

**Report of the Bishop
East Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
May 17-18, 2019**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Welcome

I look forward to welcoming you to the May 17-18, 2019 Synod Assembly at the Fox Cities Exhibition Center and the Red Lion Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton. We will gather under the theme "We are Church: For the Sake of the World". Ms. Dana Dutcher from the ELCA Global Mission Unit will be our Churchwide Representative and will bring greetings and reports from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. In addition an ELCA Glocal Mission Team of educators and musicians, including Rev. Sunitha Mortha, ELCA Director of Mission Formation, will lead us in song and liturgy and help us discover how changes in the world are transforming the way churches like the ELCA proclaim and serve today. Glocal, a hybrid word combining global and local, speaks of the deep connections between local contexts and global realities. I think we are in for a treat with musicians and presenters bringing a glocal flavor to our worship and our engagement with the mission to which God has called us.

The Thursday evening event, entitled "God's Story, Our Story: Engaging Worship and Culture" will be put on by the ELCA Glocal Team. This event is an excellent opportunity for all of us to explore how worship both transcends and incorporates elements of culture in liturgy and song. This is an event for everyone, but I especially encourage musicians and worship leaders from around the synod to participate.

Our assembly service project will be the building of a Global Barnyard through the ELCA Good Gifts program. Congregations may participate by making a purchase of farm animals, tools or other supplies from the ELCA Good Gifts catalogue.

With this assembly we are taking another step forward into the digital age. Ben Stepanek, the synod Communications Manager, will be introducing the Guidebook app for your phone and computer. With the app voting members will be able to access maps and assembly printed material. This app has been used in a number of ELCA assemblies and venues.

Western Diocese – Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa

In July of this past year 43 people from the East Central Synod of Wisconsin made a visit to our companion synod, the Western Diocese of the ELCSA. My wife Anita and I were privileged to be part of this amazing journey that took us to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and then to the diocesan offices in Rustenburg. There we were welcomed by Bishop Job Ubane, members of his staff, and pastors and lay leaders of host congregations. We practice accompaniment in our companion synod relationship, which means we walk and work

together. We seek to learn from one another and to recognize gifts in one another. We focus upon our relationship and shared stories from our own contexts. So we experienced incredible hospitality and worship, shared meals, music and dancing, and learned about the joys and sorrows of life in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Every congregation in the East Central Synod of Wisconsin has been paired with a partner congregation in the Western Diocese. I encourage all our congregations to reach out and get to know their partners in South Africa. In the summer of 2020 we expect about the same number of visitors from our partner congregations in the Western Diocese to be with us here in Wisconsin. Now is the time for congregations to consider hosting visitors, to extend invitations to partner congregations, and begin the plans that will make for a rich experience a year from now. For more information I encourage you to speak with people from the synod's Global Mission Team.

Holy Land Trip - 2020

I have been encouraged by the Global Mission Team of our synod to lead a trip to the Holy Land. I expect that by the time of our synod assembly I will be announcing plans for that trip in the spring of 2020. I encourage pastors and lay leaders to consider joining Anita and me in this travel to Israel and Palestine. The purpose of the trip will be to make a pilgrimage to the land where Jesus walked and proclaimed the Good News of God. But it will also include visiting with Palestinian Christians and engaging them on issues related to the Middle East. We will visit several Lutheran ministries in and around Jerusalem, including Augusta Victoria Hospital, owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation, and try to come to a better understanding of the issues facing Jews, Muslims and Christians, Israelis and Palestinians. The trip will be guided by the principles put forth in the ELCA "Peace Not Walls" Campaign which seeks to promote dignity and full respect for human rights, reconciliation, and healing for all people of the Middle East.

Churchwide Assembly – 2019

The 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will meet August 5-10 at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee with the theme "We Are Church". The Churchwide Assembly meets every three years and is the primary decision making body of the Church. The Assembly is a communal discernment process whereby voting members pray to be guided by the Holy Spirit and seek to conform the decisions of the Church to the will of God. We pray that would be the case for every gathering of the Church in congregations and synods! On the agenda this year will be the election of the Presiding Bishop and a Secretary. Presiding Bishop Eaton has indicated she is open to another term. Secretary Chris Boerger is retiring and therefore a new Secretary will be elected. The Assembly will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the ordination of women in the Lutheran Church in North America (the actual anniversary is 2020). The Assembly will act upon the proposed social statement, "Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action". It will also act upon the proposed policy statement, "A Declaration on Inter-Religious Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

Seventeen Voting Members have been elected from the East Central Synod of Wisconsin. They are: Nancy Jones, Prince of Peace, Appleton; Andrew Skow-Anderson, Prince of Peace, Appleton; Pastor Robert Wilkinson, St. Mark, Neenah; Pastor Jennifer Fite, Good Shepherd, Howard; Bob Brumm, Incarnation, Green Bay; Wendy Koepp, Church of Our Savior, Fond du Lac; Nate Zimdars, Grace, Ripon; Pastor Casey Sugden, Redeemer, Plymouth; Lori Carlson, Peace, Amherst; Horace Davis, First English, Wisconsin Rapids; Pastor Dione Miller, Trinity, Waupaca; Wanda Minniecheske, Zion, Tigerton; Pastor Scott Ludford, Zion, Shawano; Kerry Fehrman, Saint Andrew, Wausau; Andrew Grieseman, Saint Andrew, Wausau; Pastor Niveen Sarras, Immanuel, Wausau; and Bishop Gerald Mansholt

Constitutions

Recently the Synod Council established a Constitution Committee for the purpose of reviewing congregational constitutions. Congregations are asked to submit their constitutions to the synod for review and approval (ELCA Constitution and By-Laws 9.53.03) The goal is to insure the mandatory sections are properly in place, to avoid conflicts within the governing documents, and to steer congregations away from legal pitfalls. Deacon Sue Rothmeyer of the ELCA Office of the Secretary suggests congregations review their constitutions and by-laws every three years immediately following a churchwide assembly. Congregation constitutions can be kept up to date by incorporating the latest churchwide amendments and reviewing their own by-laws. Ideally the Synod Constitution Committee desires to accompany a congregation in reviewing its governing documents so that amendments proposed for adoption at a congregational meeting have already been reviewed and met with the committee's approval.

Discernment Event – Who Is Being Called

We are experiencing a clergy shortage in the ELCA. In this synod of 123 congregations we regularly have 30-35 congregations in a pastoral transition. Pastors accept calls to serve elsewhere or they retire. There are more pastors retiring these days than students entering the seminary. Across the ELCA we have a shortage of more than 1,000 pastors to serve the congregations. This March we received one candidate in the assignment process whereas in years past the synod might have received 4-5 candidates. There are a number of reasons for this including membership and smaller numbers of children and youth in our congregations and the cost of college and theological education. More of our congregations are also finding they no longer have the resources necessary to support a pastor full-time.

These are days that call for discernment of call, creativity in providing theological education and pastoral formation, and generosity and support from the Church. To that end a Discernment Event is being planned for October 11-12. During the assembly voting members will be asked to lift up names of people who someday might be called to serve as Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastors) or Ministers of Word and Service (deacons) or in some other capacity within the Church. These people will be invited to an event to pray, to learn about different forms of ministry, and to explore different ways their gifts might be affirmed and called forth to

serve the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Three of our pastors are working with synod staff in planning this event: Pastor Jim Honig, Shepherd of the Bay; Pastor Cheryl Davis, First English, Wisconsin Rapids; Pastor Amy Perron, Redeemer, Wittenberg.

Generosity to Churchwide

In 2018 congregations and individuals contributed \$2,874,463 to ELCA Churchwide Ministries. Included in that amount was \$691,454 of mission support from congregations, which is 50% of the mission support the synod receives from congregations. The rest, \$2,183,009, given by individuals and congregations of this synod to support the ELCA Campaign, World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, the ELCA Fund for Leaders and other ministries. I am delighted to share this information with you and celebrate with the synod the generosity of so many people who give generously to support the work God has given this Church to do.

ARISE: Embracing God's Promised Future

Last year I introduced Tom and Nancy Scheuerman, co-chairs of the ARISE Campaign and spoke of how we were taking initial steps in this \$1.5 million capital campaign. To date we have received pledges and gifts totally \$254,111 of which \$135,954.29 has already been received. I am deeply grateful to Tom and Nancy, members of Prince of Peace, Appleton for their commitment and enthusiasm. We expect to reach our goal by the 2020 Synod Assembly with the support and generosity of people throughout the synod.

ARISE seeks to fund a number of initiatives from technology to stewardship to reducing clergy indebtedness and raising up new leaders among us. But ARISE is really about three big things:

- Transforming the culture of the synod so that we are more deeply connected with one another and participating in a Spirit-led re-imagination of what the Church might be.
- Raising up and equipping leaders – pastors, deacons, laity – to serve the Church in a vastly different time and context.
- Creating a culture of generosity where we learn to trust that God has already given us the gifts needed for the mission to which we have been called.

During the assembly you will hear reports on the work of ARISE and voting members will be given an opportunity to participate in the ARISE Campaign.

2020 Budget

This will be the second year of a new budget format following a line-by-line overhaul of a year ago. We have attempted to use a format that communicates more clearly the work of the bishop and staff and accounts for the spending. Voting Members will once again see a Narrative Budget which attempts to show the programs and ministries that are part of the work of the synod. You will also notice how monies contributed by individuals through ARISE are helping the synod to live into the strategic directions and do the work to which we have been called.

Budgets are more than just dollars in and dollars out. Budgets are a story of the work we are doing and how we are seeking to live faithfully as the people of God and participate in God's mission today. We hope our first narrative budget will help accomplish tell that story.

Congregational Vitality

Our Presiding Bishop emphasizes the importance of vital congregations and gifted leaders for sustaining the life of the Church. We believe we cannot do this work ourselves but the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the Church on earth (Luther's Small Catechism). And we trust the Holy Spirit to be at work among us, calling us to renewal through the Good News of Jesus Christ, raising up leaders, creating holy discontent, and shaping the Church to more fully participate in the mission to which God has called us. Vital congregations might be described as, "communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing relationships with God, one another and all the world."

In our work as synod we seek to grow vital congregations and raise up and equip leaders in these ministries:

- Stewardship for All Seasons (helping congregations grow in generosity)
- Fall Theological Conference for pastors and deacons
- Our third EPIC Event (Equipping People in Congregations) was held in March
- Seeds for Growth – congregations working on redevelopment
- Re-Imagining Church – congregations on a journey of listening, discerning, experimenting
- Sacred Ground – working with our Episcopal and other ecumenical siblings in addressing this country's legacy of racism

Synod Leadership

I am grateful for the work and leadership of our officers, Vice-President Kerry Fehrman (Saint Andrew, Wausau) and Treasurer Dan Evensen (First English, Appleton) and Diana Klapperich (St Stephen's, Rosendale). We give thanks for those whose term of service on the synod council is ending (though several are eligible for election to a second term): Horace Davis, First English, Wisconsin Rapids; Pastor Nate Gauerke, Christ the King, Combined Locks; Wendy Koepp, Church of Our Savior, Fond du Lac; Vicar Wil Ostrem, Pilgrim, Wausau; Pr. Michael Peuse, Faith and North New Hope, Rosholt; and Ashley Karras, Good Shepherd, Howard.

Communications Manager and Staff

In December of this past year Ben Stepanek joined the bishop's staff as Communications Manager. We have gone to a weekly newsletter and are working to be more highly visible on social media. Ben has begun lifting up different ministry stories from congregations all across the synod in the weekly #MondayMinistry. So our efforts to tell the story of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin and the ways God is at work among us is taking hold.

I also want the synod to know how grateful I am to work with a team of people who love God and God's people deeply. In addition to Ben Stepanek, the staff includes Darlene Kalfahs, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Development and Faith Formation; Pastor Jean DeVoll-Donaldson, Bishop's Associate for Evangelical Mission; Pastor Amy Engebose, Bishop's Associate for Rostered Leadership and Congregations in Transition; and Nancy Salzwedel, Synod Financial Administrator. The synod is well served by this Spirit-led, dedicated and highly competent team of servants.

2020 An Election year

Yes, 2020 is an election year for president of the country. But it also is an election year for bishop of this synod. Bishops are elected to a 6-year term and it has been my privilege to serve as your bishop since being elected to this office in 2014. As I look back over these past 5 years I know there has been healing in the synod. We have done some good work together in focusing upon God's mission in the world. We have sought to provide leadership that focuses upon God's Promised Future in the midst of great change and challenge. In whatever ways I and my staff have worked faithfully and helped move the synod along the journey in a Spirit-led manner, I give thanks to God without whom nothing is possible. In whatever ways we have not lived up to our calling I beg your mercy and ask your forgiveness.

In this next year we will enter a time of prayer and discernment. For my part I am considering the possibility of being open to election to another term and continued service as your bishop. I covet your prayers as I seek to discern where the Spirit might be leading. I will let the synod know of my intentions in the fall of the year. Whatever my decision may be, this will be a time of prayer and discernment for the synod as you seek to determine where God the Holy Spirit might lead in the election of a bishop.

I close with a prayer for the life and mission of the Church:

Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ's mission to the world and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, page 75)

In Christ's peace,

Bishop Gerald L Mansholt
East Central Synod of Wisconsin

BISHOP'S RESOURCE FUND

1-8310

	<u>2/1/14-1/31/15</u>	<u>2/1/15-1/31/16</u>	<u>2/1/16-1/31/17</u>	<u>2/1/17-1/31/18</u>	<u>2/1/18-1/31/19</u>
BEGINNING BAL	\$ 33,363.21	\$ 43,138.99	\$ 44,052.77	\$ 52,887.12	\$ 32,536.78
DEPOSITS	3,290.17	3,861.37	12,462.18	3,047.16	950.00
1/2 ASSEMBLY OFFERING	8,353.50	7,668.40	7,443.49	6,909.25	6,623.47
ESTATE GIFT					
LOAN REPAYMENT				-	-
COUNSELING/MEDICAL SUPPORT	(1,867.89)	(10,615.99)	(11,071.32)	(30,306.75)	(14,745.16)
OTHER	-	-	-		(1,250.00)
ENDING BAL	\$ 43,138.99	\$ 44,052.77	\$ 52,887.12	\$ 32,536.78	\$ 24,115.09

Session 1
Friday, May 18, 2018
Oshkosh Convention Center, Oshkosh, WI

**“We are Church Together: Feeding and Equipping Leaders”
East Central Synod of Wisconsin
Synod Assembly – Oshkosh, WI
May 17-19, 2018**

Opening Worship – The 2018 Synod Assembly of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin was opened with worship, ECSW Bishop Gerald Mansholt presiding and preaching, Rev. Marilyn Lange, assisting. Cantors: Deacon David Berndt, Diane Sands & Choir.

The Assembly was declared open at 10:20, Friday, May 18, 2018 after worship.

We Are Church Together: Feeding and Equipping Leaders is this year's theme. The Thursday evening preassembly event featured Jim LaDoux, who oversees Vibrant Faith coaching and consulting services. Jim's topic was **“Becoming a Vital and Vibrant Intergenerational Faith Community”**.

Welcome and Introductions – Bishop Gerald Mansholt welcomed voting members and guests to the Assembly.

Bishop Mansholt introduced:

- Synod officers: Kerry Fehrman, synod vice-president, Dan Evensen, synod treasurer and Connie Eisch, synod secretary.
- Roald Harswick will serve as the Assembly parliamentarian.
- Dave Salzwedel, Assembly floor manager
- Roger Willer and Mary Streufert and guests from part of a Lutheran World Federation Leadership Exchange, linking the Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland and the ELCA, Ms. Agnieszka Godfrejów-Tarnogórska: Presiding Bishop's office communication officer and coordinator for Middle and East Europe; and Dr. Joanna Koleff-Pracka: lecturer at the Christian Theological Academy.

Adoption of the Agenda –

SA18.05.01 A motion to adopt the proposed agenda was moved, and seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

Adoption of the Assembly Rules & Procedures –

SA18.05.02 A motion to adopt the Assembly Rules and Procedures was moved, and seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

Credentials Committee Report: Rev. Brian Schmidt, chair, credentials committee:

Total voting members: 263
Rostered voting clergy: 73
Lay: 174
Deacons: 4
Rostered retired voting: 9
Executive council voting: 3
Non-voting members: 36
Retired clergy: 0
Visitors: 36
Grand total: 299

Introductions continued with **Rev. Paul Aebischer**, representative of Portico. Paul presented a short message and encouraged us all to stop at his booth for more information. Portico is a ministry of the ELCA, providing benefits that strengthen leaders for ministry. Portico is constantly changing to better serve.

Jim LaDoux, I: “Faith Formation for all the Seasons of Adulthood”

We are challenged to update our mental maps for faith formation. It starts with us. We need to equip our leaders to help us move forward. Be nimble and adaptive, equip and encourage, and assess our impact. Raise the bar and stretch our comfort level.

Transform our roles and utilize our current gatherings to be more intentional about being intergenerational. Are we able to communicate with people in their language? Reach, bless and

disciple in their location, in their platform. We can repurpose what we already have. Be courageous, be intentional, and be spirit driven.

Treasurer's Report & Audit – Dan Evensen, synod treasurer

A draft of the independent auditors report, conducted by Wipfli, stated ‘the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin as of January 31, 2018, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States.’

SA18.05.03 A motion to receive the auditor's report was moved, and seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

Dan reported that he works closely with synod financial administrator Nancy Salzwedel to make sure everything is working for the good of the synod. The synod moved from the Mission Investment Fund pilot project back to our own software based accounting platform for the 2018 fiscal year as of the end of January. This will simplify the accounting and reporting of our budget.

Total results for fiscal 2017 were positive. The General Fund was slightly positive to budget, but still resulted in a net loss for the year. Revenues slightly exceeded budget expectations, but expenses were significantly less than budget. The endowment fund benefited from a strong year in the equity markets in 2017. The narrative budget we will see later, reflects the mission of the synod. Dan extended his thanks to the synod staff, the synod council and the budget committee

SA18.05.04 A motion to receive treasurer's report was made and seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

Mr. Hector Colon, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and upper Michigan:

We are partners in ministry. We share the important work of serving children, women and families in Wisconsin. For 135 years, LSS has been a place to turn to, responding to the needs of people, families in turmoil, and refugee families. LSS has helped 1200 people transition from

prison to society. They work with family preservation organizations in 20 counties in Wisconsin and provide school based mental health service.

LUNCH

Ms. Agnieszka Godfrejów-Tarnogórska spoke to the Assembly and reports that she and Bishop Jerry are Facebook friends! She is here to share community with us, to learn how we provide hearings for social statements in our country, and is particularly interested in the draft social statement on women and justice. She comes from a small Lutheran church in Poland. Lutherans are 70,000 strong in a country of 38 million people. She brought a symbol of her church -a book of matches! We need to walk in the Holy Spirit. She challenges us to be the matches to keep the fire going.

Credentials Committee Report – Rev. Brian Schmidt, chair, credentials committee

Total voting members: 281

Rostered voting clergy: 82

Lay: 183

Deacons: 4

Rostered retired voting: 9

Executive council voting: 3

Non-voting members: 38

Retired clergy: 0

Visitors: 38

Grand total: 319

2019 Budget Presentation - Dan Evensen, synod treasurer

(See page 76 of preprint) The numbers look very different from 2017 budget as the budget was streamlined to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our budget management and accounting process.

Kerry Fehrman, synod vice-president, discussed the narrative budget. We will be using a narrative format because we have a story to tell. It reflects our mission and gives a picture of what we are doing. A narrative budget format speaks to the generosity of our synod. The budget

has 4 categories: 1.Cultivating leaders, 2.Accompanying congregations, 3.Being church together – building bridges, and 4. Focused framework. Our budget is more than numbers!

Nominations - Chair Rev. Doug Holtz, chair of the nominations committee (refer to pages 27-50 of the pre-print for nominations). Nominations are for open positions on synod council, the discipline committee and the consultation committee. The nominations were presented to the Assembly and additional nominations were requested from the floor. Carina Wirtley was nominated for Synod Youth Member at large. Nominations were closed.

Additional nominations were requested for voting members to the 2019 Churchwide assembly. None were given and nominations were closed.

ELCA Report – Rev. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the ELCA

A power point with Bishop Eaton’s video and the ‘ELCA 2017 year in Review’ video were both viewed. A brief overview of the Churchwide organization was presented. The ELCA has done much in the past year – Future Directions 2015, ELCA Youth gathering, the Campaign for the ELCA, and “God’s work. Our hands” Sunday (Refer to pages 21 and 22 in the pre-print for highlights in a letter from Bishop Eaton). We are also invited to join the conversation on the “Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice”. The comment period is open until June 30, 2018.

Healing Service: Worship Leaders/Lectors: Pastor Amanda Nesvold & Carol Grom

Afternoon Breakout sessions:

- ***“Developing Faith Formation for all the Seasons of Adulthood”***
– Jim LaDoux, Vibrant Faith
- ***“How can a congregation’s constitution serve its ministry”***
Rev. Chris Boerger, Secretary of the ELCA
- ***“Strategies of Adaptation”*** – Jean DeVoll-Donaldson, Bishop’s Associate for Evangelical Mission
- ***“Why we should be using Social Media in ministry”*** - Rev. Jerry Wirtley & Tracy Conradt
- ***“Called to Global Service”*** Nate Zimdars – Campaign Interpreter
- ***“Boy, do I Have a Story for You!”*** – Rev. Kimberly Stowell & Karin Olson

- *“Stepping Outside the Box . . . Faith Through the Eyes of the Youth”* ECSW Youth & Adults
- *“Hearing of the Draft of the Social Statement on Women & Justice”* Nancy Jones, ECSW Process Builder and Hearing Convener

Evening Banquet honoring retirees, church and ordination anniversaries, welcomes and thank yous to outgoing synod council members and outgoing synod secretary Connie Eisch.

Session 2
Saturday, May 19, 2018
Conference Center, Oshkosh

Opening Worship: Rev. Karen Tews Presides, Rev. Chris Boerger, Secretary of ELCA Preaches

Jim LaDoux, II: “Discovering and Living One’s Calling”.

We are all called and we all have multiple callings throughout our lifetimes. Calling is a dynamic response to who we are, how we live and what we give our lives to. God in Christ is calling us into relationship, a life of discipleship. Our response to God’s calling is a life expressed through calling and answering that call.

Credentials Committee Report: Rev. Brian Schmidt, chair, credentials committee

Total voting members: 288
Rostered voting clergy: 84
Lay: 188
Deacons: 4
Rostered retired voting: 9
Executive council voting: 3
Non-voting members: 45
Retired clergy: 0
Visitors: 45
Grand total: 326

Wisconsin Council of Churches, Rev. Kerri Parker, the Executive Director, spoke to us about the important work they do. Wisconsin Council of Churches sent 136 people to Washington DC to rally against racism. They advocate an end to child poverty, to change what can be changed. They step out as people of faith, and create an atmosphere of love with interfaith neighbors. It is all possible because of financial involvement and support of the ECSW who is invested in the care and healing of the world.

Bishop's Report: (refer to pages 5-9 of preprint)

Reformation year – we look back with comfort and look forward with confidence and hope.
(Go to elca.org/future for more information)

- We seek to be a thriving church, spreading and living the gospel,
- We seek to be an equipping church, equipping people for the Baptismal Vocation
- We seek to be a welcoming church embracing the diversity of the world around us.
- We seek to be a visible church – to work ecumenically and inter-religiously with people of good will
- We seek to be a well governed, connected and sustainable church.

The **ARISE capital campaign** is about three big things:

1. transformation-a passion to be spirit led to touch the hearts of people within the walls of our congregations so we can touch the hearts of those outside our walls – embracing the future
2. equipping leaders –creating a culture of call among us, raising up leaders and bringing theological education to all of us
3. creating a culture of generosity – where we begin to trust that God has given us the gifts we need for the mission to which we have been called

The goals of our **Strategic Mission Vision Plan** are as follows: (see synod video and brochure)

1. Connect with people by utilizing technology as a resource.

2. Reimagining the Church to adapt to a changed North American culture.
 3. 40 congregations will launch missional experiments outside of their church walls in next 5 years that engage 600-1,200 previously un-connected people
 4. Hold discernment events- we have a pastor shortage – what are we all doing about this? We hope to have 44 people to hold forth for candidacy in next years
 5. Lift up young adults to be among us across the church
 6. Engage congregations in stewardship events - Rev. Ben Sheets discussed Stewardship for all seasons.
 7. Support candidates hoping to enter the ministry
 8. Launch an immediate special gifts appeal
 9. Tithe to the ELCA ‘Always being made new’ campaign.
- Tom & Nancy Scheuerman, co-chairs and Kerry Fehrman spoke about the Arise appeal: \$1.5 million appeal - \$150,000 already been raised!

Elections:

SA18.05.05 A motion from the floor that all those positions that have only one nominee be elected was made, and seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

Congratulations to Synod secretary Diane Klapperich, Synod Council members Kerry Arnold, Nancy Schanke, and Rev. Kemp Jones.

Synod Council position number 3: Robert Kaye (55% of vote)

Synod Council youth member at large: Ms. Ashley Karras (53% of vote)

Discipline Committee member: Ms. Ruth Marquardt (81%)

Consultation Committee: John Filcher (54%)

Consultation Committee: Casey Sugden (62%)

Consultation Committee: Rev Cheryl Davis (132 votes)

ELCA Council nominees: Hannah Schmitt and Pat Kluetz

SA18.05.06 A motion that 2019 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members nominees and alternates as presented be elected en bloc, moved and seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

2019 Budget Vote: Synod treasurer, Dan Evensen, presented the 2019 budget to the Assembly and asked for questions and comments.

SA18.05.07 A motion to approve 2019 ECSW budget moved, and seconded. Motion carried by a voice vote.

Mission Investment Fund –Rev. Dick Wehrs spoke to the Assembly. The MIF is a wonderful ministry of ELCA. Money from congregations is pooled together and made available in the form of loans for church buildings, and to help with ADA compliance, for example. The interest goes back into the fund for future use. There is currently over \$500 million available – Gods work. Our hands.

Crossways Presentation – Jake Czarnik-Neimeyer - video - ‘Rooted in Faith and Growing to Serve’ is the name of Crossways capital campaign with a goal of \$1.8 million (the stretch goal is \$2.6 million). They have already received \$300,000 with the public phase of the campaign to begin in January of 2019. The camps want to begin projects the summer of 2019. The money will be used for camp maintenance, winterizing buildings so the camps are available all year round, expansion and general improvement of the camps. Crossways is currently debt free and they are an accredited national camping ministry.

Jim LaDoux, III: “Bringing the Vision to Life in Your Congregation”

1. Create a sense of urgency – raise the bar.
2. Build a guiding coalition to embrace the future.
3. Create a compelling vision – What? So what? Now what? Why me?
4. Communicate the vision. How will you get the word out? Do you need a communication team?
5. Empower others to act.
6. Celebrate short term wins. Set 30 day, clear, tangible goals and celebrate those.
7. Create habits/systems to support transformation.
8. Anchor the desired change – ‘what’s your story?’ There will be detours –enjoy them!

Compensation Guidelines 2019 – Kerry Fehrman presented the compensation guidelines found on pages 52-74. The guidelines are unchanged from 2018 except for 3% wage increase.

SA18.05.08 Motion to approve the compensation guidelines as presented, seconded.
Motion carried by voice vote.

ECSW Constitution: The proposed amendments to the synod constitution are the result of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly that combined the three lay rosters into one. The yellow highlighted sections of the Constitution in the packets are mandatory because they are in sections of the constitution that are mandatory for all constitutions – Churchwide, synod and congregations. The grey highlighted areas are not mandatory and need to be voted on.

SA10.05.09 A motion was made that the amendments to the constitution and bylaws be adopted en bloc, motion seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

Resolutions – Resolutions to the 2018 Synod Assembly were presented by Rev. Jen Christensen.

Resolution # 1 (for the full resolution see page 25): Be it resolved that our synod support ELCA World Hunger Initiatives like Global Barnyard, and many more found at <http://www.elca.org/hunger>.

SA18.05.10 Motion made, and seconded to adopt the resolution. Motion carried.

Resolution # 2 (for the full resolution see page 26): Be it resolved that individual Lutherans and congregations of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin make special efforts to look beyond our own neighborhoods and communities to the world beyond our national borders and become more aware of our many global links such as Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief etc and choose one or more global ministries to receive special attention over the coming year.

SA19.05.11 Motion made and seconded to adopt the resolution. Motion carried.

Other Business:

Commissioning of South African Companion Synod Travelers - Forty five members of our synod are traveling to our companion synod, the Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in South Africa. They leave on July 4. The travelers received a blessing from our Assembly chaplain, Rev. Kimberly Stowell.

Commissioning of Youth Attending National Gathering - A total of 31,000 youth are gathering in Houston to celebrate their faith “This Changes Everything”. Our chaplain offered a blessing for the travelers. The youth plan to support literacy programs and their monetary goal to buy many books was met at the Assembly!

Closing of the Assembly and Closing Worship.

Installation of new Synod Council Members: a reading from Romans 12:4-6 ‘ For even as we have many members in one body...and having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us.’

The Synod Assembly in 2019 will be held May 17 - 18 in Appleton at the Fox Cities Exhibition Center with housing at the Red Lion Paper Valley Hotel.

Thanks to Jim LaDoux and Secretary Chris Boerger for adding such richness to our Assembly.. Thanks for all the displays and for all those making the assembly possible – the assembly planning team, Marilyn Freeman’s musical leadership and musicians from throughout our Synod, chaplain Rev. Kimberly Stowell, David Salzwedel, floor manager, and technical support from Will Casper and Rev. Jerry Wirtley. Special thanks to the Synod staff for a well organized and well run Assembly. Blessings on the travel of our guests from Poland.

The Synod Assembly ended at 2:14 pm Saturday, May 19th. Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Respectfully submitted:

Connie Eisch
Synod Secretary