



OUR MISSION: Empower, equip and encourage the people of God to make Christ known

Freed and Renewed in Christ

2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Theme

We, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, had our triennial churchwide assembly in New Orleans August 8 through 13 this year. This wonderful event was very much like a large scale synod assembly: 980 voting members from every corner of this church (including 15 voting members, plus some staff and guests from the IN-KY mission territory) gathered with guests from all over the world and across faith traditions to worship, fellowship, study scripture, and discuss and decide about important issues and concerns that we face together.



Each of the six days we gathered around table and font for worship and to hear inspiring preaching. Every day we heard the stories of mission and ministry, lives changed by the love of Jesus, across the church and around the world. We discussed peace in the Middle East and care for creation and the welcome of all of God's children. We affirmed "Declaration on the Way," thirty-two theological and other commitments that are no longer church dividing between us and the Roman Catholic church, and we witnessed a warm embrace between a Jewish rabbi and a Muslim leader. We crafted one, new roster of ministers of Word and Service out of three and committed to walk and work together toward God's unfolding future, whatever that might be. In so many ways, we saw over and over again throughout the days together the glorious work of God among, through, and around us, all of us, as the part of the body of Christ known as the ELCA.

A video library of the event with featured videos can be found here: <http://www.elca.org/cwalive> and the entire live stream, broken down by category (Plenary, Sermon, Holy Communion) can be found here: <http://livestream.com/accounts/4664934/events/5829763>

The summary of actions by the assembly can be accessed and downloaded here: <https://guidebook.com/guide/38501/poi/6124304/?pcat=134778>

And a fun behind-the-scenes video can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiGRwzLhxyM>

Unfortunately, and as a reflection of the unhelpful, unhealthy ways we too often communicate in our culture, some of the reporting about what happened at this assembly has been inaccurate, even inflammatory. For example, almost immediately after we approved the one roster of Word and Service to be called deacons, some parts of the Internet blew up with pastors claiming that we did away with ordination and that they could no longer be called pastors. A careful read of the documents and watching the videos will reveal that this is completely wrong. Pastors are still ministers of Word and Sacrament (the way our confessions refer to them) who become so through the rite of ordination. Now, working alongside them will be deacons, ministers of Word and Service, who become so through the rite of consecration. [See also my blog posting about this at <http://livingcommunion.blogspot.com>.]

As another example, some news reports have claimed that because of a resolution that was passed at this assembly the ELCA is anti-Semitic. This could not be further from the truth. Again, a careful read of the documents will show that the resolution calls for attention to "internationally recognized human rights standards as specified in US law" on the part of both Israel and Palestine as the US engages in diplomacy in the Middle East.

These, and other, unfortunate misunderstandings of what occurred at the churchwide assembly, nourished and complicated by the way social media are used in our culture, make it crucial for each of us be advocates for accuracy and to not be shy about correcting misconceptions, caricatures, and distortions when we encounter them. This is true not just in conversation and reporting about the churchwide assembly, but unfortunately, it's a challenge for us in much of our discourse about important concerns in our country and church. I am grateful for your partnership in being people who speak the truth in love, seek accuracy and clarity, and engage one another with civility, mutual respect, and trust.

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Freed and Renewed in Christ *(continued)*

On the last morning of the assembly, speaking to the uncertainty and fear that many people across the church experience these days and highlighting the ways we had seen God at work during the assembly, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton proclaimed in her closing remarks, "We are not a dying church; we are a changing church." We are, indeed, being changed by the power of the Spirit of the crucified and risen Christ. We face many challenges together and sometimes the way forward is unclear. Yet, as we walk with Christ and with one another, from the midst of the changes and challenges new, abundant, and lasting life is rising, for us and for the world. By grace, as the apostle Paul proclaimed, "all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit" [2 Corinthians 3:18].

Thanks be to God!

+Bishop Bill Gafkjen

FREE Stewardship Workshop & Lunch



Are you looking for new ideas to strengthen your congregation's stewardship ministry? Cultivating a spirit of generosity among your people requires leadership. Join us on Saturday, August 27 from

9:00-3:00 at Trinity English (450 West Washington Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46802) as we present Strengthening Steward Leaders in Your Congregation. Speakers include Neil Bullock from the ELCA Stewardship Office; Pastor Jerry O'Neal, the I-K Stewardship Director, and Chris Burnette, the new I-K Gift Planner. Please RSVP to Pastor Jerry at joneal@iksynod.org.

Updated Pulpit Supply List Available

We are pleased to provide this resource to support your congregation during times when you need a Supply Pastor. For a list of the current Pulpit Supply List, which includes Rostered Leaders, clergy from other traditions, Lay Worship Leaders, seminarians and seminary graduates who are available to serve your congregation please follow [this link](#) to the I-K Synod Website.

Professional Leaders Conference

Clifty Falls State Park
September 25 - 27, 2016
**RECONCILIATION:
Dare We Speak of It?**



The Indiana-Kentucky Synod Professional Leaders Conference is an annual event - the one time each year when the rostered leaders (clergy, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers) have an opportunity to relax and to foster their collegial relationships. It is a time for conversation about leadership, ministry, and their personal lives. The speaker this year will be the Rev Dr Allan Boesak.

Dr Allan Boesak is professor of theology at Christian Theological Seminary and the Desmond Tutu Chair of Peace, Global Justice and Reconciliation Studies. Born in South Africa, his early activism and service led to international recognition as an influential leader in the fight against apartheid. During the 1980s he worked alongside Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela to lead efforts against apartheid and promote reconciliation.. You may register for the Professional Leaders Conference by [clicking here](#) or by visiting the I-K Synod website at iksynod.org.

Join Us for Bishop's Youth Day

On October 29, 2016, all high school youth and their adult leaders from the IK Synod are invited to attend Bishop's Youth Day, a new endeavor sponsored by the Indiana Youth Coalition designed to connect today's youth with Bishop Bill Gafkjen through worship, fellowship and team building activities. The 10 am to 3 pm event will be hosted at Christ the Savior Lutheran Church in Fishers, IN, and will include lunch.

"Christ the Savior is thrilled to host this Bishop's Day with the youth of our synod," said Rev. Brian Derrer, Senior Pastor at Christ the Savior Lutheran Church. "We understand part of our mission to be faith formation for every generation, and are so excited to see Bishop Gafkjen connect with young people."

Register [here](#)! Questions can be directed to Julie Peralta at julie@rlcindy.org.

