



Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## 2015 Virginia Synod Assembly Update

### Knowing Your Congregational Neighborhood to Do God's Will

Synod Assembly is our annual opportunity for the 150 congregations of the Virginia Synod to come together and be reminded what it means to be a part of the wider church. Our theme during our June 5-7, 2015 gathering was "Knowing Your Congregational Neighborhood to Do God's Will".

During the weekend, **Dr. Mary Sue Dreier**, a professor of pastoral care and missional leadership, helped explore the theme. She challenged us to think about what it would mean if our congregations were really known in our community. "Our God is a relationship building God, and a key to all of this is to actually build relationships with people," she said.

Being part of the wider church doesn't stop with the Synod. Rev. Malpica Padilla, the Executive Director of the Global Mission program unit of the ELCA, represented the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as he told us of the global impact that we all are having together including 363 new ministries started in the U.S. this year and 246 ELCA missionaries in more than 46 countries across the world.

**Bishop Jim Mauney** gave a report, during which he announced that he and his wife were donating **\$25,000** in honor of their parent's faith to kickoff a \$2 million project to endow the position for Youth Ministry and Christian Formation on the Synod Staff.

Bishop Mauney also led an interactive demographics presentation that allowed representatives to research the ethnic, socioeconomic status, and age makeup of their communities. Ask your pastor what s/he found out!

*Journey Together, A history of the Virginia Synod from 1988-2012*, written by Rev. Jim Utt, was released and a complementary copy of the book was offered to each congregation. Additional copies are available for \$30.



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After many years of faithful service, Charles Poston retired from his position as Vice President of the Synod Council and Janet Gomez retired from her position as Secretary of the Synod Council.

One resolution was passed concerning the election of a new Synodical bishop in 2017 that encourages the Synod Council to study the needs of the Synod as well as the “ELCA Toolkit for Bishop Elections.” The Assembly also approved a 2016 budget of \$1.9 million.

Elections took place over the weekend with **Charles Downs Jr.**, a member of Christ Lutheran in Roanoke, being elected as the Vice President of the Synod Council and **Blythe Scott**, First Lutheran in Norfolk, elected as secretary. Both **Debbie Mintiens** of Emanuel Lutheran in Woodstock and **Matt Wertman** of Grace Lutheran in Waynesboro were reelected to serve as lay members of the Synod Council. **Rev. Evan Davis**, the pastor of St. Jacob’s-Spaders in Harrisonburg, and **Rev. Cheryl Griffin**, pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Williamsburg, are the newly elected clergy on Synod Council.

We also elected our representatives for the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly. The clergy representatives will be **Rev. Linda Motley** of the Floyd- Willis Parish in Floyd and **Rev. Jonathan Boynton** of Grace Lutheran in Winchester. The lay male representatives will be **Richard Corliss** of St. Timothy in Norfolk, **Christopher Mumaw** of St. Peter in Toms Brook, and **David Raecke** of Our Saviour in Warrenton.

The lay female representatives to the Churchwide Assembly will be **Elizabeth Franz** of St. Philip in Roanoke, Christy Van O’Linda Huffman of Epiphany in Richmond, and Jody Smiley of St. Michael’s in Blacksburg.

**Maren Corliss** of St. Timothy, Norfolk, president of the Lutheran Youth Organization, presented the Youth Assembly report in which she explained that the theme was similar to the main Assembly.

The theme of Youth Assembly was ‘The Social Neighborhood’ which emphasized the impact of technology on our culture. Because of social media, we no longer need to physically be with people to count them as part of our neighborhoods. The next LYO Board president will be **Wyatt Gretka** of Gloria Dei, Hampton.

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