

**Minutes of the Northwest Washington Synod's
May 16, 2026 Special Meeting
of the
2025 Synod Assembly
9 am – 12 pm
Via Zoom
6/11/2026 Revision**

Welcome/Opening Devotion and Opening of the Special Meeting of the Assembly

The meeting began at 9:05 a.m. with a welcome from Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee. In addition to thanking everyone for their presence on Zoom, she expressed a special thank you to Vice President Kay Edgerton for her faithfully-served, two terms in this important leadership role. She then gave Kay the floor.

V.P. Kay shared the following land acknowledgement.

- We acknowledge the original inhabitants of this area, the Coast Salish people. Since time immemorial, they have hunted, fished, gathered, and taken care of these lands. We respect their sovereignty, their right to self-determination, and honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. We will strive to be honest about our past mistakes and bring about a future that includes their people, stories, and voices to form a more just and equitable society.

For the opening devotion, Kay read a passage from 1 Corinthians 12 from *The Message* beginning with v. 4. She then shared a reflection on these verses especially emphasizing the varied gifts and leadership brought to the church by lay people. All, rostered and lay, have gifts to share and all are needed for the betterment of the church.

She then returned the floor to the bishop who shared an opening prayer and declared this Special Meeting of the 2025 Synod Assembly to be in session in the name of the Triune God who creates, redeems and sustains all.

PLENARY 1

Introductions

The bishop introduced and thanked the following people for their roles in the meeting:

Bishop Emeritus Chris Boerger - Parliamentarian

Kay Edgerton - Vice President

Dan Clements - Treasurer

Rev. Netsie Griffith - Secretary

Tabatha Myatt - Additional Minute Scribe

Andy Arnold - Additional Minute Scribe

Rev. Sara Funkhouser - Elections Committee Chairperson

Rev. Andy Yee - Elections Support

Shane Lambing - Registrar

Rev. Tor Berg - Registration Support

Debbie O'Neal - Nominating Committee Chairperson

Susan Berg - Director of Communications and Events

Brief Orientation – Susan Berg

The bishop gave the floor to Susan Berg for an orientation. Susan carefully explained important information and details pertaining to the nature of an online meeting and how voting members were to interact with others and follow voting procedures.

Susan then returned the floor to the bishop who called upon Registrar, Shane Lambing for the first Credentials Report.

Credentials Report – Registrar, Shane Lambing

As of 9:26 am, we have **177 voting members** checked in consisting of **61 pastors, 112 laypersons, and 3 deacons.**

The **gender breakdown** included 96 women, 77 men, and 3 non-binary individuals.

The **age distribution** consisted of 3 under 18, 10 from 18 to 30, and 163 over 30.

The assembly included **16 people of color or whose primary language is other than English.**

Adoption of Proposed Agenda

Moved and Carried (Hereafter, MC)

SA2026.05.16.01 to approve the Synod Assembly Agenda as presented.

Adoption of Proposed Standing Rules

MC

SA2025.05.16.02 to approve the Synod Assembly Standing Rules as presented.

Nominating Committee Report

The bishop thanked all nominees, Chairperson, Debbie O’Neal and all those on the Nominating Team. ¹

The team has put forward names for three positions: 1) Youth Representative to Synod Council, 2) Synod Secretary and 3) Synod Vice President. The two nominees for Vice President will speak before the vote for that position. The bishop offered a prayer for the nominees, those voting, and the election process.

Elections

The bishop thanked Elections Chairperson, Pr. Sara Funkhouser who is working behind the scenes with Susan Berg preparing the ballots. She then explained we will vote by Zoom poll. There will be one poll for each position, and each poll will be open for 30 seconds.

- **Voting for Youth position on Synod Council, a two-year term**
 - The Nominating Committee has presented two nominees: Sierra Ferrel and Elizabeth Tanis.
 - Voting is opened and closed.
 - Pr. Sara announced the results of the ballot:
 - 162 votes were cast
 - 54 votes were cast for Sierra Ferrel
 - 105 votes were cast for Elizabeth Tanis
 - 3 votes were cast as abstentions

The bishop declared the election of Elizabeth Tanis as our new Youth Representative on Synod Council.

- **Voting for Synod Secretary, a four-year term**
 - The Nominating Committee has presented Rev. Netsie Griffith as the nominee for Synod Secretary.

¹ Members of the Nominating Team: Debbie O’Neal, chairperson, Pastor Scott Brents, Nisar Stephen, Pastor Deanna Wildermuth, Bishop Shelley and Susan Berg

- Voting is opened and closed.
- Pr. Sara announced the results of the ballot:
 - 166 votes were cast
 - 163 votes were cast for Pr. Netsie
 - 3 votes were cast as abstentions

The bishop declared the election of Rev. Netsie Griffith to a second term as Synod Secretary.

- **Voting for Synod Vice President, a four-year term**

- The Nominating Committee has presented Brent Hicks and Cindy Shultz as nominees for the position of Synod Vice President.
- Each nominee was given four minutes to address the Assembly; the order was determined by a draw; Cindy will present first followed by Brent.
- In her address Cindy stated: she is part of Emmaus Table, Greenlake; she comes from a long line of Lutheran pastors; her roots also include a Methodist pastor; she has always felt her calling was as a lay leader; she has held multiple lay positions in different leadership capacities in four different Lutheran churches; she also served at Holden Village for five years; in her capacity serving on Synod Council, she has found it a joy to attend installations and call votes; she would like to share a Lutheran understanding of unconditional grace in a world which needs us.
- In his remarks Brent stated: he is thankful to Kay and the synod staff for finding and encouraging nominees; he believes it's important to be involved in what the synod is doing; we need to support our bishop in her bold moves to be in public and speak out; small churches should not be overlooked; small churches have a vitality and live out an awareness of the church's mission statement; they are needed at this time; he believes there is a renewed interest in churches as people seek community; there is no hiding in a small church; this should be so in the synod as well.
- Prior to the vote for Vice President, the Bishop offered a prayer.
- Voting is opened and closed.
- Pr. Sara announced the results of the ballot:
 - 168 votes were cast
 - 136 votes were cast for Cindy Shultz
 - 32 votes were cast for Brent Hicks
 - 0 votes were cast as abstentions

The bishop declared the election of Cindy Shultz to serve as our next Synod Vice President with her term beginning August 1st.

The bishop announced our next order of business will be voting on the budget and declared a break with business resuming at 10:10 am.

Break

PLENARY 2

Final Credentials Report – Shane Lambing

Registrar Shane Lambing was called upon for a final Credentials Report.

As of 10:10 am, we have 178 voting members checked in.

- Lay persons present - 113:

- Rostered Ministers present – 65:
 - Word and Service – 4
 - Word and Sacrament – 61
- Persons of color or whose primary language is other than English present – 16
- Youth members present – 3
- Young adult members present – 10
- Women – 96
- Men – 77
- Non-Binary – 3
- Visitors/volunteers present – 4

Budget Overview – Treasurer, Dan Clements

The bishop called on our Treasurer, Dan, to present the budget.

Dan did an overview of the budget figures discussing the expenditure changes and the past trends and future outlook. Concern was expressed about the Emerging and Strategic Ministries Fund (outside the General Fund budget). To deal with this concern, he suggests a Financial Futures Task Force be set up to look at how to continue to fund these important ministries as well as our General Fund. The ultimate goal for the General Fund is to have a balanced budget without depending upon revenue outside of Mission Support.

Following this Dan responded to many good and thoughtful questions about the specifics of his printed report and the proposed 2027 budget.

An invitation was extended to join our Synod Evangelical Outreach Team if interested in doing more to support Emerging and Strategic Outreach ministries.

After questions were addressed, the Bishop opened and closed the voting on the 2027 budget forwarding the motion from the Synod Council.

MC

SA2025.05.16.03 Synod Council moves that the General Fund Budget as presented be adopted for Fiscal Year 2027 (ending January 31, 2028) and be approved at \$1,810,427 and that the Fiscal Year 2027 (ending January 31, 2028) General Fund receipts more than \$1,810,427 be disbursed as directed by the Synod Council.

Bishop's Final Comments, Expression of Gratitude and Announcements

The bishop clarified that the consideration to raise our support of churchwide by 1% (for our synod this is an increase from 47% to 48%) was at the request of our churchwide bishop, Bishop Curry. In response to this request Synod Council made the decision to increase our contribution by 1%. Bishop Shelley reminded those in attendance that our contribution to churchwide includes World Hunger, Disaster Response, Missionaries, our Companion Synods, support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and much more.

To impact our synod budget in a positive way, the bishop proposed three considerations for congregations, as she also thanked those congregations represented at this meeting for their generosity. Please consider: 1) submitting payments by check rather than through tithe.ly (this would save 3% of contributions made which go towards processing charges), 2) raising your support by 1%, as we as a

synod did in our support of churchwide, and 3) donating to the synod a portion of the sale of congregational property if your congregation ever considers and succeeds in selling property.

As this meeting came to a close, she expressed thanks to many people: the Office of the Bishop staff; contract staff; outgoing Synod Council members, Kay Edgerton and David Kinner; the whole Synod Council; those elected to positions, Netsie, Cindy and Elizabeth; everyone working behind the scenes; and the crew at the synod office.

Prior to the final blessing, the bishop invited all to come to the Synod Gathering. Especially because we are missing the opportunity to be together in person at this meeting, she would love for people to take the opportunity to gather on May 30th in person. This gathering will be a time when we can learn about generosity, and we will have an amazing keynote speaker in Tim Brown. He is very deep and rich in theology as well as funny and accessible. Tim works at the churchwide office in development, stewardship and generosity. In addition to hearing Tim, there will be 22 workshop offerings. A missionary from Jerusalem will be with us and there will be a time at lunch when people may speak with her. The gathering will be at Trinity, Lynnwood and the new neighborhood center built on their property.

Closing Blessing

As we move from this time of discernment, may God make us like a watered garden, like springs whose waters do not fail. May the river of the water of life keep flowing among us – bringing wisdom, courage, mercy, and hope for the sake of the world God loves. May you leave this place refreshed for the work ahead: steady in hope, generous in spirit, and rooted deeply in God's mercy and peace. Amen.

Closing of the Assembly

Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee declared the Special Meeting of Northwest Washington Synod Assembly closed at 10:58 a.m. in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity: Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit.

Respectfully Submitted,
Netsie N. Griffith
NWWA Synod Secretary