

June 2024

Synod Assembly Recap

The Synod Assembly held on May 18, 2024, was attended by a total of 337 synod members including 275 voting members, six observers, and 56 visitors/volunteers. We give thanks to our host congregation, Grace Lutheran Church in Des Moines, to all who assisted in the planning and leadership of the day, and to all the attendees.

FINAL CREDENTIALS REPORT	
Synod Assembly + May 18, 2024	
Total Voting Members: 275	
Total Lay Persons: 170	Persons of Color or Language other than English: 28
Women: 96	Youth Members (under 18): 8
Men: 70	Young Adults (18-30): 15
Non-Binary: 4	
Total Rostered Ministers: 105	Observers: 6
Word & Service (Deacons): 7	Visitors: 56
Word & Sacrament (Pastors): 98	

We began our time together in worship – centered on our theme, “We Lift Our Eyes” – from Psalm 121. It was a joy-filled service with special music from Grace Lutheran Church Music Director, Amy Boers, the GLC Choir, and members of the Mariachi Club from Pacific Lutheran University. During the service, we officially installed Rev. Judy Brennan as our Director for Evangelical Mission. We are grateful that we received over \$5600 in offering that will be shared between Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW), Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), and the NW Washington Synod Bishop’s Caring Fund (supports rostered leaders by providing scholarships and emergency aid). THANK YOU for your generosity!

Assembly business items included approving the recommended changes to our synod constitution that were forwarded from the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the 2025 Synod Budget. The presented budget was amended to include increased compensation for our rostered synod staff members so that they would receive synod guidelines. (A note from the bishop: while this budget approval is an affirming sign and appreciated, it also calls for increased mission support from our congregations. Please encourage your congregation leaders to prayerfully consider increasing your congregation’s mission support this year.)

Following Synod Council approval, the assembly joyfully received our newest congregation, Hope Church in Lake Stevens. Originally a Covenant Congregation, they left that denomination and began exploring what it would mean to become an ELCA congregation. They began renting from Holy Cross Lutheran in Lake Stevens and had many conversations about what it might mean to do ministry together. Although that partnership never came to fruition, through those discussions Hope discerned a call to stay in Lake Stevens and become an ELCA congregation.

In addition to the written reports shared ahead of the assembly, we received oral reports from our Synod Officers: Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee, Vice President Kay Edgerton, Treasurer Bart Brosten, and Synod Secretary Rev. Netsie Griffith. These reports are posted on our assembly webpage: <https://www.lutheransnw.org/synod-assembly>

Additionally, we shared video reports and stories from Ministry Partners and Synod Committees. You will find these – and written reports received – also posted on our assembly webpage. Look for a link to view a recording of the full assembly to be posted on the synod website to be posted soon.

A handful of synod members donned fun flame headbands to share stories of how the Spirit is working in our synod in new or surprising ways. We heard about a group of youth ministry leaders joining forces to offer opportunities for their young people; how one congregation is being transformed by the welcome and inclusion of Spanish-speaking neighbors; how another congregation challenged themselves to learn more about what it means to welcome and support a leader of color; how one cluster of congregations is collaborating to support one another in new ways; and how a passion for archery is creating a new sacred space. (Look for more of these stories next year!)

Finally, we held elections for Synod Council, the Committee on Discipline, the Consultation Committee, and for 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Members. THANK YOU to all the nominees for allowing their names to go forward for consideration. We are so grateful to have such talented and gifted people open to serving! Below you will find the roles and names of those who were elected at this assembly:

Synod Council

David Kinner (Youth from Pointe of Grace, Mukilteo)
Sam Martinez (Young Adult from Christ the Servant, Bellingham)
Sherianne Caldwell (Layperson from Immanuel, Seattle)
Dan Squires (Layperson from Our Savior's, Everett)
Elly Stitt (Layperson from Prince of Peace, Shoreline)
Deacon Luke Allgeyer (Columbia City Church of Hope, Seattle)
Rev. Andy Arnold (Shepherd of the Valley, Maple Valley)
Rev Paul Eldred (Central, Seattle)
Rev. Sam Sseba (Prince of Peace, SeaTac)

Committee on Discipline

Rev. Glen Aaberg (Hospice Chaplain)
David Foster-Koth (Faith, Seattle)
Rev. Jory Mickelson (Faith, Bellingham)
Deacon Marie Preftes-Arenz (Faith of N. Lakewood, Marysville)
Bob Spencer (Our Savior's, Everett)

Consultation Committee

John Fairbairn (Faith, Bellingham)
Rev. Katherine GrayBuck (Church of the Apostles, Seattle)
Rev. Kari Lipke (Gethsemane, Seattle)
Eric Peoples (First, Bothell)

Voting Members to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly include 3 rostered ministers and 6 laypersons. Of those in the delegation, 1 is a youth, 2 are young adults, 1 person identifies as non-binary, and 3 are persons of color:

Dante Austin (Immanuel, Seattle)
Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee (Faith, Everett)
Vice President Kay Edgerton (Nativity, Renton)
Rev. Ivar Hillesland (Church of the Apostles, 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)
Nisar Stephen (Grace, Des Moines)

Our next synod assembly will be held next year at the Edward D. Hansen Conference Center in downtown Everett. This will be a two-day assembly on May 16-17, 2025. In addition to reports, approving a budget, electing persons to various roles, we will be holding an election for bishop. Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee announced to those gathered that she is willing to serve another term if nominated and elected. (Look for more information soon from the Synod Council about the Bishop Election Process.)

We are so grateful for each of you. And together, in thankfulness, we lift our eyes to God, to each other, and to our neighbor, trusting that our help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth!