

## 2017 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly

The congregations of the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the ELCA met in assembly at the John S. Knight Center on Friday June 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup>. Highlights of the Assembly included:

- Lutheran Youth Organization Summer Gathering: This year, the Synod's LYO chapter held its summer gathering in conjunction with the Synod Assembly. They held several of their own activities, including a lock-in at Holy Trinity, Akron, but they also joined the Assembly to lead the Friday morning Eucharist service, lead workshops on youth ministry on Friday afternoon, and lead an inter-generational service project during the workshop sessions on Saturday morning.
- ELCA Report: We received greetings and a report from the churchwide organization brought by Julie Rossate, Program Director for the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) ministry. Her report detailed the efforts and successes of several ELCA ministries, and highlighted our Synod's own Amanda Silcox, who is serving a year in Cambodia as a part of YAGM. You may also go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRtTH-LrRK8> to see Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's video address to the assembly.
- Bishop's Report: Bishop Allende challenged the Synod to consider what it is to be Lutheran and to be clear about our beliefs and our witness in our lives as followers of Christ. His report included reflections on his travel to our companion Synod in South Africa and his visit to the Mexico-Guatemala border as part of a Human Rights Observation Mission as well as highlights of local efforts on discipleship, evangelism, stewardship, and cross-cultural conversations.
- Vice President's Report: Bryan Penvose emphasized the importance of communicating with each other and sharing the stories of where God is at work in our midst. He lifted up the developing mission interpreters ministry and asked individuals interested in participating in this ministry of storytelling to contact him.
- Workshops: An excellent slate of workshops were offered on how congregations can engage with their communities, which addressed such topics as youth ministry, conversations across races and cultures, Lutheran-Catholic covenant, and conversations among congregations about how to connect with God's mission in the world. Workshops were also offered on shared ministry and the historical context and content of the 95 theses.
- Budget Approval: The assembly approved a 3-tier budget for 2018-2019 based on varying levels of mission support, ranging from a 2% reduction in mission support to a 1% increase. All levels of the budget maintain giving from the Synod to the churchwide organization at 50% of unrestricted mission support.
- Compensation Guidelines: The Assembly approved compensation guidelines that recommend a base salary of \$37,700 (0.3% COLA) and a \$310 increase for each additional year of ordained ministry for pastors.
- Synod Offering: The offering for the two Eucharist services totaled almost \$3,600 and was divided equally between the Northeastern Ohio Synod LYO and ELCA World Hunger.
- Resolutions on Visa Process: The primary disappointment of the Assembly was that we were unable to be joined by Bishop SWS Sihlangu of the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa, due to delays in his visa hearing. The Assembly passed a resolution directing the Synod Council to prepare a letter of concern to United States Senators and Representatives representing Synod territory expressing our disappointment.