Strong Connections

We, too -the many – are different parts that form one body in the Anointed One [Christ]. Each one of us is joined with one another, *and we become together what we could not be alone.* – The Voice Translation (Romans 12:5).

Over 300 Lutherans around the Virginia Synod gathered via Zoom on April 27 for the 2024 Virginia Synod Assembly. The Synod welcomed **The Rev. Tim Brown**, Director of Congregational Stewardship of the ELCA, as our Churchwide Representative. The Assembly theme was Strong Connections.

Elections

The Assembly elected the following leaders to serve on the Synod Council: **Ali Armentrout** (St. Mark's, Roanoke); **Pat Carriker** (Good Shepherd, Galax); **Cam Haggett** (College, Salem); and **Rev. Kayla Keilholtz** (Ebenezer, Marion). The following lay leaders were elected to serve on the Consultation Committee: **Richard Fraenkel** (Grace, Chesapeake) and **Kristee Trumbo** (Muhlenberg, Harrisonburg). The following leaders were elected to serve as voting members at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly: **Rev. Luke Swanson** (Trinity, Roanoke); **Deacon Emily Edmonds** (Grace, Rural Retreat Parish); **Rev. Viktoria Parvin** (St. Mark, Charlottesville); **Tom Bartkiewicz** (Our Saviour, Warrenton); **Judy Casteele** (Good Shepherd, Lexington); **Sylvia Miles** (Good Shepherd, Galax); **Cam Haggett** (College, Salem); **Dr. Yolanda Shea** (First, Norfolk). The lay leader elected to serve on ELCA Church Council is **Jillian Stierwalt** (St. Andrew, Portsmouth). The final election for the ELCA Church Council position will take place during the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. A complete list of those elected is available on the Synod website: vasynod.org/2024-virginia-synod-assembly/.

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The Assembly opened with a Land Acknowledgment and worship service. Pastor Dave Fox (Gloria Dei, Hampton) preached during worship and focused on the Assembly theme, ‘Strong Connections.’

Assembly Business
The Assembly approved the 2025 Investment in Ministry Plan and the Compensation Guidelines for 2025. Bishop Milton and the Synod Officers shared their reports. The Assembly approved a resolution submitted to encourage care for creation. The resolution submitted on privileged associate membership was withdrawn by the author of the resolution.

Suzanna Carr (First English, Richmond) presented a report from **Asher Porter** (Our Savior, Christiansburg), president of the Lutheran Youth Organization. The report shared the impact of the youth ministry of the Virginia Synod, providing updates on Synod events. The Youth Assembly will be held on May 25 at four different locations: Christ the King, Richmond, College, Salem, Muhlenberg, Harrisonburg, and Trinity, Newport News.

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