



Grand Canyon Synod

Communicating • Connecting • Creating

Synod Assembly

Love of Christ Lutheran Church, Mesa, Arizona

June 10-11, 2022

Minutes

Preliminaries

June 10, 2022

Registration

At 8:00 a.m. synod assembly registration opened at Love of Christ Lutheran Church, Mesa, Arizona (AZ).

Opening Worship

At 10:00 a.m. a service of Holy Communion was held with Bishop Deborah Hutterer presiding.

Plenary Session I

Friday, June 10, 2022

Call to Order

Bishop Deborah Hutterer called the thirty-fourth assembly of the Grand Canyon Synod (GCS) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), under the theme, "Stirred Up in the Spirit," to order "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," on June 10, 2022, at 11:15 a.m.

The territory of the Grand Canyon Synod is spread across lands in Arizona (AZ), Nevada (NV), and Utah (UT), which are currently home to over two dozen tribal nations. The assembly acknowledged these communities, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations.

Introductions

The churchwide representative, Rev. Louise Johnson, Executive for Administration was introduced.

The assembly welcomed Rev. Roberto Trejo Haager, President of Iglesia Luterana Mexicana (ILM).

The Rev. Stephen Springer was introduced as parliamentarian for the assembly, as were the officers of the Grand Canyon Synod; Ms. Barbara Carl, Vice President; Rev. David Brandfass, Secretary; and, Mr. Erik Rehms, Treasurer.

A word of gratitude was spoken to the pastors, members, and staff of Love of Christ Lutheran, Mesa, AZ for their gracious hospitality and technical expertise in hosting the assembly. The Synod Assembly Planning Team and assembly photographer Rev. Lars Hammar was recognized.

The synod staff of Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta, Director for Evangelical Mission, Bishop's Associate for Congregational Vitality; Rev. Jacqui Pagel, Associate to the Bishop - Candidacy and Faith Formation; Deacon Janice Zimbelman, Director of Congregation Transitions; Rev. Patricia Reed, Transition Coach; Rev. Glenn Zimbelman, Transition Coach; Dr. Jerry Kingston, Special Bishop's Associate for Mobility; Ms. Solveig Muus, Director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Arizona (LAMA); Mr. Brian Flatgard, Director of Communications; Ms. Theresa Thornburgh, Director of Administration and Events; Ms. Kathye Hamm, Administration and Events Assistant; Ms. Amy Birchard, Finance Administrator; Ms. Molly Gary, Program Manager for the Ministerial Excellence Fund; Ms. Lisa Marie Higginbotham, ELCA Foundation Planner; Mr. Josh Kerney, ELCA Foundation Planner; and Mr. William Ledford, Director of Advocacy, Lutheran Engagement in Advocacy (LEAN), were introduced.

Those newly ordained since the 2019 assembly were welcomed: Rev. Nanette Christofferson serving at Love of Christ, Mesa, ordained 10/5/2019, installed 10/6/2019; Rev Pam Reynolds, serving at Lord of Life, Sun City West, 2/6/2021; Rev Elizabeth Gallen, serving at New Journey, Fountain Hills, 3/13/2021; Rev Amalia Vagts serving at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Tucson, ordained 10/23/2021 at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Decorah, Iowa, installed 11/14/2021; Rev Ruby Myers serving at Trinity Lutheran in Phoenix, installed 1/9/2022, ordained at Zion Lutheran in Tinley Park, Illinois, 11/13/2021; Rev Lourdes Olson serving at New Song Lutheran in Las Vegas, ordained 1/15/2022 and installed 2/26/2022; Rev Katie Langston serving at New Promise Lutheran in St. George, 1/30/2022.

Rostered leaders new to the Grand Canyon Synod since our last in person assembly in 2019 are: Rev. Ben Bergren, Community Lutheran, Las Vegas, NV (11/16/2019); Rev. Rebecca Boardman, Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM), Tucson, AZ (10/27/2019); Rev. Scott Hackler, Spirit of Grace, Surprise, AZ (10/20/2019); Rev. Kari Williamson, St. Andrew, Phoenix, AZ (11/8/2020); Rev. Andrew Schlecht, Maricopa Lutheran, Maricopa, AZ; Rev. Thaddeus Book, Desert Cross, Tempe-Gilbert, AZ (1/15/2021); Rev. Annemarie Burke, Esperanza Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ (1/30/2021); Rev. Brian Weinberger at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Mesa, AZ (10/10/2021); Rev. Sandy Jones at Bethany Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, AZ (10/31/2021); Rev. Ryan Hersch at Peace Lutheran Church in Peoria, AZ (10/17/2021); Rev. Tim Nybrotten at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Oro Valley, AZ (10/31/2022); Rev. Doug Dill at Central Lutheran in Arizona City, and Casa Grande, both AZ (12/12/2021); Rev. Mari Larson at St. Andrew's Lutheran in Las Vegas, NV (12/19/2021); Rev. Naomi Hartman at Lutheran Church of the Foothills in Tucson, AZ (2/6/2022); Rev. Michael Sager at Desert Hills Lutheran in Green Valley, AZ (3/27/2022); Rev. John Maroni at Shepherd of the Desert in Sun City, AZ (5/14/2022).

Credentials Report

Mr. Erik Rehms, Synod Treasurer, and chair of the assembly's Credentials Committee, reported the following registered as of 11:27 am.

Credentials Report	Number
Ministers of Word & Sacrament	84
Ministers of Word & Service	3
Lay	153
Total Voting Members	240
Visitors	11
Visitors, no vote	1
Total Non-Voting	12
Total Registered	252

The Credentials report shows a quorum present; therefore, the thirty-fourth assembly of the GCS (ELCA) is duly constituted.

Adoption of Rules of Procedures

Bishop Deborah Hutterer, as chair of the assembly, offered a brief overview of the Rules of Procedure for the 2022 Assembly. The Rules of Procedure are attached to these minutes as **Exhibit 1**.

Rev. Paul Block moved

MSP¹ SA22.06.01² to adopt the Rules of Procedure for the 2022 Grand Canyon Synod Assembly.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Jim Day moved

MSP SA22.06.02 to adopt the published agenda and schedules of the 2022 Grand Canyon Synod Assembly.

2023-2024 Mission Spending Plan

Mr. Erik Rehms gave an overview of the 2023-2024 Mission Spending Plan which is attached to these minutes as **Exhibit 2**.

The assembly was informed that adoption of the 2023-2024 Mission Spending Plan will take place in the Friday afternoon plenary session. The assembly was informed that any revisions to the 2023-2024 Mission Spending Plan need to be presented to the Synod Council by June 10, 2022, at 2:45 p.m.

2021-2022 Audit Report

Mr. Erik Rehms gave an overview of the audited 2021-2022 financial results which are attached to these minutes as **Exhibit 3**. The very positive response to the Growing Generosity Campaign combined with the holy closure of Celebration Lutheran Church, Peoria, AZ and the liquidation of their assets had a positive effect on the synod's financial position. There is much to be thankful for, and this strong position will give the synod the capacity to fund future mission work.

The Rev. David Brandfass moved

MSP SA22.06.03 to accept the Audited Statement of Financial Position for 2021-2022 by the Metz Accounting Firm.

¹ MSP = "Moved, seconded, and passed" Note: "The name of the maker of the main motion should be entered into the minutes, but the name of the seconder should not be entered unless ordered by the assembly." – *Roberts Rule Order, Newly Revised, 12th Edition, 48:5.1*.

² In the coding of actions, "SA" refers to Synod Assembly, "22" to the year of the assembly (2022), "06" to the month in which the assembly took place (June), and "01" and sequentially, the number of actions of this assembly.

Nominations

The nominating committee for the 2022 Synod Assembly was Mr. Roger Bailey, chair; Ms. Barbara Carl; Rev. David Brandfass; Ms. Janis Richert; Mr. Glenn Austad; and Mr. Mark Myers. The committee solicited nominations to fill the positions of Secretary and youth-at-large representative. Conferences elected their nominees for synod council conference representatives at their conference gatherings and seek ratification by the assembly.

Voted SA22.06.04 to elect by ratification to the Grand Canyon Synod Council: Ms. Janis Richert, Kino Conference Representative; Ms. Wendy Weiske, Capital Conference Representative; Mr. Roger Bailey, Colorado River Conference Representative.

The High-Country Conference, unable to put forward a candidate for ratification, will elect their synod council conference representative for ratification by the Synod Council at a future date.

Nominations from the Floor

Nominations were opened to the floor.

- a) Ticket 1: Synod Secretary. The Synod Council nominated Rev. Stephen Springer. There were no nominations from the floor. With no further nominations, the chair closed ticket one.
- b) Ticket 2: Synod Council Youth At-Large Representative
Ms. Hannah Roberts, All Saints Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ was nominated from the floor. With no further nominations, the chair closed ticket two.

Presentation: One-Minute Faith Statement

Later in the assembly agenda there will be a workshop on sharing our faith using one-minute faith statements. Members of the Synod Council were asked to give example statements.

Ms. Hannah Manzanares presented her example of a one-minute faith statement.

Director for Evangelical Mission Report

The assembly heard the presentation of the Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta, Director for Evangelical Mission and Bishop's Associate for Congregational Vitality. Points of emphasis were on how good it is to be in-person after a pandemic triggered recess to mostly Zoom meetings. During this time there was loss, but also there has been an inspiring level of generosity that is giving this synod the freedom to develop plans for ministry on the border with our global partner, the Iglesia Luterana Mexicana (ILM), most likely in Nogales, AZ. The Stewardship and the New and Renewing Teams were recognized for their faithful work.

Recognitions and Celebrations

The assembly recognized Community Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, Nevada which is celebrating fifty years of ministry in 2022.

Newly ordained rostered leaders were joyfully acknowledged. The assembly also celebrated rostered leaders serving five years and less; rostered leaders celebrating ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, fifty, fifty-five, and sixty-year anniversaries of ordination or commissioning.

The assembly recognized those retired since the last assembly: Rev. Martin N. Overson (7/2/20210); Rev. Lowell Nelson (2/1/2022); Rev. Randall Olson (6/1/2022).

Break

Ms. Laura Musfeldt offered a prayer to conclude the first plenary session.

Bishop Deborah Hutterer declared the assembly to be in recess at 12:10 p.m.

Preliminaries to the Second Plenary

Prayer

Ms. Twila Burdick led an opening prayer prior to the Bible study.

Provoking to Love and Grow

An excellent study and discussion of Hebrews 10:24-25 was led by Rev. Peter Perry and Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta.

Discussion on the Sierra Pacific Synod

Discussion was held on the recent controversies regarding the ministry of the Sierra Pacific Synod.

Break

The assembly was declared to be in recess at 2:34 p.m. by Bishop Deborah Hutterer.

Bishop Deborah Hutterer called the assembly back to order at 3:01 p.m.

Prayer

Ms. Sue Jensen opened this portion of the assembly with prayer.

Bishop and Synod Council Report

Bishop Deborah Hutterer introduced Synod Vice President Ms. Barbara Carl. Bishop Deborah Hutterer and Ms. Barbara Carl highlighted the work of the synod and emphasized ministries including LAMA, LEAN, and Cruzando Fronteras. The assembly was introduced to the Lutheran Church of Senegal, Iglesia Luterana Mexicana (ILM), and various Churchwide and global partners. The Wisdom Keepers ministry at The Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission (NELM) and House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Rock Point, AZ, was recognized as was the Native American Urban Ministry (NAUM), Phoenix, AZ. The important ministry to congregations in transition is now led by Deacon Janice Zimbleman. An overview of the formation of Gloria Christi Federated Church, Paradise Valley, AZ and the merger of Good Samaritan and The Lakes Lutheran Churches, Las Vegas, NV was received by the assembly. A Mission and Ministry Task Force has been formed and is tasked with reporting to the Synod Council on how to best use funds received from congregations going through holy closure. The Diakonia Program continues to be a blessing. The Growing Generosity campaign, whose initial goal has been met, will expand possibilities to reach out to new and diverse populations and is supporting rostered leaders in significant ways. The “stretch” phase of the campaign will further support Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) among other exciting possibilities. All rostered leaders present were applauded for responding to the needs and call of the gospel during these difficult times. The pandemic has taken a toll on many of our leaders and rejuvenation will be a focus of the Fall gathering of rostered leaders. Discussion was held at individual tables about this presentation.

Seminary Student and Interns

Bishop Deborah Hutterer recognized synod seminarians and interns before the assembly.

Welcome of ILM President

Rev. Jacqui Pagel introduced President Rev. Roberto Trejo Haager who then provided a report on the ministry of the Iglesia Luterana Mexicana (ILM) and answered questions about our common mission from voting members.

Plenary Session II

Friday, June 10, 2022

Call to Order

Bishop Deborah Hutterer called Plenary Session II to order at 4:45 p.m.

Updates to Synod Governing Documents

Ms. Barbara Carl introduced updates to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Grand Canyon Synod.

The Synod Council moved

MSP SA22.06.05 to adopt the amendments to Synod Constitutions recommended by the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with the exception of recommended amendment S8.11.01.

The Synod Council moved and seconded

SA22.06.06 that bylaw S7.11.01 be amended to read, “~~The time and place of the Synod Assembly shall~~ **may** be held annually. **The time and the place (in-person or online) for the Synod Assembly as shall be** scheduled by the Synod Council.”

Rev. Naomi Hartman moved

MSP SA22.06.07 to amend SA22.06.06 striking the “may” and restoring the “shall” in the proposed bylaw change.

MSP SA22.06.08 that bylaw S7.11.01 be amended to read, “The ~~time and place of the~~ Synod Assembly shall be held annually. **The time and the place (in-person or online) for the Synod Assembly as shall be scheduled by the Synod Council.”**

Simon's Project

Ms. Barbara Carl introduced Rev. Jacqui Pagel, Associate to the Bishop - Candidacy and Faith Formation who gave a brief overview of her responsibilities and work.

Rev. Jacqui Pagel introduced Simon's Project which is about carrying the burden of racism in our ministries. The way to get rid of racism is to walk closer and closer to Jesus as we celebrate the world's wonderful diversity and encouraging our ministries at all levels to do so. Simon's Project will help us be a church of the present and the future and not a church of the past.

A second cohort of people interested in Simon's Project will begin in the Fall of 2022. To join the next cohort contact Rev. Jacqui Pagel.

Conference Deans

The Conference Deans and Bishop Deborah Hutterer gather once a month. Bishop Deborah Hutterer is grateful for the leadership of conference deans, and the companionship and counsel they provide.

Adopt 2023-2024 Mission Spending Plan

A question was asked about the amount designated for camps and faith formation stated in the narrative budget presentation. Further research and follow up will be required.

The Synod Council moved

MSP SA22.06.09 to adopt the Mission Spending Plan of the Grand Canyon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the period of February 1, 2023, through January 31, 2024, with total income of \$2,000,000 and a net loss of \$400,000 which is attached to these minutes as Exhibit 4.

General Election Ballot

Bishop Hutterer requested that ballots for the election of Synod Secretary, and Synod Council Youth At-Large Representative be distributed to the voting members present.

Instructions were given on casting ballots. The Rev. Tina Mills offered prayer before voting took place.

After making sure that all ballots had been collected, Bishop Deborah Hutterer closed the balloting at 5:27 p.m.

Grants

Ministries in the Grand Canyon Synod received over \$200,000 in grants in the past year. The Grants Committee was recognized for their work.

There are two categories of grant applications:

1. Project Support Grants, and
2. Adapting, Connecting, Transforming, and Sustaining (ACTS) Grants.

\$107,000 were awarded in ACTS Grants, and \$95,874 in Project Support Grants.

In the grant funding cycle priority was given to projects seeking to mitigate the effects of the pandemic including, but not limited to, food insecurity, unemployment, homelessness, health inequities, and production of online worship opportunities.

Resolutions

Bishop Deborah Hutterer introduced Rev. Stephen Springer, Chair of the Committee for Reference and Counsel.

Mr. Kenneth Larson moved

MSP SA22.06.10 that the Grand Canyon Synod, meeting in assembly, (re)commits to the following actions and practices, acknowledging that they are a starting point for life-long conversion, not merely a checklist of remedies:

- **We support the work of the GCS Simon's Project working group, as it launches a second cohort committed to cultural diversity awareness and advocacy.**
- **We proactively work to dismantle injustice by listening to voices, experiences, and the expertise of people at the margins. We**

strongly encourage congregations to invite multi-skin toned, multi-abled, and multi-aged people into every layer of participation and leadership.

- **We strongly encourage congregations to regularly participate in multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious activities in their community to demonstrate Christ’s call to learn from and love the neighbor.**
- **We strongly encourage congregations to honor June 17 as a commemoration day of penitence with study and prayer to honor the Emanuel Nine.**
- **We strongly encourage congregations to name the sin of prejudice in corporate Confession (racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, classism, etc.) as a regular part of worship.**
- **We strongly encourage individuals to sign the ELCA Racial Justice pledge, “I commit to study, prayer and action to become an anti-racist individual in an anti-racist church,”**
<https://www.elca.org/racialjusticepledge>.

Several voting members spoke in favor of the resolution. Youth and young adult ministry is most often our most diverse ministry which needs funding and line-item specifics.

Presentation: One-Minute Faith Statement

Ms. Sue Jensen of the Synod Council presented her example of a one-minute faith statement.

Recess

Mr. Roger Bailey led the closing prayer before dinner.

Bishop Deborah Hutterer declared the assembly to be in recess at 5:49 p.m.

Saturday, June 11, 2022

Preliminaries to the Third Plenary

Morning Prayer

Rev. Mary Louise Frenchman introduced herself and led the assembly in prayer. The hymn Beautiful Savior was sung by the assembly.

Presentation: One-Minute Faith Statement

Following the hymn, Synod Treasurer, Mr. Erik Rehms shared the third and final one-minute faith story.

Report of the ELCA, with Rev. Louise Johnson

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton brought greetings and a message from the churchwide organization by video.

Bishop Deborah Hutterer welcomed churchwide representative, Rev. Louise Johnson, Executive for Administration. In addition to serving congregations and non-profits and seminaries, she served as the fourteenth president of Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

In her report Rev. Louise Johnson shared our ELCA goal of engaging one million new people as we grow the church together. Our purpose is to “activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.” Our vision is for “a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.”

The priority areas of the ELCA are to be (1) “A Welcoming Church: Engaging new, young and diverse people.” (2) A Thriving Church: Rooted in tradition and radically relevant.” (3) “A connected, sustainable church: Raising the bar together.” The ELCA values forgiveness and reconciliation; dignity and

justice; inclusion and diversity; courage and openness to change; and the faithful stewardship of God's creation and gifts.

Rev. Johnson shared highlights of the incredible work this church does around the world.

The next rostered leaders gathering will be held July 17-20, 2023, in Phoenix, AZ. If you are interested in helping with that event, please contact Rev. Douglas Dill. The rescheduled National Youth Gathering will be held July 16-20, 2024, in New Orleans, LA.

Learning Event

Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta introduced Rev. Carol Breimeier who led the assembly in a workshop titled, "How to have a spiritual conversation without being a jerk."

Manna Grant

Ms. Laura Musfeldt was introduced by Bishop Deborah Hutterer.

Ms. Laura Musfeldt shared that twenty years ago Orpah Hoganson, Ascension Lutheran Church, Paradise Valley, AZ, left a legacy gift of \$180,000 to be used for local hunger and world hunger causes. This year, on behalf of Orpah's friends and family, the members of Ascension Lutheran Church present the GCS with half of these funds to be used in a new set of grants called Manna Grants within the Grand Canyon Synod. The other half of the Hoganson gift will be presented to ELCA Hunger Appeal.

Recognize New and Outgoing Synod Council Members

Ms. Lisa Parish, Ms. Twila Burdick, and Rev. David Brandfass were recognized for their service on the Synod Council.

New Synod Council members begin their terms in September and will be formally installed after their terms begin.

Plenary Session III

Saturday, June 11, 2022

Call to Order

Bishop Deborah Hutterer called Plenary Session III to order at 10:14 a.m.

Elections

Ms. Barbara Carl shared the voting results follow:

Synod Secretary

Synod Secretary	Number of Votes
Rev. Stephen Springer	223

Voted SA22.06.11 to elect Rev. Stephen Springer to his first four-year term as Synod Secretary.

Synod Council Youth At-Large Representative

Synod Council – Youth At-Large Representative	Number of Votes
Ms. Hannah Roberts	220

Voted SA22.06.12 to elect Ms. Hannah Roberts to her first three-year term as Synod Council – Youth At-Large Representative.

Synod Assembly Planning Team

The Synod Assembly Planning Team and the Love of Christ Team were recognized for their work.

Calendar Announcements

The annual Bishop's Fall Gathering for rostered leaders will be held October 17-19, 2022, at the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, Arizona.

The 2023 Synod Assembly will be June 8 -10, 2023, at Resurrection Lutheran Church, Oro Valley, Arizona.

Recess

Bishop Deborah Hutterer declared the assembly to be in recess at 10:25 a.m.
Bishop Deborah Hutterer called the assembly to closing worship at 10:40 a.m.

Worship

The concluding worship to the 2022 Grand Canyon Synod Assembly included a message by the Rev. Louise Johnson based on John 14:8-27. The Synod Council was installed. The voting members to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly were blessed with a sending rite.

During the Rite for the closing of an assembly, Bishop Deborah Hutterer declared the assembly closed at 11:19 a.m. “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. David W. Brandfass
Secretary
Grand Canyon Synod