

***MINUTES OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH REGULAR SYNOD ASSEMBLY OF THE
METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA***

**May 29-30, 2015
Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown, New York**

Assembly registration began at 8:00 am, followed by Orientation for Voting Members.

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015

PLENARY SESSION I

At 10:00 am Bishop Rimbo led the assembled in the rite for the Opening of an Assembly, and then called the first plenary session to order.

Bishop Rimbo welcomed the voting members, spoke about the work of the assembly, and defined for the assembly the term “voting member” as it applies to the members of the assembly. He then introduced The Rev. Marc Herbst as host for the session, The Rev. Amandus Derr, The Rev. Emilce Erato, The Rev. Brenda Irving, The Rev. John Jurik, and The Rev. Ernie Mossel as members of the pastoral care team for the Assembly, The Rev. C. Anderson James as Assembly Parliamentarian, The Rev. Jeanne Warfield as Chairperson of Reference and Council, and The Rev. Paul Johnsen as Chair of the Assembly Planning Committee. Bishop Rimbo then asked the members of the Assembly Planning Committee to stand for recognition by the voting members.

Bishop Rimbo then welcomed ELCA Diaconal Minister Jessica Nipp Hacker who will give the report of the ELCA to the Assembly.

Bishop Rimbo next introduced the staff of the Synod: The Rev. Perucy Butiku, Assistant to the Bishop for Multicultural Mission; Mr. Brandon Dicks, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Sarah Goe, Director of Communication; The Rev. Marc Herbst, Chief of Staff and Director of the Strategic Plan; The Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo, Candidacy Coordinator; The Rev. Kathleen Koran, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations; The Rev. Jonathan Linman, Assistant to the Bishop for Formation; Deacon Gayle Ruege, Executive Assistant to the Bishop; Ms. Kathleen Schmidt, Assistant to the Bishop for Administration and Finance; Mr. Brendan Stanton, Director of Media and Public Affairs; Ms. Rebekah Thornhill, Administrator to the Executive Staff and Synod Assembly Coordinator; The Rev. Lamont Wells, Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop; and Ms Susan Brandt, Administrative Assistant to Pr. Marc Herbst.

Bishop Rimbo then invited Mr. Jacob Wood to instruct the voting members in the use of the Quizdom electronic voting devices that will be used throughout the Assembly.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Hazel Goldstein gave the first registration report.

Clergy	142
ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders	7
Lay Voting Members	219
Total Voting members	<u>368</u>
Visitors	<u>58</u>
Total Attendance	426

Pr. Ernie MossI and Pr. Emilce Erato led the Assembly in prayer.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda for the assembly was adopted as presented.

Bishop Rimbo asked those speaking in favor of or against a matter before the assembly to do so at the appropriate microphone and noted that they will be limited to three minutes.

Friday, May 29

8:00am	Registration and Check-In <i>Check in and receive all your materials. Be sure to note when the registration desk is open and the procedures for checking in and out.</i>	Lobby
	Display Tables Open <i>Visit with almost 30 different committees and organizations hosting display tables.</i>	Grand Ballroom Foyer
9:00	Synod Assembly Orientation <i>Learn what you can expect during our time together and get the background on issues and initiatives we'll be discussing.</i>	Tarrytown Ballroom
10:00	Claimed, Gathered, and Sent: Opening of Assembly	Grand Ballroom

Plenary Session I

10:30	Welcome , Bishop Robert A Rimbo Introductions Pastoral Care Team, Chaplains Rev. C. Anderson James, Parliamentarian Pr. Jeanne Warfield, Chair, Reference and Counsel Assembly Planning Committee ELCA Representative, Ms. Jessica Nipp Hacker, Diaconal Minister Synod Staff Introduction to voting device , Mr. Jacob Wood Registration and Attendance , Dcns. Patty and John McDonnell Prayer , Pastoral Care Team Adoption of the Agenda , Bishop Robert A Rimbo Rules and Procedures , Bishop Robert A Rimbo Hymn , Blest Be the Tie That Binds Report and Procedure for Nominations from the floor , Pr. Kevin O'Hara Sent Moment: Mid East Relations Committee , Pr. Amy Kienzle	Grand Ballroom
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Claimed: Introduction to *Indaba* process, *Indaba* Working Group
Claimed: Prayer and invitation to engage *Indaba* process, *Indaba* Working Group
FMC: Report of the Treasurer, Mr. Frank Suttell
Claimed, Gathered, Sent and FMC: Presentation of the 2015 Revised Budget and 2016 Budget, Mr. Ed Wagner
Announcements, Pr. Paul Johnsen
Prayer, Pastoral Care Team
Claimed: Invitation to practice *Indaba* over lunch, *Indaba* Working Group

12:00 **Lunch** **Tarrytown Ballrooms
or Garden Terrace**

Plenary Session II

1:15 **Hymn**, What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine **Grand Ballroom**
Prayer, Pastoral Care Team
Call to Order, Bishop Robert A Rimbo
Claimed, Gathered, and Sent: Bishop's Bible Study, Bishop Robert A Rimbo
Introduction of Synod Council, Bishop Robert A Rimbo
Claimed, Gathered, and Sent: Synod Council Report, Ms. Maria DelToro
Hymn, The Church's One Foundation
Sent Moment: Environmental Stewardship Committee, Mr. Gerry Falco
Attendance and Registration Report, Dcns. Patty and John McDonnell
Prayer, Pastoral Care Team
Common Ballot, Pr. Kevin O'Hara
Reference and Counsel, Session 1, Pr. Jeanne Warfield
Sent Moment: Ministries with Youth and Young Adults, Ms. Abigail Triebel
Gathered: Introduction of Conference Deans, Pr. Kathleen Koran
Gathered: Recognition of Rostered Leaders and Congregation Anniversaries
Pr. Kathleen Koran, Ms. Amy Finney
Claimed: Introduction and invitation for *Indaba* process, *Indaba* Working Group
Sent Moment: Justice and Reconciliation in our Synod
Pr. Marsh Drege and Ms. Barbara Johnson
Claimed: Interfaith and Ecumenical Guests, Bishop Robert A Rimbo
Announcements, Pr. Paul Johnsen
Prayer, Pastoral Care Team
Claimed: Invitation to practice *Indaba* over dinner, *Indaba* Working Group

6:00 **Dinner** **Tarrytown Ballrooms
or Garden Terrace**

7:30 **Claimed, Gathered, Sent: Festival Eucharist** **Grand Ballroom**
Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, presiding and preaching

Saturday, May 30

7:00am	FMC: Budget Breakfast <i>Learn and ask questions about our proposed budget. (Bring your copy from your packet.)</i>	Tarrytown Ballroom
	Strategic Plan Question and Answer	Tarrytown Ballroom
8:00	Claimed, Gathered, and Sent: Morning Prayer	Grand Ballroom
8:30	Racial Relationship Building <i>This panel of pastors will bring their experiences with community concerns related to race, law enforcement and faith based responses.</i>	Westchester B
	Facilitating Strategic Planning , Mr. Tom Massey, Daxko <i>This forum is a follow up to this year's Quadrant meetings on strategic planning. The forum will be a discussion to help you facilitate a strategic planning process for a congregation.</i>	Westchester A
	Brainspotting and Pastoral Care Pr. Martha S. Jacobi, LCSW, Pastoral Psychotherapist; St. Luke's, NY <i>The forum introduces participants to Brainspotting, a transformational brain-body approach to healing and wellness, and how it can be integrated into various areas of congregational life and social ministries.</i>	Dutchess Room
	ELCA Deacon Roster , Mr. John Litke, Pr. Cherlyne Beck <i>The ELCA plans to form a new leadership office of deacon using the gifts of existing rosters, Learn about this process, emphasizing the church's diaconal witness.</i>	Hudson Room
	Wartburg Care at Home , Ms. Janet Palazzolo, Wartburg <i>Wartburg's Vice President of Residential Services will give more information about what is offered in our area and how this can help members continue to participate in their faith community.</i>	Putnam Room
	Justice in the Holy Land , Pr. Amy Kienzle, Mideast Relations Committee <i>This brief film will highlight the challenges of daily life, including racism, for Palestinians living under occupation. Following the viewing, there will be a brief time for discussion.</i>	Lyndhurst Room
	Learning about Worship, Evangelism and the Bible from the African Church , Pr. Arden Strasser, St. David's, Massapequa Park <i>After 14 years of living and working with the church in Africa, Pr. Strasser will share practical ideas and perspectives for praying, preaching, singing, leading, interpreting the Bible and even fundraising.</i>	Pocantico Room
	Communicating in Crisis , Rubenstein Associates <i>This forum will help to equip our leaders to communicate effectively and professionally with various media outlets, especially in times of crisis.</i>	Seepy Hollow Room
	The Sower's Project:	Rockland Room
	Seed Money for New Ministries , Pr. Benjamin McKelahan, Innovation Team <i>Do you know a community where the gospel would flourish? Do you know someone who with the gifts to start ministries? Learn more about how our strategic plan is enabling seed money.</i>	
	Display Tables Open <i>Visit with almost 30 different committees and organizations hosting display tables.</i>	Grand Ballroom Foyer

Plenary Session III

9:30	Call to Order , Bishop Robert A Rimbo Hymn , Beautiful Savior Prayer , Pastoral Care Team ELCA Report , Ms. Jessica Nipp Hacker, Diaconal Minister Attendance and Registration Report , Dcns. Patty and John McDonnell Prayer , Pastoral Care Team Reference and Counsel, Session 2 , Pr. Jeanne Warfield Sent Moment: Tanzania Companionship Committee , Pr. Daniel Ward Claimed, Gathered, and Sent: Strategic Plan Steering Committee , Ms. Maria DelToro Claimed: Prayer and invitation to engage Indaba process , Indaba Working Group Hymn , Lift Every Voice and Sing Sent Moment: Lutheran World Relief	Grand Ballroom
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Announcements, Pr. Paul Johnsen

Prayer, Pastoral Care Team

Claimed: Invitation to practice Indaba over lunch, *Indaba* Working Group

12:00	Lunch	Tarrytown Ballrooms or Garden Terrace
1:30	Claimed, Gathered, and Sent: Eucharist Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, presiding and preaching	Grand Ballroom

Plenary Session IV

2:35	Call to Order , Bishop Robert A Rimbo Attendance and Registration Report , Dcns. Patty and John McDonnell Prayer , Pastoral Care Team Sent Moment: Wartburg , Pr. Carol Fryer Claimed, Gathered, Sent and FMC: Budget Questions and Adoption Mr. Frank Suttell and Mr. Ed Wagner Second/further Common ballot , Pr. Kevin O'Hara Sent Moment: Portico Announcements , Pr. Paul Johnsen	Grand Ballroom
3:30	Claimed, Gathered, and Sent: Closing of an Assembly	

Adoption of Rules of Procedure

Prior to the vote on the Rules of Procedure, Bishop Rimbo suggested an amendment to allow for a change in the order of resolution presentation.

The Rules of Procedure were then adopted as amended.

The voting members joined in singing "Blest Be the Tie that Binds."

Report of Committee on Nominations and Elections

The Rev. Kevin O'Hara, Chairperson, gave report and procedure for receiving nominations from the floor.

Sent Moment: Mid East Relations Committee

The Rev. Amy Kienzle and The Rev. Khadir Khalilia reported on the work of the committee and then presented a video on Augusta Victoria Hospital and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land.

Introduction to the Indaba Process

Bishop Rimbo invited Deacon Ingrid Compton, Deacon Jean Hansen, Mr. Wally Nash and Ms. Wendy Bean Tannenbaum, members of the Indaba Working Group, to the podium to introduce and model the indaba process.

Then, with prayer and the ringing of a prayer bowl, the voting members were invited to join in indaba conversation around the topic: “Describe a time when you have experienced God in conversation with others.”

After ten minutes of discussion, the indaba session was ended with the ringing of the prayer bowl and prayer by Bishop Rimbo.

Report of Treasurer and Presentation of Revised 2015 Budget and Proposed 2016 Budget

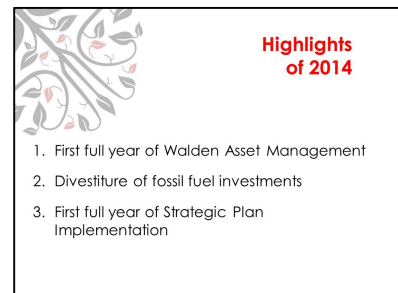
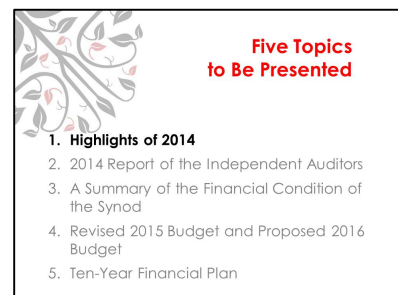
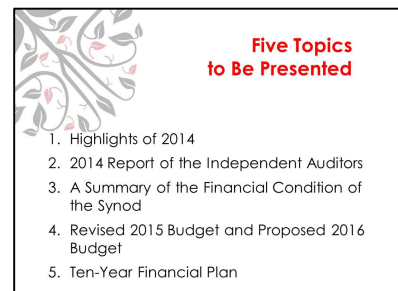
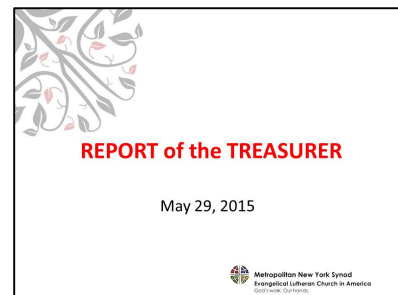
Bishop Rimbo invited Mr. Frank Suttell, Synod Treasurer, and Mr. Edward Wagner, Chair of the Financial Management Committee, to the podium.

Mr. Suttell gave the report of the Treasurer.

**FMC: Report of the Treasurer, Mr. Frank Suttell
Claimed, Gathered, Sent and FMC: Presentation of the 2015 Revised Budget and 2016 Budget, Mr. Ed Wagner**
Discussion held at the Budget Breakfast, May 30

The Treasurer’s report presents five topics. There will be opportunity to discuss these topics and others at the budget breakfast at 7 a.m. tomorrow morning and the full assembly will debate the budget later in the day. The first topic is a brief list of financial highlights for 2014. The second topic is the purpose and the results of the audit by our outside auditors TaitWeller. The third topic is a review of the current financial condition of the Synod compared to the last several years. The fourth topic is the adjusted budget for this year and the proposed budget for next year. The final topic is the ten-year financial plan.

2014 was again a busy year for the Synod. In addition to the strategic plan which has been the focus, a number of other significant accomplishments took place. I will mention a few. We had our first full year with Walden Asset Management, a premier socially responsible investment management firm, which was appointed our investment manager. We were extremely pleased with this arrangement. Walden has proven to be flexible and responsive to the Synod’s changing needs during the implementation of our strategic plan. We also experienced investment gains which exceeded the standard benchmarks. Understanding that it takes several years to fully measure the success or failure of an investment manager, we can say that we are very pleased with our first full year.



Members of the Environmental Stewardship Committee met with the Financial Management Committee and our asset managers to discuss the pros and cons of divesting our investments in companies which deal primarily with fossil fuels. The FMC unanimously agreed to accept the ESC's recommendation to add fossil fuels to the list of investments we believe are inappropriate for our Synod. Gerry Falco of the ESC will discuss this important initiative in more detail later today.

The first full year of the Strategic Plan implementation presented a number of challenges and opportunities. At several points in this assembly you will hear about the activities of the Claimed, Gathered and Sent Committees. From the point of view of the Financial Management Committee and the Treasurer's office this activity required flexibility in shifting resources as we learned more about which initiatives were more effective than others and making appropriate shifts in the budget. At the end of the day, the Strategic Plan Committees made the appropriate adjustments and came in under budget.

Tait/Weller, our Independent Auditors, have completed their work and issued their opinion.


The purpose of an audit is to determine if our books as prepared and presented by management fairly present our assets and liabilities and that the changes in our assets and the cash flows for the year are presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Once again this year our auditors have given us a "clean" opinion. The auditors have attested that our books fairly present our financial condition. I do not get terribly excited about a clean opinion. In truth, a "qualified" opinion is rare and usually indicates major problems with the books and/or the entity presenting the books. What I do get excited about is a "squeaky clean" opinion which keeps me and the audit committee fully informed and supports our management with up-to-date accounting principles. In this respect, the audit was a great success. There were no significant adjustments to be made and there was no management letter to point out areas in need of improvement. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Kathy Schmidt for her tireless effort and technical expertise which made this "squeaky clean" audit possible.

At the suggestion of the Synod Council, the Audit Committee examined the possibility of periodically rotating the outside audit firm in order to strengthen their independence. Anyone who remembers Enron will appreciate the troubles that can arise when an auditor becomes too cozy with company management. However, there are disadvantages. The biggest disadvantage to rotating audit firms is that it costs time and money to do so. In the end the Audit Committee decided that we are not Enron and Tait/Weller is not Arthur Anderson and we could get most of the same protection by sticking with Tait/Weller and directing them to rotate the partner in charge every three years and every year have at least one new staff person on our audit.

A complete copy of the auditors' report will be available at the budget breakfast tomorrow morning and may also be found on our website. I recommend your reading it. I understand that reading audit reports is an acquired taste but there is a wealth of information there if you have the time. Some of the footnotes are fairly routine but if you review them all you can learn a great deal about how we keep track of our operations.

How are we doing? The financial strength of the Synod is determined by what we own and how well we manage those assets and how well we control our spending. In this discussion I will cover (1) our real property assets which are mostly churches whose congregations have ended their mission; (2) our monetary assets which are cash and near cash assets; (3) our recent trend in congregational mission support; (4) and our recent trend in expense budgets.




**Five Topics
to Be Presented**

1. Highlights of 2014
- 2. 2014 Report of the Independent Auditors**
3. A Summary of the Financial Condition of the Synod
4. Revised 2015 Budget and Proposed 2016 Budget
5. Ten-Year Financial Plan




**2014 Report of the
Independent Auditors**

- Synod management prepares the financial statements.
- Auditors determine if statements present fairly the financial position of the Synod.
- Auditors again issued a "clean" opinion.
- Audit Committee rehired Tait/Weller as our independent auditors.



**Five Topics
to Be Presented**

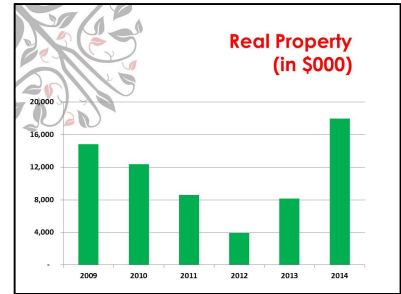
1. Highlights of 2014
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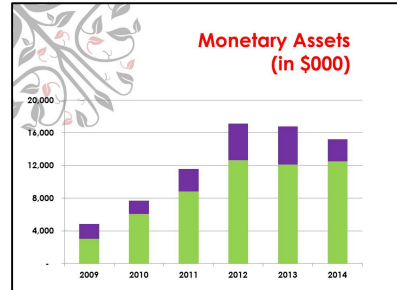
**The Financial
Condition of the Synod**

1. Real Property Assets
2. Monetary Assets
3. Congregational Mission Support
4. Expense Budget History

As you can see, until 2012 there had been a steady drop in our real property assets. The change in 2013 was mostly due to the acquisition of Zion Lutheran Church Brooklyn and Reformation Lutheran Brooklyn. The increase in 2014 of \$9.6 million was due to the acquisition of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Brooklyn with a carrying value of \$8.8 million and the revaluation of Bethany Lutheran Church, Brooklyn by \$1.1 million. Generally it is a good sign when real property assets decrease. We generally receive no income while holding such assets and in fact have to expend resources for maintaining these assets. Our current policy is to repurpose or move the properties as quickly as possible in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

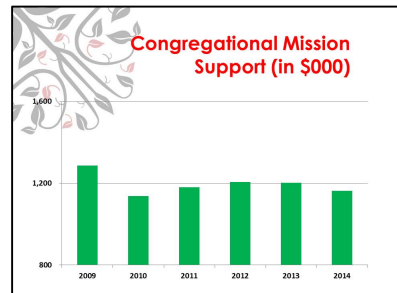


Monetary assets are cash, receivables and investments. These assets are represented by the total column on the chart. The green bottom portion of the column is the amount that is invested with our advisors, now Walden Asset Management. The purple top portion of the column represents the monetary assets not invested in the fund. You should not assume that these purple assets represent only non-revenue producing assets just because they are not in the Walden fund. A significant portion of those assets are in interest bearing mortgages.



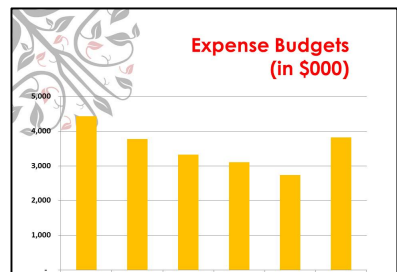
As you can see, while down slightly for the last two years, our monetary assets have generally been growing nicely over the last few years. Some of this growth is natural as we sell down our vacant properties and invest the proceeds. Some of this growth is due to a recovering stock market. And the years up to 2013 have benefitted greatly from the expense reduction program.

In 2014 contributions were below those of 2013 by \$39 thousand and approximately \$86 thousand below budget. This performance is particularly distressing because it may indicate that many of our congregations are wrestling with budget problems.



We all agree that we would like to increase congregational contributions to the historic highs and beyond. We believe the Strategic Plan will help accomplish this goal in two ways. First by developing stronger congregations which will be in a better position to support the Synod. Second by supplying causes that are worthy of support from our congregations.

As you can see, our budgeted expenses had shown a steady drop in the last few years, from \$4.5 million in 2009 to just under \$3 million in 2013. These drops have resulted from the staff making some very difficult decisions on personnel and facilities and then carrying through on those decisions. We noted the effect on investable assets earlier. The increase in 2014 is the result of the extra expenses related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. As discussed last year, we believe that the investments made last year and to be made this year are well thought out and necessary to keep our Church relevant in the 21st century.



Up to this point, we have discussed where we stand now in relation to the recent past. Now we take a look forward.

As you know, each year we come to the assembly with a budget for the current year and for the following year. Last year you adopted a budget for 2014 of \$3.815 million and our spending was \$3.568 million, or

Five Topics to Be Presented

1. Highlights of 2014

2015 Revised Budget and Proposed 2016 Budget (in \$000)

1. 2014 Budget	\$3,815	Actual	\$3,568
2. 2015 Adopted Budget			\$4,140
3. 2015 Proposed Revised Budget			\$4,090
4. 2016 Proposed Budget			\$3,943

approximately \$250 thousand under budget. You also adopted a budget for 2015 of \$4.14 million. Today and tomorrow we will be presenting a proposed budget for 2015 which at \$4.09 is slightly below what was approved last year. We will also be presenting a proposed budget for 2016 of \$3.943. The short form of the 2015 and 2016 budgets is included in your Bulletin of Reports and the long form is available at the budget breakfast tomorrow. Please note that only accounts would call a three page detailed report as the short form.

It should be noted here that fiscal year 2017 we assume that the bulk of the extra investment for the strategic plan will have been spent and that we will be working on a drastically reduced baseline budget.

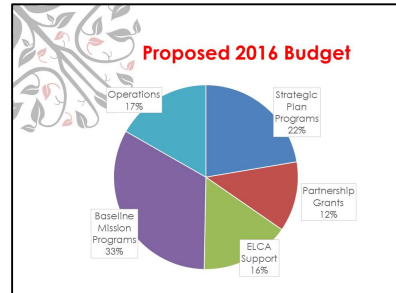
The pie chart gives a graphic look at how we plan to use our resources in 2016.

The green slice at the lower right represents the portion of our congregational support which we send on to the ELCA or approximately 16% of our budget. We currently forward approximately half of what our congregations contribute and we plan to raise that to 55%. The red slice is the amount we give to congregations to support their viability. We project using approximately 12% of our budget.

The dark blue slice, or 22% of the budget, is the amount we plan to spend on projects to implement the strategic plan.

The light blue slice, or 17% of the budget, is the amount we spend on synod governance and finance and administration.

Finally the purple slice or 35% of the budget is devoted to our baseline mission programs.



- ### Five Topics to Be Presented
1. Highlights of 2014
 2. 2014 Report of the Independent Auditors
 3. A Summary of the Financial Condition of the Synod
 4. Revised 2015 Budget and Proposed 2016 Budget
 5. **Ten-Year Financial Plan**

- ### The Ten-year Plan
1. Objective unchanged: a sustainable financial condition by 2024
 2. Adjustments made based on 2014 experience
 3. Detailed plan and resolution to be discussed at June Synod Council

The bar graph presents the progression of the ten year plan from today where we are make substantial investments in the strategic plan to the final years of the plan where our income and expenses stabilize. The following are the expense assumptions in the plan:

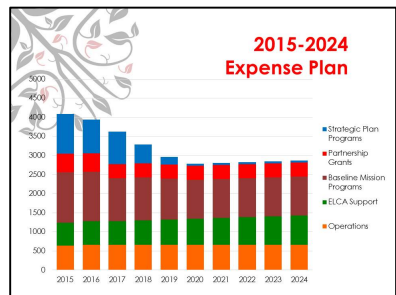
Operations costs will remain the same

ELCA support will increase from the current 50% of congregational giving to 55%

Long-term synod baseline mission program costs will level off.

Partnership grants, that provide temporary support to viable congregations with potential, will remain the same.

Strategic plan implementation programs will result in expansion and revitalization of the synod's ministries over the next five years.



Beyond the seed initiatives, those programs that require continued synod support beyond five years will be covered by additional revenue or will replace existing synod mission programs

Revenue projections bring challenges and opportunities. The following are the revenue assumptions in the ten-year plan:

Congregations will increase contributions by 1% per year to enhance the support of the strategic plan.

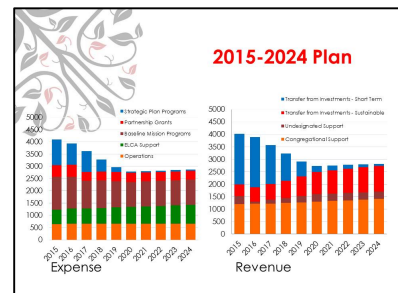
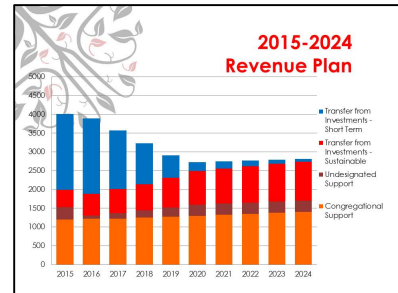
A financial development initiative will raise undesignated support from current level of about \$50,000 to \$300,000 annually.

Higher value of endowment investments will significantly raise the level of investments distributions that are sustainable.

Sizable short-term distributions from investments over the next 5 years can be managed.

This slide combines the previous slide to show the progress of both income and expenses as they attain sustainable parity in the latter years of the plan.

In general 2014 was a good, if not spectacular, year for the Synod. We maintained our financial stability, we reached a number of our Strategic Plan goals and we operated within our budget. We understand that there are more difficult goals ahead of us and strict budget constraints. However, I have great confidence in our talented and dedicated staff and the wonderful volunteers who are working so hard on our Strategic Plan.



More Information is Available

- A breakdown of the budgets is in your packets
- Come to the budget breakfast tomorrow at 7 a.m.

Methodist New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2015-2016-2017

Mr. Wagner and Mr. Suttell presented the Revised 2015 Budget and Proposed 2016 Budget, noting that any proposed amendments to the budgets are to be submitted in writing (triplicate) by 12 noon today. Voting on the budgets will take place in the fourth plenary session Saturday afternoon.

METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD
Revised 2015/Proposed 2016 Budgets
Synod Assembly
May 29-May 30, 2015

	2015 BUDGET		2016 BUDGET
	Adopted (June 2014)	Revised (May 2015)	Proposed (May 2015)
PROGRAM BUDGET			
REVENUE			
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CONGREGATIONS	1,250,000	1,200,000	1,225,000
Undesignated Mission Support			
GRANTS, UNDESIGNATED GIFTS, & OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS	66,000	334,000	84,000
ELCA Grants (Congregational and Synodical Mission); Undesignated Gifts; Sutter Memorial Fund; Portico Health Assessment grant			
TRANSFERS FROM OTHER FUNDS	2,292,863	2,128,300	2,067,059
Metro New York Synod Fund; Mission Redevelopment Fund; Wider Church Fund; Transfers from other designated funds			
OTHER INCOME	531,625	427,793	566,625
Investment Income; Loan Interest			
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS	4,140,488	4,090,093	3,942,684
EXPENSES			
CLAIMED			
Faith Formation	108,342	116,213	119,840
Leadership training and spiritual direction for lay leaders; theologian in residence			
Family Ministries	6,759	5,551	5,671
Children, Youth and Family Ministries			
Communications - Claimed	49,011	44,799	45,873
Communications support for Claimed strategy; website maintenance; publications - Lutheran New Yorker			
Education Grants	96,895	98,995	67,370
Lutheran Schools Association - Dues; Lutheran Ministries In Higher Education; Student Christian Center at SUNY New Paltz; Wagner College			
Strategic Plan Implementation	142,936	263,690	251,566
Implementation Initiatives			
Total Claimed	403,943	529,247	490,320
GATHERED			
Mission Resources	40,298	40,295	41,354
Outreach Committee; Stewardship & Mission Support Table			
Congregational Grants	464,187	590,871	592,230
Partnership grants, Salam Ministry Fund grant, other grants			
Congregational Consultations & Resources	258,421	281,821	289,910
Rostered leaders support; congregation consultations & resources			
Communications - Gathered	26,305	28,584	29,439
Communications support for Gathered strategy			

	2015 BUDGET		2016 BUDGET
	Adopted (June 2014)	Revised (May 2015)	Proposed (May 2015)
Leadership Formation Ministeriums & other education events; bishop's, candidacy, deans and staff retreats; orientation of new pastors, renewal and boundary workshop, Urban Leaders Institute; candidacy process and expenses; Trexler grants; ministerial education grants	161,963	181,094	180,020
Education/Internship Grants Philadelphia Seminary; Horizon Internships	77,000	37,000	37,000
Strategic Plan Implementation Implementation Initiatives	886,745	619,760	501,264
Total Gathered	1,914,919	1,779,425	1,671,216
SENT			
Companion Synods Tanzania teachers - salary/benefits	92,650	113,397	92,160
Committees/Commissions Companion synod committees; commission and committee support and expenses	23,500	32,799	33,701
Multicultural Ministries Multicultural ministries support and expenses	53,558	90,344	92,991
Social Ministry Organizations Social Ministry Organizations support; Wider Church Fund grants	226,293	125,253	125,854
Communications - Sent Communications support for Sent strategy	26,905	29,235	30,109
ELCA Support ELCA Mission Support (50.0% of mission support rec'd from cong.)	625,000	600,000	618,625
Strategic Plan Implementation Implementation Initiatives	179,681	155,950	127,830
Total Sent	1,227,586	1,146,978	1,121,269
SYNOD GOVERNANCE			
Synod Assembly Synod Assembly (net of registration); Assembly management	54,242	57,782	68,852
Synod Council Synod Council; Synod Council Committees; Archives expense	73,551	77,628	79,562
Synod Events Region 7 Coordinating Council; Worship Events & Ordinations	28,793	30,253	30,854
Total Synod Governance	156,585	165,663	179,268
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION			
General Office Management Telephone/Internet Access; Professional Services - Technology; Computers & Other Equipment; Data Base Expense; Office Supplies/Printing; Postage & Shipping; office management	72,347	91,915	95,311
General Accounting Payroll Service Fees; Credit Card Fees; general management	33,569	38,837	40,124
Facility Rent & Facility Management; Maintenance and Repair; Depreciation Expense	222,570	223,800	228,491
Audit/Legal Professional Services - Audit; Legal Fees; audit and legal management	70,646	69,859	71,434

	2015 BUDGET		2016 BUDGET
	Adopted (June 2014)	Revised (May 2015)	Proposed (May 2015)
Insurance Directors & Officers/Employment Practices Liability; NYS Disability/Dishonesty Bond; ELCA Shared Risk Assessment; Workmen's Comp/State Unemployment; Property & Liability; Insurance reviews and management	38,321	44,369	45,251
Total Finance and Administration	437,454	468,779	480,611
TOTAL EXPENSES	(4,140,488)	(4,090,093)	(3,942,684)
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS	4,140,488	4,090,093	3,942,684
NET INCOME (LOSS)	-	-	-

PROPERTIES OWNED/SYNOD ADMINISTRATION BUDGET

REVENUE

Synod Owned Properties - Trf. from Mission Redevelopment Fund	200,000	200,000	200,000
Synodical Admin Properties - Trf. from Mission Redevelopment Fund	150,000	150,000	150,000
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS	350,000	350,000	350,000

EXPENSES

Synod Administration/Owned Properties - Non-staff expense	174,292	200,000	200,000
Synod Administration/Owned Properties - Staff expense	175,708	150,000	150,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	(350,000)	(350,000)	(350,000)
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS	350,000	350,000	350,000
NET INCOME (LOSS)	-	-	-

SUMMARY - ALL FUNDS

TOTAL EXPENSES - ALL FUNDS	(4,490,488)	(4,440,093)	(4,292,684)
TOTAL REVENUE & FUNDS TRANSFERS - ALL FUNDS	4,490,488	4,440,093	4,292,684
NET INCOME (LOSS) - ALL FUNDS	-	-	-

The Rev. Paul Johnson, Chair of Assembly Planning Committee, came to podium to make announcements. The Rev. Brenda Irving and The Rev. Emilce Erato then closed the session with prayer.

Bishop Rimbo invited the voting members to practice indaba over lunch around the question: "Where do you see God at work in your congregation or local ministry setting?"

The Rev. Amandus Derr and The Rev. Emilce Erato led the Assembly in prayer.

The second plenary session was then called to order by Bishop Rimbo at 1:30 pm. Bishop Rimbo then expressed gratitude for the Huneke Fund that has provided full tuition for Metropolitan New York Synod students attending the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, for the submission of 158 parochial reports to date, and for the response to and participation in the events surrounding the quadrant visits.

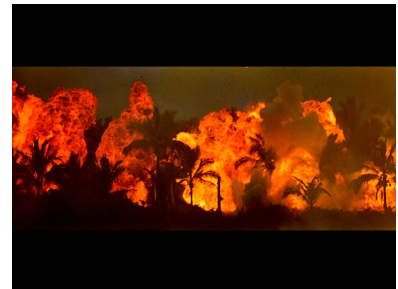
Mr. Alex Lawrence and Mr. Aaron VanderYacht, from Trinity Lower East Side Parish, presented their song, “I Am a Lutheran,” which was received enthusiastically by the Assembly.

Bishop’s Bible Study: “The Power of the Lamb”

A small group of us was discussing images that come together in these days in worship and in actions at our Synod Assembly. It was a pile-up of pictures, mostly from the Book of Revelation, the New Testament Apocalypse,

Sarah: A picture from the movie Apocalypse Now, or something scary with lots of destruction in it?

one of the most scary and, frankly, most misunderstood pieces of literature ever written. I’m no biblical scholar but I do know some things about worship and about the Church, so I thought I would learn more about this Book, correct some of the misguided thinking on it, and help all of us grow into the koinonia, the communion, God desires for us.



So, we were talking about the river that flows from the throne of God...about the powers and principalities that war against the Church...the City ... heaven...a seven-headed beast...a dragon...the Tree of Life...leaves for the healing of the nations...lampstands...singing angels...a bride adorned for her husband...God’s dwelling...tears...mourning...Alpha and Omega... That conversation was just the start.

And, of course, running through my musical/liturgical mind was this:

Sarah: ELW – This is the Feast – Setting 4

Let’s sing it together now.

I want to talk with you about the Power of the Lamb who is the true central figure, the real main theme in the Book of Revelation, a book which many Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants like us tend to avoid and have given over to the Fundamentalists. They tend to love it because they can use it, presumably, to predict the end of the world, even though Jesus himself could not predict it and even though that is not what this Book is about. The Book of Revelation is about hope. It is about the Power of the Lamb.

Intro
Ascending minor

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, Al-le - hu - ia.

All

1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose Mood set us free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

Repeat

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, Al-le - hu - ia.

Final return

2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Final return

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain. has be-gun his reign, Al-le-hu-ia. Al-le-hu-ia.

Many of the images in the Book of Revelation are scary, alarming, and seemingly incomprehensible. Bloody battles;

Sarah: Picture?



Judgment and destruction.

Sarah: Picture?



But I want to suggest that the book is really about Hope and Power. And not just any kind of power: the Power of the Lamb.

Sarah: Picture of the Lamb?

I'll just give you a quick overview, so you'll have to take my word for it. But I invite you to consider looking at two books that helped me think about this.

First, Barbara Rossing's *The Rapture Exposed: the Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation*, a book I read when it first was published, and Ward Ewing's *The Power of the Lamb: Revelation's Theology of Liberation for You*, a new one for my library. Both are intelligent contributions to

understanding a book that is mysterious and has scared a lot of people. But it really should not scare because it offers ultimate hope for our own time and situation and the future.

First, we'll talk about powerlessness. Then, the Power of the Lamb.



Powerlessness

There are letters to seven churches. You can read the letters in Chapters 1 and 2. I think they capture much of what continues in our churches today. They are small, poor, struggling to survive, suffering from discrimination, divided by internal squabbles, abused by local magistrates, treated badly by other religions, surrounded by pagan corruption. These seven churches have a tendency to drift into complacency –laziness – to tolerate and even follow false teachers, and generally to lose their commitment to Jesus and their hope for the future.



Turn to a neighbor and ask yourselves: Does this sound familiar? Do you know of any churches like this? You need not name them. Just say whether you are aware of them.

PAUSE for a few moments.

Interestingly, at least to me: the shining stars among John's seven churches are Philadelphia and Smyrna. These bright spots are two poor, harassed and not-very influential congregations which, despite their weakness, hold steadfastly to the faith in Jesus. And that's why St. John the Divine likes them, commends them, holds them up as examples. Again, turn to a neighbor: do you know any congregation like this? No names. Just Yes or No>

PAUSE for a few moments.

St. John writes to Ephesus, Pergamum and Thyatira about his concerns regarding false teaching, calling for purity in belief and in practice. On the other hand, the church at Ephesus *heard* John's first letter to them and became so rigid that the spirit of love was lost. He reminds them that their works of love, faith, service and patient endurance

must be neither so tolerant of pagan practices that the uniqueness of the Christian life be lost, nor so intolerant of pagan faiths as to become a persecution. A delicate balance still for us.

And for St. John the Divine, the most important announcement is that Jesus was and is God's Anointed – God's Messiah – that's the most important message and that means that all the gloom and doom of approaching destruction has to be reinterpreted.

Not only did the Messiah come, but he was crucified!

Sarah: Picture of Crucified Christ



And not only did he die, he was raised!

Sarah: Picture Risen Christ

It was *incomprehensible* to the audiences for which John and all of the New Testament writers wrote that the Messiah would be crucified by the powers of the world; the Messiah was supposed to overcome them. So the Book of Revelation announces that the crucial battle between the power of God and the oppressive powers of this world has been won, and God's rule has begun.



This is why I think this book, interpreted in the light of history and the rest of the Bible, has a great message of *hope* for us, *power* for the powerless. John's churches do not seem very different from us. Our congregations seem weaker than in ages past, are concerned with internal issues, we have little clout in our political structures.

The issue we face is power and specifically whether the Power of the Lamb can work for us today.

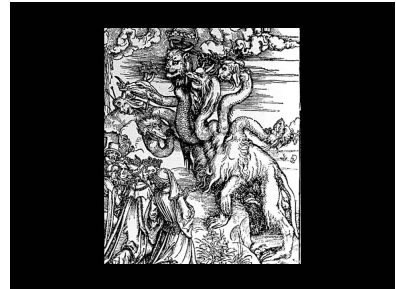
Here is a visual way to contrast, to capture the paradox of the Book of Revelation and the times in which we live:

Sarah: I recall a picture of The Beast with seven heads from the Book of Revelation. Durer?

Picture of The Lamb – also Durer?

Show them individually, then on a split frame?

The Beast is a symbol of brutal force. The Lamb is a symbol of unprotected vulnerability. The Beast coerces through fear and might, the Lamb has no such power. The followers of the Lamb are not manipulated, cajoled, or constrained to follow; they freely choose the Lamb as their leader. By his love and his sacrifice, the Lamb transforms the heart and inspires devotion. Love compels the followers of the Lamb, not force. The Beast controls people by fear and death; the Lamb liberates people from bondage and heals people and brings life. The Beast uses people for its own glory and in the process people get hurt. The Beast kills people and drinks their blood, but the purpose of the Lamb is to free people from destructive enslavement, even at the cost of its own life. Through his own blood the Lamb liberates his people and raises them to new life. Those who follow the Lamb know eternal life now and will live with the Lamb forever.



Ward Ewing puts it this way, contrasting what the world teaches with what Jesus teaches:

Sarah: Please put these two contrasting understandings in Parallel Columns:

The world teaches...

Blessed are the rich for they shall rule the world.

Jesus teaches:

Blessed are the poor for there is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the calm and collected, for little can touch them.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the aggressive, for they shall be promoted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those with finesse, for in avoiding controversy they shall come out ahead.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the cool and callous, for they shall emerge untroubled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the manipulators, for they shall achieve power.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The world teaches...

Jesus teaches...

Blessed are the rich for they shall rule the world.

Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The world teaches...

Jesus teaches...

Blessed are the calm and collected, for little can touch them.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The world teaches...

Jesus teaches...

Blessed are the aggressive, for they shall be promoted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

The world teaches...

Jesus teaches...

Blessed are those with finesse, for in avoiding controversy they shall come out ahead.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

The world teaches...

Jesus teaches...

Blessed are the cool and callous, for they shall emerge untroubled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

The world teaches...

Jesus teaches...

Blessed are the manipulators, for they shall achieve power.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the nice, for all will speak well of them.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

The issue we face is power and specifically whether the Power of the Lamb can work for us today. So, now, what about this Lamb of God, of which we sing rather complacently?

The Lamb

Jesus is the main character in Revelation. Let's read Revelation 1:1-3 together aloud.

**The revelation of Jesus Christ,
which God gave him to show his servants what must soon
take place;
he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,
who testified to the word of God
and to the testimony of Jesus Christ,
even to all that he saw.**

**Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the
prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is
written in it;
for the time is near.**

Revelation's primary purpose is to tell us the story of Jesus, not to predict end-times events in Europe or the Middle East.

And who is Jesus? Jesus is first presented as a majestic, human-like figure with a sword in his mouth.

Sarah: Picture of that???

But this depiction is quickly eclipsed by the portrayal of Jesus as the Lamb.

Sarah: Picture of the Lamb

It is the Lamb who gathers 144,000 holy warriors on Mt. Zion (Rev. 14:1). It is the Lamb on whom the armies of evil make war (Rev. 17:14). It is the Lamb who even marries and rules after the war (Rev. 19:7; 22:3).

The world teaches...

Blessed are the nice, for all will speak well of them.

Jesus teaches...

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

The Lamb

The revelation of Jesus Christ,
which God gave him to show his servants
what must soon take place;
he made it known by sending his angel to
his servant John,
who testified to the word of God
and to the testimony of Jesus Christ,
even to all that he saw.

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the
words of the prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear and who
keep what is written in it;
for the time is near.

Revelation 1:1-3



The Lamb is an amazing and yet wonderfully disarming vision. In place of overwhelming military strength, we are given the image of the Lamb's non-violent power. In place of Rome's image of inflicting slaughter on the world, Revelation tells the story of the Lamb who has *been* slaughtered – and who still bears the scars of that slaughter. Revelation undertakes to reveal what true power and true victory is: At the heart of the power of the universe stands Jesus, God's slain Lamb.

We first meet Jesus as the Lamb in chapter 5 in the heavenly vision that follows the seven letters to the churches. We go on a journey behind the veil into heaven itself where we see God seated on a beautiful throne.

Sarah: Picture?

All creation is singing praise to God. Singing and worship are central to Revelation, a fact often overlooked by people who see the book only as a system of end-times predictions and timetables. In Revelation we *sing* our way into God's new vision for our world.

God holds a scroll sealed shut with seven shields that must be opened. But who is worthy to open this scroll?

The Lion of Judah (image?)

The Root of David (image?)

No. Rather: a Lamb. A rather peculiar Lamb, but still a Lamb. Let's read this together:

Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Revelation 5:6



Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Sarah: Picture of a Lamb?

This is a complete reversal. But note this, the portrait of the Lamb develops and is even more interesting. The Greek word is not just "lamb," but a diminutive: a word like "lambkin," "little lamb." Dan Erlander, for many years a leader at Holden Village, calls him "fluffy." The only other place in the New Testament where this version of the word for lamb (lambkin, fluffy) is used, is when Jesus says he is sending his disciples out into the world as lambs among wolves in Luke 10. That's the only place! The divine hero is a baby lamb. Jesus is shown in the most vulnerable way possible, as a victim who is slaughtered but standing – that is, crucified, but risen to life.



And here's the point for us: The Lamb – dare I say it, "Fluffy" – became the victor not by militaristic power but by being slaughtered. From beginning to end, Revelation's vision of the Lamb teaches a theology of the cross, of God's power made manifest in weakness. This is the whole message of Revelation and it gives us hope. The victim becomes the victor.

Let's sing about this:

Sarah: project ELW 847, Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs

We are followers of the Lamb on whom the title "conqueror" is bestowed and so we are conquerors as well. This is one of the many amazing features of this Book. Much of Revelation can sound so violent, but we have to look at the subversive heart of the book – the redefinition of victory and conquering – to understand how Revelation subverts violence itself. Just like the Lamb, we, God's people, are called to conquer not by fighting but by remaining faithful, by testifying to *God's* victory in *our* self-giving love.

Come, Let Us Join Our Cheerful Songs

1 Come, let us join our cheer-ful songs with an-gels round the throne;
 2 "Woe- thy the Lamb!" our lips re-ally, "Ho- he-av-ens call thee!"
 3 Je- sus is wor- thy to re-ceive hon-ors and pow'r di-vine;
 4 Let all cre-a-tions join in one to bless the sa-cred name

ten thou-sand thou-sand are their tongues, but all their joys are one,
 "Woe- thy the Lamb!" our lips re-ally, "Ho- he-av-ens call thee!"
 and bless-ings more than we can give, be, Lord, for-ev-er thine,
 of God who sits up-on the throne, and so to re-vere the Lamb

How Firm a Foundation, 1875; 1188
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The Christian community is portrayed as those who follow the Lamb. Our calling as Christians is simply to be followers, standing with the Lamb, going where the Lamb leads.

“**Lamb Power**” is what Ward Ewing identifies in a most compelling way as Revelation’s new way of life, Revelation’s theology of liberation for us all, a lifestyle oriented around Jesus’ self-giving love, a mode of operation in church and world for us to live. (Some of you may know of Dr. Ewing; he is the former President and Dean of the General Theological Seminary in New York. Prior to preparing for this Bible Study at Assembly I had no idea he was a New Testament scholar! Oh, well.).



Back to Lamb Power.

Lamb Power is the power of vulnerable but strong love to change the world, and it is ours.

It is the power of nonviolent resistance and courage in opposition to injustice, and it is ours.

It is the power of unity, and it is ours.

It is the power of forgiveness, of mercy, and it is ours.

It is the power of healing for the nations, and it is ours.

It seems to me that this Power of the Lamb can characterize our life together as a synod, especially as we tackle difficult issues, raise tough questions, struggle with what appears to some to be a hopeless future, long for health and wholeness.

When I think of the Power of the Lamb which is ours, I think of congregations in this Synod who have decided to cooperate or even close in order to move into new formations for ministry. I think of the Lutheran Parish of Northern Duchess; I think of Augustana, Elmhurst and Grace, Astoria; I think of Christ, Ozone Park, St. Philip’s, Brooklyn, Saint Luke’s and San Lucas, Woodhaven, who are moving together to form All Saints/Todos Los Santos. I think of you, faithful to your calling and to your God while facing challenges never anticipated by your ancestors who founded your congregations. I think of you, who have been with victims of disease and death and helped them face the future with hope.

Turn now to a neighbor and share a time or a situation in which God has given you courage, grace, hope, power for a challenge.

Friends, we constantly choose between the Power of the Lamb and the Way of the Beast. Living by the Power of the Lamb means we accept the Cross as the ultimate expression of love. And because we are following the Lamb, we cannot remain safe and secure. Vulnerability – the primary characteristic of the Power of the Lamb – includes by definition the possibility of suffering. The Power of the Lamb is the power of our acts of hope and resistance, our songs and our solidarity, to overcome the terror of the Beast, the terror we see every day all around our world.

Sarah: Picture: Lambkin???

[[[A story that might capture for you what I’ve been saying.

No government in recent times has more fully epitomized the spirit of oppressive and aggressive domination, of racism, cruelty and injustice, than that of Hitler’s Third Reich. What happened in those years and in those countries where the Beast of the swastika was opposed? In Norway and Denmark the leadership refused to be ruled by fear, and the effectiveness of their resistance is remarkable.



Denmark’s army was almost nonexistent when Hitler turned and attacked this neutral country in 1940. Denmark was occupied in a matter of hours without military resistance. Then the conquerors began the process of taking

over the local government, using fear and prejudice to make it serve the invader's purposes. But one man refused to cower in fear, and his example gave courage to the nation. Every day King Christian, the seventy-year-old ruler of Denmark, mounted his horse and rode through the streets to greet the people who filled the streets in order to see him. On one occasion, he took down the German flag and replaced it with that of Denmark, an action clearly prohibited by the laws of the occupying forces. Fear would not rule in Denmark as long as Christian remained king.

In 1942, the German government ordered all Jews in Denmark to wear the star of David. The order was issued on a Friday. That night, as the Jews gathered for their regular Sabbath observance, King Christian joined them in the synagogue. His stand was supported by the Lutheran bishop and clergy. The Jews were not to be isolated in Denmark. Given courage by one man's refusal to give in to fear, the people of Denmark refused to join in Hitler's insane prejudice against the descendent of Abraham and Sarah.

But this kind of resistance, this kind of Lamb Power, is not restricted to long ago opposition to the Nazis.]]]

Conclusion

This is the Power of the Lamb. It is the Power of the Vulnerable. It is the Power of the Blessed. It is the Power we have as Christians who follow Jesus.

Introduction of Synod Officers and Synod Council

Bishop Rimbo introduced the officers and council of the Synod: Ms. Maria Del Toro (Vice President), Mr. Daquan Baker (Youth Representative), The Rev. William Baum (Executive Committee), The Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite, The Rev. Khader El-Yateem (Executive Committee), Ms. Hazel Goldstein (Executive Committee), The Rev. Brenda Irving, Ms. Barbara Johnson, The Rev. Amy Kienzle, Mr. John Litke, Dr. Carlos Lopez, Deacon John Malone, Deacon Karen Maulen, The Rev. Craig Miller, Mr. Walter Nash, Deacon Lulu Paolini, The Rev. Daniel Peter Penumaka, Deacon John Prosen, Mr. Brian Reardon, Ms. Terra Rowe, The Rev. Harry Schenkel, The Rev. Robert Schoepflin (Secretary), Mr. Frank Suttell (Treasurer), Ms. Wendy Bean Tannenbaum, Ms. Abby Triebel, Mr. Christopher Vergara (Executive Committee), and Ms. Karen Woolley.

The Assembly thanked council members and officers for their service by applause.

Report of the Synod Council

Vice President Del Toro presented her report.

Buenas tardes hermanas y hermanos en cristo. Otra vez, buenas tardes. Es un placer estar una vez mas con ustedes.

It is a pleasure to be with you again and give the synod council report. In your packet there is a full report on all the actions taken by the council during the year and I hope you take the time to go over it.

The theme of this assembly is "We are a Church Together." Your synod council has been very busy this year. a lot has happened. the spirit is moving. Let us rejoice together.

Last year started with the bishop's election. Well, that was an interesting meeting! And I was reelected as vice president but I still did not get a pay raise. Bob Schoepflin was

elected secretary. He didn't get a pay raise either. We also elected seven new council members.

As usual, the council has been working incredibly hard, always making decisions together as a team, discerning what is best for the synod. Will all council members please stand so you can be recognized.

This assembly also passed a budget that included funds to provide the necessary resources for our clergy and congregations so that together we could bring the good news that 'marked by the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the world.'

Marcados con la cruz de Cristo para siempre, respondemos al llamado y, reunidos, somos enviados para obrar por el bienestar del mundo.

You are going to hear a lot about grants, strategies, projects, and plans – but rest assured the reason for all of this is centered on proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. This is rejoicing together.

Speaking of grants, so far the synod has awarded more than \$323,000 in grants related to the strategic plan. And this is just the first year of the plan. And by doing so, this assembly affirmed that our strategic plan was not going to be a plan buried in some drawer collecting dust. It was a plan for action.

the plan called for the synod to provide a variety of resources, including financial, to the clergy and congregations, to assist you, as you proclaim how we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world in the metropolitan metro New York synod.

The implementation plan is comprehensive across the three strategic plan strategies. Let's begin with the gathered strategy.

The response to the capital challenge grant proposals for was overwhelming. Twenty-one congregations received grants totaling \$200,000. Grants funded projects ranging from work on parking lots, roofs, bell towers, parsonages, masonry, furnaces, bathrooms, and windows, among others.

Let us rejoice together in the lord. If you received a capital improvement challenge grant, please stand.

Our leadership development grants aim to sharpen the skills of or leaders enabling individuals and groups to gain new skills. Grants have been awarded to attend continuing education events focused on adult faith formation, stewardship, school management, and mutual conversation and consolation in the parish.

We are growing together. If you received a leadership development grant, please stand up so we can congratulate you.

The Sower's Project, a new initiative to start new ministries in our Synod has already funded three new projects, with more on the way. These new ministries help our Synod connect to populations that are currently not being served or connected with. In Uniondale Long Island, congregant June Daniel-Bradshaw has sparked an after school program for children. They receive assistance with their homework and learn about God in a supportive environment.

In the Hudson River Valley, Terra Rowe has launched a ministry of word and action focused on faith, food, and community. And finally, Deacon Patty Avilla is launching a new service for Spanish speakers in collaboration with two congregations in Wyandanch, Long Island that is drawing Spanish speakers in need of a community.

Let us rejoice together.

One of our strongest programming is our partnership grants . By partnering with the wider church, we maximize our resources.

We are a church together.

In the budget you will approve tomorrow, you will approve almost a half million dollars for partnership grants for 19 congregations that include many examples of renewed and transformative efforts to share the good news of Jesus Christ in new and innovative ways. it includes new start ministries - Ascension Table and the "Two or Three" projects – as new ways to proclaim Christ.

Ascension Table is a new church in the neighborhood of East Tremont in the Bronx. Its mission is centered on three tables:

Communion Table – worship and faith development

Dinner Table – fellowship and emotional nourishment

Artisan's Table – lectures

These "Two or Three" gathered projects will provide for people to gather regularly and in person for worship in different places in the community.

Another new exciting ministry is Advent Latino, which will be the alternative Latin worshipping community of Advent Manhattan Lutheran Church.

We also committed to redevelop ministries facing challenges, such as Saint Peters in Port Jervis, Greenpoint/Emmaus Mission, and SW Queens/San Lucas/All Saints.

So let us rejoice in the work of Jesus Christ in our midst.

We also rejoice at the successful merger of Grace, Astoria with Augustana, East Elmhurst. and our ministry partners, such as Wartburg, that are contracting to bring affordable housing ministries at Messiah, Flushing.

The churches in Southwest Queens Conference moved from seven-plus year of conversations and agreed to join together on Pentecost Sunday to worship together as the new All Saints/Todos Los Santos faith community. Will the voting members of the Congregations of Christ, Ozone Park, St. Lukes, Woohaven and its Latino ministry San Lucas, and St. Philips, Brooklyn please stand up so we can give thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for your steadfast faith.

And throughout all of this we want to recognize our Pastoral care team: Pastors Amandus Duehr, Emilce Erato, Brenda Irving, John Jurik and Ernie Mossl, who have walked with these congregations as they discerned what god wanted them to do. Will the members of the pastoral care team please stand up so we can thank you.

But at the center of everything must be our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. How do we grow in faith? if we do not grow in our faith in Christ, we have wasted our time.

The claimed strategy of the strategic plan has focused this year on the means of grace recognized as mutual conversation and consolation. It included the Indaba process, which we will have the opportunity to experience here at the assembly, with an emphasis on how we deal with our issues of racism. Next year's assembly, will focus on reconciliation and forgiveness.

We are church together.

This past year events in the world surrounding social and racial injustice compelled us to respond to god's call to action. The sent committee listened to the Holy Spirit and responded within their charge in the area of focus: service, partnerships and advocacy. As events were quickly happening, the committee organized an extraordinary interfaith worship liturgy. Pastor Heidi Neumark preached the healing words of our Lord.

The interfaith service provided opportunities to rejoice in the strength and faith our varied religious beliefs provided to us. It acknowledged through word and song the pain and injustice that permeates our cities and country.

Our conversations joined us together in the faith and hope. we are responsible for owning our individual prejudices, and more important, that we are responsible for beginning and continuing the journey to conversation, understanding, justice and ultimately reconciliation. Just as those at that event did, let us pledge today to be change agents and to work together for the justice we know must take place, which will lead to reconciliation.

That event is only the beginning of more conversations regarding racial harmony and justice in our faith communities. A little later in this session you will hear more about this from Barbara Johnson and Pastor Marsh Drege.

One of the most satisfying experiences I have had these past two years has been participating in the quadrant visits. The Friday night dinners have given me an opportunity to meet so many of you personally. It has been a great pleasure.

But the next day, I get to meet the lay leadership. that has been a remarkable experience. This year we have had three meetings so far. Originally, we had decided to offer grants to congregations to facilitate individual strategic planning seminars. Well, the Holy Spirit had other plans because the response was overwhelming. and only proves that it is not our plan but God's plan. So we decided we needed to change and instead offer training to all congregations collectively at gatherings at the quadrants through the synod. Ninety-nine congregations and 443 leaders have attended one of the 3 quadrant meetings completed so far, or are registered for our last one next week. If you have attended a quadrant meeting, or registered for the one on June 6, please stand up.

If you have started working on a strategic plan for your congregation or plan to start working on one, please stand up so we can recognize you. If you couldn't stand up, but want to – never fear. we are having another training on September 19th to provide you with everything your congregation needs to develop a plan for your ministries and community. there will be more details announced soon in our synod newsletter and email to your pastor.

I have covered a lot about our strategic plan. But I want to hear from you. What do you think about what we have done and what we have planned? How does this affect your congregation? I would like to invite you to get up early and meet me in the Tarrytown Ballroom at 7:00 am to tell me what you think and ask any question you have about the strategic plan.

And this year we rejoiced that we exceeded our malaria campaign goal. Our synod raised \$220,346 to help eradicate malaria.

The malaria campaign is the first phase of always being made new: the campaign for the ELCA. The synod council is recommending a joint campaign between the ELCA and our synod. We are working with Pastor Lamont Wells on the details and the synod council will appoint a task force to plan our participation in the national and synodical campaign. The task force will recommend to the council how we will align with the stated ELCA's thematic goals of the campaign.

Let us rejoice together.

Tomorrow you will hear more about how we are walking together and working together. We will also engage in mutual conversation and consolation.

When I survey what we have accomplished so far in the strategic plan, I marvel at how our Lord has blessed us. I think back and I wonder how could we have been so bold? Or perhaps naïve? But yet, there is so much more to do.

I would like to thank again the synod council, the chairs of the claimed, gathered, sent and financial management committees. Pastor Bill Baum, chair of the gathered strategy, Deacon John Malone, chair of the claimed strategy, Ms. Barbara Johnson and Pastor Marsh Drege, co-chairs of the sent strategy, and Mr. Ed Wagner, chair of the financial management

committee. I would also like to thank our consultant, Tom Massey. And a special thank you to the synod staff, who, of course, are integral members of our team. thank you to Pastor Marc Herbst for being responsible for the implementation of the strategic plan. would all of you please stand up.

And a very special thanks to you, Bishop Rimbo. thank you for your leadership and for your trust in us.

And to all you here today. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for being an oasis in your communities with the life-changing Gospel. Thank you for answering the call, for such a time as this.

We are church together. Let us work together . Let us rejoice together.

Muchas gracias!

The voting members joined in singing “The Church’s One Foundation.”

Sent Moment: Environmental Stewardship Committee

Mr. Gerry Falco reported on the work of the committee and gave a video presentation.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Hazel Goldstein gave updated registration figures.

Clergy	155
ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders	7
Lay Voting Members	230
Total Voting members	<u>392</u>
Visitors	<u>61</u>
Total Attendance	453

The Rev. John Jurik and The Rev. Emilce Erato led the voting members in prayer.

Reference and Counsel One

The Rev. Jeanne Warfield presented a Resolution on Ministerium, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Resolution – Ministerium

WHEREAS as we approach the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation; and

WHEREAS as Lutherans we experience God’s grace by the Mutual Conversation and Consolation of the Sisters and Brothers; and

WHEREAS American Lutheranism has at its genesis the work of Patriarch Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and his founding of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS the collegial interaction of the ministerium contributes to the communion of congregations within a synod; and

WHEREAS the little opportunity for the ministerium to converse with their bishop on important topics relevant to mission and ministry on the territory of the synod has in recent years been limited to one hour at a retreat in which fewer than 25% of the ministerium is present; and

WHEREAS funding already exists in the budget (Gathered: Leadership Formation: Ministerium and other educational events); therefore, be it

RESOLVED that there be a yearly one day meeting (usually morning and afternoon) of the ministerium, and be it

RESOLVED that the meeting be planned by the bishop and four representatives of the Conference of Deans, one each from each of the four Quadrants, and be it

RESOLVED that this meeting commence with prayer in the celebration of the Eucharist, and be it

RESOLVED that the topics for conversation be limited to practical issues relating to life within the congregations and ministries on the territory of the synod.

Pr. Ed Barnett, St Peter's, Baldwin
Pr. Marylou Baumgartner, King of Kings, New Windsor
Pr. Linda Bell
Pr. Joanne Bond, Cross of Christ, Babylon
Pr. Mary Chang, Incarnation, Cedarhurst
Pr. Paul Egensteiner, Emanuel, Pleasantville
Pr. David Gainsen, Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre
Pr. Richard Hill, Hope, Selden
Pr. Brenda Irving, Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights
Pr. Alex Kennedy, St. John's, Lynbrook
Pr. James Krauser, Grace, Bellmore
Pr. Joseph Mantovani, St. Jacobus, Woodside
Pr. Ernie Mossel, Christ, Newburgh
Pr. Danielle Miller, Oceanside, Oceanside
Pr. Martin Nale, Christ, Wantagh
Pr. Annemarie Noto
Pr. Fernando Otero, St. Paul's, Bronx
Pr. David Parsons, St. John-St. Matthew-Emanuel, Park Slope
Pr. Patrick Poole, Grace, Malverne
Pr. Rebecca Pollicino, Grace, Uniondale
Pr. Jennifer Richards, Trinity & Our Saviour, Staten Island
Pr. David Rommereim, Good Shepherd, Brooklyn

Pr. Micah Stumme, St. James-St. Matthew's, South Ozone Park
Pr. Jerome Taylor, Good Shepherd, Roosevelt
Pr. Charlie Voageley, Our Saviour, Port Washington
Pr. Dan Ward, St. John's, Poughkeepsie
Pr. Harriet Wieber, Conference Dean
Pr. Kimberly Wilson, Our Saviour's, Glen Head

The Rev. Ed Barnett spoke in favor of the resolution.
After motion and second, the resolution was adopted.

SA 2015:05.01 Resolution on Ministerium

RESOLVED, that there be a yearly one day meeting (usually morning and afternoon) of the ministerium, and be it

RESOLVED, that the meeting be planned by the bishop and four representatives of the Conference of Deans, one each from each of the four Quadrants, and be it

RESOLVED, that this meeting commence with prayer in the celebration of the Eucharist, and be it

RESOLVED, that the topics for conversation be limited to practical issues relating to life within the congregations and ministries on the territory of the synod.

Pr. Warfield then presented a Memorial on Recommitting to the *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine*, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Recommitting to the *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine*

WHEREAS the situation on the ground in the Holy Land has grown increasingly tense and untenable for both Palestinians and Israelis due to expansion of barriers to peace, such as the separation wall, illegal settlement building, violence perpetrated by individuals, groups and the state; and

WHEREAS the leaders and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) with their bishop Munib Younan are “a catalyst for a just peace, working as bridge builders among the nations, [seeking] to be brokers of justice, ministers of reconciliation, and apostles of love,” and are committed to ministries that enrich the lives of Palestinians living under occupation, while witnessing to the hope and peace of the resurrected Christ; and

WHEREAS 2015 marks 10 years since the Evangelical Lutheran Church adopted its *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine* (2005) that commits us

to “working in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith partners and others of good will” to bring about peace with justice for the sake of Palestinians and Israelis, and through the *Peace Not Walls* campaign of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirms the three A’s of awareness-raising, accompaniment and advocacy; be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommit to a robust effort in accomplishing the goals set out in the *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine* (2005) that include but are not limited to:

IN THE HOLY LAND

1. Peaceful coexistence of Palestinians and Israelis in their own recognized states
2. Economic empowerment of Palestinians
3. Negotiated final status agreement on two states with a shared Jerusalem
4. Protecting the endangered Christian witness
5. Ending illegal settlement building in the occupied territories

IN THE US

1. Education among ELCA members about the situation in the Holy Land
2. Advocacy by ELCA members with their members of Congress that reflects the urgency of the situation
3. To be the voice of the voiceless on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in US policy-making decisions.

MIDEAST RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Rev. Percy Butiku, MNYS Staff
The Rev. Khader El-Yateem
Mr. Dennis Frado [Advisory Member, ELCA Staff]
The Rev. Dr. Marvin Henk
The Rev. Dr. Timothy Kennedy
The Rev. Stephanie Kershner
The Rev. Khader Khalilia
The Rev. Amy Kienzle, Chair
Ms. Mary Margaret Powers
The Rev. David Rommereim
Ms. Brita Rose
The Rev. James Sudbrock
The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, MNYS Staff
The Rev. Elise Brown

The Rev. Amy Kienzle spoke in favor of the memorial.
After motion and second, the memorial was adopted.

SA 2015:05.02 *Recommitting to the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine*

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommit to a robust effort in accomplishing the goals set out in the *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine* (2005) that include but are not limited to:

IN THE HOLY LAND

- 6. Peaceful coexistence of Palestinians and Israelis in their own recognized states**
- 7. Economic empowerment of Palestinians**
- 8. Negotiated final status agreement on two states with a shared Jerusalem**
- 9. Protecting the endangered Christian witness**
- 10. Ending illegal settlement building in the occupied territories**

IN THE US

- 4. Education among ELCA members about the situation in the Holy Land**
- 5. Advocacy by ELCA members with their members of Congress that reflects the urgency of the situation**
- 6. To be the voice of the voiceless on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in US policy-making decisions.**

Pr. Warfield then presented a Memorial on Urging Divestment from Fossil Fuel Corporations, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Urging Divestment from Fossil Fuel Corporations

WHEREAS, God has created us and all that exists, given and preserves our bodies and all the necessities for life [The First Article: On Creation, Luther’s Small Catechism]; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice affirms that “we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth;” and

WHEREAS, the 1999 ELCA Social Statement Economic Life: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All recognizes that “the growth of economic activity during the twentieth century, and the industrialization and consumerism that fueled it, radically changed the relationship between humans and the earth. Too often the earth has been treated as a waste receptacle and a limitless storehouse of raw materials to be used up for the sake of economic growth, rather than as a finite, fragile ecological system upon which human and all other life depends;” and

WHEREAS, climate research is clear that there has been a rapid rise in the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, occurring most rapidly in the past 200 years during the

worldwide Industrial Revolution¹²³ and leading to current levels of around 400 ppm – the highest in 2,000,000 years; and

WHEREAS, climate research is clear that burning fossil fuels is the major source of the rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, negatively impacting not only our climate but also the health and wellbeing of all life on the planet⁴⁵⁶⁷; and

WHEREAS, with Caring for Creation, this church realized the urgency was already “widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of] dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide” from the burning of fossil fuels, and that “action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's children;” and

WHEREAS, in Caring for Creation, the ELCA declares that it will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in its life, and that “we will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation;” and

WHEREAS, in 1990, the Church Council transmitted [CC90.04.38] investment screens on “Energy and Environment” for social purpose funds of the ELCA Board of Pensions, which recommend limiting investments made in corporations that are the most egregious in terms of damage to human health or the natural environment and investing in corporations which are taking positive steps toward a sustainable environment, and, in 2007, approved [CC07.11.95b] the updated “Environmental Social Criteria Screen;” therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to urge that, by May 1, 2017, all Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations and independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations and investment corporations:

- a) Publish a list of the values of all their stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and instruct asset managers employed by those entities do the same; and
- b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and instruct asset managers employed by those entities do the same; and
- c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas are removed from portfolios related to the ELCA; and
- d) With the exception of congregations, release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such divestment.

MNYS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Gerard Falco, Chair
Pastor John Flack
Terra Rowe
Sarah Gioe
Kristin Quell-Garguilo
Pastor Jim O'Hanlon
Patrick Almonrode

NOTES

Climate Change: The Evidence and Our Options, Lonnie Thompson, Ohio State University. Concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) over the last 800,000 years. Fig. 6, pg. 163. <http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/TBA-LTonly.pdf>.

2007 IPCC Working Group. "Atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration has continued to increase and is now almost 100 ppm above its pre-industrial level." http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/ch7s7-es.html.

EPA: Causes of Climate Change. "Since the Industrial Era began, humans have had an increasing effect on climate, particularly by adding billions of tons of heat-trapping greenhouse gases to the atmosphere." <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/causes.html>.

NRC (2011). *Climate Stabilization Targets: Emissions, Concentrations, and Impacts over Decades to Millennia*. National Research Council. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC, USA. "Emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels have ushered in a new epoch where human activities will largely determine the evolution of Earth's climate."

NASA: Global Climate Change; Vital Signs of the Planet. "Humans have increased atmospheric CO₂ concentration by a third since the Industrial Revolution began. This is the most important long-lived "forcing" of climate change." "Over the last century the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂)." <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes>.

USGCRP (2009). *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*. Thomas R. Karl, Jerry M. Melillo, and Thomas C. Peterson (eds.). United States Global Change Research Program. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. "It is clear that impacts in the United States are already occurring and are projected to increase in the future, particularly if the concentration of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continues to rise."

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=UCg7inAHksC&oi=fnd&pg=PA13&dq=USGCRP+%282009%29.+Global+Climate+Change+Impacts+in+the+United+States&ots=uXe7HdVN2I&sig=3OclArtThzaKsX5JwzBrWNEj59A#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

NOAA, USGS: Climate change impacts to U.S. coasts threaten public health, safety and economy *Coastal Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerabilities: A Technical Input to the 2013 National Climate Assessment*. "...the effects of climate change will continue to threaten the health and vitality of U.S. coastal communities' social, economic and natural systems."

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20130125_coastalclimateimpacts.html.

The Rev. John Flack spoke in favor of the memorial. The Rev. James Krauser asked if the Synod Treasurer could address what effect this would have on Synod investments. Treasurer Suttell responded that he did not believe that this would adversely affect Synod's investment returns and that the Financial Management Committee supported the Memorial.

After motion and second, the memorial was adopted.

SA 2015:05.03 Urging Divestment from Fossil Fuel Corporations

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to urge that, by May 1, 2017, all Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations and independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations and investment corporations:

a) Publish a list of the values of all their stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and instruct asset managers employed by those entities do the same; and

b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and instruct asset managers employed by those entities do the same; and

c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas are removed from portfolios related to the ELCA; and

d) With the exception of congregations, release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such divestment.

Pr. Warfield then presented a Memorial on Eco-Reformation in the Context of Climate Change, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Eco-Reformation in the Context of Climate Change

WHEREAS, 2017 will mark observances of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, which addressed fundamental threats to human well-being and all of God's creation in theological, social, and political ways; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Social Statement *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* affirms that, "we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth;" and

WHEREAS, in 1993 with *Caring for Creation* we realized the urgency was already "widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of] dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide" from the burning of fossil fuels, and that "action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's children. Time is very short;" and

WHEREAS, in the 1999 ELCA Social Statement *Economic Life: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, this church declares that "Too often the earth has been treated as a waste receptacle and a limitless storehouse of raw materials to be used up for the sake of economic growth, rather than as a finite, fragile ecological system upon which human and all other life depends;" and

WHEREAS, the Statement of *Vision and Expectations for Ordained Ministers* in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) stipulates that “the people of God are called to the care and redemption of all that God has made. This includes the need to speak on behalf of this earth, its environment and natural resources and its inhabitants. This church expects that its ordained ministers will be exemplary stewards of the earth’s resources, and that they will lead this church in the stewardship of God’s creation;” and

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton wrote in a pastoral letter on September 19, 2014: “Daily we see and hear the evidence of a rapidly changing climate. Glaciers are disappearing, the polar ice cap is melting, and sea levels are rising. Incidents of pollution-created dead zones in seas and the ocean and toxic algae growth in water supplies are occurring with greater frequency. Most disturbingly, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is rising at an unprecedented rate. At the same time we also witness in too many instances how the earth’s natural beauty, a sign of God’s wonderful creativity, has been defiled by pollutants and waste... The present moment is a critical one, filled with both challenge and opportunity to act as faithful individuals and churches in solidarity with God’s good creation”; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran World Federation has already, with its three-fold theme “Salvation: Not for sale. Human beings: Not for sale. Creation: Not for sale.”, signaled its intention to include creation at the center of global 2017 anniversary commemorations; be it therefore

RESOLVED, that this Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly, recognizing the need for ongoing reformation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make climate change and ecological justice major themes in Evangelical Lutheran Church in America planning and activities leading up to and following the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

MNYS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Ms. Terra Rowe
Mr. Gerry Falco, chair
Mr. Patrick Almonrode
Ms. Kristin Quell-Garguilo
Ms. Sarah Gioe
The Rev. John Flack
The Rev. Jim O’Hanlon

The Rev. James Rowe, Redeemer, Kingston
The Rev. Albert R Ahlstrom, Redeemer, Kingston
Ms. Abby Tribel, St. John’s, Poughkeepsie

Ms. Kathryn Meyer, Redeemer, Kingston
Ms. Elizabeth O'Rourke, Redeemer, Kingston
Mr. Stephen Fardig, Redeemer, Kingston
Mr. Art Gould, Redeemer, Kingston
The Rev. Dennis O'Rourke, Redeemer, Kingston
Mr. Dan Wingard, Redeemer, Kingston

Ms. Terra Rowe spoke in favor of the memorial.
After motion and second, the memorial was adopted.

SA 2015:05.04 Eco-Reformation in the Context of Climate Change

RESOLVED, that this Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly, recognizing the need for ongoing reformation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make climate change and ecological justice major themes in Evangelical Lutheran Church in America planning and activities leading up to and following the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Pr. Warfield then presented a Resolution to Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

To Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations

WHEREAS, God has created us and all that exists, given and preserves our bodies and all the necessities for life [The First Article: On Creation, Luther's Small Catechism]; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Social Statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice affirms that "we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth;" and

WHEREAS, the 1999 ELCA Social Statement Economic Life: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All recognizes that "the growth of economic activity during the twentieth century, and the industrialization and consumerism that fueled it, radically changed the relationship between humans and the earth. Too often the earth has been treated as a waste receptacle and a limitless storehouse of raw materials to be used up for the sake of economic growth, rather than as a finite, fragile ecological system upon which human and all other life depends;" and

WHEREAS, climate research is clear that there has been a rapid rise in the levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, occurring most rapidly in the past 200 years during the worldwide Industrial Revolution¹²³ and leading to current levels of around 400 ppm – the highest in 2,000,000 years; and

WHEREAS, climate research is clear that burning fossil fuels is the major source of the rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide, negatively impacting not only our climate but also the health and wellbeing of all life on the planet⁴⁵⁶⁷; and

WHEREAS, with Caring for Creation, this church realized the urgency was already “widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide [of] dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide” from the burning of fossil fuels, and that “action to counter [climate] degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's children;” and

WHEREAS, in Caring for Creation, the ELCA declares that it will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in its life, and that “we will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation;” and

WHEREAS, in 1990, the Church Council transmitted [CC90.04.38] investment screens on “Energy and Environment” for social purpose funds of the ELCA Board of Pensions, which recommend limiting investments made in corporations that are the most egregious in terms of damage to human health or the natural environment and investing in corporations which are taking positive steps toward a sustainable environment, and, in 2007, approved [CC07.11.95b] the updated “Environmental Social Criteria Screen;” and

WHEREAS, the Investment Policy Statement adopted by resolution of the Metro New York Synod Council on June 25, 2013, states that because we are committed to responsible stewardship of the earth and to human dignity and empowerment, we encourage, *inter alia*, investment in companies that work to maintain and conserve the supply of natural resources and to control pollution; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod shall:

- a) Publish a list of the values of all its stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and
- b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and
- c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas are removed from its portfolio, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and
- d) Release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such divestment, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same.

NOTES

¹ Climate Change: The Evidence and Our Options, Lonnie Thompson, Ohio State University. Concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) over the last 800,000 years. Fig. 6, pg. 163.

<http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/TBA- - LOnly.pdf>.

² 2007 IPCC Working Group. “Atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration has continued to increase and is now almost 100 ppm above its pre- industrial level.”

http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/ch7s7- es.html.

³ EPA: Causes of Climate Change. “Since the Industrial Era began, humans have had an increasing effect on climate, particularly by adding billions of tons of heat- trapping greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.”

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/causes.html>.

⁴ NRC (2011). *Climate Stabilization Targets: Emissions, Concentrations, and Impacts over Decades to Millennia*. National Research Council. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC, USA. “Emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels have ushered in a new epoch where human activities will largely determine the evolution of Earth’s climate.”

⁵ NASA: Global Climate Change; Vital Signs of the Planet. “Humans have increased atmospheric CO₂ concentration by a third since the Industrial Revolution began. This is the most important long- lived “forcing” of climate change.” “Over the last century the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂).” <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes>.

⁶ USGCRP (2009). *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*. Thomas R. Karl, Jerry M. Melillo, and Thomas C. Peterson (eds.). United States Global Change Research Program. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, USA. “It is clear that impacts in the United States are already occurring and are projected to increase in the future, particularly if the concentration of heat- trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continues to rise.”

<http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=UCg7inAHksC&oi=fnd&pg=PA13&dq=USGCRP+%282009%29.+Global+Climate+Change+Impacts+in+the+United+States&ots=uXe7HdVN2I&sig=3OcIArtThzaKsX5JwzBrWNEj59A#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

⁷ NOAA, USGS: Climate change impacts to U.S. coasts threaten public health, safety and economy *Coastal Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerabilities: A Technical Input to the 2013 National Climate Assessment*. “...the effects of climate change will continue to threaten the health and vitality of U.S. coastal communities’ social, economic and natural systems.”

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/20130125_coastalclimateimpacts.html.

The Rev. John Flack spoke in favor of the Resolution. Ms. Terry Rothport, of Saint Peter’s, Manhattan, moved to strike the word “primary” from the resolved. This motion as seconded and, after discussion, was defeated.

The Resolution, as presented, was adopted.

SA 2015:05.05 To Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod shall:

- a) Publish a list of the values of all its stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of**

coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and

b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and

c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas are removed from its portfolio, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and

d) Release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such divestment, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same.

Nominations and Elections. First Common Ballot.

The Rev. Kevin O'Hara led voting on the first ballot.

SA 2015:05.06

First Ballot

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Clergy

The Rev. Peter Rustico
The Rev. Mark Erson
The Rev. Perucy Butiku
The Rev. David Parsons
The Rev. Amy Kienzle
The Rev. Khader Khalilia

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Lay Female

Dcn. Anita Williams
Ms. Eleanor L. Sudbrock
Ms. Maritza Tamayo
Ms. Yvette Y. Brooks
Ms. Hephzibah Penumaka

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Lay Male

Mr. Mark Goodwin
Mr. Alex Lawrence
Dcn. John Malone

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Young Adult

Mr. Nelson Silverio

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Multi-Cultural

Mr. Adolfo Ramirez

After discussion initiated by The Rev. Robert Rainis about the form of the ballot, a motion was made by The Rev. Amandus Derr to review the election process for voting members to the Churchwide Assembly. The motion was seconded and adopted.

SA 2015:05.07 To Review Election Process for Voting Members to Churchwide Assembly

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod election process for electing members to the churchwide assembly be reviewed by the Synod Council which will make a recommendation for adoption by the 2016 Synod Assembly.

The second ballot will be voted during the fourth plenary session on Saturday afternoon.

Sent Moment: Ministries with Youth and Young Adults

Ms. Abby Triebel, Director of Youth Ministry at St. John's, Poughkeepsie, and Region 7 Facilitator for the ELCA Youth Ministry Network, spoke about Pinecrest Lutheran Leadership School, Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education, and the 2015 Youth Gathering in Detroit. She presented a video about the Gathering.

Ms. Triebel then invited Deacon Charlie Germain to present the Heart of Ministry Award to Sion, Manhattan.

Introduction of Conference of Deans and Rostered Leaders new to Synod

The Rev. Kathleen Koran, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations, introduced the Conference of Deans.

- Pr. Fernando Otero: Bronx
- Pr. Paul Egensteiner: Tappan Zee
- Pr. J. Elise Brown: Manhattan
- Pr. Brenda Irving: Southeast Queens
- Pr. Edward Barnett: Southwest Nassau
- Pr. Joseph Mantovani: Northwest Queens
- Pr. Richard Hill: Peconic
- Pr. Ernie Moss: Delaware Hudson
- Pr. Martin Nale: Eastern Nassau
- Pr. Daniel Ward: Hudson
- Pr. David Parsons: Brooklyn Bridges
- Pr. Daniel Peter: Northeast Queens
- Pr. Micah Stumme: Southwest Queens
- Pr. Jennifer Richards: Staten Island
- Pr. Joanne Bond: Western Suffolk
- Pr. David Rommereim: Southwest Brooklyn
- Pr. Robert Cederstrom: Western Nassau
- Pr. Harriet Wieber: South Shore Brooklyn

Ms. Amy Finney, member of the Assembly Planning Committee, then introduced pastors new to the synod.

Pr. J. Barrington Bates: Zion, Staten Island
Pr. Chryll Crews: St. Stephen's, Brooklyn
Pr. George Detweiler: Holy Trinity, Manhattan
Pr. Justin Johnson: Trinity, Kingston
Pr. Justin Kosec: St. Andrew's, Smithtown
Pr. Mark Kreemer: Christ, Islip Terrace
Pr. Henry Morris: Good Shepherd, Pearl River
Pr. Eric Mull: Ascension Table, Bronx
Pr. Anne Reike: Two or Three Project, Harlem
Pr. Nicholas Sollom: Good Shepherd, Plainview
Pr. Arden Strasser: St. David's, Massapequa
Pr. Emily Trubey-Weller: St. Stephen's, Hicksville

Ms. Finney then introduced deacons who were set apart in April 2015.

Dcn. Jean Hansen: St. John's, Middletown
Dcn. Camile Holman: Gustavus Adolphus, Manhattan
Dcn. Donna Mari-Fieldsa: Christ/Cristo, Freeport
Dcn. Karen Maulen: Grace, Yorktown Heights
Dcn. Marva Montalvo: St. Luke's, New Rochelle
Dcn. John Ogren: Gustavus Adolphus, Manhattan
Dcn. Grace Sabella: Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre
Dcn. Karen Turnator: Ascension, Deer Park
Dcn. Donna While: Good Shepherd, Roosevelt

Pr. Koran then announced milestone anniversaries and presented gifts to those recognized.

25 Years Ordained

Pr. Mary Lou Baumgartner
Pr. Joanne Bond
Pr. Joy Clarke
Pr. Fredi Eckhardt
Pr. Nancy Matthias
Pr. Fritz Wendt
Pr. Leo Longan, Jr.

50 Years Ordained

Pr. Ernest Helmke

Congregations celebrating milestone anniversaries were also recognized.

50 Years of Ministry

Hope, Selden

75 Years of Ministry

Christ, Fresh Meadows

125 Years of Ministry

Trinity, Brooklyn
St. Peter's, 140th Street, Bronx
Trinity, Long Island City

Atonement, East Elmhurst

100 Years of Ministry

Christ, Islip Terrace
Fordham, Bronx

150 Years of Ministry

Gustavus Adolphus, Manhattan

300 Years of Ministry

Christ, Suffern
St. Paul, Red Hook

Indaba

Bishop Rimbo introduced the next period of indaba discussion by showing a video of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton speaking about racism in America and how our church can respond.

He then invited voting members to divide into groups of four with members of other quadrants.

Pr. Mossel and Pr. Erato led the Assembly in prayer. The prayer bowl was rung and Bishop Rimbo invited the voting members to discuss: “How has your perception of race relations changed or not in the past several months of news coverage about unarmed black men dying while in police custody and police officers also being killed while on duty?”

After ten minutes of discussion, the prayer bowl was rung and the second discussion question was introduced: “How genuine is your congregation’s or ministry setting’s welcome of persons of all cultures, nationalities, races, and ethnicities?”

After another ten minutes of discussion, the prayer bowl was rung and the third discussion question was given: “What do you believe that God is calling us to do as church together to improve relations among persons of all races and cultures?”

After ten minutes, the prayer bowl was rung and the fourth discussion topic given: “Describe things that you personally and your congregation or ministry setting have done to improve race relations.”

Pr. Irving and Pr. Erato closed this period of indaba with prayer and the voting members were asked to return to their places.

Sent Moment: Justice and Reconciliation in our Synod

The Rev. Marsh Drege and Ms. Barbara Johnson, Co-Chairs of the Sent Strategic Committee, spoke on work and events of the committee on the issues of justice, reconciliation and race in our synod.

Ecumenical Greetings

The Venerable William Parnell, Archdeacon for Mission, brought greetings from the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Foltz-Morrison, Executive Presbyter, brought greetings from the Presbytery of New York, PCUSA.

The Rev. Dr. David Benke, President/Bishop, brought greetings from the Atlantic District, LCMS.

Pr. Paul Johnson made announcements to the voting members.
Pr. Derr and Pr. Erato closed the session with prayer. Bishop Rimbo encouraged the voting members to practice indaba conversation over dinner with questions that will be placed on the tables.

The voting members had dinner and then gathered at 7:30pm for the Festival Eucharist.

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2015

PLENARY SESSION III

Voting members gathered for Morning Prayer at 8:00am.

Bishop Rimbo called the Assembly to order at 9:35am and invited the Assembly to join in singing “Beautiful Savior” Pr. Jurik and Pr. Erato then led the voting members in prayer.

ELCA Churchwide Report

Ms. Jessica Nipp Hacker presented a video “We are Church Together” which featured St. Paul’s International. She thanked the synod for its support for the larger church and gave an update on the malaria campaign.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Hazel Goldstein gave updated registration figures.

Clergy	136
ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders	7
Lay Voting Members	215
Total Voting members	<u>357</u>
Visitors	<u>55</u>
Total Attendance	412

Pr. Mossel and Pr. Erato then led the Assembly in prayer.

Reference and Counsel Two

The Rev. Jeanne Warfield presented a Resolution on Metropolitan New York Synod Disaster Plan, noting that this resolution came from the Synod Council (resolution of December 2014 Council meeting) and needs no second. After Pr. Craig Miller spoke in favor of the resolution, it was adopted.

SA 2015:05.08 Metropolitan New York Synod Disaster Plan

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod adopt the Disaster Plan; and

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod establish a permanent Disaster Response and Planning web page and made this Disaster Plan available on the web page; and

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod establish a Disaster Response Task Force consisting of at least one person from each quadrant, a member of the synod staff, and a representative from LSSNY. The Disaster Response Task Force will maintain familiarity with the Disaster Plan and ensure the Disaster Response and Planning web page contains current information and links, and assist the bishop and synod to assess the nature and scope of a disaster and appropriate synod response. The convener of the Disaster Response Task Force will participate in the Lutheran Disaster Response network; and

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod call upon congregations to develop and implement congregational disaster plans and share those plans with the synod office; and

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod encourage all rostered leaders to develop and implement personal or family disaster plans as examples of good stewardship.

Pr. Warfield next presented a Resolution proposing an amendment to the Transition and Call Process, noting that this resolution came from the Synod Council (resolution of November 2014 Council meeting) and needs no second. After Pr. Marc Herbst spoke in favor of the resolution, it was adopted.

SA 2015:05.09 Amendment to Transition and Call Process

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod adopt the proposed amendment to the Transition and Call Process.

Pr. Warfield next invited Pr. Robert Schoepflin, Synod Secretary, to present proposed amendments to the Synod Constitution and Bylaws. These amendments are set forth in detail in the Official Minutes of the 2014 Synod Assembly.

The amendment to the Constitution is to create a single Committee on Nominations and Elections. This amendment was approved at the 2014 Assembly, and needs to be voted on a second time pursuant to the constitutional provision governing amendments. The amendment was adopted.

SA 2015:05.10 Constitutional Amendment to Create a single Committee on Nominations and Elections

[This amendment was first voted on and approved at the 2014 Synod Assembly]

S9.03 amended to read as follows:

S9.03 Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Committee on Nominations and Elections.

S9.05 amended to read as follows:

S9.05 The Committee on Nominations and Elections shall nominate at least two persons for vice-president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

Pr. Schoepflin then explained that amendments to the Bylaws to the Constitution, and to a Continuing Resolution on the Nomination and Election Process are necessitated to conform the Bylaws to the Amended Constitution. Amendments to Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions require vote at only one Assembly.

The amendments were adopted.

SA 2015:05.11 Amendments to Bylaws and Continuing Resolution on Nominations and Election Process for Synod Assembly Elections.

RESOLVED, that amendments to the Bylaws and the Continuing Resolution on Nominations and Election Process for Synod Assembly Elections be adopted to conform with the adopted constitutional amendment.

Pr. Warfield then presented a Resolution on Behalf of Augusta Victoria Hospital, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

On Behalf of Augusta Victoria Hospital

WHEREAS The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) of which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a member, has managed Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) in East Jerusalem for over 65 years and continues to provide life-saving care to all people regardless of their ability to pay; and

WHEREAS, Augusta Victoria Hospital provides medical care not available elsewhere in Gaza or the West Bank, including pediatric oncology services, mammography services, pediatric dialysis and diabetes care through a mobile unit that travels throughout the West Bank to people in low-service areas; and

WHEREAS a large percentage of Augusta Victoria Hospital patients are referred to the hospital by the Palestinian Authority and the Authority's debt to the hospital is approximately \$20 million dollars and growing by over \$2 million dollars a month; and

WHEREAS 2015 funding has been appropriated by the US Congress to support the Palestinian Authority, but Congress must issue a letter authorizing the disbursement of funds through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) for Augusta Victoria Hospital and the other East Jerusalem hospitals; and

WHEREAS, the need for the release of these overdue funds is urgent; be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly direct Bishop Robert A. Rimbo to draft a letter to the current Administration of the United States of America and members of the United States Congress within the boundaries of the Metropolitan New York Synod asking these leaders to encourage Congress to issue the letter authorizing the disbursement of funds through USAID to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people, including covering the Palestinian Authority debt to Augusta Victoria Hospital and the other East Jerusalem hospitals; and be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly invite members of our congregations to support our Bishop by contacting their own Senators and Representatives asking those leaders to do the same; and be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod encourage congregations to have an annual Sunday of prayer and information sharing about the ministry of Augusta Victoria Hospital.

MIDEAST RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Rev. Perucy Butiku, MNYS Staff
The Rev. Khader El-Yateem
Mr. Dennis Frado [Advisory Member, ELCA Staff]
The Rev. Dr. Marvin Henk
The Rev. Dr. Timothy Kennedy
The Rev. Stephanie Kershner
The Rev. Khader Khalilia
The Rev. Amy Kienzle, Chair
Ms. Mary Margaret Powers
The Rev. David Rommereim
Ms. Brita Rose
The Rev. James Sudbrock
The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, MNYS Staff
The Rev. Elise Brown

The Rev. James Sudbrock spoke in favor of the Resolution. The resolution was adopted.

SA 2015:05.12 On Behalf of Augusta Victoria Hospital

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly direct Bishop Robert A. Rimbo to draft a letter to the current Administration of the United States of America and members of the United States Congress within the boundaries of the Metropolitan New York Synod asking these leaders to encourage Congress to issue the letter authorizing the disbursement of funds through USAID to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people, including covering the Palestinian Authority debt to Augusta Victoria Hospital and the other East Jerusalem hospitals; and be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly invite members of our congregations to support our Bishop by contacting their own Senators and Representatives asking those leaders to do the same; and be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod encourage congregations to have an annual Sunday of prayer and information sharing about the ministry of Augusta Victoria Hospital.

Pr. Warfield next presented a Resolution on Awareness Raising/Advocacy in the Holy Land, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Awareness-Raising, Accompaniment, Advocacy in the Holy Land

WHEREAS the situation on the ground in the Holy Land has grown increasingly tense and untenable for both Palestinians and Israelis due to expansion of barriers to peace, such as the separation wall, illegal settlement building, violence perpetrated by individuals, groups and the state; and

WHEREAS the Metropolitan New York Synod is home to a diversity of people from every corner of the world and its congregations are located in areas with large Jewish and Arab communities, whose lives are impacted by the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine and the wider Middle East; and

WHEREAS 2015 marks 10 years since the Evangelical Lutheran Church adopted its *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine* (2005) that commits us to “working in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith partners and others of good will” to bring about peace with justice for the sake of Palestinians and Israelis, and through the *Peace Not Walls* campaign of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America affirms the three A’s of awareness-raising, accompaniment and advocacy; be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod prayerfully discern means to support our sisters and brothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, who work daily to promote understanding and peace through their ministries, schools and advocacy work; and be it,

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod support the work of the *Peace Not Walls* campaign and the MNYS Mideast Relations Committee through prayer and participation in work that seeks to foster dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims around issues of justice in the Middle East; and be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod commit to raising awareness among its members and congregations about the situation on the ground in Israel-Palestine [i.e., by going to elca.org/peacenotwalls and the website of our sister church The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (elcjh.org) to find resources;

by reading the *Kairos Palestine Document, A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering* (2009);
by attending film screenings and book discussions;
by taking trips to the Holy Land that are focused on seeing the reality of occupation first-hand and speaking with Palestinians and Israelis working for peace and justice];
and be it

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly invite the members of its congregations to reach out to their members of Congress and the current Administration, asking them to do what they can to reignite peace talks between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities and call for an end to settlement building, home demolitions and policies that work against negotiated peace with justice for the people of the Holy Land.

MIDEAST RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Rev. Percy Butiku, MNYS Staff
The Rev. Khader El-Yateem
Mr. Dennis Frado [Advisory Member, ELCA Staff]
The Rev. Dr. Marvin Henk
The Rev. Dr. Timothy Kennedy
The Rev. Stephanie Kershner
The Rev. Khader Khalilia
The Rev. Amy Kienzle, Chair
Ms. Mary Margaret Powers
The Rev. David Rommereim
Ms. Brita Rose
The Rev. James Sudbrock
The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, MNYS Staff
The Rev. Elise Brown

The Rev. Khadir Khalilia spoke in favor of the Resolution.

The Rev. Amandus Derr made a motion to amend the Resolution by adding the following to the third Resolve:

by engaging with neighboring rabbis and the congregants of neighbor synagogues in intentional conversation so that we can work together to meet our mutual goal of a just and secure, two-state solution which provides peace between the independent states of Palestine and Israel;

The motion to amend was seconded and Pr. Derr spoke in favor of the amendment. The amendment was approved. Whereupon vote was taken on the Resolution, as amended, and it was adopted.

SA 2015:05.13 Awareness-Raising, Accompaniment, Advocacy in the Holy Land

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod prayerfully discern means to support our sisters and brothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, who work daily to promote understanding and peace through their ministries, schools and advocacy work; and be it,

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod support the work of the *Peace Not Walls* campaign and the MNYS Mideast Relations Committee through prayer and participation in work that seeks to foster dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims around issues of justice in the Middle East; and be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod commit to raising awareness among its members and congregations about the situation on the ground in Israel-Palestine [i.e., by going to elca.org/peacenotwalls and the website of our sister church The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (elcjh.org) to find resources; by reading the *Kairos Palestine Document, A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering* (2009); by attending film screenings and book discussions; by taking trips to the Holy Land that are focused on seeing the reality of occupation first-hand and speaking with Palestinians and Israelis working for peace and justice]; by engaging with neighboring rabbis and the congregants of neighboring synagogues in intentional conversation so that we can work together to meet our mutual goal of a just and secure, two-state solution which provides peace between the independent states of Palestine and Israel; and be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly invite the members of its congregations to reach out to their members of Congress and the current Administration, asking them to do what they can to reignite peace talks between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities and call for an end to settlement building, home demolitions and policies that work against negotiated peace with justice for the people of the Holy Land.

Pr. Warfield then presented a Resolution on Continued Commitment for Addressing Racism in Church and Society, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Continued Commitment for Addressing Racism in Church and Society

“For he [Christ] is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” - Ephesians 2:14

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton recently wrote to the whole church: “We need to talk. Ferguson, Missouri; Norman, Oklahoma; Madison, Wisconsin; Staten Island, New York (North Charleston, South Carolina) and Charlottesville, Virginia: recent events in these and other places prove we are not living in a postracial society. I know it’s difficult to talk about race because too many Americans do not want to

believe racism still exists in our country. Yet, as always, Christ promises to be alongside us, even in the most difficult of times, working for our reconciliation. Because of God's promise, we can and must have a deep, honest and even painful conversation about racism."

WHEREAS, she wrote: "Overt forms of racism are no longer legally sanctioned, but the legacy of racism, sadly, endures. Institutional policies and practices still privilege some while limiting access and opportunities to others. We have said, 'Racism – a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice – is sin, a violation of God's intention for humanity.'" (*Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, 1993); and

WHEREAS, she concludes: "Ongoing racial justice conversations are occurring and work is happening. But in cases where these are not, we shouldn't wait until another racial event is widely reported before we talk;" and WHEREAS, at the Service for Justice and Reconciliation held on January 17, 2015, Pastor Heidi Neumark preached value for conversation and timeliness for training to deconstruct racism; and

WHEREAS, racism must be confronted and broken whenever it appears; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the continued commitment of the Metropolitan New York Synod to address racism in the church and society be affirmed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod, as part of its strategic plan, design and implement antiracism training for all elected and volunteer synodical leaders; synodical boards, committees, teams; rostered leaders, synodically-rostered leaders, candidates in the call process, and staff in the Metropolitan New York Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that appropriate funds (out of the Sent budget) for the antiracism training of all elected and volunteer synodical leaders; boards, committees, teams; rostered leaders, synodically-rostered leaders, and staff within the Metropolitan New York Synod be allocated continually within the Metropolitan New York Synod's annual budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that by a certain date the Metropolitan New York Synod require elected, called, and volunteer synodical leaders; synodical boards, committees, teams, and staff to undertake the antiracism training developed by the Metropolitan New York Synod on a regular basis through which they can develop a common analysis, an antiracist identity, and the knowledge that will assist them in addressing, confronting, and working toward the dismantling of racism; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the leadership of the Metropolitan New York Synod form an anti-racism team tasked with implementing the preceding resolutions.

Submitted by the Sent Committee

*from Bishop Eaton's remarks:

Therefore let us:

- Listen to and learn from the experiences of people of color in your communities.
- Contact the Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries and the Racial Justice Ministries at the churchwide organization.
- Be in conversation with your synod bishop and staff. Many of our synods are equipped to help connect you with local resources on anti-racism education and racial justice ministries.
- Learn more about our ongoing racial justice work. This church has helpful guidance in our criminal justice social statement and in the race, ethnicity, and culture social statement.
- Advocate for local, state and federal legislation and regulations that guarantee to all citizens the right to vote. Join the ELCA e-Advocacy Network at www.elca.org/advocacy; and

** from Pastor Neumark's sermon:

“Here's something I ask myself. Why do we insist on boundary training workshops for our ordained leaders, but not anti-racism training or multi-cultural, cross-cultural community training which is not for Whites only? Now I am not speaking against boundary training workshops- exploiting one's position to sexually abuse and take advantage of others causes terrible damage to individuals, families and congregations. It's a poison for sure. However, I would propose that racism and xenophobia or fear of the other, fear of difference, does even more damage. Look at the mounting toll in Nigeria. Pakistan. Gaza. Jerusalem. Syria. France. Ferguson. Or closer to home where we can see the signs of international fissures in our own mirrors. Our own pews. Maybe the reason we mandate healthy boundary training is that our insurance policies require it. But does the insurance industry dictate our priorities or does the Word of God do that? I think every clergy person, and perhaps all who would exercise moral leadership, should be required to take dismantle-the-boundaries training too. Dismantle the boundaries that marginalize, divide, deport, incarcerate and keep us from truly seeing one another as Police Commissioner Bratton courageously called for, truly loving ALL our neighbors as ourselves as God calls for.”

The Rev. Lamont Wells moved to amend the Resolution as follows:

(inserted at line 20 and replacing lines 20 and 21)

WHEREAS, internalized racism has its own systemic reality among people of color who are victimized by the power of privilege and racism, and

WHEREAS, we will not fully dismantle racism, privilege and prejudice until people of color address the effects of its counterpart: internalized racial oppression, and

WHEREAS, racism and its effects like internalized racial oppression must be confronted and broken whenever it appears; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the continued commitment of the MNYS to address racism and internalized racial oppression in the church and society be affirmed; and be it further

(inserted at line 36)

...the dismantling of racism and reversing the effects of internalized racial oppression;

The motion was seconded and Pr. Wells spoke to the proposed amendment. The amendment was adopted.

Mr. Thomas Ciccone of Our Saviour's Atonement moved to amend the fourth resolve by replacing "by a certain date" with *by December 31, 2016*.

The motion was seconded and adopted.

The Rev. Mark Erson moved to amend the second resolve by adding *congregation call committees*.

The motion was seconded and discussed.

The Rev. Katrina Foster rose to call the question, and the question was called.

Upon vote, the Resolution, as amended thrice, was adopted.

SA 2015:05.14 Continued Commitment for Addressing Racism in Church and Society

RESOLVED, that the continued commitment of the Metropolitan New York Synod to address racism in the church and society be affirmed and that the Metropolitan New York Synod begin to address issues surrounding internalized racial oppression; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod, as part of its strategic plan, design and implement antiracism training for all elected and volunteer synodical leaders; synodical boards, committees, teams; rostered leaders, synodically-rostered leaders, candidates in the call process, congregation call committees, and staff in the Metropolitan New York Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that appropriate funds (out of the Sent budget) for the antiracism training of all elected and volunteer synodical leaders; boards, committees, teams; rostered leaders, synodically-rostered leaders, and staff within the Metropolitan New York Synod be allocated continually within the Metropolitan New York Synod's annual budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that by December 31, 2016 the Metropolitan New York Synod require elected, called, and volunteer synodical leaders; synodical boards, committees, teams, and staff to undertake the antiracism training developed by the Metropolitan New York Synod on a regular basis through which they can develop a common analysis, an antiracist identity, and the knowledge that will

assist them in addressing, confronting, and working toward the dismantling of racism and reversing the effects of internalized racial oppression; and be it further;

RESOLVED, that the leadership of the Metropolitan New York Synod form an anti-racism team tasked with implementing the preceding resolutions.

Pr. Warfield next presented a Resolution on Synodical Communion Practices, noting that Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Synodical Communion Practices

WHEREAS, the opportunity to commune in both kinds should be afforded to the faithful of our synod, and

WHEREAS, those with pressing reasons of health should be able to commune using elements which are safe and wholesome for them; and

WHEREAS, those without pressing reasons of health should be able to commune using the customary elements of the Supper; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly provides for communion with both the traditional elements and alternatives, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod in its liturgies shall conform to the guidance offered by “*The Use of the Means of Grace*” [1997] namely, Principle 44 and Application 44c¹, using grape juice as the default non-alcoholic element.

Pastor James G. Krauser
Pastor Gary Mills
Pastor Paul Milholland

NOTES

¹ **Principle 44**

In accordance with the words of institution, this church uses bread and wine in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Communicants normally receive both elements, bread and wine, in the Holy Communion.

Application 44C

For pressing reasons of health, individuals may commune under one element. In certain circumstances, congregations might decide to place small amounts of non-wheat bread or nonalcoholic wine or grape juice on the altar. Such pastoral and congregational decisions are delicate, and must honor both the tradition of the Church and the people of each local assembly.

The Rev. James Krauser spoke in favor of the Resolution.

The Rev. Katrina Foster moved to amend the Resolution by adding to the resolve the following language:

, using grape juice as the default non-alcoholic element.

The motion to amend was seconded and adopted.

The Rev. F. Robert Modr then moved to refer the Amended Resolution to the Synod Worship Committee for it to confer with the makers of the Resolution, formulate a policy, and report to the 2016 Synod Assembly.

His motion was seconded and led to discussion, whereupon the Assembly voted to call the question on the motion to refer.

The motion to refer was defeated. Whereupon the Assembly, upon motion of Ms. Nancy Malone called the question on the Amended Resolution.

The Resolution, as amended, was adopted.

SA 2015:05.15 Synodical Communion Practices

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod in its liturgies shall conform to the guidance offered by “*The Use of the Means of Grace*” [1997] namely, Principle 44 and Application 44c, using grape juice as the default non-alcoholic element.

Bishop Rimbo announced that the Strategic Plan presentation would be made in the next plenary session.

Pr. Paul Johnson made announcements, and Pr. Jurik and Pr. Erato closed the session with prayer.

Voting members were encouraged to practice indaba conversation over lunch.

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2015

PLENARY SESSION IV

Bishop Rimbo called the fourth plenary session to order at 2:25 pm, and announced a revised agenda for the session. The Assembly consented to the following revised agenda.

Call to Order
Prayer
Registration and Attendance Report
Tanzania Companionship Committee
Vote on Budgets
Prayer
Lutheran World Relief Presentation
Common Ballot 2
Strategic Plan Presentation
Wartburg Presentation (if time allows)
Closing of Assembly.

Pr. Derr and Pr. Erato led the Assembly in prayer.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Hazel Goldstein gave the registration report for the session.

Clergy	89
ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders	6
Lay Voting Members	134
Total Voting members	<u>229</u>
Visitors	<u>42</u>
Total Attendance	271

The Rev. Dan Ward and Ms. Lois Rimbo gave report of Tanzania Companionship Committee. They shared a video presentation giving thanks from the students of Kibeta English Medium and Primary School in Bukoba, Tanzania. They invited members of assembly to join in the synod trip to Bukoba in October 2015.

Revised Budget for 2015 and Proposed Budget for 2016

Mr. Frank Suttell and Mr. Ed Wagner came to podium to answer questions on the budgets that had been presented.

Pr. Craig Miller presented amendment to budget. (This amendment had been presented to Treasurer at an earlier plenary session as required by assembly rules.) The amendment was seconded.

Proposed budget amendment:

Resolved, to amend the proposed budgets for 2015 and 2016, adding \$40,000 to GATHERED: Education/Internship Grants: Philadelphia Seminary; Horizon Internships, bringing the amount for that line to \$77,000.

Pr. Bill Baum made a motion to refer the amendment to the Synod Council. The motion was seconded.

Bishop Rimbo explained that referring the amendment to the synod council would mean that the revised budget for 2015 would be referred to synod council also.

Pr. Stahler called the question. Seconded. Question was called.

Assembly then voted on motion to refer the amendment to the Synod Council. The motion to refer was defeated.

Assembly then voted on motion to amend. The amendment was adopted.

Bishop Rimbo then invited discussion on the amended budgets. Pr. Foster moved to call the question and the question was called.

The amended revised budget for 2015 was adopted.

Pr. Derr moved a continuing resolution for a balanced budget. The motion was seconded.

Proposed continuing resolution:

All amendments to proposed synod budgets which increase expenses must be accompanied by an identified commensurate source of funding, commensurate decrease in spending, or combination of each.

After the question was called by Deacon Paul Lumpkin, with Assembly voting favorably, the proposed continuing resolution was defeated.

The Assembly was then invited to vote on the amendment for the Proposed 2016 Budget (same amendment as for Revised 2015 Budget) and the amendment was approved. The Assembly then voted to adopt the Amended Proposed 2016 Budget.

SA 2015:05.16 Ratified a Revised Budget of \$4,130,093 for Fiscal Year 2015
SA 2015:05.17 Adopted a Budget of \$3,982,684 for Fiscal Year 2016

Nominations and Elections. Second Common Ballot.

The Rev. Kevin O'Hara led voting on the second ballot.

SA 2015:05.18
Second Ballot

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Lay Male
Mr. Christopher Vergara

Synod Council: Lay Female
Ms. Karen Maulen

Presentation on Strategic Plan

Vice President Del Toro and Pr. Marc Herbst gave presentation, including video "Walking Together."

Yesterday you heard me tell all about the many things we have accomplished together as part of our Synod Strategic Plan. I invited anyone that had questions or comments about the plan to meet with me this morning at 7.

I would like thank all the people that took the time to come and talk. Here are a few of the questions that were asked that I think all of you may be interested in hearing the responses:

[Tom will write the questions and get the right person ready to respond in advance. Bishop, Marc, Bill, John, Marsh/Barbara – be near the stage and on alert. Maria will call you on.]

I also heard a few comments that I would like to share with you.

[Tom will capture these from the 7:00 am session. Maria, if it is only 2 or 3, we may ask the person who commented to be sitting near one of the floor mics to repeat their comment for themselves – in 30 seconds or less]

The Synod Strategic Plan has guided us to share the Gospel in new and different ways. As exciting as these projects and initiatives have been – the plan has also helped us define who we are. I am pleased to share this video of several people describing, in their own words, who we are.

Closing of Assembly

The Rev. Paul Johnson, Chair of the Assembly Planning Committee, made final announcements to those present.

Bishop Rimbo expressed final words of appreciation to the Assembly Pastoral Care Team, the Indaba Working Group, the Synod Worship Team, the musicians, the dancers, the Assembly Planning Committee, all volunteers in Registration and Hospitality, the Committee on Reference and Council, the elected officers and council of the Synod, the volunteers of Emanuel, Pleasantville who assembled the packets, the parliamentarian, our Strategic Plan consultant, our photographer and audio/visual team, the Quizdom representative, and the Assembly Coordinator, Rebekah Thornhill.

Bishop Rimbo then invited a motion to adjourn, which was made, seconded and passed.

The assembly concluded with the Order for the Closing of the Assembly.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Robert Schoepflin
Secretary, MNYS*
