

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

**May 19-21, 2016  
Melville Marriott Long Island, Melville, New York**

Assembly registration began at 9:00 am, followed by Orientation for Voting Members.

***THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2016***

***PLENARY SESSION I***

At 1:00 pm 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 welcomed guests at the assembly, asking them to stand when introduced:

**Bishop Abednego Keshomshahara** and **Melisa Keshomshahara** of the North Western Diocese of Tanzania;

**The Rev. Elmereck Kigembe**, General Secretary of the North Western Dioceses of Tanzania;

**The Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger**, Secretary of the ELCA; and

**The ELCA Global Musicians** who will lead music and song during assembly worship.

Bishop Rimbo then noted that on Friday we will welcome the following:

**Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas**, Professor of Religion at Goucher College and Canon Theologian at the Washington National Cathedral who will be our keynote speaker;

**The Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley**, Regional Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York, who will preach at the Friday afternoon Eucharist;

and the following ecumenical guests bringing greetings:

**Bishop Derrick LeCakes**, Atlantic District, LCMS;

**The Rev. Dr. Brian McWeeny**, Archdiocese of New York;  
**Bishop Lawrence Provenzano**, Episcopal Diocese of Long Island; and  
**The Rev Mark Tammen**, Presbytery of Long Island.

Bishop Rimbo then introduced **The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor** as Assembly Chaplain.

Introductions continued with:

**Synod Staff:**

Ms. Susan Brandt, Executive Administrator  
The Rev. Percy Butiku, Asst. to the Bishop for Global and Multicultural Mission  
Mr. Brandon Dicks, Office Assistant  
The Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo, Candidacy Coordinator  
The Rev. Kathleen Koran, Asst. to the Bishop for Congregations  
The Rev. Jonathan Linmsn, Asst. to the Bishop for Faith and Leadership Formation  
Synod Deacon Gayle Ruege, Senior Asst. to the Bishop  
Ms. Kathleen Schmidt, Asst. to the Bishop for Finance and Administration  
Ms. Rebekah Thornhill, Asst. to the Bishop for Communications and Events, and  
The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, Asst. to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission.

**Conference of Deans:**

The Rev. Fernando Otero – Bronx  
The Rev. Paul Egensteiner – Tappan Zee  
The Rev. John Flack – Manhattan  
The Rev. Brenda Irving – Southeast Queens  
The Rev. Edward Barnett – Southwest Nassau  
The Rev. Joseph Mantovani – Northwest and Southwest Queens  
The Rev. Richard Hill – Peconic  
The Rev. Ernie Mossel – Delaware Hudson  
The Rev. Martin Nale – Eastern Nassau  
The Rev. Sonja Maclary – Hudson  
The Rev. Katrina Foster – Brooklyn Bridges  
The Rev. Daniel Peter – Northeast Queens  
The Rev. Jennifer Richards – Staten Island  
The Rev. Joanne Bond – Western Suffolk  
The Rev. Khader Khalilia – Southwest Brooklyn  
The Rev. Robert Cederstrom – Western Nassau, and  
The Rev. Harriet Wieber – South Shore Brooklyn.

**Rostered Leaders new to Synod:**

The Rev. Aaron Baughman – St. Peter’s, Port Jervis  
The Rev. Wolfgang Laudert – Christ, Staten Island  
The Rev. Jonathan Pryer – St. Paul’s, East Northport  
The Rev. Lena Warren – Good Shepherd, Pearl River  
The Rev. Robert Kasting – Faith, Syosset  
The Rev. Becca Seely – The Vine, NYC/LMHE

The Rev. Carol Schneider – Chaplain, Winthrop University Hospital, Mineola  
 The Rev. Susan Nagle – Grace, Yorktown Heights  
 ELCA Diaconal Minister Ross Murray – Program Director GLAAD  
 Synod Deacon. Susan Bliss – Ascension, Deer Park  
 Synod Deacon Vicki Elfers – Ascension, Deer Park  
 Synod Deacon Natalie Romero – Ascension, Deer Park  
 Synod Deacon Carol DaCosta – Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights.

The voting members then viewed a video on parliamentary procedure, after which Bishop Rimbo introduced The Rev. C. Anderson James, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New York, as Assembly Parliamentarian.

Then followed the introduction of The Rev. Joel Brandt, Chair of Reference and Counsel, The Rev. Paul Johnsen, Chair of the Assembly Planning Committee, and The Rev. Paul Egensteiner as host of the plenary session

Mr. Jacob Wood of Qwizdom introduced the voting members to the voting devices that will be used during the assembly.

**Report of the Committee on Registration**

Ms. Hazel Goldstein gave the first registration report.






|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Clergy                      | 128               |
| ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders   | 9                 |
| Lay Voting Members          | 199               |
| <b>Total Voting members</b> | <b><u>336</u></b> |
| Visitors                    | <u>69</u>         |
| <b>Total Attendance</b>     | <b>405</b>        |

The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor led the Assembly in prayer.








**Adoption of Agenda**

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. He also reported that three congregations have exercised their right to appeal the action of the Synod Council in placing them under synod administration. Each congregation will be engaged in a process involving consultation with the Bishop and a meeting with the Consultation Committee. If resolution is not achieved, the congregation’s appeal will be heard at a Special Meeting of the Synod Assembly on October 15, 2016. He noted that this Special Meeting was approved by the Synod Council on April 23, 2016, and voting members of the present assembly will remain voting members at the Special Assembly.








The agenda for the assembly was adopted as presented.

- Claimed 
- Gathered 
- Sent 
- Financial Management 
- Anti-Racism Task Force 

# Thursday, May 19

|         |  |  |
|---------|--|--|
| 9:00am  | <p><b>Registration and Check-In</b><br/> <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. Please also note that overnight check-in for the Melville Marriott is not until 3:00pm, but they will be able to hold any bags for you.</i></p> <p><b>Display Tables Open</b> <br/> <i>Visit with over 30 different committees and organizations hosting display tables.</i></p> <p><b>Coffee and Tea</b> <br/> <i>Thanks to Thrivent Financial for sponsoring coffee and tea. Visit their table to learn more about their ministry.</i></p> | <p><b>Atrium</b></p> <p><b>Prefunction Hall</b></p> <p><b>Prefunction Hall</b></p> |
| 10:00   | <p><b>Synod Assembly Orientation</b> <br/> <i>Learn what you can expect during our time together and get the background on issues and initiatives we'll be discussing.</i></p> <p><b>Spiritual Gifts - Unwrap Your Gifts and Use Them</b> <br/> <i>Spiritual gifts for Lutherans – really? HealthierChurch.org suggests that spiritual gifts are the key to maximum involvement in congregations.</i></p>  | <p><b>Nassau/Suffolk Rooms</b></p> <p><b>Whitman Room</b></p>                      |
| 11:00   | <p><b>Strategic Planning for Your Congregation</b> <br/> <i>Hosted by Tom Massey, Triangle2, This workshop will give you the process and resources to develop priority strategies for the next three to five years to ensure your congregation fulfills its mission: marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.</i></p> <p><b>Not Your Father's Church Financing</b> <br/> <i>Presented by Gerry Lauro, ELCA Mission Investment Fund. The world has changed... So has your financial ministry!</i></p>   | <p><b>Nassau/Suffolk Rooms</b></p> <p><b>Whitman Room</b></p>                      |
| 1:00 pm | <p><b>Opening of the Assembly</b> </p>  | <p><b>Grand Ballroom</b></p>   |

## Plenary Session I

|      |  |                              |
|------|--|------------------------------|
| 1:30 | <p><b>Welcome</b>, Bishop Robert A. Rimbo</p> <p><b>Introductions</b><br/> <i>Bishop Abednego Keshomshahara and Rev. Elmerck Kigembe, Northwest Diocese of Tanzania (ELCT)<br/>         Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, Preaching Theologian<br/>         Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger, ELCA representative<br/>         Staff<br/>         Deans<br/>         Chaplain<br/>         Synod Council<br/>         New Leaders to MNYS</i></p> <p><b>Orientation to Assembly</b>, Bishop Robert A. Rimbo and Rev. C. Andy James, Parliamentarian</p> <p><b>Introduction to Voting Device</b>, Mr. Jacob Wood</p> <p><b>Registration and Attendance</b>, Ms. Hazel Goldstein</p> <p><b>Prayer</b>, Rev. Jerome Taylor</p> <p><b>Adoption of the Agenda</b>, Bishop Robert A. Rimbo</p> <p><b>Rules and Procedures</b>, Bishop Robert A. Rimbo</p> <p><b>Report and Procedure for Nominations from the floor</b>, Rev. Kevin O'Hara</p> <p><b>Report of the Treasurer and Ten Year Financial Plan</b>, Mr. Frank Suttell and Mr. Ed Wagner </p> <p><b>Lutheran Men in Mission</b>, Mr. Bob Bender </p> <p><b>Prayer on the way: Connection</b> </p> <p><b>Break</b></p> <p><b>Vice President's Report</b>, Ms. Maria Del Toro </p> <p><b>Portico Benefit Services</b>, Rev. Jeffrey Thiemann </p> <p><b>Candidacy Committee</b>, Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo </p> <p><b>Strategic Plan Impact</b> </p> <p><b>Announcements</b>, Rev. Paul Johnsen</p> | <p><b>Grand Ballroom</b></p> |
|------|--|------------------------------|

|                |  |                             |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>4:30</b>    | <b>Eucharist: Connection</b> , <i>Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, Presiding and Bishop Abednego Keshomshahara, preaching</i> 🗣️👥🙏🙌   |                             |
| <b>6:00 pm</b> | <b>Dinner</b> , <i>included in pre-purchased meal plan or on your own</i>  | <b>Atrium</b>               |
| <b>7:30</b>    | <b>Songs to Empower</b> 🗣️👥<br><i>Join this highly interactive workshop with the Glocal Musicians on music that empowers and engaged people for social justice ministry.</i>   | <b>Grand Ballroom</b>       |
|                | <b>Confronting Racism Screenings</b> 🗣️👥🙏🙌<br><i>The ELCA has hosted two national conversations on confronting racism in our church with Bishop Eaton. Come watch how these unfold and have conversation with others gathered.</i> | <b>Nassau/Suffolk Rooms</b> |
|                | <b>Guided Indaba Conversations</b> 🗣️👥<br><i>Speak with and listen to fellow participants.</i>   | <b>Whitman Room</b>         |
| <b>9:30</b>    | <b>Night Prayer</b> 🗣️👥🙏🙌  | <b>Wherever you are</b>     |

## Check-In

Upon arrival, please check-in at the registration table. There you will receive all of your materials and name tag.

Please note that payment must be received in full to check-in.






## Check-Out

All participants must check-out. When you check-out, you will return your name tag and your voting device (if applicable). In return you will receive a receipt. Please note the times when the registration table is closed and ensure that you have checked out. For example, if you are only able to attend on Friday, make sure to check-out prior to dinner, even if you are planning to stay through worship.








## Registration Hours

Please note that the registration table is not open throughout the entire assembly. We do this for a number of reasons. First, we recognize that worshipping together may be the most important thing we do at assembly. We want all of our volunteers to be able to join. Second, this also greatly helps to facilitate our voting process. If you are a voting member, you must check-in to receive your materials during these times in order to be eligible to vote.

| Thursday, May 19 | Friday, May 20   | Saturday, May 21  |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 9:00am - 2:00pm  | 8:30am - 10:00pm | 8:30am - 9:50am   |
| 3:15pm - 4:00pm  | 12:45pm - 4:30pm | 11:15am - 12:45pm |
| 5:45pm - 6:30pm  | 6:30pm - 7:30pm  | 3:00pm - 4:00pm   |

- Claimed 
- Gathered 
- Sent 
- Financial Management 
- Anti-Racism Task Force 






# Friday, May 20

|        |  |                         |
|--------|--|-------------------------|
| 8:00am | <b>Morning Prayer</b>   | <b>Grand Ballroom</b>   |
| 8:30   | <b>Registration and Check-In</b><br><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>   | <b>Atrium</b>           |
|        | <b>Display Tables Open</b> <br><i>Visit with over 30 different committees and organizations hosting display tables.</i>   | <b>Prefunction Hall</b> |
|        | <b>Coffee and Tea</b> <br><i>Thanks to Wartburg for sponsoring coffee and tea. Visit their table to learn more about their ministry.</i>  | <b>Prefunction Hall</b> |
|        | <b>Guided Indaba</b> <br><i>Space and time are provided for participants to continue in deep conversations with one another.</i>  | <b>Grand Ballroom</b>   |
|        | <b>From Tanzania with Love</b> <br><i>Presented by the Tanzanian Companionship Committee, Get to Know our Tanzanian Companions</i>  | <b>Whitman Room</b>     |
|        | <b>Stakeholders and Stockholders</b> <br><i>Presented by Rev. Jeff Theimann, CEO of Portico Benefit Services, Learn more about working together as the Body of Christ to have a public impact on our world.</i> | <b>Vanderbilt Room</b>  |
|        | <b>Updating your Congregation's Constitution</b> <br><i>Hosted by Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Learn best practices for your own congregation's constitution and how to update it</i>                                 | <b>Roosevelt Rooms</b>  |
|        | <b>On your own</b><br><i>Take a walk, talk with colleagues, or visit the Marriott's restaurant for breakfast.</i>  |                         |

## Plenary Session II

|         |  |                       |
|---------|--|-----------------------|
| 9:30    | <b>Strategic Plan Impact</b> <br><b>Wartburg, Mr. David Gentner</b> <br><b>Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Rev. Dr. David Lose</b> <br><b>Financial State of the Synod, Ms. Kathy Schmidt</b><br><b>Strategic Plan Impact</b> <br><b>Registration and Attendance, Ms. Hazel Goldstein</b><br><b>Prayer, Rev. Jerome Taylor</b><br><b>Nominations and Elections, Rev. Kevin O'Hara</b><br><b>Reference and Counsel, Rev. Joel Brandt</b><br><b>Prayer on the way: Commitment</b>  | <b>Grand Ballroom</b> |
| 12:00pm | <b>Lunch, included in pre-purchased meal plan or on your own</b>   | <b>Atrium</b>         |

## Plenary Session III

|      |   |                       |
|------|---|-----------------------|
| 1:00 | <b>Accompaniment, Rev. Teresita Valeriano</b> <br><b>Strategic Plan Impact</b> <br><b>Bishop's Bible Study, Bishop Robert A. Rimbo</b> <br><b>Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education, Rev. Rebecca Seely</b> <br><b>Strategic Plan Impact</b> <br><b>ELCA Report, Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger</b> | <b>Grand Ballroom</b> |
|      | <b>Break</b>  |                       |

**Prayer on the way: Commitment** 🌍🌱🌿🙏

**Grand Ballroom**

**Ecumenical Guests**, *Bishop Robert A. Rimbo* 🌍

**Eucharist: Commitment**, *Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, Presiding and Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley, Preaching* 🌍🌱🌿🙏

**6:00**






**Dinner**, *included in pre-purchased meal plan or on your own*

**Atrium**


















**7:30**

**Keynote Presentation**, *Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas* 🌍🌱🌿🙏  
**Night Prayer** 🌍🌱🌿🙏























**Grand Ballroom**

- Claimed 
- Gathered 
- Sent 
- Financial Management 
- Anti-Racism Task Force 

# Saturday, May 21




- |         |   |                      |
|---------|---|----------------------|
| 7:00 am | <b>Budget Breakfast</b> <br><i>Learn and ask questions about our proposed budget.</i>  | Nassau/Suffolk Rooms |
| 8:00am  | <b>Morning Prayer</b>       | Grand Ballroom       |
| 8:30am  | <b>Registration and Check-In</b><br><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. Please also note check-out for overnight guests is 11:00am. Check out now and they will hold any bags for you.</i>   | Atrium               |
|         | <b>Display Tables Open</b>    <br><i>Visit with over 30 different committees and organizations hosting display tables.</i>        | Prefunction Hall     |
|         | <b>Coffee and Tea</b> <br><i>Thanks to Mission Investment Fund for sponsoring coffee and tea. Visit their table to learn more about their ministry.</i>  | Prefunction Hall     |
|         | <b>Guided Indaba</b>  <br><i>Space and time are provided for participants to continue in deep conversations with one another.</i>   | Grand Ballroom       |
|         | <b>Confronting Racism in Christian Education</b>  <br><i>Presented by Karla McKenzie of the Parish Resource Center of Long Island West, Take a fresh look at your Sunday School or Youth Ministry Curriculum to ensure that it promotes a Biblical vision and foundation of God's love for all.</i> | Whitman Room         |
|         | <b>Are you being called to serve?</b> <br><i>Presented by Deacon Meg Fielding, Chair of the Diaconate Council, The first step in discerning God's plan for you. Is the Synodical Diaconate right for you?</i>  | Vanderbilt Room      |
|         | <b>Public Mission: Social Action and Advocacy</b> <br><i>Presented by ELCA Glocal Musicians, Equip yourself with resources to effectively mobilize your congregation to act through service, giving, advocacy and lifestyle choices.</i>   | Roosevelt Rooms      |
|         | <b>What's Going On with LTSP and LTSG</b> <br><i>Hosted by David Lose, president of Lutheran THEological Seminary at Philadelphia, If you're curious what's happening with the merger of LTSP and LTSG, come out and get the scoop!</i>  | Nassau/Suffolk Rooms |
|         | <b>On your own</b><br><i>Take a walk, talk with colleagues, or visit the Marriott's restaurant for breakfast.</i>   |                      |

## Plenary Session IV


- |         |  |                |
|---------|--|----------------|
| 9:30    | <b>Strategic Plan Impact</b>      <br><b>Pinecrest Lutheran Leadership Ministries</b> , Mr. Lucas Mietlowski <br><b>Registration and Attendance</b> , Ms. Hazel Goldstein<br><b>Prayer</b> , Rev. Jerome Taylor<br><b>Nominations and Elections</b> , Rev. Kevin O'Hara<br><b>World Hunger</b> , Deacon Karen Nurmi <br><b>Strategic Plan Impact</b>      <br><b>Prayer on the way: Courage</b>    <br><b>Question and Answer</b> , Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas<br><b>Anniversaries</b> , Bishop Robert A. Rimbo <br><b>Announcements</b> , Rev. Paul Johnsen<br><b>Prayer</b> , Chaplain | Grand Ballroom |
| 12:00pm | <b>Lunch</b> , <i>included in pre-purchased meal plan or on your own</i>   | Atrium         |
| 1:00    | <b>Eucharist: Courage</b> , Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, <i>Presiding and Preaching</i>        | Grand Ballroom |



# Plenary Session V

Strategic Plan Impact   
Mission Investment Fund, Mr. Gerry Lauro   
Registration and Attendance, Ms. Hazel Goldstein  
Budget Questions and Adoption, Mr. Frank Suttell   
Reference and Counsel, Rev. Joel Brandt

Grand Ballroom

3:15 Closing of the Assembly 

## Adoption of Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure were adopted.

## Report of Committee on Nominations and Elections

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

## Report of Treasurer and Presentation of Revised 2016 Budget and Proposed 2017 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.

*2015 was a good year for the Synod from the financial perspective. Our expenses were within budget and our balance sheet was substantially strengthened. Our mission support from congregations was ahead of last year, albeit only slightly.*

*In my report today I will discuss (1) the performance against budget, (2) the financial condition of the Synod and (3) the audit of our financial statements. I will be followed by Ed Wagner, the chair of the Financial Management Committee, who will discuss the 10-year financial plan. A detailed discussion and Q & A of this year's budget and other financial topics will take place at 7 Saturday morning in the Nassau/Suffolk Rooms at our famous budget breakfast.*

### REPORT of the TREASURER

May 19, 2016



#### Four Topics to Be Presented

1. Performance Against the Budget
2. The Financial Condition of the Synod
3. The Audit of the 2015 Statements
4. The Ten-Year Financial Plan



#### Four Topics to Be Presented

1. Performance Against the Budget
2. The Financial Condition of the Synod
3. The Audit of the 2015 Statements
4. The Ten-Year Financial Plan



As you can see, actual expenses for 2015 of \$3 million 967 thousand were \$163 thousand below budget. The budget for 2016 which was adopted at the last assembly was just under \$4 million. We are now proposing an increase in that budget of close to \$500 thousand. We believe this increase is necessary because of pressing needs in our congregations such as capital improvement grants, lay leader training and our anti-racism campaign. This increase is possible because many of these expenses will enable us to save in future years and our robust cash flow will allow us to stay within the 10-year plan. It should be noted that budgeted staff expenses for 2016 are essentially the same as actual staff expenses for 2015.

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 spending which we send on to the ELCA or approximately 14% of our budget. We currently forward approximately 50% of what our congregations contribute in mission support 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 13% of our budget for this purpose.

The dark blue slice, or 25% of the budget, is the amount we plan to spend on projects to implement the strategic plan.

The light blue slice, or 15% of the budget, is the amount we spend on synod governance and finance and administration.

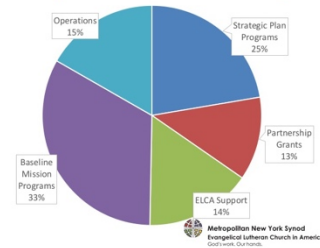
Finally the purple slice or 35% of the budget is devoted to our baseline mission programs.

### Performance Against the Budget (\$000)

|                                 |         |        |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| 1. 2015 Budget                  | \$4,130 | Actual | \$3,967 |
| 2. 2016 Adopted Budget          |         |        | \$3,983 |
| 3. 2016 Proposed Revised Budget |         |        | \$4,463 |
| 4. 2017 Proposed Budget         |         |        | \$4,172 |



### Proposed 2016 Revised Budget



### Four Topics to Be Presented

1. Performance Against the Budget
2. The Financial Condition of the Synod
3. The Audit of the 2015 Statements
4. The Ten-Year Financial Plan



### The Financial Condition of the Synod

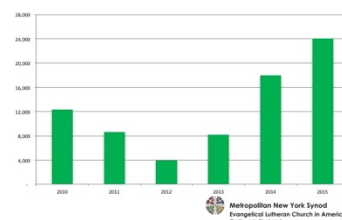
1. Real Property Assets
2. Monetary Assets
3. Congregational Mission Support

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 are the former churches that were received by the synod; (2) our monetary assets are cash and near cash assets; and (3) our recent trend in congregational mission support.

As you can see, until 2012 there had been a steady drop in our real property assets. Since then there has been a consistent increase in these assets.



### Real Property (in \$000)



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, Walden Asset Management. The purple top portion of the column represents the monetary assets not invested with Walden.

As you can see, 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 some of the proceeds. Some of this growth is due to a recovering stock market. Our investment manager at Walden will be with us at the budget breakfast to discuss our portfolio's objectives and performance.

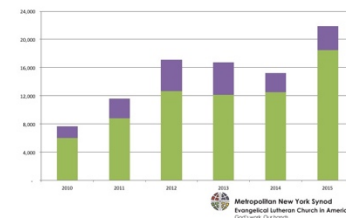
Later in this assembly you will be presented with a resolution to allow the Synod to open one or more supporting organizations. The resolution looks complicated with numerous whereases but the concept is quite straight forward. We would like to establish a separate entity to house the investments with Walden. This separate entity is designed to protect these assets from claims against the Synod. This structure is very common among non-profit institutions with endowments. I urge you to approve this resolution.

Mission support has been stagnant for the past several years. While we hope that the strategic plan will help develop stronger congregations and increase mission support we realize that the Synod cannot operate on mission support alone. Accordingly, like many individual congregations, the Synod needs income from investments to become self sustaining. Much of this investment comes from the selling of church property. But selling a church is the last option, not the first.

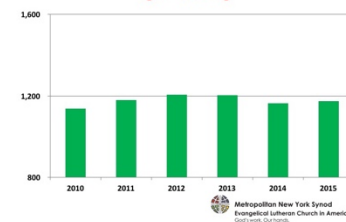
There is a general path that the Synod takes to assist a congregation. Most important is a viability analysis. With the help of a set of well researched and tested viability norms, the Synod determines what steps to take. If the congregation is viable, the Synod will assist through a variety of programs including direct grants, matching grants and mission development projects. The goal is to steer the congregation to a self-sustainable condition within two to three years. If there are questions about viability of a congregation, a number of other approaches are examined. These approaches include mergers and/or repurposing the property. Ideally repurposing would allow the congregation to maintain worship space while sharing the property with a mission related entity such as elder housing. These arrangements can allow the congregation to continue with the help of revenue from the sharing entity.

However, there are cases where the property is too badly in need of repair to be saved and/or the neighborhood has changed demographically and cannot support a church in that location. In these cases the Synod's first concern is for the care of the remaining parishioners. Every effort is made to assure that they have a convenient, welcoming place to worship.

Monetary Assets (in \$000)



Congregational Mission Support (in \$000)



#### Four Topics to Be Presented

1. Performance Against the Budget
2. The Financial Condition of the Synod
- 3. The Audit of the 2015 Statements**
4. The Ten-Year Financial Plan

Tait/Weller, our Independent Auditors, have completed their work and issued their opinion. Once again our auditors have given us an unmodified or “clean” opinion. The auditors have attested that our books fairly present our financial condition. Last year the audit committee evaluated the feasibility of changing auditing firms as a way of assuring more independence. In the end it was decided to retain the firm that we have worked so well with for so long but have a different partner manage the audit. This change was implemented for 2015 to everyone’s satisfaction.

I now turn the podium over to Ed Wagner, chair of the Financial Management Committee, to discuss the ten-year plan.

### 2015 Report of the Independent Auditors

- Auditors determined if the management prepared statements present fairly the financial position of the Synod.
- Auditors again issued an unmodified opinion.
- Audit Committee recommended, and Synod Council voted to approve, retaining Tait Weller as our auditors for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2017.



### Four Topics to Be Presented

1. Performance Against the Budget
2. The Financial Condition of the Synod
3. The Audit of the 2015 Statements
4. The Ten-Year Financial Plan



Frank has reviewed the Proposed Revised 2016 and 2017 budgets. My part today is to go over the updated Ten-year Plan that the Synod Council approved on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

This year’s Ten-year Plan is indeed a good news plan. The target date for achieving a sustainable financial condition hasn’t changed – it remains 2024. Compared to last year’s Ten-year Plan, however, this plan not only achieves sustainability but allows for significant additional support to congregations through Strategic Plan Programs and Partnership Grants.

This year participation in the budgeting process was expanded. The Strategic Committees, the Steering Committee and the Executive Committee, supported by staff and the Financial Management Committee, carefully evaluated our strategic initiatives, our other mission programs, and our operations needs. All the elements of the Proposed Revised 2016 budget and Proposed 2017 budget were considered not only from a one and two-year perspective but also were considered with a view of the direction and goals of the next ten years. The results are budgets and a long-term plan that were thoughtfully built from the ground up and make best use of the synod’s resources for mission.

### The 2016-2025 Ten-year Plan

1. Objective is unchanged: a sustainable financial condition by 2024 and beyond
2. Proposed 2016 Revised and 2017 Budgets were determined within the context of the Ten-year Plan
3. Updated Plan allows for additional support to congregations through Strategic Plan Programs and Partnership Grants

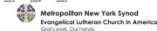
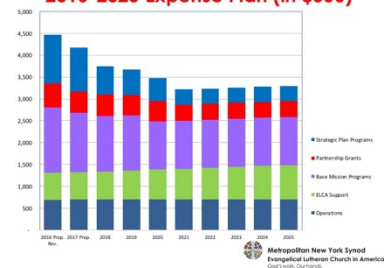


This bar graph represents the progression of the Ten-year Plan from today, when we are making substantial investments in the strategic plan programs, to later years when our income and expenses stabilize. The top portions of each bar, in blue, show how these up-front strategic plan investments tail off in the out years.

But, unlike last year’s plan, we are now projecting that we will be able to continue the very successful leadership development and capital improvements grants programs and the enhanced communication effort well into the future. In this plan, total projected ten year spending for strategic plan programs are more than 50% higher than seemed possible last year. This plan also allocates 10% more funds for Partnership Grants over ten years while continuing our commitment to increase ELCA support to 55% of total congregational giving beginning this year.

Overall, total ten-year Mission spending is projected to be close to \$29 million, 13% more than last year’s projections. We expect we will be able to afford annual Mission spending in the later years nearly 20% above what we foresaw last year. Truly a good news plan!

2016-2025 Expense Plan (in \$000)



Where will the additional revenue come from to support these greater Mission programs? As Frank mentioned, to comply with our synod's policy to use all proceeds from property sales for Mission, after transfers for Mission programs the remainder is managed as an endowment to support our Mission in the future. The sources of revenue to the Synod are shown in this chart. There are two basic sources - annual giving, as shown by the purple and green portions of the bars in the chart - and annual transfers from investments. These transfers are shown by the red and blue portions of the bars.

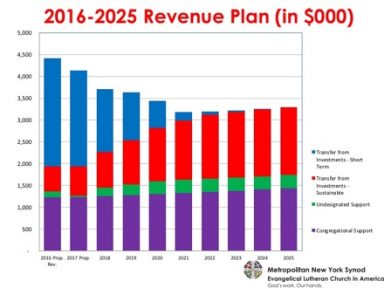
Our financial goal is to achieve a sustainable financial position by 2024. Sustainable management of the endowment is to transfer out each year about 4% of the investment fund's average value over the previous five years. The Ten-year Plan shows that we can transfer additional amounts over the short term - represented by the blue portion - to help fund the initial costs of our strategic plan initiatives. You can see that the 4% each year - the red portion - increases when the value of our endowment increases. By 2024, the excess transfers disappear because we project the endowment will grow to where those non-sustainable temporary transfers are no longer needed.

These basic assumptions are the same as were used for last year's Ten-year Plan. Frank explained that our monetary assets are increasing. Therefore, following the endowment model, the sustainable amounts projected to be available from investments in future years are higher than we projected last year.

We now expect that this approach to the stewardship of the synod's assets will yield even more robust Mission programs in the future!

In conclusion, 2015 was a good year for the Synod. We maintained our financial stability, we reached a number of our Strategic Plan goals, we operated within our budget, and we have a much more positive Ten-year Plan. We understand that there are difficult goals ahead 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.

To learn more about the budgets, the audit and the Ten-year Plan, come to the budget breakfast on Saturday at 7 am.



**More Information is Available**

- A breakdown of the budgets is in your packets.
- The full audit report is on file.
- Come to the budget breakfast Saturday at 7 a.m.



Mr. Wagner and Mr. Suttell presented the Revised 2016 Budget and Proposed 2017 Budget, noting that any proposed amendments to the budgets are to be submitted in writing. Voting on the budgets will take place in the fifth plenary session Saturday afternoon.

**METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD - ELCA**  
**Proposed Revised 2016 and Proposed 2017 Budgets**

| Program   | Component  | 2016<br>Adopted Budget | 2016<br>Proposed<br>Revised Budget | 2017<br>Proposed<br>Budget |
|---|--|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>OPERATING BUDGET (Funds 1-6)</b>                     |  |                        |                                    |                            |
| <b>REVENUE</b>  |  |                        |                                    |                            |
| <b>CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CONGREGATIONS</b>                 |  |                        |                                    |                            |
|   | Undesignated Mission Support                               | 1,225,000              | 1,225,000                          | 1,225,000                  |
|   | <b>Total Contributions from Congregations</b>              | <b>1,225,000</b>       | <b>1,225,000</b>                   | <b>1,225,000</b>           |
| <b>GRANTS, UNDESIGNATED GIFTS, &amp; OTHER CONTRIB.</b> |  |                        |                                    |                            |
|   | ELCA Grants (Congregational and Synodical Mission)         | 15,000                 | 11,000                             | 11,000                     |
|   | Portico - Health Assessment Grant                          | 18,000                 | -                                  | -                          |
|   | Undesignated Gifts   | 50,000                 | 125,000                            | 25,000                     |
|   | Sutter Memorial Fund                                       | 1,000                  | 1,000                              | 1,000                      |
|   | <b>Total Grants &amp; Other Contributions</b>              | <b>84,000</b>          | <b>137,000</b>                     | <b>37,000</b>              |
| <b>TRANSFERS FROM OTHER FUNDS</b>                       |  |                        |                                    |                            |
|   | Metro New York Synod Fund                                  | 530,000                | 586,000                            | 577,500                    |
|   | Mission Redevelopment Fund - Partnership Grants            | 483,900                | 550,000                            | 480,000                    |
|   | Mission Redevelopment Fund - Strategic Plan Implementation | 880,659                | 1,102,541                          | 1,005,812                  |
|   | Trexler Grants   | 5,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |
|   | Salam Ministry Fund  | 50,000                 | 140,000                            | -                          |
|   | Wider Church Fund  | 100,000                | 100,000                            | 100,000                    |
|   | Tanzania Endowment Fund                                    | 50,000                 | 65,000                             | 45,000                     |
|   | Transfers from Other Funds                                 | 7,500                  | 7,500                              | 7,500                      |
|   | <b>Total Transfers from Other Funds</b>                    | <b>2,107,059</b>       | <b>2,556,041</b>                   | <b>2,220,812</b>           |
| <b>OTHER INCOME</b>                                     |  |                        |                                    |                            |
|   | Investment Income  | 450,000                | 433,266                            | 575,000                    |
|   | Loan Interest  | 116,625                | 111,625                            | 114,387                    |
|   | <b>Total Other Income</b>                                  | <b>566,625</b>         | <b>544,891</b>                     | <b>689,387</b>             |
|   | <b>TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS</b>                    | <b>3,982,684</b>       | <b>4,462,932</b>                   | <b>4,172,199</b>           |
| <b>EXPENDITURES</b>                                     |  |                        |                                    |                            |
| <b>CLAIMED</b>  |  |                        |                                    |                            |
| <b>Faith Formation</b>                                  | Staff *  | 119,840                | 99,512                             | 102,351                    |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>119,840</b>         | <b>99,512</b>                      | <b>102,351</b>             |
| <b>Family Ministries</b>                                | Children, Youth & Family Ministries                        | 2,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |
|   | Youth Ministry   |                        |                                    |                            |
|   | Staff *  | 3,671                  | 3,766                              | 3,868                      |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>5,671</b>           | <b>8,766</b>                       | <b>8,868</b>               |
| <b>Communications - Claimed</b>                         | Website Maintenance/Social Media                           | 4,000                  | 4,200                              | 4,200                      |
|   | Publications - Lutheran New Yorker                         | 5,000                  | -                                  | -                          |
|   | Staff *  | 36,873                 | 28,960                             | 29,788                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>45,873</b>          | <b>33,160</b>                      | <b>33,988</b>              |
| <b>Education/Internship Grants</b>                      | Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education Grant              | 43,370                 | 43,370                             | 43,370                     |
|   | Lutheran Schools Association (Judicatory fees)             | 18,000                 | 18,900                             | 19,845                     |
|   | Student Christian Center at SUNY New Paltz Grant           | 6,000                  | 13,000                             | 13,000                     |
|   | Wagner College   | -                      | -                                  | -                          |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>67,370</b>          | <b>75,270</b>                      | <b>76,215</b>              |
| <b>Strategic Plan Implementation</b>                    | Strategic Support  | 15,000                 | 35,000                             | 35,000                     |
|   | Strategic Development                                      | 25,000                 | -                                  | -                          |
|   | Strategic Initiatives                                      | 35,000                 | -                                  | -                          |
|   | Growing in Faith Initiative                                | 10,000                 | 10,000                             | 10,000                     |
|   | Communications Enhancement Programs                        | 145,000                | 50,000                             | 50,000                     |
|   | Website Grants to Congregations                            | 5,000                  | 500                                | -                          |
|   | 500th Anniversary of the Reformation                       | -                      | 25,000                             | 25,000                     |
|   | Staff *  | 16,566                 | 9,039                              | 8,680                      |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>251,566</b>         | <b>129,539</b>                     | <b>128,680</b>             |
|   | <b>TOTAL CLAIMED</b>                                       | <b>490,320</b>         | <b>346,247</b>                     | <b>350,101</b>             |

\*Staff cost includes salaries, benefits, travel, hospitality and continuing education. These costs are allocated to the various program areas, based on the amount of time spent in each area.

| Program                                   | Component   | 2016<br>Adopted Budget | 2016<br>Proposed<br>Revised Budget | 2017<br>Proposed<br>Budget |
|---|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>GATHERED</b>                           |   |                        |                                    |                            |
| Mission Resources                         | Stewardship & Mission Support Table                             | 2,500                  | 2,500                              | 2,500                      |
|   | Staff *   | 38,854                 | 36,211                             | 35,663                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>41,354</b>          | <b>38,711</b>                      | <b>38,163</b>              |
| Congregational Grants                     | Partnership Grants  | 483,900                | 550,000                            | 480,000                    |
|   | Salam Ministry Fund Grant                                       | 50,000                 | 140,000                            | -                          |
|   | Other Grants  |                        | 25,000                             | 25,000                     |
|   | Staff *   | 58,330                 | 62,958                             | 61,639                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>592,230</b>         | <b>777,958</b>                     | <b>566,639</b>             |
| Congregational Call Process/Consultations | Congregation Consultations                                      | 3,000                  | -                                  | -                          |
|   | Staff *   | 286,910                | 302,491                            | 309,422                    |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>289,910</b>         | <b>302,491</b>                     | <b>309,422</b>             |
| Communications - Gathered                 | Staff *   | 29,439                 | 28,960                             | 29,788                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>29,439</b>          | <b>28,960</b>                      | <b>29,788</b>              |
| Leadership Formation                      | Bishop's Retreat  | 25,000                 | 25,000                             | 25,000                     |
|   | Candidacy Retreat   | 1,000                  | -                                  | -                          |
|   | Deans Retreat   | 3,500                  | 3,500                              | 3,500                      |
|   | Staff Retreat   | 2,500                  | 3,500                              | 3,500                      |
|   | Ministerium & Other Education Events                            | 5,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |
|   | Urban Leaders Institute   | 5,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |
|   | Trexler Fund Grants   | 5,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |
|   | Candidacy Expenses  | 5,000                  | 20,000                             | 20,000                     |
|   | Staff *   | 128,020                | 142,129                            | 144,906                    |
|   |   | <b>Total</b>           | <b>180,020</b>                     | <b>209,129</b>             |
| Education/Internship Grants               | Philadelphia Seminary Grant                                     | 65,000                 | 65,000                             | 65,000                     |
|   | Horizon Internships   | 12,000                 | 12,000                             | 12,000                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>77,000</b>          | <b>77,000</b>                      | <b>77,000</b>              |
| Strategic Plan Implementation             | Strategic Support   | 15,000                 | 35,000                             | 35,000                     |
|   | Pastoral Care   | 8,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |
|   | Shared Ministry Initiative                                      | 12,000                 | -                                  | -                          |
|   | The Sower's Project   | 150,000                | 75,000                             | 75,000                     |
|   | Leadership Development Grants to Congregations                  | 50,000                 | 100,000                            | 100,000                    |
|   | Capital Grants to Congregations                                 | 200,000                | 400,000                            | 400,000                    |
|   | Property Surveys  | -                      | 75,000                             | 50,000                     |
|   | Congregations in Transition - Financial & Property Reviews      | -                      | 60,000                             | 60,000                     |
|   | Housing Grants for Interns                                      | -                      | 30,000                             | -                          |
|   | Staff *   | 66,264                 | 33,521                             | 32,906                     |
|   |   | <b>Total</b>           | <b>501,264</b>                     | <b>813,521</b>             |
| <b>TOTAL GATHERED</b>                     |   | <b>1,711,216</b>       | <b>2,247,769</b>                   | <b>1,990,825</b>           |
| <b>SENT</b>                               |   |                        |                                    |                            |
| Companion Synods                          | Companion Synod - Tanzania (Teacher salaries, benefits, travel) | 45,000                 | 60,000                             | 40,000                     |
|   | Travel & Hospitality (Tanzania)                                 | 5,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |
|   | Staff *   | 42,160                 | 47,261                             | 48,636                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>92,160</b>          | <b>112,261</b>                     | <b>93,636</b>              |
| Committees/Commissions                    | Synod Committees & Commissions                                  | 4,000                  | 1,500                              | 1,500                      |
|   | Staff *   | 29,701                 | 34,926                             | 36,020                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>33,701</b>          | <b>36,426</b>                      | <b>37,520</b>              |
| Multicultural Ministries                  | Multicultural Ministries  | 5,000                  | 10,000                             | 10,000                     |
|   | Staff *   | 87,991                 | 94,446                             | 97,020                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>92,991</b>          | <b>104,446</b>                     | <b>107,020</b>             |
| Social Ministry Organizations             | Wider Church Fund Grants  | 100,000                | 100,000                            | 97,500                     |
|   | Social Ministry Organizations (SMO) Events                      | 7,500                  | 4,000                              | 4,000                      |
|   | Staff *   | 18,354                 | 18,832                             | 19,338                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>125,854</b>         | <b>122,832</b>                     | <b>120,838</b>             |
| Communications - Sent                     | Staff *   | 30,109                 | 24,674                             | 29,788                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>30,109</b>          | <b>24,674</b>                      | <b>29,788</b>              |
| ELCA Support                              | ELCA Mission Support  | 618,625                | 618,625                            | 624,750                    |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>618,625</b>         | <b>618,625</b>                     | <b>624,750</b>             |
| Strategic Plan Implementation             | Strategic Support   | 15,000                 | 35,000                             | 35,000                     |
|   | Strategic Initiatives   | 30,000                 | 100,000                            | 60,000                     |
|   | Staff *   | 82,830                 | 24,482                             | 24,226                     |
|   | <b>Total</b>  | <b>127,830</b>         | <b>159,482</b>                     | <b>119,226</b>             |
| <b>TOTAL SENT</b>                         |   | <b>1,121,269</b>       | <b>1,178,747</b>                   | <b>1,132,778</b>           |

\*Staff cost includes salaries, benefits, travel, hospitality and continuing education. These costs are allocated to the various program areas, based on the amount of time spent in each area.

| Program  | Component   | 2016<br>Adopted Budget | 2016<br>Proposed<br>Revised Budget | 2017<br>Proposed<br>Budget |       |
|--|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| <b>SYNOD GOVERNANCE</b>                                      |   |                        |                                    |                            |       |
| Synod Assembly   | Synod Assembly  | 35,000                 | 35,000                             | 35,000                     |       |
|  | Staff *   | 33,852                 | 46,059                             | 47,104                     |       |
|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>68,852</b>          | <b>81,059</b>                      | <b>82,104</b>              |       |
| Synod Council  | Synod Council   | 7,500                  | 8,000                              | 8,000                      |       |
|  | Synod Council Committees                                      | 2,500                  | 2,500                              | 2,500                      |       |
|  | Archives  | 10,000                 | 12,000                             | 12,000                     |       |
|  | Staff *   | 59,562                 | 68,903                             | 70,612                     |       |
|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>79,562</b>          | <b>91,403</b>                      | <b>93,112</b>              |       |
| Synod Events   | Region 7 Coordinating Council                                 | 7,500                  | 7,500                              | 7,500                      |       |
|  | Worship Events & Ordinations                                  | 5,000                  | 3,500                              | 3,500                      |       |
|  | Staff *   | 18,354                 | 27,637                             | 23,678                     |       |
|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>30,854</b>          | <b>38,637</b>                      | <b>34,678</b>              |       |
| <b>TOTAL SYNOD GOVERNANCE</b>                                |   | <b>179,268</b>         | <b>211,099</b>                     | <b>209,894</b>             |       |
| <b>FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION</b>                            |   |                        |                                    |                            |       |
| General Office Management                                    | Telephone & Internet Access                                   | 16,000                 | 17,000                             | 17,000                     |       |
|  | Professional Services - Technology                            | 2,500                  | 3,500                              | 3,000                      |       |
|  | Computers & Other Equipment                                   | 5,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |       |
|  | Database & Cloud Expense                                      | 23,000                 | 17,500                             | 17,500                     |       |
|  | Office Supplies & Printing                                    | 6,500                  | 8,000                              | 6,500                      |       |
|  | Postage & Shipping  | 9,000                  | 8,000                              | 8,000                      |       |
|  | Office Hospitality  | 5,000                  | 5,000                              | 5,000                      |       |
|  | Other Expense   | 7,144                  | 337                                | 2,532                      |       |
|  | Staff *   | 21,167                 | 18,583                             | 19,411                     |       |
|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>95,311</b>          | <b>82,920</b>                      | <b>83,943</b>              |       |
|  | General Accounting  | Payroll Service Fees   | 4,500                              | 4,500                      | 4,500 |
|  |   | Credit Card Fees       | 500                                | 500                        | 500   |
| Staff *  |   | 35,124                 | 33,027                             | 34,424                     |       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>40,124</b>   | <b>38,027</b>          | <b>39,424</b>                      |                            |       |
| Facility   | Rent & Facility Management                                    | 188,244                | 188,228                            | 192,934                    |       |
|  | Maintenance & Repairs   | 7,500                  | 6,000                              | 6,000                      |       |
|  | Depreciation Expense  | 30,000                 | 45,000                             | 45,000                     |       |
|  | Staff *   | 2,747                  | 1,874                              | 1,930                      |       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>228,491</b>  | <b>241,102</b>         | <b>245,864</b>                     |                            |       |
| Audit/Legal  | Professional Services - Audit                                 | 23,000                 | 23,000                             | 23,000                     |       |
|  | Legal Fees  | 15,000                 | 15,000                             | 15,000                     |       |
|  | Staff *   | 33,434                 | 36,087                             | 37,246                     |       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>71,434</b>   | <b>74,087</b>          | <b>75,246</b>                      |                            |       |
| Insurance  | Directors & Officers/Employment Practices Liability Insurance | 14,000                 | 13,750                             | 14,500                     |       |
|  | NYS Disability & Dishonesty Bond Insurance                    | 1,600                  | 1,600                              | 1,650                      |       |
|  | ELCA Shared Risk Assessment                                   | 1,650                  | 1,650                              | 1,650                      |       |
|  | Workmen's Comp & State Unemployment Insurance                 | 10,500                 | 8,000                              | 8,000                      |       |
|  | Property & Liability/Umbrella Insurance                       | 13,000                 | 13,250                             | 13,500                     |       |
|  | Staff *   | 4,501                  | 4,684                              | 4,825                      |       |
|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>45,251</b>          | <b>42,934</b>                      | <b>44,125</b>              |       |
| <b>TOTAL FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION</b>                      |   | <b>480,611</b>         | <b>479,071</b>                     | <b>488,601</b>             |       |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES - FUNDS 1-6</b>                            |   | <b>(3,982,684)</b>     | <b>(4,462,932)</b>                 | <b>(4,172,199)</b>         |       |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS - FUNDS 1-6</b>          |   | <b>3,982,684</b>       | <b>4,462,932</b>                   | <b>4,172,199</b>           |       |
| <b>NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUNDS 1-6</b>                         |   | <b>0</b>               | <b>0</b>                           | <b>0</b>                   |       |
| <b>PROPERTIES OWNED/SYNOD ADMINISTRATION BUDGET (Fund 7)</b> |   |                        |                                    |                            |       |
| <b>REVENUE</b>   |   |                        |                                    |                            |       |
| Synod Owned Properties - MRF (Budget Est Only)               |   | 200,000                | 200,000                            | 200,000                    |       |
| Synodical Admin Properties - MRF (Budget Est Only)           |   | 150,000                | 150,000                            | 150,000                    |       |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS</b>                      |   | <b>350,000</b>         | <b>350,000</b>                     | <b>350,000</b>             |       |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>  |   |                        |                                    |                            |       |
| Synod Administration/Owned Properties - TBD                  |   | 200,000                | 200,000                            | 200,000                    |       |
| Synod Administration/Owned Properties - Staff*               |   | 150,000                | 150,000                            | 150,000                    |       |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>  |   | <b>(350,000)</b>       | <b>(350,000)</b>                   | <b>(350,000)</b>           |       |
| <b>NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUND 7</b>                            |   | <b>0</b>               | <b>0</b>                           | <b>0</b>                   |       |
| <b>SUMMARY - ALL FUNDS</b>                                   |   |                        |                                    |                            |       |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES - ALL FUNDS</b>                            |   | <b>(4,332,684)</b>     | <b>(4,812,932)</b>                 | <b>(4,522,199)</b>         |       |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE &amp; FUNDS TRANSFERS - ALL FUNDS</b>       |   | <b>4,332,684</b>       | <b>4,812,932</b>                   | <b>4,522,199</b>           |       |
| <b>NET INCOME (LOSS) - ALL FUNDS</b>                         |   | <b>0</b>               | <b>0</b>                           | <b>0</b>                   |       |

\*Staff cost includes salaries, benefits, travel, hospitality and continuing education. These costs are allocated to the various program areas, based on the amount of time spent in each area.



### **Lutheran Men in Mission**

Mr. Bob Bender, MNYS Chapter President, presented the report of Lutheran Men in Mission.

After song, prayer, and a short break, the session resumed with Bishop Rimbo introducing the Synod Officers and Council:

Ms. Maria Del Toro, Vice President

Mr. Frank Suttell, Treasurer

The Rev. Robert Schoepflin, Secretary

Mr. Daquan Baker, New Hope, Jamaica – Youth representative

The Rev. William Baum, St. Barnabas, Howard Beach

The Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite, Grace, Astoria

The Rev. Khader El-Yateem, Salam Arabic, Brooklyn

Ms. Hazel Goldstein, St. John's, Middletown – Executive Committee

The Rev. Brenda Irving, Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights

Ms. Barbara Johnson, Transfiguration, Harlem

The Rev. Amy Kienzle, Park Church Co-op, Brooklyn

Mr. John Litke, St. Peter's, Huntington Station

Dr. Carlos Lopez, Advent, Manhattan

Synod Deacon John Malone, Holy Trinity, Brooklyn

Synod Deacon Karen Maulen, Grace, Yorktown Heights

The Rev. Craig Miller, Our Saviour's, Brooklyn

Mr. Walter Nash, St. Peter's, 219<sup>th</sup> Street, Bronx

Synod Deacon Lulu Paolini, Gustavus Adolphus, Manhattan

The Rev. Daniel Peter Penumaka, St. Paul's International, Floral Park

Synod Deacon John Prosen, Incarnation, Cedarhurst

Mr. Brian Reardon, Trinity, Staten Island

Ms. Terra Rowe, Redeemer, Kingston

The Rev. Harry Schenkel, St. Paul's, East Northport – Executive Committee

Ms. Wendy Bean Tannenbaum, St. Paul's, East Northport

Ms. Abby Triebel, St. John's, Poughkeepsie – Young Adult representative

Mr. Christopher Vergara, St. Peter's/Sion, Manhattan – Executive Committee

Ms. Karen Wooley, New Hope, Valley Stream – Executive Committee

### **Report of the Vice President**

Ms. Maria Del Toro gave the report of the Vice President.

BUENAS TARDES HERMANAS Y HERMANOS EN CRISTO. OTRA VEZ,  
BUENAS TARDES. ES UN PLACER ESTAR CON USTEDES UNA VES MAS.  
IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU AGAIN AND GIVE THE SYNOD  
COUNCIL REPORT. IN YOUR PACKET YOU CAN FIND A FULL REPORT  
ON ALL THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE COUNCIL THIS PAST YEAR SO I  
WILL NOT TAKE THE TIME TO GO OVER IT. I HOPE YOU WILL READ IT  
BECAUSE YOU WILL SEE HOW ACTIVE THE COUNCIL HAS BEEN.  
THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN A VERY BUSY YEAR FOR THE SYNOD. BUT  
I WANT TO START BY GIVING THANKS TO GOD FOR GIVING OUR

BISHOP HEALING. IT IS GOOD TO HAVE HIM IN GOOD HEALTH. LAST YEAR THIS ASSEMBLY OVERWHELMINGLY PASSED AN ANTIRACISM RESOLUTION TO ADDRESS RACISM IN OUR CHURCHES AND SOCIETY AND TO PROVIDE ANTI-RACISM TRAINING TO LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS OF OUR SYNOD: ROSTERED LEADERS, SYNODICALLY ROSTERED LEADERS, CANDIDATES IN CALL, CONGREGATIONAL CALL COMMITTEES, AND STAFF. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SENT COMMITTEE WAS CHARGED WITH SHEPHERDING THIS WORK. I WANT TO THANK THE COMMITTEE, WHOSE NAMES YOU SEE ON THE SCREEN. ALSO, I WANT TO RECOGNIZE THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE SENT COMMITTEE: BARBARA JOHNSON AND MARSH DREGE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP ON THIS CRITICAL ISSUE FOR OUR SYNOD. THE ANTI RACISM TASK FORCE IS COMPOSED OF DIVERSE, MULTICULTURAL, LAY AND CLERGY, MULTI-AGE INDIVIDUALS. YOU SEE THE NAMES OF THOSE SERVING IN THIS IMPORTANT ROLE ON THE SCREEN. THE LEADERSHIP TEAM OF THE TASK FORCE IS JIM ROWE, BECCA SEELY, MARCIA PARKINSON-HARRISON, AND ROBERTO LARA. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP. THE TASK FORCE IS HARD AT WORK AND WANTS TO REMIND ALL OF US THAT CONFRONTING RACISM IS FAR MORE THAN AN EVENT OR TRAINING. THIS IS SOMETHING OUR SYNOD WILL BE WORKING ON FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. BUT WE DO HAVE THREE WAYS YOU CAN ENGAGE RIGHT AWAY. FIRST, HERE AT THE ASSEMBLY WE WOULD INVITE YOU TO VISIT THE AREA JUST OUTSIDE THE BALLROOM SET ASIDE FOR DISCUSSIONS ON CONFRONTING RACISM HOSTED BY THE TASK FORCE. TWO ANTI-RACISM TRAININGS HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE AND WE HAVE 3 MORE EVENTS PLANNED FOR JUNE 11, SEPTEMBER 10 AND NOVEMBER 12. THESE WILL BE FULL-DAY INTRODUCTIONS TO CONFRONTING RACISM AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE SYNOD WEBSITE. AN ANTI-RACISM BLOG IS NOW ON THE SYNOD WEBSITE AND WE INVITE AND ENCOURAGE ALL TO READ IT AND TO RESPOND TO IT. I CONTINUE TO BE IN AWE OF GOD'S ABUNDANCE AND BLESSINGS TO US AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE RESULTS OF THE GRANTS PROGRAM OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN. THE GATHERED COMMITTEE YOU SEE ON THE SCREEN OVERSEES THE SYNOD'S GRANTS PROGRAM. THE COMMITTEE CHAIR, BILL BAUM, IS NOT HERE. I UNDERSTAND THIS IS THE FIRST ASSEMBLY BILL HAS MISSED IN 30 YEARS. HIS SON IS GETTING MARRIED. I THINK THAT IS A VALID EXCUSE. IN YOUR PACKET, YOU WILL FIND AN IMPRESSIVE LIST OF THE GRANTS THAT HAVE BEEN AWARDED SINCE 2014 AS PART OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION. IN ADDITION TO THE PRINTED REPORT, WE ARE HAVING THE RECIPIENTS OF 9 GRANTS SHARE WITH YOU AT VARIOUS TIMES THROUGHOUT THE ASSEMBLY. THEY WILL TELL YOU OF THE IMPACT THOSE GRANTS HAVE MADE ON THEIR CONGREGATIONS. YOU WILL HEAR FROM RECIPIENTS IN ALL THREE GRANT AREAS: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, LEADERSHIP

DEVELOPMENT, AND THE SOWER'S PROJECT.  
THE RESPONSE TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT CHALLENGE GRANT HAS BEEN ENORMOUS. LAST YEAR WE HAD AGAIN BUDGETED \$200,000 BUT THE REQUESTS FOR GRANTS THIS YEAR FAR EXCEEDED THAT AMOUNT. THE GATHERED STRATEGY WAS ABLE TO REALLOCATE FUNDING BETWEEN PROGRAMS AND WE DOUBLED THE AMOUNT OF THE GRANTS TO \$400,000 WITHOUT INCREASING THE BUDGET. 28 CONGREGATIONS RECEIVED CHALLENGE GRANTS TO ASSIST THEM WITH PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING CEILING RESTORATIONS, PARKING LOTS, ROOFS, WINDOW AND DOOR REPLACEMENTS, HEATING EQUIPMENT, PLUMBING AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, REPLACEMENT OF FURNACES AMONG OTHER THINGS. IN OTHER WORDS, OUR SYNOD IS HELPING CONGREGATIONS WITH YOUR FACILITIES SO YOU CAN CONCENTRATE ON YOUR MISSION OF BRINGING THE GOSPEL TO YOUR COMMUNITIES.  
WILL THE LEADERS OF THOSE CONGREGATIONS THAT RECEIVED A CAPITAL GRANT AWARD OVER THE LAST 2 YEARS, PLEASE STAND, SO WE CAN CONGRATULATE YOU.  
AND I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE ANOTHER GROUP OF DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS – THE COMMITTEE THAT REVIEWS THE CAPITAL GRANT APPLICATIONS. THESE INDIVIDUALS SPEND MANY HOURS REVIEWING REQUESTS AND MAKING WISE DECISIONS.  
OUR SYNOD CONTINUES TO BE COMMITTED TO HELPING CONGREGATIONS THROUGH THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION. THE BUDGET BEFORE YOU INCLUDES \$400,000 FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS FOR NEXT YEAR. IF YOU APPROVE THE BUDGET, THE APPLICATION PROCESS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY POSTED ON OUR SYNOD WEBSITE.  
WE HAVE CONTINUED OUR GRANTS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT. IN FACT, WE HAVE EXPANDED THEM TO INCLUDE LAY LEADERS. IF YOU RECEIVED A LEADERSHIP GRANT, PLEASE STAND UP SO WE CAN CONGRATULATE YOU. [APPLAUSE]. AND WE HAVE A GROUP OF LEADERS WHO REVIEW THE APPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GRANTS.  
WE OFTEN HEAR TALK OF A CHURCH, IN DECLINE. WELL, THE SOWER'S PROJECT, AN INITIATIVE OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN, BELIEVES THAT JUST THE OPPOSITE IS HAPPENING!  
THIS TEAM OF CLERGY AND LAY LEADERS ACCOMPANIED BY SYNOD LIAISON REV. LAMONT WELLS, IDENTIFIES UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS WITHIN THE SYNOD, FIND LEADERS WITH IDEAS TO REACH THOSE POPULATIONS, AND AWARDS "SEED" GRANTS UP TO \$10,000 FOR THOSE NEW MINISTRIES.  
SO FAR, THEY HAVE FUNDED THE GRANTS YOU SEE ON THE SCREEN. IF YOU ARE A LEADER OF ONE OF THESE PROJECTS, PLEASE STAND AND REMAIN STANDING FOR A MOMENT. TAKE A LOOK AT THESE PIONEERS OF NEW MINISTRIES. GET THEM TO TELL YOU ABOUT THEIR EXITING, INNOVATIVE PROJECTS. THANK YOU [APPLAUSE]. AND YOUR CONGREGATION COULD BE A PART OF THIS FUTURE MINISTRY GROWTH. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS DEVELOP AN IDEA AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING. IT WILL BE THOUGHTFULLY

AND PRAYERFULLY CONSIDERED.

WE HAVE SEVERAL NEW MINISTRIES AND DEVELOPING CONGREGATIONS AS PART OF OUR PARTNERSHIP GRANTS WITH CHURCH WIDE AND DIRECTED BY PASTOR LAMONT WELLS. OUR SYNOD INVESTED \$480,000 THIS YEAR ON PARTNERSHIP GRANTS WITHIN OUR SYNOD.

ONE OF THE FRUITS OF THIS WORK IS THE WELCOMING OF ST LYDIAS AS A FULL CONGREGATION INTO OUR SYNOD LATER IN THE ASSEMBLY.

AND SO WE REJOICE IN GOD'S BLESSINGS TO US FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS.

THE CLAIMED COMMITTEE IS WORKING ON TWO IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR LUTHERAN LIFE AND TRADITION. MARK ERSON IS THE CHAIR OF THE CLAIMED COMMITTEE.

THE CLAIMED COMMITTEE IS TAKING OUR CHURCH WIDE THEME – GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS – AND LOOKING AT ALL THE WAYS OUR CONGREGATIONS CONNECT TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

CLAIMED COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILL BE AT A TABLE IN THE AREA OUTSIDE THIS BALLROOM DURING THIS ASSEMBLY. PLEASE STOP BY AND TALK WITH THEM ABOUT ALL THE WAYS YOUR CONGREGATION AND MINISTRIES CONNECT TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

WE HAVE ALSO BEGUN LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 500<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION (2017). THE BISHOP HAS APPOINTED A WORKING GROUP TO BRAINSTORM AND LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE SYNODICAL EVENTS TO MARK THIS VERY SIGNIFICANT YEAR. THE NAMES OF THIS GROUP ARE ON THE SCREEN.

AS THE CLAIMED COMMITTEE APTLY PUT IT IN THEIR REPORT TO THE ASSEMBLY: "2017 OFFERS US A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE THE LUTHERAN TRADITION WITH ALL ITS JOY AND TENSION, RENEW OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR EXPRESSION OF THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST – CRUCIFIED AND RISEN, AND TO CONNECT WITH A WORLD THAT IS HUNGRY FOR THE GIFT OF A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST THAT IS OURS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH."

WE ASKED OURSELVES WHAT WE WANTED TO FOCUS ON. DID WE WANT THE FOCUS TO BE LUTHER? WELL WE SAID NO TO THAT. JUST TO THE REFORMATION? NO TO THAT AS WELL. WELL THEN WHAT IS IT EXACTLY ABOUT LUTHERANISM THAT WE ARE COMMEMORATING? WHAT IS IT THAT IS WORTH REJOICING ABOUT? WHAT IS OUR LUTHERAN IDENTITY? AND THERE IT WAS.

CHRIST ALONE, GRACE ALONE, FAITH ALONE, SCRIPTURE ALONE – THE FOUNDATIONAL LUTHERAN PRINCIPLES THAT EMERGED FROM THE REFORMATION 500 YEARS AGO, AND THAT CONTINUE AS CENTERPIECES OF OUR IDENTITY AS LUTHERANS TODAY. IN COMMEMORATING THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION IN 2017, WE WILL EXPLORE WHAT THESE BASIC PRINCIPLES MEAN FOR MISSION IN OUR COMPLEX 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WORLD, AND HOW WE CONTINUE FAITHFULLY TO SPEAK TODAY WITH A LUTHERAN VOICE. AND I WAS THINKING OF THAT GLOBAL LUTHERAN IDENTITY WHEN MY HUSBAND STAN AND I HAD THE PRIVILEGE LAST OCTOBER OF JOINING THE BISHOP AND HIS WIFE LOIS AND A SMALL GROUP FROM

THE SYNOD ON A TRIP TO TANZANIA TO CELEBRATE THE  
INSTALLATION OF BISHOP KESHOMSHAHARA WHO IS HERE WITH US.  
[WELCOME BISHOP KESHOMSHAHARA.]

WHAT A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE IT WAS TO WORSHIP THERE. AND  
WOW! DO THOSE TANZANIAN LUTHERANS KNOW HOW TO WORSHIP!  
THE SINGING! 4,000 PEOPLE AT THE CATHEDRAL IN BUKOBA  
SINGING. IT WAS ALL IN SWAHILI BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER.

AND THE SAME WAS TRUE IN THE CHURCHES WE VISITED IN SMALL  
VILLAGES. WE DIDN'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE BUT WERE BOUND  
TOGETHER BY OUR LUTHERAN IDENTITY, CHRIST ALONE, GRACE  
ALONE, FAITH ALONE, SCRIPTURE ALONE.

A CALENDAR OF EVENTS IS ALREADY PLANNED BEGINNING OCTOBER  
31, 2016 WITH A SYNODICAL 'KICK OFF' FOR OUR ANNIVERSARY  
OBSERVANCES IN CONJUNCTION WITH POPE FRANCIS' VISIT TO  
LUND, SWEDEN.

LOOK FOR ECUMENICAL EVENTS IN EACH OF OUR QUADRANTS  
WHERE WE HOPE TO VIEW VIDEO OF POPE FRANCIS VISIT TO LUND  
AND THEN TO SHARE A COMMON PRAYER SERVICE IN EACH  
LOCATION. THE E LETTER WILL HAVE A SPECIAL CALENDAR OF  
EVENTS FOR THE WHOLE YEAR.

THE COMING YEAR WILL BE A VERY BUSY ONE FOR THE SYNOD. OUR  
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REMAINS IN PLACE. BUT MANY  
OF OUR CONGREGATIONS ARE IN DISTRESS. ABOVE ALL, WE HAVE TO  
BE GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR RESOURCES, AND YOU WILL HEAR  
ABOUT THAT FROM OUR TREASURER, FRANK SUTTELL, THE CHAIR  
OF THE FMC, ED WAGNER, AND KATHY SCHMIDT, OUR VERY ABLE  
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION.  
KATHY IS MAKING A VERY IMPORTANT PRESENTATION TOMORROW  
MORNING ON HOW OUR SYNOD CAN BE THE BEST STEWARDS OF OUR  
FINANCIAL RESOURCES. YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS THAT.

OFTEN, PAINFUL DECISIONS MUST BE MADE, INCLUDING CLOSING  
SOME CHURCHES AND YES, EVEN SELLING SOME PROPERTIES. AND  
WE NEED FAITHFUL LEADERS WHO LISTEN AND DISCERN THE  
SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE AS WE MAKE DECISIONS. THE SYNOD COUNCIL IS  
SUCH A BODY AND I AM HONORED TO SERVE WITH THEM.

I WOULD LIKE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL TO  
PLEASE STAND SO WE CAN THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THE  
CHURCH. [APPLAUSE]

AND OF COURSE, THE SYNOD STAFF IS WHAT MAKES IT ALL  
POSSIBLE. THEIR DEDICATION, COMMITMENT AND FAITHFULNESS  
ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL.

AND OF COURSE, MY DEAR FRIEND, BISHOP RIMBO, WHO EVEN  
THOUGH HE CALLS ME OY VEY MARIA! IS OUR FAITHFUL CAPTAIN  
BUT LET ME GET BACK TO THE THEME OF THIS ASSEMBLY.  
CONFRONTING RACISM THROUGH CONNECTING, COMMITTING,  
COURAGE.

WE WILL HEAR MANY STORIES THROUGH OUR TIME TOGETHER. WE  
ALL HAVE STORIES TO TELL, SOME HAPPENED LONG AGO, SOME JUST  
YESTERDAY, AND SOME MAY BE TOO PAINFUL TO SHARE. BUT  
FINALLY THROUGH THESE STORIES, I PRAY THAT WE MAY REJOICE IN  
GOD'S BLESSINGS TO US.

I AM BY NATURE A VERY PRIVATE PERSON. I SHARE MY PRIVATE LIFE WITH FEW PEOPLE AND I TEND TO BE MORE INVOLVED INTELLECTUALLY THAN EMOTIONALLY. IT IS PROBABLY WHY LUTHERANISM SUITS ME WELL.

OH DEAR! I AM ALREADY SHARING TOO MUCH.

BUT AS I HAVE RECEIVED EMAIL AFTER EMAIL ABOUT THE THEME OF THIS ASSEMBLY, AFTER ATTENDING A MEETING OF THE ANTIRACISM TASK FORCE, I PRAYED AND PRAYED AND ONE NIGHT WHILE I COULDN'T SLEEP I FINALLY DECIDED THAT I SHOULD SHARE MY OWN STORY, OR AT LEAST ONE STORY OF RACISM IN MY OWN LIFE AND HOW IT HAS AFFECTED ME. I SHARE THIS STORY TODAY BECAUSE I HOPE IT MAY HELP US REJOICE IN GOD'S BLESSINGS TO ALL OF US.

MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW ME DO NOT KNOW IT, NOT EVEN MY CLOSEST FRIENDS. IN FACT I SHARED IT THE OTHER DAY WITH MY FRIEND OF FIFTY YEARS, AND HE SAID, SO THAT'S WHY YOU ARE THE WAY YOU ARE. I DIDN'T KNOW.

I WAS ALMOST THIRTEEN WHEN MY BROTHER AND I CAME TO NEW YORK FROM PUERTO RICO AND OUR FAMILY MOVED TO HELLS KITCHEN, AN IRISH NEIGHBOURHOOD. THIS WAS IN THE FIFTIES. THE SPANISH –SPEAKING PEOPLE IN NEW YORK WERE PUERTO RICANS AND MOST LIVED IN EAST HARLEM, WHICH WAS CALLED “EL BARRIO”.

BUT OTHERS LIVED IN PARTS OF THE UPPER WEST SIDE, LOWER EAST SIDE. PUERTO RICANS WERE OFTEN CALLED ‘SPEEKS’ BECAUSE WE SPOKE ENGLISH WITH A SPANISH ACCENT. EVEN THE POLICE OFTEN CALLED US THAT. MY BROTHER AND I LEARNED TO SURVIVE VERY QUICKLY.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL WAS A MAGNET FOR HELLS KITCHEN AND THE TENEMENTS IN WHAT IS NOW LINCOLN CENTER. THIS WAS JETS AND SHARKS TERRITORY. WEST SIDE STORY.

I FINISHED FIRST IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND WENT OFF TO HIGH SCHOOL IN CHELSEA, TO A SCHOOL THAT ATTRACTED GIFTED STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER THE CITY. THIS WAS A TIME WHEN WHITES HAD NOT YET LEFT FOR THE SUBURBS AND WERE STILL SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I WAS YOUR REGULAR NERD AND BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY. I WAS CHOSEN ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING TEENAGERS OF THE CITY AND WAS HONORED AT CITY HALL.

THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT. AS GRADUATION LOOMED, I WAS CALLED TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE. SHE WAS THERE WITH THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL AND THE CHAIRS OF SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS. ALSO THERE WAS A FELLOW STUDENT, A CHINESE AMERICAN. I WAS WONDERING WHAT I HAD DONE WRONG. THE PRINCIPAL CONGRATULATED ME BECAUSE I HAD ACHIEVED THE HIGHEST GRADE POINT AVERAGE IN THE GRADUATING CLASS. WONDERFUL! THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD HEARD THE GOOD NEWS!

MY CHINESE AMERICAN CLASSMATE HAD ACHIEVED THE SECOND HIGHEST GRADE AVERAGE. CONGRATULATIONS ALL AROUND. WE

WERE BOTH VERY HAPPY.

NORMALLY THE STUDENT WITH THE HIGHEST GRADE POINT AVERAGE IS THE VALEDICTORIAN AND THE SECOND HIGHEST STUDENT IS THE SALUTORIAN. GREAT AGAIN. NOT SO FAST THE PRINCIPAL PROCEEDS TO POINT OUT THAT OUR SCHOOL IS AN IMPORTANT INSTITUTION IN THE CITY AND THEY NEED TO PROTECT ITS REPUTATION. THOSE GATHERED IN THE ROOM, AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, HAVE CONCLUDED THAT IT IS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE SCHOOL TO HAVE TWO STUDENTS WITH STRONG ACCENTS MAKE THE SPEECHES AS VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTORIAN. IT WOULD SIMPLY NOT LOOK GOOD FOR THE SCHOOL.

HOWEVER, THEY HAVE COME TO WHAT THEY CONSIDER A FAIR SOLUTION FOR ALL INVOLVED. THEY WILL OFFER A SPEECH COMPETITION OPEN TO THE TOP TEN STUDENTS.

A PANEL OF TEACHERS, INCLUDING HERSELF, WILL DECIDE THE TWO WINNERS AND THOSE WINNERS WILL GIVE THE SPEECHES AT THE GRADUATION. SO THEY CHANGE THE RULES OF THE GAME! AND MY IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IS NO WAY, I AM NOT PLAYING AND I WALK OUT. I AM ANGRY. I AM SHOCKED!

TWO TEACHERS FOLLOW ME. THEY TELL ME THAT I CANNOT GIVE UP NOW AND THAT I HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT. BUT WHY FIGHT FOR WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY MINE? I AM BEING DENIED WHAT I HAVE EARNED JUST BECAUSE I AM PUERTO RICAN. JUST BECAUSE I SPEAK WITH AN ACCENT. DR. SCHNEIDER, MY HISTORY TEACHER, TELLS ME I HAVE TO FIGHT. WHY SHOULD I FIGHT FOR WHAT I ALREADY WON? WHY, I ASK?

BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO. YOU ARE GOING TO WRITE THE BEST SPEECH AND YOU ARE GOING TO FORCE THEM TO LET YOU SPEAK, SO START WRITING. I WILL HELP YOU. AND I WILL SIT NEXT TO YOU ON THE DAIS. AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED. I WON FIRST PLACE. THE CHINESE AMERICAN STUDENT WON SECOND PLACE. THE PRINCIPAL VOTED AGAINST US BOTH.

SHE THOUGHT OUR SPEECHES HAD MANY CLICHÉS. MY SPEECH WAS ON WHAT IT MEANT TO BE AN AMERICAN. I HAD JUST STUDIED THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION WITH DR. SCHNEIDER. I FOUND THAT SPEECH THE OTHER DAY AMONG OLD PAPERS. I DIDN'T THROW IT OUT.

WHAT I EXPERIENCED IN HIGH SCHOOL WAS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM THAT BECOMES PERSONAL. HERE SOPHISTICATED EDUCATORS WERE INSULTING ME MORE DEEPLY THAN PEOPLE IN THE STREET CALLING ME A 'SPEEK". THEY WERE DISGUIISING THEIR RACISM IN WAYS THAT WERE MORE OFFENSIVE BUT HARD FOR A YOUNG PERSON TO FIGURE OUT. THEY WERE TELLING ME I WAS NOT WORTHY BUT SUGAR-COATING IT, HIDING IT BEHIND THEIR AUTHORITY. CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL. MY ACCENT WAS MY BLACKNESS!

I HAVE SUCCEEDED BOTH ACADEMICALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY; I FINISHED FIRST IN COLLEGE AND WENT ON TO BE ACCEPTED TO GRADUATE SCHOOL BY EVERY IVY LEAGUE COLLEGE I APPLIED TO. I WAS THE FIRST PUERTO RICAN TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT AT PRINCETON AS A FORD FOUNDATION DOCTORAL FELLOW. ALONG THE WAY, I MARRIED A WONDERFUL JEWISH MAN WHO IS BACK THERE SOMEWHERE. BUT THAT IS NOT THE END OF MY STORY. WHILE I STILL REMEMBER THAT EXPERIENCE THE PRINCIPAL DID NOT HAVE THE LAST WORD. WHILE MY BROTHER AND I LIVED IN HELLS KITCHEN, WE USED TO SPEND WEEKENDS IN BUSHWICK, BROOKLYN, WHERE MY AUNT LIVED AND I STARTED ATTENDING A LUTHERAN CHURCH THERE. THE AREA WAS PRIMARILY GERMAN AND I WAS ONE OF TWO OR THREE LATINOS IN THE CHURCH. BUT I FELT WELCOMED. SEVERAL YEARS LATER WE MOVED TO THE AREA ALTHOUGH I CONTINUED TO ATTEND THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL IN MANHATTAN. AS THE NERD THAT I WAS, I APPROACHED BEING A LUTHERAN THE SAME WAY I APPROACHED EVERYTHING ELSE. I WANTED TO LEARN EVERYTHING I COULD ABOUT IT. I JOINED THE YOUTH GROUP. I ATTENDED BIBLE CLASS. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, I RAIDED THE PASTOR'S LIBRARY. I STUDIED THE BIBLE. I READ BONHOEFFER, TILLICH, C.S. LEWIS, KIERKEGAARD, BOOKS ON WORSHIP, AND BOOKS ON THEOLOGY. AND SO OVER THE YEARS, MY FAITH GREW AND SLOWLY IT HAPPENED. I LEARNED WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN, A LUTHERAN. I LEARNED THAT MY ACCENT IS NOT MY IDENTITY, NOR EVEN MY BEING PUERTO RICAN, BUT THAT MY IDENTITY IS AS A CHILD OF CHRIST SAVED BY HIS GRACE ALONE AND BY FAITH ALONE. AND I WILL TELL YOU A SECRET: BEING A LUTHERAN IS A GREAT JOY TO ME. OFTEN, MY HUSBAND TURNS TO ME AND SAYS, YOU REALLY GET INTO THIS, DON'T YOU. AND I ALWAYS RESPOND, YES, I DO! MUCHAS GRACIAS!

### **Portico**

Mr. Jeff Thiemann, President and CEO of Portico Benefits Services gave a report to the assembly.

### **Candidacy**

The Rev. Jeff Kolbo, Candidacy Coordinator of the synod, gave the report on candidacy to the assembly.

*Slide One: Candidacy Process: The Synod Candidacy Committee is responsible for determining the readiness of persons to enter the ELCA's candidacy process for rostered ministry, for endorsing candidates for a specific roster of this church, and in the approval process, for determining an individual's qualifications and readiness to serve as a pastor or other rostered leader in the ELCA.*

*Slide Two: Assembly Reports: For those interested, a full written report of the Committee's decisions and actions for the calendar year 2015 is found on page B-56 of the Assembly Report Booklet.*

*The purpose of this report is to present to the Assembly the names of those who were approved for ordination in the calendar year 2015 and, to give you some idea of who God is calling to rostered leadership in our church, to introduce to a select few of the 35 candidates for rostered ministry from our Synod who are involved in some aspect of the ELCA Candidacy process.*

*Slide Three: Approved for Ordination: Two of our candidates were approved for ordination in 2015. Both have been active in the life and ministry of our congregations and synod so may be already known to you.*

*Slide Four: Winston Dookram: This is . . . [Winston Dookram](#)*



Winston brings to the ordained ministry a long history of lay leadership at Ascension Lutheran Church in Deer Park, as well as with the greater Guyanese-American Lutheran community in the New York/New Jersey area. He is the owner and CEO of an insurance agency and a well-known and respected member of the Long Island business community. He brings to the ministry extensive managerial, planning and leadership experience and interpersonal skills honed through years of relationships with clients, parishioners and friends. His calling is rooted in a deep seated, life-long commitment to ministry and to the well-being and growth of the Lutheran church. Congratulations and God's blessings, Winston.

**Slide Five: Jonathan Pryer** Another candidate, Jonathan Pryer, was also approved for ordination in 2015 . . . Jonathan grew up in Sayville, New York, a community on the South Shore of Long Island. He earned his Master of Divinity Degree as a part time student while working full time as a librarian for the Suffolk County Library System. He is a devout, life-long Lutheran with considerable intellectual, pastoral, resourcing and interpersonal skills. He speaks fluent Russian and Spanish and has a conversant knowledge of French and Italian as well. He is a licensed pilot who he enjoys flying over Long Island and throughout the Northeast in his spare time. On January 17 of this year, he was ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry and installed as the Associate Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in East Northport. Congratulations and God's blessings, Jonathan.

**Slide Six : God's call to Ministry** And now, to give you some idea of who it is that God is calling to the rostered ministry of our church, we have selected six candidates to profile today. Some are present with us here at the assembly.

**Slide Seven: Leticia Alanis** This is . . . Leticia Alanis  
Leticia is Pastoral Associate for Women and Youth Ministries at Trinity Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, where she has been a member since 2012. A former Roman Catholic nun of the Salesian Order, she ministered for 18 years in her native country of Mexico as a Catholic youth educator and director of educational programs. When she left the order and moved to the United States, she became active in the Immigrant Rights Movement. She is the co-founder and former Executive Director of La Union, a civic and social justice organization that aims to promote the rights and well-being of immigrants and refugees in New York City and in other cities around the nation. Leticia, a person of deep faith and courage and a highly competent leader and organizer, is a candidate for the ordained ministry.

**Slide Eight: Kelsey Brown** This is . . . Kelsey Brown  
Kelsey is a first year student at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. She was approved for Entrance to Candidacy just a few days ago at the Committee's May 14 meeting. She is a graduate of Wagner College, where she majored in history. In her Application Essay Kelsey states that she "wants to be a pastor who changes lives." "Spreading the good news," she writes, "is something that I want to do for the rest of my life, but it is also something that has saved me time and time again. It has sheltered me from the bad and steered me towards the good."

**Slide Nine: John Heidgerd** This is . . . John Heidgerd  
John will receive his Master of Divinity Degree from The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia this month. He brings to the ordained ministry an impressive list of talents and abilities honed through years of employment as an accountant and financial executive and as a lay leader at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Mount Kisco. He is a Diakonia graduate, a former President of the Martin Luther Camp Association, and for years has been active on the synodical level as well. John, a candidate for the ordained ministry, completes his internship at Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church in Manhattan in a few weeks. His Approval Decision Interview is schedule for the June meeting of the Synod Candidacy Committee.

**Slide Ten: James Miller** This is . . . James Miller  
James, a graduate of The General Theological Seminary in NYC, will complete his internship at The Wartburg in Mount Vernon this summer and will interview with the Candidacy Committee for his Approval for Ordination Decision in June. Jim was an exemplary student at General where he was awarded the Robert Dentan Prize in Old Testament studies as well as the McVikar Award for excellence in Greek. He is a faith-filled, personable and compassionate person who is training for a possible vocation in chaplaincy. An accomplished musician, Jim was once principal trumpeter for the San Francisco Opera Company; he has generously shared his musical talent throughout the years with many churches in the New York area.

**Slide Eleven: Daniel Potaznick** This is . . . Daniel Potaznick  
Daniel is a second year student at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He was approved for Endorsement in the fall of 2015 and is to begin a year of internship this fall in Ohio. As a teenager, Daniel participated in Pinecrest Lutheran Leadership Camp, was President of the Synod's Lutheran Youth Organization and elected as Co-Chair of the ELCA's Council of Synod LYO Presidents. In college, he was active as a Peer Minister in Lutheran Campus Ministry. He will bring to the ministry a strong interest in youth ministry, faith formation and congregational renewal.

*Slide Twelve: Jeanetter Surita-Vazquetelles This is . . . Jeanette Surita-Vazquetelles*  
Jeanette is enrolled in the Accelerated-Co-operative Learning Master of Divinity Degree Program at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, a program which provides students with a shorter route to ordained ministry by combining full-time study and part-time parish experience; presently, she is a synodically authorized lay pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Baltimore, Maryland. Jeanette has a background in education, has worked for many years as a self-employed fashion consultant and designer and has held many positions of leadership in her congregation of membership. A graduate of the synod's Diakonia program, she was set apart as a Synodical Deacon in May of 2014.

*Slide Thirteen: Kevin Vandiver Finally, this is . . . Kevin Vandiver*  
Kevin is relatively new to the Metropolitan New York Synod. His application for candidacy was transferred to us from the North Carolina Synod, where he served as Director of Family Ministry at a large ELCA congregation in Charlotte. Although he grew up as a Pentecostal, and although at a young age he was licensed and ordained by his local church to preach and administer Holy Communion, he discovered while a student at Duke Divinity School a strong affinity for Lutheran thought, doctrine and worship. With the encouragement and support of his Pastor and the congregation of Christ Lutheran Church in Charlotte, he began to take courses intended to prepare him for rostered leadership in the ELCA. He moved to New York City in 2015, when he was called by The Riverside Church in Manhattan, where he serves as Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

*Slide Fourteen: Candidates in Process* As stated previously, more than thirty members of the Metropolitan New York Synod are presently involved in some stage of the ELCA candidacy process. We wish we had time today to introduce all of them to you. You would be impressed, I think, by the sincerity of their faith, the strength of their testimonies, and by the talents and life-experiences they bring to rostered leadership.

If you or someone you know is discerning God's calling to the ordained ministry or other positions of rostered leadership, information on how you can apply is available on the synod website.

*Slide Fifteen: Candidacy Committee* Finally, on behalf of the Synod, I extend a special thank you to the members of the Synod Candidacy Committee for the faithful ministry they provide to our candidates, the synod and our denomination. Without exception, all on the Committee consider themselves privileged to be involved in this important aspect of the church's work.

*Slide Sixteen: Prayer for Candidates for Ministry . . .* We give you thanks, O God, for all of life and for our common calling as your servants, for the work of your church and for the ministries of word, sacrament and service. We give you thanks for the women and men you call to be leaders in your church and for the teachers who form them for service. Through the witness and mission of our seminaries may the church join courageously in your work of compassion, mercy, justice and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## **Strategic Plan Grant Impact Moment**

The Rev. Sonja Maclary and Ms. Connie Graff thanked the synod for the strategic grant and spoke of its impact on the congregation.

The Rev. Paul Johnson made announcements and the session was adjourned at 4:30pm.

The assembly continued with the Holy Eucharist at which Bishop Abednego Keshomshahara preached and Bishop Rimbo presided.

Following dinner, forums on Reconciliation through Song & Story, Confronting Racism, and Guided Indaba Conversations were held.

The day concluded with Night Prayer at 9:30pm.

Friday, May 20, began with Morning Prayer at 8:00am, led by The Rev. Justin Johnson, with personal witness by The Rev. Samuel Siaban. Workshops on Guided Indaba, Tanzania, Portico Benefits, and Congregation Constitutions were held.

The second plenary session was called to order by Bishop Rimbo at 9:35am.

### **Strategic Plan Impact Moment**

The Rev. Justin Kosec, St. Andrew's, Smithtown, spoke to the assembly about the impact that the capital grant had on his congregation.

### **Wartburg**

Mr. David Gentner presented a video about the ministry of the Wartburg Home.

### **Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia**

The voting members viewed a video about the proposed merger of the Philadelphia and Gettysburg seminaries, after which a report was given by Vicar John Heidgard.

### **Property Stewardship – Moving into the Future**

Ms. Kathleen Schmidt, Asst. to the Bishop for Finance, presented a verbal and visual report on stewardship of property in the synod.

*SLIDE 1 [COVER] CLAIMED, GATHERED AND SENT: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS Thank you, Bishop Rimbo.*

*I'm here today to speak with you about our changing Church, and how we have been Claimed, Gathered and Sent, for such a time as this. To get us started, let's sing the first verse of "The Church of Christ in Every Age."*

*SLIDE 2 [Hymn lyrics]  
The church of Christ in every age,  
beset by change but Spirit-led,  
must claim and test its heritage  
and keep on rising from the dead.*

*SLIDE 3 [Topics]  
Today I want to cover three topics with you:  
1) The reality of our changing church  
2) The reality of decaying properties  
3) Why we need the 10-year financial plan*

*SLIDE 4 [Our Changing Church – title slide]  
First, our changing church.*

*SLIDE 5 [Our Changing Church]  
There's no doubt that our church is beset by change. The huge growth in church attendance, membership and giving that occurred from the 1940's through the 1960's is a thing of the past. Membership in ELCA predecessor church bodies grew a staggering 90%, from 3.1 million to almost 6 million from 1940 and 1965. New church buildings were popping up all over the place. But fast-forward to 2016 and what do we see?*

*SLIDE 6 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]  
Since 1990, membership in ELCA has declined 28%.*

*SLIDE 7 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]  
In our synod, baptized membership has declined by a third in the last 20 years, which is consistent with most other synods.*

*Beset by change? You bet we are!*

*SLIDE 8 [Strategic Plan Impact Moments]  
Bishop Rimbo and other synod leaders recognized that, given these grim statistics, we needed to move from being reactive to being proactive, and so, with the help of Tom Massey and Daxko, we developed a strategic plan*

which the Synod Assembly adopted in 2012. This plan is one gigantic "YES!!!" to the world in these times of uncertainty and fear - YES!!!, we will continue to claim our heritage, and YES!!!, we will keep on rising from the dead.

How do the various initiatives of our strategic plan enable us do this? You just heard a "Strategic Plan Impact" moment, and throughout the rest of this Assembly you will have the opportunity to hear many more. I hope that you will watch and listen carefully to these impact moments, which when put together, create a beautiful collage of our synod's strategic plan at work.

#### SLIDE 9 [Grants]

These impact moments will focus on grants that were given out by our synod during 2015. Our strategic plan enabled us to provide congregational capital improvement, leadership development and sowers project grants; partnership and education grants, and grants to the wider church, together totaling more than \$1,340,000. As much as we don't like to talk about the sale of church properties, these grants would not be possible without that. A crucial building block of our strategic plan is that we have committed to putting 100% of the net proceeds from the sale of properties into a fund to be used to support mission in our synod, both now and in the future. These grants are a living example of God's abundance, a living example of how the church keeps on rising from the dead.

#### SLIDE 10 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]

It's clear that we are no longer in the "if you build it, they will come" era. Over the last 20 years:

- The number of our congregations has gone from 230 to 188
- Baptized membership has decreased by a third, from 90,000 down to about 60,000
- Average Weekly Attendance went from 24,000 down to 15,000

#### SLIDE 11 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]

The change in the number of congregations is comprised of two numbers. There have been 15 new starts since 1996. And there are 57 congregations that are no longer on our roster.

#### SLIDE 12 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]

We can break down these 57 congregations into the following categories:

|    |                                       |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| 6  | Merged with another congregation      |
| 11 | Withdrew/Removed from the ELCA roster |
| 27 | Disbanded by congregational vote      |
| 13 | Closed by Synod Council action        |

You may be surprised at these numbers, particularly that 27 congregations voted to close in the last 20 years and that 11 withdrew or were removed from our roster.

#### SLIDE 13 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]

Let's focus on the 13 that were closed by Synod Council action, because one of the things that I, along with other staff members and lay leaders in our synod often hear is, "The synod is always closing churches. Bishop Rimbo and his staff just want to sell properties." So let's address this head-on. First, let me make clear that it's not up to the Bishop or his staff to decide if a congregation should close. The road to closure is generally a very long one, sometimes spanning years, and often includes large cash infusions to try and help a congregation begin to grow again. And it certainly involves countless hours of synod staff time along the way. However, the ultimate decision maker is the Synod Council, and it only comes to them after careful consideration by the Executive Committee. Since the adoption of our strategic plan, the Gathered Strategy Committee and Steering Committee provide two additional levels of accountability. The Gathered Strategy Committee, which is comprised of your peers from around the synod, may recommend that a congregation be placed under synod administration after carefully reviewing the ability of that congregation to meet the viability norms, and concluding that, to quote our constitution, "the congregation has become so scattered or so diminished as to make it impractical for such a congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized or that it is necessary for this synod to protect the congregation's property from waste and deterioration."

#### SLIDE 14 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]

I've divided the 13 congregations that were closed by Synod Council action into 3 categories

1. 5 were closed prior to 2009
  - Since these were prior to Bishop Rimbo's administration, I don't know the circumstances surrounding these closures.
2. 3 were placed under S.A. prior to 2009
  - Holy Trinity, Hollis (S.A. 2003 – Closed 2009)
  - St. John's, Bronx (S.A. 2005 – Closed 2009)
  - St. Luke's, Brooklyn (S.A. 2006 – Closed 2014)

- The synod expended a great amount of time and money in an attempt to help both Holy Trinity and St. Luke's turn around, but sadly, these efforts were not successful and ultimately both of these churches had to close.
3. 5 congregations were placed under Synod Administration AND closed between 2009 and 2015.

**SLIDE 15 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]**

Let's drill down a bit into the 5 congregations that were placed under synod administration and closed by the Synod Council since 2009.

- Salem, Brooklyn (2009) – voted to close but then decided to stay open for a time to work with the SW Brooklyn Founding Council. The SC eventually imposed synod administration.
- St. Luke's, Bronx (2011) – there was one member left and she personally entered into contract to sell the church property; SC put under SA; she appealed to Assembly; Assembly upheld SC decision. We had to sell this property far below market value because the NY Supreme Court ordered us to honor the sales price from the original illegal contract.
- Zion, Brooklyn (2014) – could not afford to pay their pastor the agreed-upon salary as there was only a handful of active members, and the amount of back pay owed their pastor was significant. The Synod Council imposed synod administration as we could not allow the debt to the pastor to continue accumulating.
- Messiah, Flushing (2014) – synod staff spent many months meeting with the this greatly diminished congregation to assist them in the journey towards closure, as they could no longer maintain their property or call a pastor. The Wartburg presented a proposal for affordable senior housing on the site, and this was received favorably by most members. However, the actual vote to disband failed, and so the S.C. ended up imposing S.A. We have allowed the congregation to continue worshipping in the space while we wait for Wartburg to obtain the necessary funding for the housing project.
- Redeemer, Flushing (2015) – This congregation was experiencing inner turmoil among members and had dangerous building issues. The basement was covered in toxic mold and Con Edison was called in because of a gas leak and the building was shut down.

**SLIDE 16 [Our Changing Church (cont.)]**

In the interest of full disclosure, you should know that 6 additional congregations were put under Synod Administration in 2015. 3 of them were released from synod administration to give them an opportunity to pursue a merger with neighboring congregations.

The other three have brought legal actions against the synod to prevent the synod from taking over their properties. These are St. Peter's, 140<sup>th</sup> St, in the Bronx, (which you'll hear more about later in my presentation), Kingsbridge in the Bronx, and St. Paul's, Coney Island. So, at this point, these are in the hands of our attorneys.

**SLIDE 17 [Our Decaying Properties – title slide]**

Let's move on to the second topic, "Our decaying properties."

**SLIDE 18 [Our Decaying Properties]**

As church membership and giving declined over the last 50 years, so has the ability of congregations to keep up with maintaining their properties. This has been particularly true of congregations located within New York City, where immigrants from Scandinavia and Germany first settled in the 1800's. Church buildings sprang up all over the city, and their pews were filled every Sunday. But after many generations, people began moving to the newly built suburbs, and new immigrant communities took their place in the city neighborhoods. These new immigrants brought with them their own religious traditions and attending a Lutheran church and eating lutefisk did not fit those traditions.

**SLIDE 19 [Lutefisk cartoon]**

If only Lars had opened McOlson's 50 years earlier – I'm sure the count would be up to at least 2.

**SLIDE 20 [Old Church Cartoon]**

When a congregation has become so diminished in numbers, when there are maybe 10 to 30 or so people worshipping in a church that seats 400, and the building can no longer be properly maintained, it might be time for that congregation to consider whether its life cycle, at least in that space, has completed. As this cartoon says, "It may be sacred space, but is it cost effective?" A prime example of this was the former St. Luke's, Brooklyn property, where the total estimated restoration cost was approximately \$10 million.

**SLIDE 21 [Our Decaying Properties (cont.)]**

When properties decay to this point, it's rarely cost-effective to repair/restore these large buildings. Best solution may be

- To sell the property outright

- To enter into a triple net lease with a developer
- Or something in between

And this is exactly what we're doing at the site of the former Zion Lutheran Church in Brooklyn.

*SLIDE 22 [Rendering of new facility]*

When Zion closed in January 2014, the Gathered Strategy Committee recommended, and the Synod Council approved, redeveloping this site for an alternative purpose, as opposed to just selling the property at market rates. I am pleased to report that after an extensive process of interviewing developers, the synod entered into a contract with Fifth Avenue Committee, a highly respected non-profit developer, to sell the property for the purposes of building a multi-use facility that will include up to 49 units of affordable senior housing, 18 units of housing for low income families, plus 16,000 sq. ft. of community space that the synod will continue to own. The Gathered Strategy Committee is in the process of analyzing a couple of community-use alternatives for that space. If the developer obtains the necessary funding required this year, we anticipate closing on the sale of the property by December, with construction of the new facility beginning in 2017.

*SLIDE 23 [Our Decaying Properties (cont.)]*

One of the saddest and most emotional aspects of my job is cleaning out church properties after a congregation closes. I'm never quite prepared to see not only the massive amounts of clutter, but more disturbingly, the serious decay of the buildings themselves. I think after seeing the photos I'm about to show you, you might better understand why some of our churches have had to close.

The first group of slides shows a few interior shots taken in the parsonage of a congregation that closed a few years ago. Not only could the congregation not afford to pay their pastor the agreed-upon salary, or make needed repairs, they couldn't even afford to heat the parsonage. I'll never forget the day when, in the dead of winter, this pastor walked into the synod office and asked for money to buy some oil for the parsonage. The bishop, of course, immediately gave him money from his discretionary fund. Our staff then worked with this congregation to help them realize they couldn't go on like this, and after a few months, they voted to close.

*SLIDE 24 [Parsonage photo #1]*

Here's the kitchen.

*SLIDE 25 [Parsonage photo #2]*

This is the stairway leading up to the second floor. Leaks that were ignored for a long time from the bathroom above caused the wall to disintegrate and black mold to grow.

*SLIDE 26 [Parsonage photo #3]*

This is the ceiling in a closet, also covered in black mold due to water leaks from above. I think all of you would agree that our pastors should not have to live under these conditions.

*SLIDE 27 – [Our Decaying Properties (cont.)]*

Virtually every church I have had to clean out in the last 5 years has a room, usually in the basement, which looks like this.

*SLIDE 28 [Photo of church basement]*

To me, this is a sign of a congregation that has given up, that's too tired to carry on. Cleaning out this stuff is akin to performing an archeological dig. Often what you find at the bottom of these piles is indicative of when the church started to decline.

*SLIDE 29 [Our Decaying Properties (cont.)]*

The next group of photos were taken by an engineer we hired to perform an inspection of St. Peter's, 140<sup>th</sup> St, Bronx, which has been under synod administration for a number of years, and which the Synod Council officially closed a year ago. The former members, led by a Baptist pastor who has been holding services there for the last year or so, have refused to vacate the premises, and we are currently in court over this. I received a phone call last Christmas Eve that some large stones had fallen from the top of the church. The Fire Department and city inspectors were called and violations issued on the property. I arranged to have the required sidewalk shed and scaffolding put up to protect passersby. I then engaged the engineer to inspect the property and this is what he found.

*SLIDE 30 [Church photo]*

Here's some of the masonry that's breaking up, with its support bars crumbling

*SLIDE 31 [Church photo]*

Loose bricks ready to break off from the building. This is a problem throughout the structure.

*SLIDE 32 [Church photo]*

Gutters breaking away from the roof, causing leaks which have damaged the interior walls.

*SLIDE 33 [Church photo]*

Roof is in major need of repair.

*SLIDE 34 [Church photo]*

*This uncovered hatchway leads into the church – remember this picture – I'll show you what it leads to in a minute.*

*SLIDE 35 [Church photo]*

*This is the only emergency exit from the church; you can see that the stair assembly is no longer securely anchored.*

*SLIDE 36 [Church photo]*

*It leads to this alleyway filled with trash.*

*SLIDE 37 [Church photo]*

*As you can see, these stairs have deteriorated beyond use. There's a door, which you can't see in this picture, which leads to the sidewalk in the front of the building, except that it has been blocked-up. So this emergency exit is unusable.*

*SLIDE 38 [Church photo]*

*The sanctuary ceiling is in great disrepair due to the leaking roof. Many of the panels on the ceiling have fallen due to this water damage.*

*SLIDE 39 [Church photo]*

*Here's the church kitchen. The stove is illegal because it is not properly vented.*

*SLIDE 40 [Church photo]*

*The basement had steel i-beams installed many years ago to shore up the floor of the church. These beams are deteriorating, again due to water damage from above.*

*SLIDE 41 [Church photo]*

*Many areas of the building are filled with debris.*

*SLIDE 42 [Church photo]*

*Here's another example of decay and debris.*

*SLIDE 43 [Church photo]*

*Remember the hole in the roof I showed you? It is over the church balcony, and as you can see, pigeons have taken up residence inside. This portion of the balcony is filled with pigeon carcasses, feathers and pigeon excrement. And in the main sanctuary, there is pigeon excrement on the ceiling trusses.*

*Everything has a life cycle, even congregations and church buildings. However, there are some in our synod who insist that no congregation should ever close, that no church property should ever be sold. I don't know how people can believe that, given pictures like these and knowing that it would take literally millions of dollars to restore these properties, dollars that, at least in my opinion, could more wisely be spent on strengthening our viable congregations, helping smaller congregations to merge, providing grants to our congregations in poverty and ethnic congregations, and continuing to provide our strategic initiative grants that can help rebuild and retool our synod for the future.*

*SLIDE 44 [The Reality of Too Many Properties]*

*Let's move on to how our strategic plan is helping congregations in neighborhoods where there are too many churches. The ELCA was formed out of three predecessor Lutheran church bodies, so it was common to have two or three congregations in the same neighborhood. An example of this is our Western Nassau conference, which has 11 congregations, 6 of which are within a 4-mile radius of one another. This conference has been one of our strategic plan's pilot projects. Pr. Rich Hill was engaged by the synod to introduce these 6 congregations to the concept of shared ministry, to see if this might be a way for them to revitalize their congregations. Phase I of the pilot project has been completed, and it is now up to those 6 congregations to decide if they want to move on to Phase II and work together in a shared ministry initiative.*

*Another solution when there are too many churches in the same neighborhood is for congregations to merge, or close altogether and start a brand new ministry.*

*SLIDE 45 [The 3 Churches Cartoon]*

*And that's exactly what is happening in SW Queens, where what I consider to be one of the most exciting projects in our strategic plan is taking place. This is a project that I am hoping can serve as a template for some of our struggling congregations that are in close proximity with one another. At last year's Assembly, Bishop Rimbo announced that Christ (Ozone Park), St. Philip's (Brooklyn) and St. Luke's (Woodhaven) had all voted to close in the winter of 2015, with the intention of coming together and forming a new congregation. These faithful, courageous people had recognized that their congregations had diminished in size to the point that they could not continue much longer, and so, hand-in-hand, led by the Holy Spirit, they set aside their fears and took a great leap of faith, knowing that their three congregations had to die in order for a new and stronger church to rise up.*

*SLIDE 46 [All Saints/Todos Los Santos]*

*Last May, Bishop Rimbo presided at the opening service of All Saints/Todos Los Santos, which is now officially recognized by the ELCA as a synodically-authorized worshipping community. The former church properties are being sold, and the proceeds will all be put towards the development of the new church building. Pr. Wells, our DEM, is in the process of securing a Mission Developer for this ministry and our hope is to have someone in place this summer. We have engaged the services of an Owner's Representative firm to guide us through the process*

of selecting a new worship site, hiring an architect, and overseeing the entire construction process. The goal is for All Saints/Todos Los Santos to have a state of the art facility in a prime location that will enable them to serve God and their community for decades to come.

*SLIDE 47 [10-Year Financial Plan – title slide]  
Let's talk briefly about the 10-year financial plan.*

*SLIDE 48 [10-Year Financial Plan]  
Yesterday you heard Ed Wagner, give an update on our 10-year financial plan. I'd like to reinforce what he said because, I've found that there are misunderstandings about the plan - some don't see a need for it, and believe that we should only be concerned with the present, and spend all of the money from the sale of properties right now.*

*So, let me bring this to a more personal level for you. What if I were to ask you why you are bothering to save for retirement? Wouldn't it be much better to spend your retirement money now, to take care of current needs? I'm sure there are things that you'd like to have, upgrades you'd like to do to your home, charities/church that need your support, etc. Why are you worrying about your future? You're probably sitting there thinking, "That's crazy talk, woman! I have to save for retirement!"*

*Well so it is with our synod's 10-year financial plan. The healthy tension between funding current strategic planning initiatives and enabling our synod to become financially sustainable by 2024 is a both/and proposition. We need to fund initiatives now AND we need to save money for the future. Our strategic planning committees, executive committee and synod council take seriously their responsibility to ensure that we will be able to continue providing word and sacrament ministry in the Lutheran tradition on the territory of our synod for generations to come – that is, after all, the mandate of our strategic plan - and at the same time, to proactively respond to specific congregational and societal needs in the present. This is why we have budgeted now for the major funding initiatives you'll hear about throughout this Assembly, and why we are investing significant funds in some of our pilot projects. And this is also why we are investing for the long-term, to ensure that our synod is sustainable for future generations.*

*SLIDE 49 [Hymn lyrics]  
I realize that I've thrown a lot of statistics and photos at you this morning, and some of it was not very pleasant to hear or see. But what I hope you will take away from this is that while there's no doubt that we are living in challenging times, and that we must confront the reality of declining membership and decaying church properties, we have been Claimed, Gathered and Sent by God, and for better or worse, we have been Claimed, Gathered and Sent by God . . . for such a time as this! I hope that you will join me in saying YES!!!, we will continue to claim our heritage, and YES!!!, we will keep on rising from the dead.*

*And let the people say . . . AMEN!*

## **Strategic Plan Impact Moment**

Dcn. Meg Fielding, Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre, reported on how a Leadership Development grant was used to pay for a retreat for deacons and diakonia students led by Dr. Marbury..

## **Report of the Committee on Registration**

Ms. Hazel Goldstein gave updated registration figures.

|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Clergy                      | 153               |
| ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders   | 11                |
| Lay Voting Members          | 228               |
| <b>Total Voting members</b> | <b><u>392</u></b> |
| Visitors                    | <u>93</u>         |
| <b>Total Attendance</b>     | <b>485</b>        |

The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor led the assembly in prayers.

## **First Common Ballot**



The Rev. Kevin O'Hara announced that ballot 22 for Synod Council Youth at Large would remain open until 12 noon for further nominations.

Ballot 1: Treasurer

Mr. Frank Suttell – 302 **elected**

Other votes – 8

Ballot 2: Consultation Committee, Lay Female

Ms. Nancy Casalino-Malone – 319 **elected**

Other votes – 3

Ballot 3: Consultation Committee, Lay Female

Ms. Carol Trower – 310 **elected**

Other votes – 9

Ballot 4: Consultation Committee, Lay Male

Mr. Eugene Hiigel – 324 **elected**

Other votes – 6

Ballot 5: Consultation Committee, Lay Male

Mr. Mark Nocero – 327 **elected**

Other votes – 3

Ballot 6: Discipline Committee, Female Clergy

The Rev. Joanne Bond – 95

The Rev. Jeanine Owens – 95

The Rev. Marva Jenkins – 90

The Rev. Jeanne Warfield – 68

**Bond and Owens will be on Second Ballot**

Ballot 7: Discipline Committee, Male Clergy

The Rev. Timothy Kennedy – 61

The Rev. Justin Kosec – 141

The Rev. Peter Rustico – 145

**Rustico and Kosec will be on Second Ballot**

Ballot 8: Discipline Committee, Lay Female

Ms. Jessica Raba – 336 **elected**

Other votes – 6

Ballot 9: Discipline Committee, Lay Male

Mr. William Bushman – 329 **elected**

Other votes – 6

Ballot 10: Synod Council, Clergy, Manhattan

The Rev. Fabian Arias – 148

The Rev. Christopher Mietlowski – 211 **elected**

Ballot 11: Synod Council, Clergy Staten Island

The Rev. Gary Squire – 144

The Rev. Brenda Irving – 212 **elected**

Ballot 12: Synod Council, Clergy, Southwest Queens

The Rev. Jeanine Owens – 328 **elected**

Other votes – 12

Ballot 13: Synod Council, Lay Female, Northwest Queens

Ms. Muriel Davis – 129

Ms. Hazel Goldstein – 145

Ms. Karen Woolley – 78

**Davis and Goldstein will be on Second Ballot**

Ballot 14: Synod Council, Lay Female, South Shore Brooklyn

Ms. Rosina Major – 137

Ms. Denise Rutherford-Gill – 212 **elected**

Ballot 15: Synod Council, Lay Female, Hudson

Ms. Angela Rios – 95

Ms. Abby Triebel – 257 **elected**

Ballot 16: Synod Council, Lay Male, Tappan Zee

Synod Deacon John Prosen – 195 **elected**

Synod Deacon Diogenes Vazquetelles-Trujillo – 161

Ballot 17: Synod Council, Lay Male, Western Nassau

Mr. Leonel Avila – 218 **elected**

Mr. Phil Fox Rose – 140

Ballot 18: Synod Council, Lay Male, Peconic

Mr. Stuart Meade – 132

Mr. Christopher Vergara – 218 **elected**

Ballot 19: Synod Council, At Large, Clergy

The Rev. Jonathan Recabarren – 157

The Rev. Nicole Schwalbe – 203 **elected**

Ballot 20: Synod Council, At Large, Multicultural Female

Ms. Cynthia Corley – 221 **elected**

Ms. Anita Williams – 129

Ballot 21: Synod Council, At Large, Young Adult

Ms. Stephanin Tillet – 120

Ms. Emma Turner – 233 **elected**

**ACTION**

**SA 2016:05.01 First Ballot**

**Treasurer**

**Mr. Frank Suttell**

**Consultation Committee**

**Ms. Nancy Casalino-Malone**

**Ms. Carol Trower**

**Mr. Eugene Hiigel**

**Mr. Mark Nocero**

**Discipline Committee**

**Ms. Jessica Raba**

**Mr. William Bushman**

**Synod Council**

**The Rev. Christopher Mielowski**

**The Rev. Brenda Irving**

**The Rev. Jeanine Owens**

**Ms. Denise Rutherford-Gill**

**Ms. Abby Triebel**

**Synod Deacon John Prosen**

**Mr. Leonel Avila**

**Mr. Christopher Vergara**

**The Rev. Nicole Schwalbe**

**Ms. Cynthia Corley**

**Ms. Emma Turner**

**Reference and Counsel 1**

The Rev. Joel Brandt began the session by reminding voting members of the difference between a resolution and a memorial.

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the first resolution.

**To Reaffirm the Companion Covenant Between the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Whereas Psalm 133:1 reminds us of “how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity,” and

Whereas God calls us “in humility [to] regard others as better than [our]selves” and to “look to the interest of others” as Christ Jesus “emptied himself and took the form of a servant” (Philippians 2), and

Whereas the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have prayed for, learned from and shared ministry in the name of Christ, and

Whereas for the past eighteen years our Synod and the Diocese have regarded each other and served each other in the name of Christ as companions, and

Whereas the Diocese and the Synod signed a formal “Companion Covenant” on Palm Sunday, April 5, 1998, that has led the Diocese and Synod into a living, breathing and loving experience of mutual care and prayerful support, therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the Diocese and Synod now reaffirm the Companion Covenant of April 5, 1998, hereby recommitting Diocese and Synod to:

- Pray for, witness to and encourage one another as both bodies seek to serve Christ in our localities.
- Learn more about one another, as friends, partners and fellow members of the one body of Christ.
- Share our struggles, challenges, joys and new possibilities for the mutual upbuilding of the People of God.
- Provide opportunities for mutual exchange of lay people, clergy and judicatory staff in order for us to sincerely know one another as friends and Christians.
- Expand our understanding that the body of Christ has no geographical boundaries, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or socio-economic status and seeks mutuality among partners.

Submitted by Tanzania Companionship Committee

The Rev. Dan Ward, chair

The Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite

Deacon Rich Ferolito

The Rev. Carol Fryer

Ms. Gayle Kliever

Ms. Judy Lorkowski

The Rev. John Krahn

Ms. Lois Rimbo

Ms. Stephanie Schmiede

Ms. Margaret Wenger

The Rev. Margay Whitlock

The Rev. Percy Butiku, staff

After the resolution was seconded, The Rev. Dan Ward spoke in support of it. The resolution was adopted.

## **ACTION**

**SA2016:05:02**

**Resolved, that the Diocese and Synod now reaffirm the Companion Covenant of April 5, 1998, hereby recommitting Diocese and Synod to:**

- **Pray for, witness to and encourage one another as both bodies seek to serve Christ in our localities.**
- **Learn more about one another, as friends, partners and fellow members of the one body of Christ.**
- **Share our struggles, challenges, joys and new possibilities for the mutual upbuilding of the People of God.**
- **Provide opportunities for mutual exchange of lay people, clergy and judicatory staff in order for us to sincerely know one another as friends and Christians.**
- **Expand our understanding that the body of Christ has no geographical boundaries, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or socio-economic status and seeks mutuality among partners.**

## **ADOPTED**

Synod Council Secretary Schoepflin then presented the next action, which came to the Assembly from the Synod Council.

### **Recognizing St. Lydia's, Brooklyn**

Resolved, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly that St. Lydia's be joyfully recognized as a congregation of the ELCA and accepted onto the roster of congregations of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

Needing no second because this resolution came from the Synod Council, the voting members joyfully adopted the resolution, which was followed by applause.

## **ACTION**

**SA2016:05/03**

**Resolved, that St. Lydia's be joyfully recognized as a congregation of the ELCA and accepted onto the roster of congregations of the Metropolitan New York Synod.**

## **ADOPTED**

The Rev. Brandt then presented the next resolution for consideration.

### **On Mission Partnerships**

Whereas the Metropolitan New York Synod has a history of encouraging and nurturing mission partnerships between its congregations, which for a time fruitfully brought together congregations of differing racial, cultural, and geographic identities and contexts;

And whereas the Metropolitan New York Synod continues to seek to overcome the racism and narrow parochialism that limits our congregations' mission in the world; let it be

**Resolved** that the 2016 Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod encourages each of its congregations to seek out as a mission partner another congregation which reflects a different racial, cultural, and/or geographic identity and context.

- Mission partners will form covenants to regularly share worship, service and fellowship in an effort to grow in relationship with and understanding of one another.
- Synod staff will facilitate matchmaking between congregations of the synod seeking mission partners.
- Congregations will also be free to enter into a relationship of mission partnership with another Christian congregation in their own community.
- All congregations will report the formation of such synodical or community based partnerships to the Metropolitan New York Synod before its next assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Joanne Bond, Cross of Christ, Babylon, and Dean, Western Suffolk Conference

The Rev. Bob Rainis

The Rev. Bill Munz

The Rev. Flora Harford

The Rev. Mark Kreemer

The Rev. John Krahn

The Rev. Tom Taylor

The Rev. Frank Nelson

The Rev. Robert Schoepflin

The Rev. William R. Kroeze

The Rev. Harry Schenkel

The Rev. Jonathan Pryer

After the motion was seconded, The Rev. Frank Nelson spoke in favor of the resolution. The resolution was then adopted.

#### **ACTION**

**SA2016:05/04**

**Resolved that the 2016 Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod encourages each of its congregations to seek out as a mission partner another congregation which reflects a different racial, cultural, and/or geographic identity and context.**

- **Mission partners will form covenants to regularly share worship, service and fellowship in an effort to grow in relationship with and understanding of one another.**
- **Synod staff will facilitate matchmaking between congregations of the synod seeking mission partners.**
- **Congregations will also be free to enter into a relationship of mission partnership with another Christian congregation in their own community.**
- **All congregations will report the formation of such synodical or community based partnerships to the Metropolitan New York Synod before its next assembly.**

#### **ADOPTED**

The Rev. Brandt then presented the next resolution for consideration.

#### **Regarding Full Participation in the Life of the Synod**

Whereas, at the 2015 Synod Assembly, we resolved to continue our commitment to address racism in our church and society;

And whereas, on June 23, 2015, the Synod Council approved a resolution which in part reads,

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that an individual may not serve on the Synod Council Executive Committee while also serving or holding membership in a congregation that is a recipient of a Partnership Grant;”

And whereas, many recipients of Partnership Grants attend congregations on the margins of the church and society;

And whereas, voices on the margins are essential to a vibrant, dynamic, mission-centered church;

And whereas, excluding those voices from the Synod Council Executive Committee creates a second-class status within the Synod; therefore be it

**Resolved** that the section of the Synod Council Action 15:06/12 of June 23, 2015, which reads:

“an individual may not serve on the Synod Council Executive Committee while also serving or holding membership in a congregation that is a recipient of a Partnership Grant” be rescinded.

The Rev. Paul Block, Transfiguration, Bronx, NY

The Anti-Racism Task Force, MNYS

The Rev. David Anglada, Epiphany, Hempstead

The Rev. Edward Barnett, St. Peter's, Baldwin and Dean, Southwest Nassau Conference

The Rev. Linda Bell, Grace, Malverne

The Rev. Joanne Bond, Cross of Christ, Babylon

Ms. Hope Card, New Hope for All Saints, Bronx, NY

The Rev. Mary Chang, Incarnation, Cedarhurst

The Rev. Ben Colahan, Sion, Manhattan

The Rev. John Flack, Our Saviour's Atonement, Manhattan and Dean, Manhattan Conference

The Rev. David Grainson, Holy Trinity, Rockville Center

Mr. Anthony Jordan, New Hope for All Saints, Bronx, NY

The Rev. Stephanie Kershner, Grace, Scarsdale

The Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo, Trinity, Rocky Point

The Rev. Justin Lathrop, Ascension, Deer Park

The Rev. Danielle Miller, Oceanside, Oceanside

The Rev. Eric Mull, Ascension Table, Long Beach

The Rev. Heidi Neumark, Trinity, Manhattan

The Rev. Annamarie Noto, St. Peter's, Baldwin

The Rev. David Parsons, St. James-St. Matthew-Emmanuel, Brooklyn

The Rev. Rebecca Pollicino, Grace, Uniondale

The Rev. James Smith, Bethlehem, Baldwin  
The Rev. Jerome Taylor, Good Shepherd, Roosevelt  
The Rev. Emily Trubey-Weller, St. Stephen's, Hicksville  
The Rev. James Watrud, Christ, East Northport

After the motion was seconded, The Rev. Paul Block spoke in favor of the resolution, and The Rev. Lamont Wells spoke in opposition.  
The Rev. Amandus Derr then moved to refer this resolution back to the Synod Council.  
After this motion was seconded, it was voted down.  
After continued discussion on the original resolution, upon motion to call the question, the resolution was adopted.

## **ACTION**

**SA2016:05/05**

**Resolved that the section of the Synod Council Action 15:06/12 of June 23, 2015, which reads:**

**“an individual may not serve on the Synod Council Executive Committee while also serving or holding membership in a congregation that is a recipient of a Partnership Grant”  
be rescinded.**

**ADOPTED**

The Rev. Amy Kienzle then led the Assembly in Prayer, after which the Assembly adjourned for lunch.

***FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2016***

***PLENARY SESSION III***

Bishop Rimbo called the third plenary session to order at 1:30 pm.

The Rev. Teresita Valeriano spoke to the Assembly about the work of Proclaim, a ministry of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries that provides affirmation and support to rostered leaders and seminarians who publically identify as LGBTQ.

The Rev. Jennifer Richards spoke about the impact of a Strategic Plan Grant upon the congregations of Trinity and Our Savior's, Staten Island.

## **Bishop's Bible Study**

Bishop Rimbo led the Assembly in a study of Ephesians 2:11-22.

*Ephesians 2:11-22 – and especially verse 14 of that passage – is a foundational passage for our efforts at addressing Racism in our Synod. As Lutherans, we read the Bible contextually – among other ways – so it is important to note that immediately before this passage in Ephesians, St. Paul explores justification by grace through faith. Let me share a few verses from early in chapter 2: You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived...But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works,*



*so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.*

*This serves as a foundation for this passage.*

*This afternoon, we will read Ephesians 2:11-22 three times, first focusing on main points and significant words; then, exploring what the passage has to say for our anti-racism efforts; and then letting the passage lead us into prayer. So please settle yourself into a group of three or four folks near you, perhaps strangers and not voting members from your home congregation. But be sure you can still see the screen which will have the text and some questions to guide conversation.*

*This will be a brief time together in the Word, so be assured that there will be other times, notably during our upcoming quadrant gatherings, when you will be able to devote more time to this activity and also explore other passages that have impact on our anti-racism efforts.*

*So, let's begin with prayer.*

*O God of love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way with your Word. Give us your holy wisdom, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your new life; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.  
Amen.*

*Hear the Word of God from Ephesians. As you listen be asking "What are the significant words and main ideas of this passage.*

*BOB READS THE PASSAGE:*

*So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision" – a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands – remember that you were at that time without Christ, beings aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Buyt now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made borth groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might created in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliences, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.*

*Share what you think with your neighbors.  
Time for sharing.*

*BOB shares a few ideas:*

*"Remembrance" is important.*

*Look at juxtapositions:*

*Without Christ, we are aliens, strangers, without hope, far off, hostile, without God*

*With Christ we are brought near, both groups are made one, the dividing wall and hostility are broken down, we are citizens with the saints, members of the household of God, we are a dwelling- place for God, one new humanity.*

*Just in case you missed it, CHRIST is central:*

*Christ brings us together*

*Christ gives equal access in one Spirit to God the Father*

*Christ is the cornerstone – but note also the importance of  
apostles and prophets  
Christ's flesh and blood are important  
Christ's cross puts hostility to death  
Christ joins the whole structure together*

*Peace is a central word  
Reconcile is a central word*

*ANOTHER READER reads the passage again. As the passage is read a second time, ask: How does this passage inform, ground, and inspire our synodical anti-racism efforts?*

*READ the passage*

*Share among yourselves in your small group.  
TIME for sharing*

*Here are some ideas:*

*Christ is the foundation for and the source of our reconciling work. Christ makes it all possible.  
Our anti-racism efforts are rooted in Christ's death and resurrection  
Our reconciling anti-racism emerges from our having been justified  
by God's grace.*

*We know the pain and hostility of being separated, aliens, strangers,  
sometimes feeling without hope, sometimes felling without  
God. We need to name this pain and hostility as part of our anti-racism efforts.*

*But we also need to remember that Christ has created a new  
humanity, that we are in fact together citizens in God's  
commonwealth. The pain of racism can cause us to lose  
sight of our common humanity.*

*Since our anti-racism efforts emerge out of Christ, whose flesh and  
blood are given to us in Holy Communion, that sacrament  
empowers our anti-racism efforts as well.*

*Because of Christ, we all have equal access to God. There is no place  
for white privilege or for internalized racial oppression when  
we are in Christ*

*Our anti-racism efforts are about peace-making in Christ Jesus.*

*Now in your little group: share other words and ideas*

*A THIRD READER reads the passage.*

*Then:*

*What prayers are inspired by this passage?*

*Some ideas for petitions:*

*That we remain centered in Jesus Christ in all of our anti-racism efforts*

*That we always remember our common humanity in Christ*

*That we have the courage in Christ to confess our sins of racism in our systems and our communities  
and within ourselves*

*That we have the courage to name the pain and hostility of racism*

*That the Holy Spirit would lead us all into healing, reconciliation, community*

*That our communing together would continue to ground us and empower us*

*That we would know peace in our communities in Christ Jesus.*

*That a truly reconciled church would result from our efforts for the sake of our witness to a racially  
divided, broken world.*

*That together we would extend our reconciling efforts beyond the church to our wider communities  
for racial healing there.*

*Now, I invite you to pray in your small group for a few minutes*

*CLOSING PRAYER*

*Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us; renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.  
Amen.*

The Rev. Becca Seely, Executive Director of Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education reported on the work of the organization.

The Rev. Danielle Miller spoke about the impact of a Strategic Plan Grant upon the congregation of Oceanside Lutheran Church.

The Rev. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the ELCA addressed the Assembly and provided a video presentation of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

Following a brief recess, Bishop Rimbo led the Assembly in prayer.

The Rev. Derek G. Lecakes, President/Bishop of the Atlantic District, brought words of greeting from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The Rev. Mark Tammen, Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Long Island brought greetings to the Assembly.

The Rev. Dr. Brian E. McWeeney, Director of Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Affairs, Ethnic Apostolates, and Ecclesial Ministries and Organizations for the Archdiocese of New York brought greetings.

The Rev. Dr. Cheryl F. Dudley, Regional Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York brought greetings.

The Rev. Paul Johnsen made announcements and the Assembly adjourned at 4:35 pm for the daily Eucharist, at which The Rev. Dr. Cheryl F. Dudley preached and Bishop Rimbo presided.

**Keynote Address by Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas**

Dr. Douglas gave her keynote address at 7:30 pm. (<https://youtu.be/6jTIYNjKYLk>)

***SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2017***

***PLENARY SESSION IV***

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

Bishop Rimbo called the fourth plenary session to order at 9:30 am.

The Rev. James Smith reported how Bethlehem, Baldwin, was able to install a new roof with the help of a Strategic Plan grant.

**Pinecrest**

Mr. Zach Dean and Ms. Hepzibah Penumaka spoke to the Assembly about the ministry of Pinecrest Lutheran Leadership, including how racism is addressed through Pinecrest programs.

### **Report of the Committee on Registration**

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

|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Clergy                      | 114               |
| ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders   | 10                |
| Lay Voting Members          | 193               |
| <b>Total Voting members</b> | <b><u>317</u></b> |
| Visitors                    | <u>96</u>         |
| <b>Total Attendance</b>     | <b>413</b>        |

The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor led the Assembly in prayer.

### **Second Common Ballot**

The Rev. Kevin O'Hara conducted the second ballot of voting.

#### Ballot 6: Discipline Committee, Female Clergy

The Rev. Joanne Bond – 154 **elected**

The Rev. Marva Jenkins – 120

#### Ballot 7: Discipline Committee, Male Clergy

The Rev. Justin Kosec – 145 **elected**

The Rev. Peter Rustico – 121

#### Ballot 13: Synod Council, Lay Female, Northwest Queens

Ms. Muriel Davis – 140 **elected**

Ms. Hazel Goldstein – 124

#### Ballot 22: Synod Council, At Large, Youth

Ms. Tabitha Johnson – 253 **elected**

Other votes - 1

### **ACTION**

#### **SA 2016:05.06 Second Ballot**

#### **Discipline Committee**

**The Rev. Joanne Bond**

**The Rev. Justin Kosec**

#### **Synod Council**

**Ms. Muriel Davis**

**Ms. Tabitha Johnson**

#### **Hunger Committee**

Synod Deacon Karen Nurmi reported on the work of the Hunger Committee and presented a video produced by the ELCA.

The Rev. Dan Ward then spoke about a program on Mutual Conversation and Consolation by Dr. Timothy Wengert the Hudson Conference was able to host due to a Strategic Plan Leadership Grant.

Bishop Rimbo then led the Assembly in prayer.

## **Reference and Counsel 2**

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the following Memorial.

### **African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter**

#### **Rationale:**

Whereas, the United Nations declared 2015-2024 the “International Decade for People of African Descent.” African American, African Caribbean and African national communities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gifted and culturally diverse, represented by more than 200 million people living in the Americas. Whether as descendants of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, people of African Descent constitute some of the poorest and most marginalized groups with limited access to quality education, health services, housing, and Social Services. People of African Descent represent 13% of the total population of the United States of America. Within the ELCA there are more than 46,100 members that identify as people of African Descent, or 1.9% of the ELCA’s total population.

Whereas, as the ELCA prepares to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, the political, social and economic injustices affecting African Descent communities still remain largely invisible to a society indifferent to black life. The legacy of slavery, post-Reconstruction ‘Jim Crow’ laws and racial subordination in the United States remains a “serious challenge” as there has been no real commitment to recognition and reparations for people of African descent. Despite many advances by people of African Descent within the ELCA and society, racism and racial discrimination, both direct and indirect, *de facto* and *de jure*, continue to manifest themselves in inequality and disadvantage.

Whereas, the 1993 ELCA CWA adopted the social statement, “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity & Culture” as a confession of the sin of racism. However, Black Liberation Theology is often rejected and avoided within not all but many Lutheran academic institutions. African Descent rostered leaders acquire higher education debt, wait longer to receive calls, are less likely to receive full-time calls, and less likely to reach synod compensation guidelines. The majority of African Descent ELCA congregations were birthed out of “white flight,” a divestment from urban areas, taking socio-economic resources and abandoning a connection, call and witness. What is left are deteriorating, debt-filled buildings with shrinking memberships, in part due to the systemic and structural issues of discrimination and lack of full inclusion of our gifts of leadership and worship styles.

Whereas, the African Descent community is within a denomination that affirms “There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; for all of you are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28).” We are called to be a church that embraces each person and confronts racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual orientation, physical, personal and class barriers that often manifest themselves in unjust treatment, inequalities, exclusion and violence. The ELCA constitution (7.31.12 section A number 7), states “Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every ordained minister shall: speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world.” Justification by faith is a principle of scripture and Lutheran identity for all races, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, sexual orientation, class, cultures or nationalities.

**Resolved**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to include as part of the ELCA’s observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the commemoration of the United Nation’s International Decade of People of African Descent the following:

1. Request the Church Council to create a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community” similar to the “Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (4/18/1994)” acknowledging the Lutheran church’s complicity in the 400+ years of slavery and the oppression of other marginalized groups; that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences; and, that the ELCA has perpetuated racism and discrimination through attitudes, actions, policies and practices these communities still endure. The Council will bring this “Declaration” to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA;

2. Request the Church Council to require the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) in partnership with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating academic exploration of Black Liberation theology across ELCA educational expressions, to allocate funds for the development of resources and to accomplish this by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and,

3. Request the Church Council to require the Congregational and Synodical Missions Unit of the ELCA, to work in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association to increase by 10% the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served, thereby renewing its commitment (see African Descent Strategy, CWA, 2005) to create, sustain, reinvest in and support this plan of action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and to encourage Synods and congregations to do likewise.

Submitted by:

The African Descent Lutheran Association of Metro New York  
The Rev. Linda F. Bell, President

Ms. Delores Gray - St. Peters - 741 E. 219 Street, Bronx, NY  
Ms. Ingrid Compton - St. Stephens - 2806 Newkirk Ave, Brooklyn, NY  
The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor - Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd - 230  
Brookside Ave, Roosevelt, NY  
The Rev. Jeanine Owens - Church of the Abiding Presence - 1672 172 St., Bronx,  
NY  
The Rev Fernando Otero - St. Peter's - 427 E. 140 St, Bronx, NY  
The Rev. Edward Barnett - St. Peter's - 2332 Grand Ave, Baldwin, NY  
The Rev. Paul Block - Transfiguration Lutheran Church - 763 Prospect Ave, Bronx,  
NY  
Ms. Nicole Hudson - Church of the Holy Redeemer - 2424 Linden Blvd, Brooklyn,  
NY  
Mr. Homer Alexander - Church of the Abiding Presence - 1672 172 St., Bronx, NY  
Ms. Carolyn Brown - Seeking a Church - Church Closed

After the motion was seconded, The Rev. Linda Bell spoke in favor of the Memorial and ELCA Secretary Chris Boerger noted that the Memorial Committee will make necessary corrections before presenting to the Churchwide Assembly.  
The Memorial was adopted.

## **ACTION**

**SA2016:05:07**

**Resolved, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to include as part of the ELCA's observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the commemoration of the United Nation's International Decade of People of African Descent the following:**

**1. Request the Church Council to create a "Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community" similar to the "Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (4/18/1994)" acknowledging the Lutheran church's complicity in the 400+ years of slavery and the oppression of other marginalized groups; that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences; and, that the ELCA has perpetuated racism and discrimination through attitudes, actions, policies and practices these communities still endure. The Council will bring this "Declaration" to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA;**

**2. Request the Church Council to require the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) in partnership with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating academic exploration of Black Liberation theology across ELCA educational expressions, to allocate funds for the development of resources and to**

accomplish this by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and,

**3. Request the Church Council to require the Congregational and Synodical Missions Unit of the ELCA, to work in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association to increase by 10% the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served, thereby renewing its commitment (see African Descent Strategy, CWA, 2005) to create, sustain, reinvest in and support this plan of action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and to encourage Synods and congregations to do likewise.**

**ADOPTED**

The Rev. John Flack and the Rev. Paul Egensteiner reported on the continuing theological education programs at Koinonia that have been supported by a Strategic Plan Leadership grant.

### **Anniversaries**

A video, narrated by The Rev. Kathleen Koran, announced significant anniversaries of rostered leaders and congregations.

#### Clergy

##### **70 years**

Rev. Robert Bauers, *3/24/46*

Rev. Paul Reisch, *6/23/46*

##### **65 years**

Rev. Dr. John Damm, *6/16/51*

##### **60 years**

Rev. Lloyd Berg, *1/22/56*

Rev. Carl Weaver, *5/23/56*

##### **55 years**

Rev. Carl Leazer, *6/11/61*

Rev. Winston Bone, *6/14/61*

##### **50 years**

Rev. Dr. William Rusch, *5/8/66*

Rev. George Matzat, *5/15/66*

Rev. Paul Hagedorn, *5/29/66*

Rev. Walter Wifall, *6/1/66*

Rev. Serge Castigliano, *6/2/66*

Rev. Ivan Gunderman, *8/13/66*

##### **45 years**

Rev. Larry Bailey, *2/21/71*

Rev. George Lutz, *6/20/71*

Rev. John Evenson, *10/3/71*

Rev. Dennis O'Rourke, *10/17/71*

Rev. William Paulsen, *10/17/71*

##### **40 years**

Rev. James Anderson, *5/13/76*

Rev. Henry Wuerz, *6/6/76*

Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo, *9/19/76*

Rev. Robert Rimbo, *10/16/76*

##### **35 years**



Rev. Frederick McElderry, 4/26/81

Rev. Martin Nale, 5/4/81

Rev. Thomas Taylor, 6/5/81

Rev. Martha Jacobi, 6/21/81

Rev. Ray Ormand, 7/12/81

Rev. Eric Mathsen, 8/27/81

**30 years**

Rev. Jeanne Warfield, 6/13/86

Rev. James Krauser, 6/15/86

Rev. Philip Trzynka, 7/20/86

Rev. Patricia Evant, 9/7/86

**25 years**

Rev. ElizaBeth Nebrasky, 6/18/91

Rev. Robert Fritch, 9/18/91

**20 years**

Rev. David Anglada, 2/11/96

Rev. Karen Kuttler, 3/30/96

Rev. Khader El-Yateem, 6/14/96

Rev. Craig Miller, 6/14/96

Rev. Dr. Laurie Andersen, 6/14/96

Rev. Marcia Parkinson-Harrison, 7/28/96

Rev. Dr. Kim Wilson, 9/30/96

Rev. Mary Chang, 10/20/96

**15 years**

Rev. Paul Block, 2/24/01

Rev. Robert Vogl, 7/15/01

Rev. Patt Kauffman, 9/16/01

Rev. Marianne Tomecek, 9/16/01

**10 years**

Rev. Brenda Irving, 2/26/06

Rev. Ernst Mossel, 7/16/06

Rev. Giovanni Sanchez, 9/23/06

Rev. Kit Robison, 10/1/06

Rev. Anthony Bateza, 10/28/06

**5 years**

Rev. Marc Herbst, 2/26/11

Rev. Linda Bell, 4/2/11

Rev. Kevin O'Hara, 6/3/11

Rev. Rebecca Pollicino, 8/27/11

Rev. Johanna Andritz, 12/3/11

Rev. James Smith, 12/3/11

Rev. Benjamin McKelahan, 12/3/11

Rev. Omar Ortiz, 12/3/11

Rev. Robert Rainis, 12/3/11

Rev. Stephanie Kershner, 12/10/11

ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders

**50 years**

Ms. Linda Fay, 1/1/66

**35 years**

Mrs. Judith Hinsch, 1/1/81

Synod Deacons

**20 years**

Deacon Frank Attanasia, 6/14/96

Deacon Carol Straub, 6/14/96

**15 years**

Deacon Hans Wiedemann, 9/16/01

Deacon Gayle Ruege, 9/16/01

Deacon Rory Ann Schoenfeld, 9/16/01

**10 years**

Deacon Karen Nurmi, 1/21/06

Deacon Lynn Weiler, 1/21/06

Deacon Gary Weiler, 1/21/06

Deacon Richard Ferolito, 1/21/06

Deacon Barbara Bambina, 1/21/06

**5 years**

Deacon Russell Carey, 5/7/11

Deacon Margaret Lindblom, 5/7/11

Deacon Betty Cole, 5/7/11

Congregations

**150 years**

St. Peter Lutheran Church

Greenport, NY

St. Paul Lutheran Church

Rye Brook, NY

Our Saviour Evangelical Lutheran Church

Brooklyn, NY

**100 years**

St. Peter Lutheran Church

Baldwin, NY

Grace Lutheran Church

North Bellmore, NY

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Astoria, NY

**75 years**

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

North Baldwin, NY

**50 years**

St. Michael's Lutheran Church

Amangansett, NY

King of Kings Lutheran Church

Melville, NY

Certificates and gifts were then presented to The Rev. Robert Fritch (25 years), The Rev. ElizaBeth Nebrasky (25 years) and The Rev. Serge Castigliano (50 years).

The Rev. Paul Johnsen gave announcements and The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor closed the session with prayer.

The Saturday Eucharist was held at 1:00 pm, with Bishop Rimbo preaching and presiding.

***SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2017***

***PLENARY SESSION V***

Bishop Rimbo called the fifth plenary session to order at 2:10 pm.

The Rev. Jeanine Owens then thanked the synod for a Strategic Plan Capital grant that enabled Abiding Presence, Bronx, repair its parking lot.

Mr. Gerry Lauro presented a video about the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

### **Report of the Committee on Registration**

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

|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Clergy                      | 66                |
| ELCA Lay Rostered Leaders   | 3                 |
| Lay Voting Members          | 140               |
| <b>Total Voting members</b> | <b><u>209</u></b> |
| Visitors                    | <u>81</u>         |
| <b>Total Attendance</b>     | <b>290</b>        |

The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor led the Assembly in prayer.

### **Budgets**

Votes were then taken on the Revised 2016 Budget of \$4,462,932, and the Proposed 2017 Budget of \$1,172,199, both of which were adopted.

### **ACTION**

**SA 2016:05.08      Ratified a Revised Budget of \$4,812,932 for Fiscal Year 2016  
ADOPTED**

### **ACTION**

**SA 2016:05.09      Adopted a Proposed Budget of \$4,522,199 for Fiscal Year 2017  
ADOPTED**

### **Reference and Counsel 3**

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the next resolution for consideration.

### **On Committee Minutes**

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America advises<sup>1</sup> that the minutes of boards be maintained and retained in the synod office until superseded by updated versions, then transferred to the synod or regional archives; and

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<sup>1</sup>See "Records Management: Advice for Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Records\\_Retention\\_Synods.pdf?\\_ga=1.202755537.1122050047.1438905825](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Records_Retention_Synods.pdf?_ga=1.202755537.1122050047.1438905825)

Whereas, the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recommends<sup>2</sup> to Synod Secretaries that “The minutes of Synod Council meetings and the council’s Executive Committee meetings are to be filed promptly in the synod office and in the synod’s archives. Upload electronic copies of the Synod Council minutes to Synod Online Digital Archive;” and

Whereas, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Metropolitan New York Synod states that “The synod council shall be authorized to review and approve the policies, procedures, and programs of committees in order to assure conformity with the governing documents and actions of the Synod Assembly.” (S11.21); therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that committees of the Metropolitan New York Synod—including but not limited to the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, and the Claimed, Gathered and Sent Committees—keep minutes of their meetings according to best practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that such minutes be maintained in the offices of the Metropolitan New York Synod and made available upon request; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that committees will provide to the Synod Council a summary of their actions and significant ongoing discussions and, when requested by the Synod Council, copies of meeting minutes.

The Rev. Ed Barnett, St. Peter’s, Baldwin, Dean SW Nassau Conference

The Rev. Linda Bell, Grace, Malverne

The Rev. Dr. Rosalind Brathwaite, Grace, Astoria

The Rev. John Flack, Our Saviour’s Atonement, Manhattan, Dean Manhattan Conference

The Rev. Dr. Katrina Foster, St. John, Brooklyn

The Rev. David Grainson, Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre

The Rev. Dr. Richard Hill, Hope, Seldon, Dean Peconic Conference

The Rev. Brenda Irving, Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights, Dean Southeast Queens Conference

The Rev. Alex Kennedy, St. John, Lynbrook

The Rev. James Klockau, Grace, Astoria

The Rev. James Krauser, Grace, Bellmore

The Rev. Joseph Mantovani, St. Jacobus, Woodside, Dean Northwest Queens Conference

The Rev. Craig Miller, Our Saviour, Bay Ridge, Synod Council member

The Rev. Ernie Moss, Christ, Newburgh, Dean Delaware Hudson Conference

The Rev. Eric Mull, St. John’s by the Sea, Long Beach

The Rev. Annemarie Noto, St. Peter’s, Baldwin

The Rev. Rebecca Pollicino, Grace, Uniondale

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<sup>2</sup>See “Recommendations for Synod Secretaries by Secretary Wm Chris Boerger, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (August 11, 2014)”  
[http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Recommendations\\_For\\_Synod\\_Secretaries.pdf?\\_ga=1.122972747.1122050047.1438905825](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Recommendations_For_Synod_Secretaries.pdf?_ga=1.122972747.1122050047.1438905825)

The Rev. Jennifer Richards, Our Saviour, Trinity, Staten Island, Dean Staten Island Conference  
The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer, Advent, Manhattan  
The Rev. James Watrud, Christ, East Northport  
The Rev. Harriet Wieber, Holy Trinity, Flatbush, Dean South Shore Brooklyn Conference

After motion was seconded and The Rev. Edward Barnett spoke in favor of the resolution, it was adopted.

#### **ACTION**

**SA2016:05:10**

**RESOLVED that committees of the Metropolitan New York Synod—including but not limited to the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, and the Claimed, Gathered and Sent Committees—keep minutes of their meetings according to best practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further**

**RESOLVED, that such minutes be maintained in the offices of the Metropolitan New York Synod and made available upon request; and be it further**

**RESOLVED, that committees will provide to the Synod Council a summary of their actions and significant ongoing discussions and, when requested by the Synod Council, copies of meeting minutes.**

**ADOPTED**

The Rev. Joel Brandt then presented the next resolution for consideration.

#### **On Financial Transparency**

Whereas, the Constitution of the Metropolitan New York Synod states:

“S10.03. the functions of the Synod Council shall be to:

g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly” and

“S10.03.01. In addition to the functions listed in S10.03. The Synod Council shall:

c. Establish the salaries of officers and staff officials”; and

Whereas, the *Manual for Synod Council Training and Formation* states:

“I.A. Legal Overview for Synod Council Members

The Synod Council has three basic legal responsibilities:

(3) Accounting to the public, or answering to the synod and to the public at large for the use of resources in accord with the synod’s charter”; and

Whereas, the Metropolitan New York Synod website) proclaims:

“To enable all these parts of the body to *be* Christ’s body, it is essential that all members of the body be accountable to one another for the gifts God has given us, including the monies entrusted to our care and stewardship. Our financial activities must be transparent, and this is what this information is meant to be”;

[\(http://www.mnys.org/who we are/financial information/\)](http://www.mnys.org/who_we_are/financial_information/)

therefore be it

**Resolved**, that the report of the Synod Council to the regular Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod include the annual compensation established for the Bishop and those named as Assistant to the Bishop; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the report of the Treasurer of the Metropolitan New York Synod state clearly the entire cost for legal counsel incurred in the preceding year; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the report of the Treasurer of the Metropolitan New York Synod state clearly the entire monies paid to outside consultants in the preceding year, including to any individual, firms or corporations not subject to ordinary employment agreements with the Synod.

The Rev. Ed Barnett, St. Peter's, Baldwin, Dean, SW Nassau Conference

The Rev. Linda Bell, Grace, Malverne

The Rev. Dr. Rosalind Brathwaite, Grace, Astoria

The Rev. John Flack, Our Saviour's Atonement, Manhattan, Dean Manhattan Conference

The Rev. Dr. Katrina Foster, St. John, Brooklyn

The Rev. Brenda Irving, Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights, Dean Southeast Queens Conference

The Rev. Dr. Richard Hill, Hope, Seldon, Dean Peconic Conference

The Rev. Alex Kennedy, St. John, Lynbrook

The Rev. James Klockau, Grace, Astoria

The Rev. James Krauser, Grace, Bellmore

The Rev. Joseph Mantovani, St. Jacobus, Woodside, Dean Northwest Queens Conference

The Rev. Craig Miller, Our Saviour, Bay Ridge, Synod Council member

The Rev. Ernie Mossel, Christ, Newburgh, Dean Delaware Hudson Conference

The Rev. Eric Mull, St. John's by the Sea, Long Beach

The Rev. Annemarie Noto, St. Peter's, Baldwin

The Rev. Rebecca Pollicino, Grace, Uniondale

The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer, Advent, Manhattan

The Rev. James Watrud, Christ, East Northport

The Rev. Harriet Wieber, Holy Trinity, Flatbush, Dean South Shore Brooklyn Conference

After motion was seconded, The Rev. Edward Barnett spoke in favor of the resolution. A motion by Mr. Frank Suttell to refer this resolution to the Synod Council for consideration was seconded but defeated. The resolution was then adopted.

## **ACTION**

### **SA2016:05:10**

**Resolved**, that the report of the Synod Council to the regular Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod include the annual compensation established for the Bishop and those named as Assistant to the Bishop; and be it further

**Resolved, that the report of the Treasurer of the Metropolitan New York Synod state clearly the entire cost for legal counsel incurred in the preceding year; and be it further**

**Resolved, that the report of the Treasurer of the Metropolitan New York Synod state clearly the entire monies paid to outside consultants in the preceding year, including to any individual, firms or corporations not subject to ordinary employment agreements with the Synod.**

**ADOPTED**

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the next resolution for consideration.

### **Advocacy and Justice for Refugees**

Whereas today there are more than 60 million people displaced from their homes by war, violence and persecution, more than at any time since such records have been kept;

Whereas more than 16 million of those who are displaced have been forced to cross a border seeking safety and are considered refugees under humanitarian international law;

Whereas most refugees hope to return to their homeland, while some are able to remain and integrate in to their country of first asylum, and a small number (half of 1%) seek and are granted resettlement in a third country like the United States;

Whereas refugees contribute greatly to a community's economy, culture and diversity;

Whereas the Lutheran church in the United States was founded by immigrants, and ministries with newcomers, through congregations, social ministry organizations and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, have been hallmarks of our demonstration of love of neighbors, as together we have resettled more than 500,000 refugees;

Whereas God's love for the stranger is central to the Biblical faith:

*Exodus 22:21, you shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

*Matthew 25:35, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*

Whereas individuals and communities in the US are sometimes struggling with their desire to welcome newcomers and with fears for the change this brings in communities; and

Whereas recognized hate groups in the US are disseminating misinformation to fuel fear and incite actions against refugees and those that provide services to assist them; therefore be it

**Resolved** that the Metropolitan New York Synod shall develop a plan and share resource materials to assist congregations in exploring the Christian calling to love and serve our

refugee neighbors and to learn about: the experience and needs of refugees; the processing of refugees through the US refugee program; and ways to accompany refugees; and further be it

**Resolved** that the Metropolitan New York Synod recommit to being an advocate and justice seeker for refugees, and request that the synodical bishop communicate our concerns to our Members of Congress and other elected officials; and further be it

**Resolved** that the synod encourage congregations, individuals and communities to be the church at work in the world, offering welcome and hospitality to refugees through local ministries and in partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; and further be it

**Resolved** that each congregation be encouraged to pray for refugees and annually host a Refugee Sunday ([www.lirs.org/refugeesunday](http://www.lirs.org/refugeesunday)).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, Bishop

After the motion was seconded, Bishop Rimbo spoke in favor of the resolution.

The following amendment was proposed by The Rev. Anthony Stephens.

Add:

**Resolved**, that a trust fund be established under Synod Council Supervision to provide for the immediate settlement and housing needs of refugees arriving in our Synod; this fund to be funded by offering on Refugee Sunday and by discretionary giving.

This amendment was seconded and adopted. The resolution, as amended, was then adopted.

## **ACTION**

### **SA 2016:05.12**

**Resolved, that the Metropolitan New York Synod shall develop a plan and share resource materials to assist congregations in exploring the Christian calling to love and serve our refugee neighbors and to learn about: the experience and needs of refugees; the processing of refugees through the US refugee program; and ways to accompany refugees; and further be it**

**Resolved, that the Metropolitan New York Synod recommit to being an advocate and justice seeker for refugees, and request that the synodical bishop communicate our concerns to our Members of Congress and other elected officials; and further be it**

**Resolved, that the synod encourage congregations, individuals and communities to be the church at work in the world, offering welcome and hospitality to refugees through local ministries and in partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; and further be it**



**Resolved, that each congregation be encouraged to pray for refugees and annually host a Refugee Sunday ([www.lirs.org/refugeesunday](http://www.lirs.org/refugeesunday)); and further be it Resolved, that a trust fund be established under Synod Council Supervision to provide for the immediate settlement and housing needs of refugees arriving in our Synod; this fund to be funded by offering on Refugee Sunday and by discretionary giving.**  
**ADOPTED**

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the next memorial for consideration.

### **Advocacy and Justice for Refugees, Churchwide Assembly 2016**

Whereas today there are more than 60 million people displaced from their homes by war, violence and persecution, more than at any time since such records have been kept;

Whereas more than 16 million of those who are displaced have been forced to cross a border seeking safety and are considered refugees under humanitarian international law;

Whereas most refugees hope to return to their homeland, while some are able to remain and integrate in to their country of first asylum, and a small number (half of 1%) seek and are granted resettlement in a third country like the United States;

Whereas refugees contribute greatly to a community's economy, culture and diversity;

Whereas the Lutheran church in the United States was founded by immigrants, and ministries with newcomers, through congregations, social ministry organizations and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, have been hallmarks of our demonstration of love of neighbors, as together we have resettled more than 500,000 refugees;

Whereas God's love for the stranger is central to the Biblical faith:

*Exodus 22:21, you shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

*Matthew 25:35, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*

Whereas individuals and communities in the US are sometimes struggling with their desire to welcome newcomers and with fears for the change this brings in communities; and

Whereas recognized hate groups in the US are disseminating misinformation to fuel fear and incite actions against refugees and those that provide services to assist them; therefore be it

**Resolved** that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the ELCA churchwide assembly to:

- Request that the Presiding Bishop communicate the church's commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the US and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and Members of Congress; and

- Request that churchwide units, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, provide easy access to resource materials for congregations to learn about and take part in ministries with refugees; and
- Request that the Presiding Bishop, Church Council, and Synod bishops speak out publicly against hateful language that targets refugees and immigrants and against actions to exclude or discriminate against them.

Respectfully submitted by:  
The Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, Bishop

After the motion was seconded, Bishop Rimbo spoke in favor of the memorial. The assembly adopted.

### **ACTION**

**SA 2016:05.13**

**Resolved that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the ELCA churchwide assembly to:**

- **Request that the Presiding Bishop communicate the church’s commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the US and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and Members of Congress; and**
- **Request that churchwide units, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, provide easy access to resource materials for congregations to learn about and take part in ministries with refugees; and**
- **Request that the Presiding Bishop, Church Council, and Synod bishops speak out publicly against hateful language that targets refugees and immigrants and against actions to exclude or discriminate against them.**

### **ADOPTED**

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the next memorial for consideration.

### **On Divestment, Churchwide Assembly 2016**

Whereas, in 2005 The ELCA approved “Peace Not Walls” as a strategy for this church’s engagement in efforts to bring a just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine, including commitment to a two-state solution in which a secure and universally recognized state of Israel exists alongside a free, viable, and secure state for the Palestinian people; and

Whereas continued occupation of the Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, by the state of Israel is a barrier to lasting peace and violates the rights of Palestinians as defined by the “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights” (ICCPR), adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 16, 1966, and to which both Israel and the United States are parties; and

Whereas, several multinational corporations have provided materials and resources that instead of encouraging solutions that will bring a just and lasting peace in fact have

exacerbated the conflict, perpetuated injustice, and violated the human rights of Palestinians, including:

**Caterpillar Corporation** which provides bulldozers that Israel has used for the demolition of homes of Palestinians accused or suspected of activity that challenges or combats Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territories seized during the 1967 War thus violating Article 17 of the ICCPR which states, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence;" and

**Hewlett-Packard Company** which developed, integrates and maintains finger print and facial recognition data collected on every Palestinian over the age of 16 that enables Israel to track and control their movements, which violates Article 17 of the ICCPR, which states, "Everyone has the right to the liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence;" and

**Motorola Solutions** which supplies Israel with weapon components, military communications systems and surveillance systems that sustain the occupation of the Palestinian Territories and delay the formation of Palestine as a nation, which violates Article 24 of the ICCPR which states, "Every child has the right to acquire a nationality;" and

Whereas three of the ELCA's full communion partners - the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church - have each voted within the past two years to similarly divest funds from these and other companies that prolong Israel's occupation or inhibit the formation of a viable Palestinian state; therefore, be it

**Resolved** that the Metropolitan New York Synod meeting in Assembly recommend that the ELCA Church Council take steps necessary to divest any and all funds the ELCA has invested in Caterpillar Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, and Motorola Solutions; and be it further

**Resolved** that the Metropolitan New York Synod meeting in Assembly recommend that the ELCA Churchwide Assembly consider referring a motion to divest pension funds from Caterpillar Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, and Motorola Solutions to the Board of Portico Benefits Services for recommendation and action; and be it further

**Resolved** that the Synod Assembly direct the Synod Secretary to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Submitted by the Mideast Relations Committee

Rev. Amy Kienzle, The Park Church Co-op, Brooklyn, Chair

Rev. Khader Khalilia, Redeemer-St. John's, Brooklyn

Rev. Khader El-Yateem, Salam, Brooklyn

Rev. Marv Henk, St. John's, Mamaroneck

Rev. Tim Kennedy, Retired, St. John's, Mamaroneck

Rev. Jim Sudbrock, Retired, Advent, Manhattan

Miss Mary Margaret Powers, St. Peter's, Manhattan

Miss Faith Rowold, Trinity 100th St. Manhattan

After an objection to considering this memorial was rejected by the voting members, the memorial was adopted.

## **ACTION**

### **SA 2016:05.14**

**Resolved that the Metropolitan New York Synod meeting in Assembly recommend that the ELCA Church Council take steps necessary to divest any and all funds the ELCA has invested in Caterpillar Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, and Motorola Solutions; and be it further**

**Resolved that the Metropolitan New York Synod meeting in Assembly recommend that the ELCA Churchwide Assembly consider referring a motion to divest pension funds from Caterpillar Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, and Motorola Solutions to the Board of Portico Benefits Services for recommendation and action; and be it further**

**Resolved that the Synod Assembly direct the Synod Secretary to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.**

### **ADOPTED**

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the next action for consideration.

### **Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Assessment Report**

**Resolved**, that the Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Assessment Report Pursuant to: The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process, proposed by the Gathered Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee and the Synod Council, be adopted.

### **Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Property Assessment Report Pursuant to:**

**The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process**  
As promulgated under Section II. Call Process (enumerated item 5), the synod follows the below minimum guidelines:

An independent licensed architect/engineer will certify that it has performed a cursory overview, similar to a home inspection performed during a real estate transaction, of the property and structures to determine, most importantly, if any dangers are present. This review will include:

1. A periphery inspection to determine if the conditions are satisfactory, need maintenance or repairs, or significant/immediate attention.
  - a. Exterior (walkways, parking lots, windows, doors, siding, etc.)
  - b. Roofing
  - c. Structural (foundation, framing)
  - d. Electrical and Plumbing
  - e. Heating/Air Conditioning

2. A recommendation of commonly required regulatory licenses (i.e., assembly licenses) and permits (e.g., elevator inspection, building c/o's) that should be verified for compliance by the congregation.
3. If required and requested, a detailed analysis of the areas of concern for corrective action.

After Mr. Frank Suttell spoke in favor of the action it was adopted.

## **ACTION**

### **SA 201605.15**

**Resolved, that the Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Assessment Report Pursuant to: The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process, proposed by the Gathered Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee and the Synod Council, be adopted.**

**Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Property Assessment Report Pursuant to:**

**The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process As promulgated under Section II. Call Process (enumerated item 5), the synod follows the below minimum guidelines:**

**An independent licensed architect/engineer will certify that it has performed a cursory overview, similar to a home inspection performed during a real estate transaction, of the property and structures to determine, most importantly, if any dangers are present. This review will include:**

1. A periphery inspection to determine if the conditions are satisfactory, need maintenance or repairs, or significant/immediate attention.
  - a. Exterior (walkways, parking lots, windows, doors, siding, etc.)
  - b. Roofing
  - c. Structural (foundation, framing)
  - d. Electrical and Plumbing
  - e. Heating/Air Conditioning
2. A recommendation of commonly required regulatory licenses (i.e., assembly licenses) and permits (e.g., elevator inspection, building c/o's) that should be verified for compliance by the congregation.
3. If required and requested, a detailed analysis of the areas of concern for corrective action.

## **ADOPTED**

The Rev. Joel Brandt presented the next action for consideration.

### **Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Financial Review**

**Resolved, that the Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Financial Review Pursuant to: The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process, proposed by the Gathered Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee and the Synod Council, be adopted.**

**Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Financial Review Pursuant to:  
The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process**

As promulgated under Section II. Call Process (enumerated item 4), the synod follows the below minimum guidelines, based upon the churchwide Congregational Audit Guide, specifically Pages 12-33 of the Congregational Audit Guide:

An independent certified public accountant consultant will certify that it has reviewed information needed to assure that the financial statements of the congregation are fairly stated and appropriate internal controls are in place. This review includes:

**1. Policies and Procedures** – to understand current congregational accounting processes and internal controls that are in place.

**2. Bank and Investment** – to obtain evidence that cash and investment balances are fairly stated on financial reports.

**3. Bank Reconciliation** – to obtain evidence that cash balances are properly stated and cash is adequately controlled.

**4. Petty Cash** – to validate the Petty Cash is properly stated on the congregation's financial statements and is properly controlled.

**5. Income**

**a. Benevolence** – to verify that the income shared with the synod is accurately reflected in the congregation's financial statements.

**b. Offerings** – to validate individual donations through confirmation with the donor.

**c. Receipting and Reconciling** – to verify that donations are accurately reflected in the General Ledger and that an important control over donations (donor statements) is working effectively.

**d. Offering Counting** – to verify offerings are properly accounted for and are properly controlled.

**e. Special Events/Other Income** – verify income received from special events or usage of the church property is properly accounted for.

**f. Designated** – verify proper support exists for any designated funds.

**6. Disbursements**

**a. Signature Control** – verify proper controls exist over check processing.

**b. Documentation and Process Controls** – verify expenses are properly stated in accounting records.

**c. Duplicate Payment Controls** – test records for any potential duplicate payments.

**d. Vendor Control Payments** – assess adequacy of controls over vendor payments.

**e. Purchase Orders** – validate that payments are properly authorized and supported by a purchase order (if applicable).

**f. Vendor Payments** – identify potential unauthorized payments.

**7. Governance and Administration** – to validate that the financial records accurately reflect all Congregation Council actions.  
properly accounted for.

**9. Payroll** – to verify compensation expense is valid and properly accounted for.

**10. Benefits** – review employee benefit plans and policies.

**11. Independent Contractors** – validate that 1099s were issued and appropriate.

**12. Government Filings** – validate compliance with all other government filing requirements.

**13. Data Systems** – to verify the existence of adequate controls over congregation information systems.

**14. Records Management** – verify records retention policy is in place and being adhered to.

**15. Safeguarding of Assets/Documents** – verify adequacy of controls over safe deposit boxes, ensure all critical congregational papers such as deeds, insurance policies and incorporation papers are kept in a fireproof safe or in a safety deposit box.

**16. Fixed Assets** – validate existence and accounting for Fixed Assets.

**17. Insurance** – to validate that appropriate insurance coverage exists for the congregation's assets and that the premiums are properly reflected in the General Ledger.

Financial Reporting – review financial results for any unusual balances and/or variances, and obtain the financial reports for the end of the year under review and the previous year for comparison.

Mr. John Litke moved to amend the guidelines by adding the following:

The synod will reimburse the congregation for any audit costs that exceed either \$1,000 or 1% of the congregation's annual receipts, whichever is greater.

Mr. Frank Suttell moved to amend the suggested amendment by replacing the word audit with review. This amendment was adopted and then the entire amendment was adopted. The assembly adopted the action as amended.

## **ACTION**

### **SA 201605.16**

**Resolved, that the Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Financial Review Pursuant to: The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process, proposed by the Gathered Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee and the Synod Council, be adopted.**

**Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Financial Review Pursuant to: The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process As promulgated under Section II. Call Process (enumerated item 4), the synod follows the below minimum guidelines, based upon the churchwide Congregational Audit Guide, specifically Pages 12-33 of the Congregational Audit Guide:**

**An independent certified public accountant consultant will certify that it has reviewed information needed to assure that the financial statements of the congregation are fairly stated and appropriate internal controls are in place. This review includes:**

**1. Policies and Procedures – to understand current congregational accounting processes and internal controls that are in place.**

**2. Bank and Investment – to obtain evidence that cash and investment balances are fairly stated on financial reports.**

**3. Bank Reconciliation – to obtain evidence that cash balances are properly stated and cash is adequately controlled.**

**4. Petty Cash – to validate the Petty Cash is properly stated on the congregation's financial statements and is properly controlled.**

**5. Income**

- a. Benevolence – to verify that the income shared with the synod is accurately reflected in the congregation’s financial statements.
  - b. Offerings – to validate individual donations through confirmation with the donor.
  - c. Receipting and Reconciling – to verify that donations are accurately reflected in the General Ledger and that an important control over donations (donor statements) is working effectively.
  - d. Offering Counting – to verify offerings are properly accounted for and are properly controlled.
  - e. Special Events/Other Income – verify income received from special events or usage of the church property is properly accounted for.
  - f. Designated – verify proper support exists for any designated funds.
- 6. Disbursements**
- a. Signature Control – verify proper controls exist over check processing.
  - b. Documentation and Process Controls – verify expenses are properly stated in accounting records.
  - c. Duplicate Payment Controls – test records for any potential duplicate payments.
  - d. Vendor Control Payments – assess adequacy of controls over vendor payments.
  - e. Purchase Orders – validate that payments are properly authorized and supported by a purchase order (if applicable).
  - f. Vendor Payments – identify potential unauthorized payments.
- 7. Governance and Administration – to validate that the financial records accurately reflect all Congregation Council actions.**  
properly accounted for.
- 9. Payroll – to verify compensation expense is valid and properly accounted for.**
- 10. Benefits – review employee benefit plans and policies.**
- 11. Independent Contractors – validate that 1099s were issued and appropriate.**
- 12. Government Filings – validate compliance with all other government filing requirements.**
- 13. Data Systems – to verify the existence of adequate controls over congregation information systems.**
- 14. Records Management – verify records retention policy is in place and being adhered to.**
- 15. Safeguarding of Assets/Documents – verify adequacy of controls over safe deposit boxes, ensure all critical congregational papers such as deeds, insurance policies and incorporation papers are kept in a fireproof safe or in a safety deposit box.**
- 16. Fixed Assets – validate existence and accounting for Fixed Assets.**
- 17. Insurance – to validate that appropriate insurance coverage exists for the congregation’s assets and that the premiums are properly reflected in the General Ledger.**
- Financial Reporting – review financial results for any unusual balances and/or variances, and obtain the financial reports for the end of the year under review and the previous year for comparison.**
- The synod will reimburse the congregation for any review costs that exceed either \$1,000 or 1% of the congregation’s annual receipts, whichever is greater.**
- ADOPTED**



Secretary Schoepflin then presented Action No. 3 to the Assembly which consisted of amendments to the Bylaws and a Continuing Resolution.

ACTION SC16:03/10

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council present to the Synod Assembly that S12.01.01 A2003 of the synod constitution be amended to read: “The synod shall be composed of conferences, grouped in four quadrants. The Synod Council shall assign each congregation to a conference.”

ACTION SC16:04/13

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Council present to the Synod Assembly that S9.20.01 and S9.20.02 of the bylaws to the synod constitution be amended to read:

S9.20.01: The conferences shall serve to nominate seats on the Synod Council.

S9.20.02: Two election cycles will elect one half of the Synod Council every other election year. Each of the conferences will be assigned to a cycle.

The action was adopted by the Assembly.

**ACTION**

**SA 201605.17**

**Bylaw amendment eliminating specific number of conferences**

**S9.20.01 The conferences shall serve to nominate seats on the Synod Council.**

**S9.20.02 Two election cycles will elect one half of the Synod Council every other election year. Each of the conferences will be assigned to a cycle.**

**Amendment to continuing resolution eliminating specific number of conferences.**

**S12.01.01 A2016 The synod shall be composed of conferences, grouped in four quadrants. The Synod Council shall assign each congregation to a conference.**

**ADOPTED**

Bishop Rimbo then asked the Assembly to refer Action No. 4, regarding Supporting Organizations, to the Synod Council. The Assembly voted to refer.

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## **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 Assembly Chaplain, The Rev. Dr. Jerome Taylor, the Synod Worship Team and worship leaders and assistants, those who shared testimonies during “Prayer on the Way” moments, the ELCA Glocal Musicians, Strategic Plan Grant Impact presenters, The Rev. Paul Johnsen and the Assembly Planning Committee, all registration and hospitality volunteers, The Rev. Joel Brandt and the Committee on Reference and Counsel, elected officers and the Synod Council, Strategic Plan Consultant Tom Massey, Photographer Bob Williams, Quizdom Representative Jacob Wood, and 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*