

**Minutes of the Northwest Washington Synod's
Thirty-fifth Assembly
Woven into God's Story
Friday-Saturday, May 16-17, 2025
Edward D. Hansen Convention Center, Everett, WA
(October 10, 2025 Revision)**

Friday, May 16

PLENARY 1

Began at 1 pm with Opening Worship and continued as follows.

Welcome/Introductions/Orientation

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee welcomed all and introduced our special guests representing churchwide, other synods and organizations. Ministry Partners supporting the Assembly were thanked. These included Lutheran Community Services NW, Portico, Godly Play, Paths to Understanding, and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Courtney Stepp, Assembly Planning Chairperson, and Susan Berg, Director of Communication and Events, were thanked along with the many volunteers who were asked to stand and be acknowledged. Courtney was then invited to the podium to orient members of the Assembly to important aspects of their responsibilities as voting members as well as the resources/tools/refreshments available to them.

Credentials Report/Declaration of Quorum

Assembly registrar, **Josh Judd-Herzfeldt**, was thanked and introduced. He then came to the podium to give the first Credentials Report:

As of 1:44 p.m. 327 voting members were registered.

Adoption of Proposed Standing Rules

Moved and Carried (Hereafter, abbreviated as **MC**)

SA2025.05.16.01 to approve the Synod Assembly Standing Rules as presented.

Adoption of Proposed Agenda

MC

SA2025.05.16.02 to approve the Synod Assembly Agenda as presented.

Report of the Synod Vice President

Vice President (VP) **Kay Edgerton** was thanked and acknowledged for her seven years of service in this role, and the care, compassion and commitment she has brought to it. She was invited to the podium for her report.

- VP Kay noted the privilege it has been to serve and that this would be her last opportunity to address the Assembly in person; we will gather virtually next year at the end of her second term to elect a new VP.
- Looking back on her service, she realized that she could not have predicted serving during a global pandemic, during the need to re-think church, and in the face of such political division and

upheaval; it was such a difficult period in the life of the church that she was one of very few synod VPs throughout the ELCA to run for a second term during these past few years.

- During her years of service Synod Council (SC) was made smaller and nimbler in a desire to empower leaders to be collaborative decision makers; she thanked current SC members and asked them to please stand to be acknowledged by the Assembly.
- Among the priorities of the SC during her time of leadership have been the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) initiative and strengthening lay leadership; currently, the Core Equity Team for the DEIB work has held 50 one-on-one listening sessions, and they are just getting started.
- In the area of lay leadership, synod VPs have long been advocates of this group of leaders; in this capacity, Kay has been pleased to support and participate in the Living into Vocational Engagement (LiVE) Project within the synod.
- Recently the ELCA has formed an official gathering of synod VPs; thus, next year, our new VP will have the support of this group; Kay invited those present who have previously served as VP to please stand and be acknowledged.

She concluded her report by remembering the mentorship and support of former VP Kim Unti whose untimely, tragic death this past year impacted many. Kim's legacy lives on in all lives she touched. Kay hopes she will be able to mentor whoever follows her as Kim mentored her.

Synod Constitution Bylaw Proposed Change

MC

SA2025.05.16.03 to approve the changes/amendments to S12.01.01 and S12.01.02 and add S12.01.03 to the Synod Constitution Bylaws as presented.*

[*See addenda to minutes for changes/amendments and approved text.]

Blessing of the Deans

Bp. Shelley returned to the podium; named those who are currently serving as deans of our synod conferences and asked them to stand and receive a blessing. (See Addenda for listing of deans)

Mission Partner Videos

Portico - Portico's Regional Representative, **Andrea Arey**, was introduced, and the following video shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515853> This flier was also provided: [Portico](#)

Camp Lutherwood - Three Camp Lutherwood Staffers were acknowledged: **Pr. Kevin Beebe, Ashleigh Ellsworth-Keller, and Sam Martinez**. The following video was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086516014>

Door Prize #1

Fellow Lutheran traveler and travel guide, **Rick Steves**, was called upon to present the first door prize provided by **Camp Lutherwood**.

Report of the Synod Secretary

Synod Secretary, Netsie Griffith, was called upon to give her report.

- She noted that changes/edits had been made since the report was first posted in the Assembly tab of the website, one of which was correcting the omission of Rev. Paul Feiertag, from the names of rostered ministers who had died since the last Assembly.

- She also acknowledged her job would be much more difficult without the support of synod staff, specifically those with whom she worked most closely: Tabetha Myatt, Susan Berg and Andy Yee.
- She has found it to be a privilege to work alongside and with VP, Kay, Bishop Shelley, the Synod Council and all the Synod Staff.
- Attention and thanks were given to the Minutes Team consisting of **Amanda Bedsaul** from St. Matthew's, Renton and **Tabetha Myatt**, Synod Office Administrator.

She concluded by introducing the video slideshow of **Rostered Minister 2025 Anniversaries** for rostered ministers noting significant, milestone anniversaries: <https://vimeo.com/1086166969>

Bishop Election Overview and Introduction of Nominees

Nick Kiger, Director for ELCA Mission Support, was introduced, and the bishop gave him the gavel for leading this specific business of the assembly.

- He thanked the **Bishop Call Process Task Force** and asked them to stand and be applauded by the assembly. (See Addenda for members of this Task Force)
- He proceeded by giving a review of the Bishop Election Process as outlined in our Synod Constitution.
 - For the first ballot 75% of legal votes are necessary for an election.
 - If no one is elected on the first ballot, a second ballot will be taken; 60% of the legal votes are required on the second ballot for an election.
- Prior to the first ballot, each nominee is allowed to give a five-minute speech.
- If there is no election after the first ballot, each nominee will be allowed a Question-and-Answer period prior to the second ballot; the results of the second ballot are expected by 6:30 p.m.
- If there is no election after the second ballot, each nominee will be allowed a two-minute speech prior to the third ballot which will be taken on Saturday at 10:20 am.
- Balloting will be preceded by a time of silence, reflection and prayer, as this is a call process.

Nominee Speeches

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee shared her address with the Assembly first, as she shared second at the pre-assembly Zoom Forum. **The Rev. Priscilla Paris-Austin** then shared her address with the Assembly.

Second Credentials Report

Registrar **Josh Judd-Herzfeldt** was called upon for a Credentials Report.

As of 2:35 p.m. 330 voting members were registered.

Bishop Election - Ballot 1

Pastor Sara Funkhouser, co-chair of the Elections Committee, was called upon to introduce the first ballot. Prior to the casting of the first ballot, **Pastor Erik Wilson-Weiberg**, was called upon to pray for our nominees and the election process. The first ballot was then cast.

Mission Partner Video

The following video on **Mission Investment Fund** was shown to the Assembly:

<https://vimeo.com/1086515840> This report was also made available: [Mission Investment Fund](#)

Afternoon Break

The gavel to chair the Assembly was then given to VP Kay Edgerton who thanked Nick and declared a 20-minute break and the reconvening of the Assembly at 3:10 pm.

- The following **Mission Partner Video** featuring the ministry of **Luther Seminary** was shown at the end of the break time: <https://vimeo.com/1086515882>

PLENARY 2

Upon our return from the break, VP Kay called upon Secretary Netsie Griffith to make the following announcement: It was pointed out during the break that **recognition of the Rev. Dick Lehmann's 65-year ordination anniversary milestone** was missing from the Anniversary Milestone video shown earlier. Given that Pr. Lehmann was with us in the Assembly, people were given an opportunity to applaud him.

Door Prizes, #s2 & 3

Rick Steves presented two door prizes; one provided by **Coach NW** and the other provided by **Lutheran Counseling Network**.

VP Kay invited Churchwide Representative, Nick, and Elections Co-chair, Pr. Sara, to come forward to share the results of the first ballot for the election of the bishop. She then turned the gavel over to Nick.

Report of Ballot 1 for Bishop /next steps

Pr. Sara Funkhouser was called upon to give the results of the first ballot for the election of bishop:

- 328 ballots were cast; all were legal.
- 246 ballots were required for an election.

For Bishop of the NWWA Synod

- **The Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee received 240 votes.**
- **The Rev. Priscilla Paris-Austin received 88 votes.**

Nick declared that based upon the report of the Election Team, we do not yet have an election. Thus, each nominee will be invited to the stage later in this plenary to respond to questions that were gathered prior to the May 4th Zoom Forum. The chair is returned to Bp. Shelley.

Instead of a single Bishop's Report, Bp. Shelley announced the offering of a different format: a series of four presentations called Staff Weavings. Each will be led by one of Synod Staff's rostered ministers: Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Andy Yee; Director for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Judy Brennan; Director for Formation and Learning, Pastor David Hahn and herself as Bishop. She then called upon Pastor Andy.

Synod Staff Weavings 1 – the Rev. Andy Yee, Assistant to the Bishop

- Theology impacts our social imagination; it helps us to discover what our dreams are and then to live out those dreams.
- Our theme verse reminds us that "in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God." Christ changes everything.
- Luke 2:8-12 was then read as a basis for reflecting upon such change. The shepherds "keeping watch in the fields" terrorized by the announcement of the angels are invited into God's story in a way which begins to challenge their trauma and challenge them to their very core.
- A time of small group discussion on our understanding of power was prompted with these thoughts and questions.

- God is opening God's space and God's self to be with us; opening us to an intimate relationship; a God who becomes vulnerable; vulnerable enough to be swaddled, swaddled by bands of cloth; norms of hierarchy are being challenged.
- What does it look like if we are invited into a different kind of power structure? What would it look like to be invited into a different way of doing social justice?
- We are journeying together with God's people so all may discover and participate in what God is doing among us. How does this working statement invite a different power dynamic?
- 'Synod' means walking together; when synod staff visit congregations, they are not coming as 'experts,' but rather to walk together with congregations by showing up; by being interested in spiritual growth for us all.
- The Synod is larger than the bishop's office; the synod is all congregations together; you are the synod (it's not an us/them dynamic).
- As synod together, we open ourselves to one another; synod staff come alongside congregations and congregations are invited to walk alongside synod staff.
- This is lived out in the transition work of Call processes; both synod staff and congregation walk together through this time, each bringing important steps based on congregational agency and synod's guidance.
- With a new understanding of power, we each show up with curiosity to ask good questions; to be present; and to trust in the Spirit, so that we might journey together to discover what God is doing among us.

Third Credentials Report

Registrar Josh came forward and reported that **as of 4:02 p.m. 331 voting members were registered.**

Reference and Counsel Session 1

Pastor Tor Berg, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, was called upon for a report from the Reference and Counsel Committee.

- Members of the Reference and Counsel Committee were thanked and named. (See Addenda for names)
- The difference between a resolution and a memorial was clarified.
- Pr. Tor explained that a memorial that had been submitted regarding the use of expansive language for the Trinity was returned to the makers for the following reasons:
 - It was believed not to be in contradiction to the mission and values of the synod;
 - It might possibly be problematic in our relationships with our ecumenical partners; and
 - It is something for which we already have the freedom to express.

Brooke Powers from Central Lutheran, Seattle was recognized at the microphone to appeal the decision of the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Moved, Seconded and Failed

SA2025.05.16.04 to bring the memorial returned by the Reference and Counsel Committee to the assembly body for debate.

Pastor Tor then introduced the following:

Resolution One: Supporting Global Refugee's Camino a Casa

Moved TO RESOLVE that congregations in the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be encouraged to support Global Refugee's *Camino a Casa* program through prayer and financial support.

Because the allotted time for resolutions/memorials had expired, the motion placed on the floor was tabled until the next Plenary session.

Bishop Nominee Question and Answer (Q&A)

The floor was turned over to Churchwide Representative, Nick, once again for the next phase, the Q&A, of the process for election of the bishop.

- One nominee was invited to the stage while the other nominee was sequestered, and each was given 15 minutes to answer five questions.
- Since the Rev. Priscilla Paris-Austin spoke second in the first round, she went first in this round followed by the Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee.
- The five questions in the order asked were:
 - Question 1 – What story/theme from the Bible resonates with you most and why?
 - Question 2 – How will you help congregations and members out of the posture of fear and scarcity and into one of trust in God's abundance?
 - Question 3 – Given the difficulties in presenting a balanced budget that funds the synod's ministry priorities with uncertain revenues from shrinking sources, what specific strategies would you employ steward the synod's financial gifts?
 - Question 4 - As bishop, how would you support ethnic specific ministries in the Synod? What steps would you take to expand accompaniment of these congregations?
 - Question 5 - Given the rise of harmful anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric and policy in our nation, how is your vision for congregational leadership and engagement being shaped and reshaped; what's shifting as you consider the church's public witness in this moment?

Bishop Election – Ballot 2

It was noted that 60% of legal ballots are necessary for election on the second ballot.

Fourth Credentials Report

Registrar Josh came forward and reported that **as of 5:03 p.m. 338 voting members were registered.**

Pr. Sara was called forward to initiate the distribution and instructions for Ballot 2; Pr. Erik offered a prayer for the Spirit's guidance; votes were cast; the results of Ballot 2 will be announced after dinner.

Mission Partner Video

While ballots were being collected this video about **Paths to Understanding** was shown:

<https://vimeo.com/1086515982>

Pastor Terry Kylo, Paths to Understanding Executive Director, was acknowledged and thanked for his ministry partnership and, also, for being a financial sponsor of this year's Assembly. This flyer was also provided for further information: [Paths to Understanding](#)

Dinner Church Break

Pastor Emma Donohew, Mission Developer of Echoes in Bellingham, was introduced to lead us into Dinner Church. Following dinner, Pr. Emma led a closing prayer, and Dinner Church was concluded with a song.

PLENARY 3

Door Prize – Repeat of #3 – A repeat drawing was held for the door prize provided by **Lutheran Counseling Network**, as the first recipient was self-declared to be ineligible.

Congregational Anniversaries

The following anniversaries since the last Synod Assembly were acknowledged:

Celebration Lutheran Church, Anacortes, celebrated 25 years;

Freeborn Lutheran Church, Stanwood, celebrated 125 years.

VP Kay called upon to recognize some significant congregational partnerships, another sign of how God weaves us together.

- First, she noted the collaboration between **Cross & Crown Lutheran and Nativity Lutheran who came together to become Living Hope Lutheran.**
- She also brought forward the following motion from our Synod Council:

MC

SA2025.05.16.05 to recognize and receive the congregation, **United in Grace, Monroe, Washington, a union of Morning Star Lutheran Church and Monroe United Methodist Church, as a congregation of this synod.**

The bishop invited Nick and Pr. Sara to the stage for sharing the report of the second ballot for bishop and turned the chair over to Churchwide Representative, Nick.

Report of Ballot 2 for Bishop

Pr. Sara Funkhouser was called upon to give the results of the second ballot for the election of bishop:

- **325 ballots were cast; 320 were legal.**
- **60% of the votes required for election were declared to be 192.**

For Bishop of the NWWA Synod

- **The Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee received 215 votes.**
- The Rev. Priscilla Paris-Austin received 105 votes.

Nick declared an election and that **the Rev. Shelley Bryan Wee was re-elected to serve a second 6-year term.** Both nominees were thanked for entering this process and Pr. Erik was called upon to offer a prayer of thanksgiving.

Bp. Shelley was called upon to share a few words.

- She expressed gratitude to Pr. Priscilla and thanked the Assembly for providing the opportunity for her to continue in ministry together with them.

Fifth Credentials Report

Registrar Josh came forward and reported that **as of 6:50 p.m. 339 voting members were registered.**

Nominating Committee Report

Pastor Rick Rouse, chair of the Nominating Committee, was called upon to give the report of the Nominating Committee. He thanked the Nominating Committee for putting forth an excellent slate of nominees and asked them to stand to be recognized. (See Addenda for members of this Committee)

General Election – Ballot 1

Heidi Francis from the Elections Team was invited forward to begin the balloting. She clarified the stipulations on the ballot; the bishop made sure there were no questions from the floor and prefaced the voting with a prayer. Ballot 1 consisted of the nominees for the Committee on Discipline, the Consultation Committee, and the Synod Council. On the ballot slate in these categories were:

- Committee on Discipline, Rostered Ministers (vote for two)
 - Rev. John LaMunyon
 - Deacon Marie Preftes Arenz
 - Rev. Pam Russell
- Committee on Discipline, Lay Persons (vote for two)
 - Karen Klemetson
 - John Koch
- Consultation Committee, Rostered Ministers (vote for two)
 - Rev. Mary Lindberg
 - Rev. John O’Neal
- Consultation Committee, Lay Persons (vote for two)
 - Jennifer Satterfield
 - Janet St. Clair
- Synod Council, Rostered Minister, Deacon or Pastor (vote for one)
 - Rev. Sara Funkhouser
- Synod Council, Lay Woman (vote for one)
 - Cindy Shultz
- Synod Council, Lay Man (vote for one)
 - Shane Lambing
- Synod Council, Lay Man, Person of Color/First Language other than English, (vote for one)
 - Salvador Cossio

Mission Partner Videos and Door Prizes

Information from our mission partners at **Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)** was provided ([Pacific Lutheran University](#)) and the following video was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086527469>

- **Door Prize #4** - There was a drawing for a door prize provided by PLU.

The following video from our mission partners at **Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS)** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515913>

- **Pastor Sara Wilson**, representing PLTS, was acknowledged and the seminary was thanked for being a financial sponsor for the Assembly.
- **Door Prize #5** - There was a drawing for a door prize provided by PLTS.

Information from our from our mission partners at **Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)** was provided ([Lutheran Disaster Response Report](#)) and the following video was shown:

<https://vimeo.com/1086515957>

- **Ray Shjerven**, our synod’s liaison to the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the synod’s liaison for LDR was thanked and invited to stand. It was also noted that a portion of the offering collected at this year’s assembly will be shared with LDR.
- **Door Prize #6** – A drawing was then held for the prize provided by LDR.

Synod Staff Weavings 2 – the Rev. Judy Brennan, Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM)

- Pr. Judy discussed the role of synodical DEMs as being like the carabiner which holds her keys, because it's that which holds and connects the three expressions of the church (congregation, synod, churchwide).
- Her primary focus for her time of sharing was the story of Lydia from Acts 16; Lydia is one of the few women in the Bible who is not defined by a familial relationship (wife, mother, sister); Paul felt a sense of partnership with Lydia and her people.
- Lydia is identified as a worshiper of God (before her baptism).
- Four reasons Judy feels drawn to Lydia:
 - She is inspired by Lydia's open, listening heart which seeks a deeper connection to God.
 - Lydia's story exemplifies true, biblical hospitality; she recognized the importance of supporting God's work and offered her resources, her home and her heart.
 - Lydia practiced principles of faithful stewardship; she shared her resources to care for others and contribute to the spread of the gospel.
 - Instead of passively receiving the gospel, Lydia actively participated in spreading the gospel; she was a partner in the mission.
- In Judy's ministry as DEM, she gets to share in the work of our synod's Mission developers; it is holy work, but it can also be really hard; it can be difficult to go out and talk about Jesus; and it can be hard knowing your livelihood is dependent upon the generosity of others.
- One of the recipients of our offering is our Synod's Emerging and Strategic Ministry Fund; this fund is important, because our developing ministries and their leaders depend upon financial assistance from the church to carry out their work.
- Pr. Judy closed her time with words from Philippians 4:8 – "Whatever is true . . . think on these things."

Mission Partner Focus and Door Prize

Our partnership with **Seattle's Mission to Seafarers** was recognized. 90% of the world's goods are shipped by sea. The Seattle Seafarers Center is dedicated to working with all the Seafarers who work on board cargo, container ships, cruise ships, and bulk carriers by providing essential human services. More information can be found at this link: [Mission to Seafarers](#)

- **Door Prize #7** – A drawing was made for the door prize provided by Mission to Seafarers.

Agenda Amendment

An amendment to the agenda was made to report the results from the General Election – Ballot 1 the next day.

Break until Saturday Morning

Saturday, May 17

PLENARY 4

Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW) Video and Presentation

The following video was shown and **Executive Director, David Duea**, was introduced:

<https://vimeo.com/1086515926>

Words from Executive Director Duea:

- Refugee resettlement is not ended but is on pause; they have resettled 57,000 refugees in the Seattle area

- LCSNW has planted rose bushes in each of their locations, as they have had to lay off or transition staff to other positions.
- It is a miracle that they have had refugees from Afghanistan walk into their office who somehow made it to the U.S. despite all the current roadblocks.
- When he called the bishop to ask for the synod's support of their law suit, he received an immediate 'yes'; he thanked us for our support and knows our prayers are with them.

Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services) Video and Presentation

The following video was shown and **Jon Buuck**, representing Global Refuge, was introduced:

<https://vimeo.com/1086527391>

Words from Jon Buuck:

- He shared the recent issues and challenges about the resettlement of South Afrikaners.
- It was announced that Temporary Protective Status for refugees from Afghanistan has now been revoked; he urged us to write to our congressional representatives about this.
- He expressed thanks for our support and for the consideration of the resolution that will come before the Assembly in support of Global Refuge's *Camino a Casa* program.
- Attendees were also provided the information accessible via these links: [Global Refuge Report](#) and [Camino a Casa Program](#)
- **Door Prize #8** - A drawing was made for the door prizes provided by Global Refuge.

Reporting of General Ballot Election

Election Team member, **Heidi Francis**, was invited back to the stage to report the results of our General Election Ballot.

307 legal ballots were cast with the following results and elections (indicated by bold font):

- Committee on Discipline, Rostered Ministers (vote for two)
 - Rev. John LaMunyon – 164 votes
 - **Deacon Marie Preftes Arenz – 239 votes**
 - **Rev. Pam Russell – 195 votes**
- Committee on Discipline, Lay Persons (vote for two)
 - **Karen Klemetson – 305 votes**
 - **John Koch – 302 votes**
- Consultation Committee, Rostered Ministers (vote for two)
 - **Rev. Mary Lindberg – 303 votes**
 - **Rev. John O'Neal - 307 votes**
- Consultation Committee, Lay Persons (vote for two)
 - **Jennifer Satterfield – 307 votes**
 - **Janet St. Clair – 303 votes**
- Synod Council, Rostered Minister, Deacon or Pastor (vote for one)
 - **Rev. Sara Funkhouser – 303 votes**
- Synod Council, Lay Woman (vote for one)
 - **Cindy Shultz – 305 votes**
- Synod Council, Lay Man (vote for one)
 - **Shane Lambing – 305 votes**
- Synod Council, Lay Man, Person of Color/First Language other than English (vote for one)
 - **Salvador Cossio – 306 votes**

Nick Kiger, ELCA Dir. of Mission Support, was invited forward for the ELCA Churchwide report.

- Nick brought greetings from Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and his colleagues at the ELCA.
- The people from our synod who serve at the churchwide level were thanked for their service.
- He thanked us for the amount of our Mission Support contributed to churchwide; also acknowledged was our synod's giving which goes beyond Mission Support; specific examples and amounts were noted for ELCA World Hunger (approximately \$291,000) and Lutheran Disaster Response (approximately \$260,000).
- The Churchwide Assembly (CWA), scheduled to be held July 28-August 2 in Phoenix, AZ will be voting on the proposed Social Statement: Faith and Civic Life: Serving the Well-Being of All; also coming before the CWA will be recommendations from the Task Force on a Renewed Lutheran Church that have either been acted upon by the ELCA Church Council or will be brought to the CWA for action; *Human Sexuality Gift and Trust* revisions will be presented to the Assembly for approval; the theme for the CWA is "For the Life of the World" (from the Nicene Creed).
- On June 17th, information will be released for candidates for the positions of ELCA Presiding Bishop and ELCA Secretary.
- We are people of faith, people of love; with God all things are possible; our generosity helps us to share God's love globally and at home; we get caught up in our differences and forget to look at what draws us together, yet when we do this, sometimes it's messy, but God's grace and love is present even when we don't get it quite right.
- He then introduced Bishop Eaton's final Synod Assembly video which was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086527487>

Bishop Shelley thanked Nick for his leadership at our assembly and also thanked **Pastor Joanne Engquist** for her service on the ELCA Churchwide Council and Executive Committee. It was noted that she was finishing her term this year. The reason this position was not represented on our balloting is because we are linked with the Alaska Synod for this position. So, the next term will be held by someone from Alaska.

Blessing of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members

Bishop Shelley asked the nine voting members representing us at the upcoming Churchwide Assembly to please stand, and she offered a prayer and blessing for them, as they will soon fulfill this role. (See Addenda for names)

Mission Partner Video

- The following video featuring the work of **Sumud (formerly Peace Not Walls)** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515869> This information was also made available: [Sumud](#)

Sixth Credentials Report

Registrar Josh came forward and reported that **as of 11:02 a.m. 350 voting members were present.**

Reference and Counsel Session 2

Tor Berg, Reference and Council Chair, was invited up to continue the work of the committee. For the second time, the first resolution was placed on the floor for consideration by the Assembly.

Resolution One: Supporting Global Refuge's Camino a Casa

Two people spoke in support of the resolution; no one spoke against it.

MC

SA2025.05.17.06

TO RESOLVE that congregations in the Northwest Washington Synod of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be encouraged to support Global Refugee's *Camino a Casa* program through prayer and financial support.

The second resolution was then placed on the floor for consideration.

Resolution Two: *Affirming Northwest Washington Synod's Commitment to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in European Russia (ELCER) through the Companion Synod Program*

Moved TO RESOLVE that the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod, in partnership with Team Russia, encourage active engagement with the ELCER through prayer, mutual visits, financial support where needed, sharing of information from Team Russia, and development of congregation-to-congregation relationships with congregations of the ELCER.

Pastor Tim Feiertag, Trinity Lutheran, Everett, submitter of the resolution and representative from Team Russia rose to spoke to the Resolution.

Pastor Kari Lipke, member of Gethsemane Lutheran, rose and **moved to amend** the resolution replacing 'Team Russia' with 'the synod's companion synod committee' and to spell out ELCER; it was seconded; and discussion followed.

MSC

SA2025.05.17.07 TO RESOLVE that the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod, in partnership with **the synod's companion synod committee** ~~Team Russia~~, encourage active engagement with the ~~ELCER~~ **Evangelical Lutheran Church in European Russia (ELCER)** through prayer, mutual visits, financial support where needed, sharing of information from **the synod's companion synod committee** ~~Team Russia~~, and development of congregation-to-congregation relationships with congregations of the ELCER.

The motion, as amended, was brought back to the floor for a vote.

MC

SA2025.05.17.08 TO RESOLVE that the congregations of the Northwest Washington Synod, in partnership with **the synod's companion synod committee**, encourage active engagement with the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in European Russia (ELCER)** through prayer, mutual visits, financial support where needed, sharing of information from **the synod's companion synod committee**, and development of congregation-to-congregation relationships with congregations of the ELCER.

Pastor Tor Berg placed ***Memorial Two: To Authorize ELCA Participation in National Legal Actions in Support of Vulnerable ELCA Communities*** on the floor for consideration by the Assembly.

Pastor Chelsea Globe, submitter of the Memorial, rose to speak in support of it. Multiple speakers both for and against, but mostly for, the Memorial addressed the Assembly.

MC

SA2025.05.17.09 TO RESOLVE that the Northwest Washington Synod request the churchwide organization to develop educational and legal materials to help synods and congregations participate in national legal matters when needed; and

TO FURTHER RESOLVE that the Northwest Washington Synod request leadership of the churchwide organization, with prayerful discernment, to evaluate the constitutions of the three expressions of the ELCA, for the purpose of empowering faithful engagement in legal advocacy as a sign of solidarity with our most vulnerable congregations and ministries.

Mission Partner Videos and Door Prizes

- The following video on hunger produced by **ELCA World Hunger** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086527426>
 - **Synod Hunger Team's chairpersons, Bob and Carol Wall**, were introduced and the following information made available: [Hunger Team](#)
- The following video featuring the work of **Godly Play** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086527406>
 - **Joy Studer, Godly Play Trainer**, was introduced and thanked for being with us and for Godly Play being another one of our financial sponsors for our assembly.
 - **Door Prize #9** – A drawing was made for the door prize provided by **Godly Play**.
- The following video featuring the unique setting and role of **Holden Village** in our synod was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515971>
 - **Door Prize #10** – A drawing was made for the door prizes provided by **Holden Village**.

Synod Staff Weavings 3 – the Rev. Dr. David Hahn, Director for Formation and Learning

- The synod's platform for formation and learning is called LiVE which is an acronym for Living into Vocational Engagement.
- Acts, chapter 2 was Pr. David's scriptural focus; it was read twice followed by a pause for reflection.
- In this narrative of a celebration of God's gift of the Word to Moses, the Spirit disrupts those who are gathered; they are perplexed which means 'at a loss for how to proceed.'
- This is the beginning of a community broken open by the sheer act of God; it resulted in a spirit-led movement, a revolution of intimacy; not just about listening but also about voicing.
- We need to lean into the possibility of being opened to free the speech of the other.
- Honoring, creating and holding space becomes holy; it's not just about the idea but about the relationship; a ministry of joining, interacting and sharing.
- The LiVE Project is like a container, a space where we can think of our calling.
- LiVE is a networked learning community woven together by a braided theme consisting of being 1) theologically thoughtful, 2) culturally responsive, and 3) communally engaged.
- This work cannot be done alone; we gather together to offer retreats and courses.
 - We have four in-person retreats a year; 50+ congregations have participated, and there's always room for more.
 - Lay Ministry Formation (LMF) is an important component which accompanies people in their sense of call; initially nine people participated and six in the second year.
- The **LiVE Team** (initially Mandy Neill) is now comprised of **Antonietta Breitenfeldt and Laural Allan**; next year's theme is: *Practicing Faith in Woven Ways*.

Lunch Break

Mission Partner Videos and Door Prizes

- The following video featuring the **Josephine Caring Community** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086527441>
 - **Door Prize #11**- A drawing was made for the prize provided by **Josephine Caring Comm.**
- Another mission partner, **Bethany of the Northwest** was acknowledged along with its **Spiritual Director, Pastor Caitlyn Melillo and Chaplain, Pastor Marilyn Schultz.**
 - **Door Prize #12** – A drawing was made for the prize provided by **Bethany NW.**

PLENARY 5

Mission Partner Videos and Door Prizes

- The following video on the work of **Living Waters** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515997>
 - An invitation was extended via this message: [Living Water Invitation](#)
 - **Door Prize #13** – A drawing was made for the prizes provided by **Living Waters.**
 - **Door Prize #14** – A drawing was made for items provided by **ELCA World Hunger.**
- **Pastor Joanne Engquist** requested and was given a **Point of Privilege** to announce that 16,000 pounds of food would be coming to Gethsemane Lutheran next week; the food will be distributed after it's packaged; talk to Joanne if your church could use some of the food to distribute.
- The following video introducing **Brewed Theology** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515939>
 - **Door Prize #15** – A drawing was made for a 6-month subscription to **Brewed Theology.**
- The following video featuring **University of Washington Campus Ministry** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086527453>
 - **Door Prize #16** – A drawing was made for items provided by **UW Campus Ministry.**
 - **Door Prize #17** – A drawing was made for a prize provided by **Western Washington University.**

Final Credentials Report

Registrar Josh came forward and reported that **as of 1:38 p.m. the Synod Assembly consisted of the following members:**

- **Total voting members present – 350**
 - Lay persons present – 216
 - Women present – 113
 - Men present – 99
 - Non-binary present – 4
 - Rostered Ministers present – 134
 - Word & Service (Deacons) present – 13
 - Word & Sacrament (Pastors) present – 121
 - Persons of color or whose primary language is other than English present – 43
 - Youth members present (not yet 18) – 15
 - Young Adult members present (18-30) – 26
 - Observers (persons with voice but no vote) present – 4
 - Visitors present - 66

Mission Partner Video and Door Prize

- The following video prepared by the **Children, Youth and Family Ministry Committee** was shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515895>
 - **Door Prize #18** – A drawing was made for multiple items provided by this committee.

SA2025.05.17.11 to amend the 2026 budget to add a line item for Reconciling Works in the amount of \$1200 by taking that amount from the Open Door Ministries Fund.

Once again, the assembly was directed back to the main budget motion as amended.
The **Previous Question** was moved, seconded and carried.

MC

SA2025.05.17.12 that the General Fund Budget as amended be adopted for Fiscal Year 2026 (ending January 31, 2027) be approved at \$1,785,474.

15 minute Break

Mission Partner Video and Door Prize

- The following video on our **Companion Synod** was prepared by the **Team Russia** group and shown: <https://vimeo.com/1086515824>
 - **Door Prize #19** – A drawing was made for the prize provided by **Team Russia**.

Reference and Counsel Session 3

Pr. Tor Berg, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, was called upon to present Memorials.

Memorial One: To Affirm Transgender, Nonbinary, Gender Expansive, Two-Spirit, and Genderqueer People of God was placed on the floor for consideration by the Assembly.

Pastor Chelsea Globe, University of Washington Campus Pastor, author of the memorial rose to speak to it. She stated her purpose in bringing this memorial to the Assembly was because of how the current U.S. administration is treating LGBTQIA+ people and how they are under attack; she further stated that we are one of only a few, large Christian bodies who can do this on behalf of those in this community.

MC

SA2025.05.17.13 **TO RESOLVE** that the ELCA be encouraged to speak out against harmful policies and language towards transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer people perpetrated by government leaders and agencies, and wherever it is encountered; and

TO FURTHER RESOLVE that the ELCA, in partnership with long-time advocacy and education organization ReconcilingWorks along with ecumenical and community partners, equip congregations, ministries, and rostered and lay leaders with information and theological background to empower us to public witness, as specified in the *Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity*; and

TO FURTHER RESOLVE that this Church continually seek guidance from transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer leaders both inside the Church (ReconcilingWorks, seminary scholars and students, synod staff, conference of bishops, rostered leaders, lay leaders) and outside the Church for how to best advocate on their behalf.

Memorial Three: For an End to the Occupation of Palestine and Recognition of its Statehood in the United Nations was placed on the floor for consideration by the Assembly.

Rod Schofield, Christ the Servant Lutheran, Bellingham, rose to speak in support of the Memorial. After further speaking to the Memorial, the vote was taken.

MC

SA2025.05.17.14

TO RESOLVE THAT THE Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage its members continue to advocate for the human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis; and

TO FURTHER RESOLVE that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that would support the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations as other United Nation member states have done; and

TO FURTHER RESOLVE that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that will support the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

PLENARY 6

Staff Weavings 4 – Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee

Because the Assembly had already heard quite a bit from her in the Bishop Call Process, had her written report, and the allotted Assembly time would soon be coming to an end, Bp. Shelley pivoted to forego her original plan and modified her closing activity emphasizing the theme of the Assembly.

- She had each of us take a strip of cloth provided on the assembly tables and tie them together.
- We then stood, as we sang the assembly theme song, “Woven into God’s Story,” and connected the strips of cloth with others and formed one, large, moving connected strand of cloth demonstrating how we are woven together.
- Following this was a short break for the musicians to prepare to lead us in our closing worship.

Closing Worship – Bless this Night

Thank Yous

Following worship, the bishop thanked the band, the Worship Team, the synod staff, her family, Rick Steves, and Courtney Stepp. Her final words to the Assembly were: “You are the best thing about being bishop. Together we go forward.”

Assembly Planning Team Chair, Courtney Stepp also offered her thanks:

- “Thank you all; raise your hand if you’re serving on one of these teams: Worship Team, Spirit Borne Productions with Tabetha Myatt’s assistance; Nominations; Elections; Bishop Call Process Task Force; Décor Guru (Kathy Fisher – who recruited over 80 table runners); Ministry Partners; Team of Ushers; Reference and Counsel Committee; Resolution Makers; Minutes Team and Registrars.”

Adjournment of the Assembly

The bishop adjourned the assembly at 3:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Netsie N. Griffith
Synod Council Secretary

Addenda to the 2025 NWWA Synod Assembly Minutes and Actions

Addendum #1

Approved Constitutional Bylaw Amendments

(~~strikethrough~~ = strike, ***bold italicized*** = add)

After reviewing the current geographic/relational divisions of the synod (clusters), the following amendments are brought forward by the Synod Council.

S12.01.01. At the first meeting after each Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall designate the composition and names of the clusters ***congregations to geographical and relational conferences***. This action shall be reported by means of the regular communication resources of the synod.

S12.01.02. Any congregation desiring to change its cluster affiliation or any cluster desiring to change its name shall make its desire known to the secretary of the synod who shall notify the Synod Council. Any such change shall become effective upon the approval of the Synod Council. Notice of such change shall be reported by means of the regular communication resources of the synod.

S12.01.02. *Conferences shall be named for their geographic or urban/rural relationship. Conferences that desire to change their name shall make that desire known to the secretary of the synod who shall notify the Synod Council. The name change shall become effective upon the approval of the Synod Council. Notice of the change shall be reported by means of the regular communications resources of the synod.*

S12.01.03. *Congregations that desire to challenge or change its conference affiliation shall make that desire known to the secretary of the synod who shall notify the Synod Council. The change shall become effective if approved by the Synod Council. Notice of the change shall be reported by means of the regular communications resources of the synod.*

Final Text of Constitutional Bylaw Amendments/Additions as Approved

S12.01.01. At the first meeting after each Synod Assembly, the Synod Council shall designate congregations to geographical and relational conferences. This action shall be reported by means of the regular communication resources of the synod.

S12.01.02. Conferences shall be named for their geographic or urban/rural relationship. Conferences that desire to change their name shall make that desire known to the secretary of the synod who shall notify the Synod Council. The name change shall become effective upon the approval of the Synod Council. Notice of the change shall be reported by means of the regular communications resources of the synod.

S12.01.03. Congregations that desire to challenge or change its conference affiliation shall make that desire known to the secretary of the synod who shall notify the Synod Council. The change shall become effective if approved by the Synod Council. Notice of the change shall be reported by means of the regular communications resources of the synod.

Addendum #2

Synod Conferences and Deans

- Whatcom Conference – Pr. Jana Schofield
- Skagit-Isle Conference – Pr. Beth Eden and Pr. Kristi Lambing
- Stillaguamish Conference – Pr. Annette Andrews-Lux
- Sno-Isle Conference – Pr. Pam Karas
- Sno-King Conference – Pr. Tim Oleson
- North Seattle Conference – Pr. Chelsea Globe
- Central Seattle Conference – Pr. Priscilla Paris-Austin
- Cascadia Conference – Pr. Krista Johnson
- South King Conference – Pr. Kacey Hahn

Addendum #3

Members of the Bishop Call Process Task Force

John Bumanglag, Deacon Janet Cederberg, Pastor Kristy Daniels, Pastor Paul Eldred, Bill Salen, Kasey Shultz, and chairperson, Pastor Gail Rautmann

Addendum #4

Members of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Pastor Lara Forbes, Pastor Mark Griffith, Pastor Pam Russell, Linda Siebert, and chairperson, Pastor Tor Berg

Addendum #5

Members of the Nominating Committee

Susan Berg, Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee, Pastor Scott Brents, Pastor Kristi Lambing, Debbie Trafton O'Neal, and Nisar Stephen

Addendum #6

2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members [as of the time of the Synod Assembly]

Mr. Dante Austin, Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee, Vice President Kay Edgerton, Pastor Ivar Hillesland, Pastor Kristi Lambing, Mr. Seth Lambing, Ms. Rachel Pritchett, Ms. Kasey Shultz, and Chaplain Nisar Stephen