is serving this summer as a counselor at Camp Mount Luther.



The Rev. Stephen Bouman, ELCA Executive Director for Congregational and Synodical Mission, served as the churchwide representative to the assembly and Bible study leader. He brought greetings from Chicago and also answered questions from delegates.

Summary of Synod Assembly Actions:

- *Adopted 2012 Budget of just over \$1.1 million. Also adopted a revised 2011 budget, taking into consideration a decrease in mission support income.*
- *Adopted 2012 Salary and Housing Guidelines for rostered leaders with a 1.5 percent increase in the first step for rostered leaders with no additional increase in the annual step and a small housing allowance increase. The base salary for an Associate in Ministry was also increased by 1.5 percent.*
- *Rejected a memorial regarding the ELCA Draft Social Statement on Genetics.*
- *Adopted a resolution regarding family leave for pastors and lay rostered persons and a memorial on clergy retirement.*





During a service of Holy Eucharist on Saturday morning, Amanda Kirby Range was ordained. Range has been called to the Salem Parish in Selinsgrove. The Rev. Preston H. Dusman, the Rev. Ronald R. Mulberger, the Rev. Paul L. Reaser, and the Rev. Charles A. Souders were also remembered posthumously during the service.

Social Ministry Coach Highlights Projects

Sandy Greier, the USS Social Ministry Coach, gave an update on how congregations can work with her to develop outreach ministries that fit the assets of their congregation.

Report of the Elections Committee

Elections also were held for several synodical positions. Elected to his third term as treasurer was Stephen A. Schlesing of St. Luke, Williamsport. Elected to Synod Council for three-year terms were the following: Camilla Zimmerman, United in Christ, West Milton; Donna Treaster, St. John's, Lewistown; Christopher Kuhn, St. Paul's (Leininger's), Mt. Pleasant Mills; Brent Edgar, Christ's United, Catawissa; Rev. Christoph Teille, Elysburg Parish; Rev. Cinda Brucker, Trinity, Hughesville. Elected to a one-year term on Synod Council was George Jansson, Church of the Savior, Williamsport.

The assembly elected the following to six-year terms on the Consultation Committee: Rev. Patrick Sipes, Arbogast's-Leiningers, Mt. Pleasant Mills; Rev. Barbara J. Collins, Follmer Parish, Milton; James Slusser, St. Matthew, Bloomsburg; Gwen Hornberger, St. John's, Belleville. Elected to six-year terms on the Committee on Discipline were Rev. Cheryl Berner, Trinity, Milton; Rev. Eric Deibler, St. Luke, Williamsport; Kenneth Roush, St. Luke, Bloomsburg; & Barry Spangler, Christ's United, Millmont.

Lay Leaders Inducted



Saturday, Authorized Lay Leaders were blessed and sent into ministry during the annual assembly of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. The candidates attended the last of 21

sessions Saturday, June 11, in the course sponsored by the synod's Lay Ministry Institute. The new lay leaders pictured here are, (from left seated) Valerie Jeske, St. Luke's, Bloomsburg; Wendy Davis, Mountain Grove Parish; Karla Leiby, St. Peter's, Grovania; and Carol Black, Sharon, Selinsgrove, all lay worship leaders. Back row: Linda Everitt, Zion, Sunbury and Brent Edgar, Christ United, Catawissa, lay Evangelists; Chris Davis, St. John's, Mifflinville; Jim Slusser, St. Matthew, Bloomsburg, and Donna Batschelet, Trinity, Avis, lay worship leaders. Not pictured: Richard Beck, St. Mark, Alfarata.



Voting members and guests in Degenstein Theatre



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED: The 300th Anniversary of the birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the father of Lutheranism in North America, provided the theme for this year's assembly. "The Church Must Be Planted" is the motto attributed to him. During his 45-year ministry, Muhlenberg planted the church throughout Pennsylvania and from New York to Georgia. Natalie Hand, grants manager at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, presented Bishop Driesen with a decorative plate, commemorating the birthday.



Milestones Celebrated at Friday Banquet

As usual, Friday evening at the Synod Assembly was a special time of celebration, relaxation, and fun. The evening began with a German Heritage Buffet dinner, followed by a program of celebration of

anniversaries for pastors and congregations. Twelve pastors were honored for celebrating their ordination anniversary of 25 years or more. Two congregations celebrated significant anniversaries: St. Stephen, Licking Creek (150 years); and Emmanuel, Williamsport (125 years). Also featured was a performance by the "Sub-Basement Ladies," a one-act play inspired by the "Church Basement Ladies." Shirley Heasley played the role of Gram Agnes; Pastor Jill Seagle played the role of Mom Becky; and Jillian Jackson played the role of young Katie.



Congregation Awarded for Service

The Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Ministry in Appalachia (ELCMA) attended the assembly to give an update on their work and talk about the USS hosting next year's ELCMA Assembly. During their report, they also gave special recognition to one of the synod's congregations. Ed Redmond of ELCMA presented the Donald Roth Award for Congregational Ministry to Christ's United, Millmont. The award was in recognition of the congregation's ministry called Hope's Haven, their weekly clothing and food drive; Elijah's Table, a seasonal luncheon; their hospitality in sharing their space with the Mennonite Community; and their initiative to open a free medical clinic. Redmond said, "I think it indeed is extraordinary what they do in Millmont."

Frantz Honored

Virginia Frantz, former administrative assistant to the bishop, was honored on Saturday for her service to the synod. Frantz left her position on medical disability last fall. Frantz thanked many people she worked with over the years and recounted her years in the synod office. When given the chance to offer her heartfelt words to the assembly, she said, "After 23 years of sitting there (pointing to the secretary's table), I finally get the microphone!" Bishop Driesen and synod Vice President Michael Schrey presented Frantz with a framed proclamation, honoring her work. Frantz commented, "My ministry never was about me. It was about Jesus and fulfilling His ministry in this time and place."



Deans Installed

Bishop Driesen installed the Conference Deans on Saturday: Rev. Jill Seagle, Buffalo Valley; Rev. Gary Roth, Juniata Valley; Rev. Wayne Muthler, Middle Creek; Rev. Chad Hebrink, North Branch; Rev. Constantine Havir, Tulpehocken; and Rev. Eric Deibler, West Branch.



Camp Staff Installed

During Friday's session, Bishop Driesen installed the Camp Mount Luther 2011 Summer Ministry Team for their work on behalf of the synod. Chad Hershberger, executive director of the camp, presented the staff for installation.

Photos provided by Harry Deitz

Stream of Information and USS ARK are publications of the Upper Susquehanna Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, for congregations in the Pennsylvania counties of Mifflin, Juniata, Snyder, Union, Northumberland, Columbia, Montour, Lycoming, Clinton, & Tioga. Permission is granted to reproduce for congregational communications. Send your mission stories and ministry ideas to Chad Hershberger, Director of Communications, at news@uss-elca.org, or to the Upper Susquehanna Synod, PO Box 36, Lewisburg, PA 17837