

I-K Lutheran

Where God is doing new things

August 2019

The triennial Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA is August 5-10 this year. I will join twenty-some other folks from the IN-KY mission territory in Milwaukee as voting members and visitors, gathered under the theme “Church Together.” As I often say about our synod assemblies, we will cram as much as we can of what it means to be the church into those six days.

Worship will center our life together throughout the week. We will debate, discuss, and discern significant decisions on behalf of the whole church. Bible study and other spiritual and community formation opportunities will be sprinkled throughout our days together. We’ll say thanks and good-bye to folks who have served the church in public positions and we’ll elect and welcome new folks who are ready and willing to serve. We’ll pray together, laugh together, no doubt cry together, bear one another’s burdens, and share each other’s joys. We will be empowered, equipped and encouraged for our participation in God’s mission of hope, healing, and reconciliation in the world. And what we do in Milwaukee won’t stay in Milwaukee! It will reverberate out into the church to empower, equip, and encourage all the people and communities associated with the ELCA for their – your – mission and ministry as well.



Gathered as a community of discernment, among the things the nearly 1000 voting members of the assembly will consider are:

- **Presiding Bishop election.** Like the Secretary and synod bishops, the Presiding Bishop serves six-year terms. Current Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has indicated her willingness to serve another term. The voting will begin with an ecclesiastical ballot, essentially a blank piece of paper on which voting members will write the name of any eligible ELCA pastor. If no one receives 75% or more of the vote on that ballot, votes will continue. Voting will begin in the first plenary session Monday evening.
- **Election of a new Secretary for the ELCA,** as we give thanks for and bid Godspeed to Pastor Chris Boerger, who will retire after serving a six-year term. Any ELCA lay person, deacon, or pastor is eligible to serve as Secretary. The voting for Secretary will begin Thursday morning and will follow the ecclesiastical balloting process.
- **Election of folks to various committees, boards, and the ELCA Church Council.**
- **Consideration of a number of important decisions, statements, policies and practices** including:
 - A proposed social statement entitled “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”
 - An inter-religious relationship policy, “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment”
 - Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA
 - Declaration to People of African Descent
 - Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns
 - Report and Recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group, including consideration of the rite of ordination for ministers of Word and Service, known as deacons, and other concerns related to this roster
 - 60 Day Journey Toward Justice in a Culture of Gun Violence
 - Scores of memorials and resolutions about a wide variety of concerns that were sent to the Churchwide Assembly from synods, congregations, and others.

The schedule and materials for the Churchwide Assembly, including the documents to be considered, are available online at <https://www.elca.org/churchwideassembly>. Most of the event will also be live-streamed and can be accessed through that same web address, beginning with opening worship at 3:00pm Central Time on Monday, August 5th. Through that web page you can also download an app, Guidebook, that will provide you with all the Assembly info.

Please pray for the folks gathered in Milwaukee before and during the Assembly. Please welcome them home afterward and ask them about what happened there. Look for synod and churchwide communications to share information about the Assembly, especially regarding how we might grow in being church together as we continue to move toward and embrace God’s unfolding future for us and for our participation in God’s mission of hope, healing, and reconciliation in the world.

Grateful to be church together with you,

Bishop Bill Gafkjen

"I'm a Lutheran" Nominations

Do you know an ELCA member who has a unique story to tell? Nominate them for "Living Lutheran's" monthly "I'm a Lutheran" feature. Past features have included people with interesting vocations, impressive accomplishments or exciting experiences. We're looking for people who are passionately living and showing their faith in their everyday life and are comfortable talking about it. Send the name and contact information for your nominee, as well as a little bit about why you think they'd be a great candidate, to megan.brandsrud@elca.org.

Faith and Addiction Conference

As understanding of addiction and concern about the opioid epidemic grows, the Fellowship of Recovering Lutheran Clergy and the Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church are hosting a conference to educate congregations about addiction and provide workshops to present ideas for how congregations can effectively do addiction ministry. The conference will be held Sept. 20-22 in Bloomington, Minn. Go to addictionandfaithconference.com for more information.

Three Sides Podcast: "Re-imagining Prison Ministry"

Visiting those in prison is one of the fundamental calls in the gospel, but within that call lies an invitation to relationship. The Rev. Fred Nelson from Redeemer Lutheran Church in Park Ridge, Ill., is founder and executive director of Inside Out Network, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping connect people inside prisons with those beyond the walls in meaningful ways. Pastor Nelson is joined by Aneel Trivedi, associate director of Inside Out, to share with Three Sides Podcast about this prison ministry. Listen at LivingLutheran.org/podcast.

"God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday is Sunday, September 8, 2019. This day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ - every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life - flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace. You work every day to make your community a better place. Let us continue doing this work together in 2019! View the [video](#) and access [resources](#) to guide your congregation's planning, promotion and more.



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.