



2019 Virginia Synod Assembly Update

Faithful + Bold + Serving

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 7-8, 2019 gathering was “**Faithful + Bold + Serving**”. This year the Assembly was located in the Kerr-Cregger Fieldhouse on the campus of Roanoke College in Salem Virginia. There, those in attendance met for both the Assembly business sessions and worship.

During the weekend, **Bishop Humphrey**, helped explore the theme for the Assembly based off of Hebrews 10.23, “Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope that we confess, for God, who made the promise, is faithful,” with a keynote presentations that led into group discussion for those seated together.

The Rev. Dr. Sandy Chrostowski, the director of DEM Relationships of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was present at this year’s Assembly to represent the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, bringing good news from the wider church. She shared with us that in 2018 ELCA World Hunger accompanied congregations and partners in over 60 countries, and through Domestic Hunger Grants supported two Virginia ministries, Waynesboro Area Refuge Ministry (WARM) in Waynesboro, and IMPACT: Interfaith Movement Promoting Action by Congregations Together in Charlottesville.

The Rev. John Wertz Jr. delivered a report for the ForwardingFaith campaign He celebrated the success of the campaign, with over \$2.74 million in estimated gifts and over 1430 individuals and congregations sharing their support. He shared that thanks to ForwardingFaith, the Virginia Synod is supporting existing ministries such as ACTS and youth events, as well as creating new opportunities like the recent Young Adult Retreat. Thank you to all the congregations and members who have helped us exceed our goal for ForwardingFaith. Pastor Wertz also shared our new Virginia Synod App, created in partnership with Tithe.ly. On the Synod app you can keep up to date on news, upcoming events, event photos, online giving, and more.

Elections also took place over the weekend. **Charles Downs**, of Christ in Roanoke was reelected as the Virginia Synod Council Vice President. **Blythe Ann Scott** of First in Norfolk reelected as the Virginia Synod Council Secretary. **Molly Beyer** of Bethel in Winchester, and **Darrell Short** of St. Paul in Shenandoah were both reelected to Synod Council. **Richard Corliss** of St. Timothy, Norfolk, **Carlton Hardy** of St. Mark, Yorktown, **Patricia Hunter** of Redeemer, Bristol, **Timothy Hoffstaetter** of Faith in Suffolk, **Elizabeth Leonard** of St. Philip in Roanoke, and **The Rev, Harry Griffith** Pastor of Our Saviour in Virginia Beach are the newly elected members joining Synod Council.

One resolution was passed over the weekend, honoring **Tent of Nations**, a working farm in Bethlehem, Palestine that seeks to educate and build bridges between people and the land. This resolution encourages congregations to designate a Sunday in 2019 and beyond as “Tent of Nations Sunday”, for prayer, education, and encouraging visits and attendance at Tent of Nations farming and peace-building workshops.

Worship at this year's Synod Assembly brought together with worship planners from across Virginia. Worship planners included **Kevin Barger**, **The Rev. Ingrid Chenoweth**, **The Rev. Kelly Bayer Derrick**, **The Rev. Anna Havron**, **The Rev. Rachel Manke**, **The Rev. Heidi Moore**, **Lenae Osmondson**, **The Rev. Kathryn Pocalyko**, **The Rev. Paul Toelke**, **The Rev. Leslie Webber**, and **The Rev. Meredith Williams**. Each shared their talents presenting a diverse range of services throughout the weekend, and we thank them for all their hard work.

Two young women were commissioned for Young Adults in Global Mission. **Maren Corliss** and **Jayne Kokkonen** have both accepted one-year appointments as YAGMs to Central Europe, and Madagascar.

Turner Barger of Epiphany in Richmond, president of the Lutheran Youth Organization, presented the Youth Assembly report, centered on the Youth Assembly theme of “Faith Shall Reign”. He shared a summary of this year’s Youth Assembly, and raised up how many youth attendees at the assembly are fully confirmed adult members of the church, “We are no longer the future of the church, we *are* the church- as youth and as adults.” The incoming LYO Board president will be **Mairi Bachman** of Grace in Winchester.