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June 2025

HIGHLIGHTS of the 2025 NW Washington Synod Assembly

The 2025 NW Washington Synod Assembly was held May 16-17 at the Edward D. Hansen Conference Center in Everett. Our theme of **WOVEN INTO GOD'S STORY**, based on Gal. 3:26-29, was apparent throughout the agenda and the assembly hall. Beautiful table runners created by artisans from around our synod adorned our tables. Our worship, with the familiar fibers of our liturgy – gathering, word, meal, and sending, unfolded across the entire assembly, reminding us that every moment we share is sacred.

Thank you to all in attendance for helping to co-create a holy space for the work of our synod. Below you will find highlights from our time together. *(Official minutes will be available, once approved by synod council.)*

We received reports and messages from our synod and churchwide leaders.
You will find written reports from our synod bishop, synod secretary, synod vice president, and our presiding bishop of the ELCA on the website for your review. We lifted up **Vice President Kay Edgerton** as this is her last in-person assembly prior to the completion of her term in 2026. We are grateful for her leadership these last 7+ years! We lifted up **Rev. Joanne Engquist** as she concludes her 6-year term on the ELCA Churchwide Council. We give thanks for our rostered synod staff members**, Rev. Judy Brennan, Rev. Dr. David Hahn, and Rev. Andy Yee** for leading opportunities for Bible study and table conversations – woven throughout the gathering.

We connected with ministry partners through videos, display tables, and presentations.
You will find written reports submitted to the synod AND video messages shared at the assembly linked on our synod website. Please take time to learn more about these important partners. Thank you to those ministry partners who provided delightful door prizes drawn by local traveling Lutheran**, Rick Steves**. A special thank you for the generosity of our assembly sponsors: **Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Portico Benefit Services, Paths to Understanding, Godly Play**, and **Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary**.

We elected members to the synod council and these committees:
Synod Council: **Salvador Cossio, Rev. Sara Funkhouser, Shane Lambing,** and **Cindy Shultz.**
Committee on Discipline: **Karen Klemetson, John Koch, Deacon Marie Preftes Arenz,** and **Rev. Pam Russell.**
Consultation Committee: **Rev. Mary Lindberg, Rev. John O'Neal, Jennifer Satterfield** and **Janet St. Clair.**

We held a Bishop Election
Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee was reelected for a second 6-year term on the second ballot.
Thank you to **Nick Kiger**, Director for ELCA Mission Support, for serving as our ELCA Churchwide Representative, chairing the bishop election process. Thank you to our two nominees for bishop: the **Rev. Priscilla Paris-Austin** and **the Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee** for their willingness to allow their names to go forward. We are blessed by the witness and words you each shared.

We passed a budget
The proposed budget (found on synod website here) was passed as amended. Amendments included:
1. Distributing $1200 from the Open Door Ministry Fund to Reconciling Works
2. Reallocating funds under Agency and Social Ministry section as follows:
   - Increase funds to Real Rent Duwamish to $5000
   - Increase funds to Racial Equity to $5000
   - Decrease funds to Luther Seminary and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary to $25,200 each

Constitution Amendments
We amended our constitution – changing the name of our smaller synod groupings from *cluster* to *conference*. We offered a blessing to those who serve as deans of the conferences. Find the list of conferences and deans here.

We celebrated ministry milestones of rostered ministers.
Find our celebration video here https://vimeo.com/1086166969

Congregation anniversaries and news:

- Celebrated these anniversaries: **Celebration Lutheran Church** in Anacortes – 25 years; **Freeborn Lutheran Church** in Stanwood – 125 years. May they continue to be a blessing in their communities!
- We voted to recognize and receive the congregation **United in Grace, Monroe, WA,** a union of Morning Star Lutheran Church and Monroe United Methodist Church, as a congregation of this synod.
- We celebrated that Cross and Crown Lutheran Church and Nativity Lutheran Church are now officially **Living Hope Lutheran Church in Renton.**

Blessing of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Members
We blessed the Voting Members from our synod who will be attending the ELCA Churchwide Assembly this July. These individuals were elected at our 2024 synod assembly: **Dante Austin** (Immanuel, Seattle), **Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee** (Faith, Everett), Vice President **Kay Edgerton** (Nativity, Renton), **Rev. Ivar Hillesland** (Seattle), **Rev. Kristi Lambing** (Fir-Conway, Mount Vernon), **Seth Lambing** (Pointe of Grace, Mukilteo), **Rachel Pritchett** (Bethany, Bainbridge Island), **Kasey Shultz** (Columbia City Church of Hope, Seattle), and **Nisar Stephen** (Grace, Des Moines). May their travels be safe, and the deliberations Spirit-led. Learn more and follow along here: www.elca.org/about/leadership/churchwide-assembly

We discussed these Resolutions & Memorials:
These can be found on the assembly webpage: **www.lutheransnw.org/synod-assembly**

- **Resolution 1**– Supporting Global Refuge's Camino a Casa Program – **passed**
- **Resolution 2**– Affirming Northwest Washington Synod's commitment to the Evangelical Lutheran Church In European Russia (ELCER) through the Companion Synod Program – **passed as amended** (amendments replaced "Team Russia" with "companion synod."
- **Memorial 1** - To affirm transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer people of God – **passed – will be forwarded to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly**
- **Memorial 2** – To authorize ELCA participation in national legal actions in support of vulnerable ELCA communities – **passed – will be forwarded to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly**
- **Memorial 3** - Call for an end to the occupation of Palestine and recognition of its statehood in the United Nations - **passed – will be forwarded to the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly**

A generous offering was collected at assembly
Over $10,300 was received – thank you for your generosity! This will be shared equally with Lutheran Disaster Response, Bishop's Caring Fund, New & Emerging Ministries, and the synod's LiVE Project.

THANK YOU to our amazing volunteers!
You will find a list of our faithful volunteers here.

2026 Gatherings and Assembly
The voting members of this assembly will be recalled for a short online meeting on May 16, 2026. The only items of business will be: electing a synod vice president, electing a synod secretary, and passing the next year's budget. We will also be holding a gathering (or two) in the spring of 2026. Stay tuned for more information.

If YOU are interested in lending a hand with the upcoming synod gatherings – or a future synod assembly, please reach out to Susan Berg in the synod office: 206-783-9292 or susan@lutheransnw.org.