

Minutes of the Twenty-Ninth Synod Assembly of the  
Southern Ohio Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Theme:  
Stronger and Better Together...  
Joining Jesus in the Restoration of the World:  
ON THE WAY!

Biblical Text: Luke 24

HPER Center  
Wittenberg University  
250 Bill Edwards Drive  
Springfield, Ohio  
June 7-8, 2019

**Morning of June 7, 2019, Session 1**

Opening Worship with Opening of Assembly

Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt opened the Synod Assembly at 9:10 AM. with Worship, followed by opening remarks.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Bishop Dillahunt introduced Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chairperson of the Elections Committee, upon whom she called to provide the members of the Assembly with a Credentials Report. Rev. Grate reported that at 9:00 A.M. there were 312 voting members registered and present. Bishop Dillahunt thereupon declared that a quorum existed to conduct the business of the Synod.

Greetings from the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Mike McDorman, representing the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, warmly welcomed the Assembly to Springfield and to Wittenberg University.

## Approval of the 2019 Synod Assembly Agenda

Secretary Hart moved the approval of the 2019 Synod Assembly Agenda.

### **VOTED**

#### **SA.19.06.01**

**To approve the pre-assembly printed Agenda for the 2019 Synod Assembly as recommended by the Southern Ohio Synod Council. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

## Adoption of Rules of Procedure for the 2019 Synod Assembly

Secretary Hart moved the approval of the Rules of Procedure for the 2019 Synod Assembly.

### **VOTED**

#### **SA.19.06.02**

**To adopt the Rules of the Procedure for the 2019 Synod Assembly as recommended by the Southern Ohio Synod Council. ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY**

## Voting Procedures for the General Ballot

Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt provided the voting members with the procedures for voting on the General Ballot matters coming before the Assembly.

## Voting Procedures for the Election of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton explained the obligations and roles of the Synod Bishop and provided the voting members with the procedures to be used in the election of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod.

## Words of Welcome

Bishop Dillahunt then extended words of welcome to Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, this year's ELCA Representative to the Synod Assembly. She also explained that young persons of the Church will be floating in and out of the Assembly Hall as a Youth Gathering is occurring simultaneously in the HPER Center. The Bishop also recognized

Deacon Cory Driver, Director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, who will lead Bible Studies during the Assembly.

The Bishop also extended words of welcome to Dr. Michael Frandsen, President of Wittenberg University, who then addressed the Assembly. In addition, words of welcome were directed to Gregory V. Palmer, Bishop of the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church and to the Bishops of ELCA Region 6, namely; Bishop Donald P. Kreiss, Southeast Michigan; Bishop Craig A. Satterlee, North/West Lower Michigan; Bishop William O. Gafkjen, Indiana-Kentucky; Daniel G. Beaudoin, Northwestern Ohio; and Bishop Abraham D. Allende, Northeastern Ohio.

Bishop Dillahunt then introduced Rev. Karen Alsnauer and Rev. Tony Katko who are acting as Synod Assembly Chaplains.

### Nominations Committee Report

The Bishop introduced Mrs. Michelle Riesbeck, Chair of the Nominations Committee.

Mrs. Riesbeck reported that there would be an Ecclesiastical Ballot for the Office of Bishop during this first session of the Assembly and a general election which will occur during the second session in the afternoon. She then reported that one (1) discernment form had been received by the Committee. She stated that this indicated that that person was recognized by congregations or individuals in the Synod as possessing qualities that would make that person a good fit for the call of Bishop, and that that nominee chose to have their biographical information shared with the members of the Assembly prior to the first Ecclesiastical Ballot for Bishop. That one discernment form identified Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt as the person raised up to the Assembly. Mrs. Riesbeck then explained the ecclesiastical ballot process and that the Synod Constitution requires a three-fourths legal vote for an election on the first ballot.

Mrs. Riesbeck then explained that the nominees for the general election would be presented at the second session of the Assembly.

### Reference and Counsel Committee Report

Bishop Dillahunt called Rev. June Wilkins to the podium and introduced her as the Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee. Rev. Wilkins reported that the Reference and Counsel Committee had received no proposed resolutions as of that moment but that proposed resolutions may still be presented to the Synod Secretary by 2:30 PM on June 7.

## Report of the Credentials Committee

Rev. Rebecca Grate reported that at 10:20 A.M. there were 313 voting members were registered and present.

### Hymn and Prayer

Bishop Dillahunt then called upon Rev. Karen Alsnauer, Assembly Chaplain, to provide prayer during the elections process.

### Ecclesiastical Ballot for Bishop

Bishop Dillahunt then turned over the gavel to Presiding Bishop Eaton who supervised the written Ecclesiastical Balloting. Upon completing the Ecclesiastical Balloting, Presiding Bishop Eaton returned the gavel to Bishop Dillahunt.

### Report of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod

Bishop Dillahunt referred to her written report that is included in the pre-assembly materials and then addressed the Assembly. She stated that our vision is “Stronger and Better Together...Joining Jesus in the Restoration of the World”. “So how are we doing?” she asked. A video was presented to demonstrate some of the things that the Synod is doing. Members of the Synod staff are on the go all over the territory. Included in the various ministries of the Synod is a new program called “The Collaborative” which began in 2019. Congregations are being brought together in small groups in an effort to share and learn from one another in order to more effectively share the Good News and to build stronger relationships in the communities. Other initiatives include a collaborative of several congregations in the Fairborn-Donnelsville-West Milton area known as Lutheran Saints in Ministry, as well as a new collaborative of five congregations in Lancaster area known as Lancaster Lutherans Together. Collaboration commenced in 2017 with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati of the Roman Catholic Church and is continuing as the two denominations deal with social issues that impact the general population. Other examples of collaboration are contained in the Bishop’s written Report to the Assembly.

The Bishop spoke energetically about the Thrive! Campaign, a new Synod-wide capital campaign designed to raise \$2 Million for the purposes of equipping lay leaders, raising up leaders for small congregations, strengthening rostered leaders, launching new congregations and reaching new people, enhancing worship practice, and sharing with the ELCA for a Fund for Leaders Scholarship. To this end, a Pastors Advisory Cabinet has been formed, and a Campaign Director has been appointed to oversee the effort.

Bishop Dillahunt then asked the question, “What does the Synod do for you?” The Synod supports congregations, rostered ministers, agencies, institutions, colleges and universities, global companions, ecumenical partners, food pantries, and disaster relief. The Bishop continued by individually introducing the members of the Synod staff to the Assembly. Her point was that all of us together are different parts, but of one body.

She then asked, “What makes your heart burn in your congregation, in the synod, and in the ELCA?”

Bishop Dillahunt proceeded to welcome those rostered leaders new to the Synod and recognized the many milestones and anniversaries in the Synod since the last Synod Assembly. Those welcomed and recognized include:

#### NEW TO THE SYNOD

Rev. Christie Beckman	Rev. Robyn Provis
Rev. Neil Cadle	Rev. Steve Rice
Rev. David Eidson	Rev. Alexandra Rode (UMC)
Rev. Martin Gehring	Deacon Blair Smith
Rev. Daniel Hille	Rev. Michael Wiechers
Rev. Blair Miller	

#### NEWLY ASSIGNED TO THE SYNOD

Laura Ferree, Seminarian

#### 25<sup>th</sup> ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev. Marjorie Anderson  
Rev. Deborah Dingus

#### 30<sup>th</sup> ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Deacon Anita Telfer  
Rev. Brian Kittner  
Rev. Grace Werzinske  
Rev. Laura Leach-Schreffler

40<sup>th</sup> ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev. Doug Campbell	Rev. Michael Hout
Rev. Skip Cornett	Rev. John Mittermaier
Rev. Al Debelak	Rev. Stephen Nierman
Rev. Jim Dinkel	Rev. Joh Schriber
Rev. Gary Eichhorn	Rev. Ronald Wean
Rev. Robert Halsey	

50<sup>th</sup> ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev. Richard Burgie  
Rev. Robert Burgie  
Rev. Art Lund  
Rev. John Kindsvatter

60<sup>th</sup> ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev. Bernie Boehm  
Rev. Richard Mintel  
Rev. Haldon Robarge  
Rev. George Wilch

65<sup>th</sup> ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev. Theodore Menter  
Rev. Daniel Snider

50<sup>th</sup> CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Christ the King Lutheran Church, West Chester

75<sup>th</sup> CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

St. Philip Lutheran Church, Columbus

125<sup>th</sup> CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lancaster

## 175<sup>th</sup> CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

Bethel Lutheran Church, Springfield  
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Oxford  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pomeroy

## 200<sup>th</sup> CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARY

St. John's Lutheran Church, Miamisburg

We are On the Way! Bishop Dillahunt then concluded her report by thanking everyone for what we have accomplished together.

### Bible Study Session #1

The Bishop called upon Deacon Cory Driver to present the first session of Bible study.

Mr. Driver began his remarks with a discussion of the Emmaus walk. “On the way... on the road to Emmaus by two people, Cleopas and Mary.” The two were out for a walk to clear their heads after the crucifixion of Jesus. They were taking time to support each other after a family tragedy. While on the road, Jesus approached them but they did not recognize him. Since Jesus was criminalized by the Romans, he was not recognized for fear of their own condemnation. Jesus asked them what they were discussing. Jesus was tried, convicted, executed, and his body had been stolen. They were astounded that the stranger did not know what had happened. Cleopas said they had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel from the Romans. The followers of Jesus hid away together for fear of their own condemnation. Cleopas and Mary had compassion for each other as they tried to console each other. They drew strength from each other as they discussed events. They exposed their vulnerability to the stranger they met on the road.

Compassion has been defined as suffering together. Mr. Driver suggested that we today may find strength by confessing our faith in Jesus. By being vulnerable in our confessions, we also find strength together. Like breaking into the lives of Cleopas and Mary, the good news is that Jesus breaks into our lives to let us know what God is up to. With those comments, Mr. Driver concluded the first Bible Study session.

Bishop Dillahunt introduced the members of the Synod Council and Rev. Craig Richter, the Parliamentarian for the Synod Assembly.

The Bishop then took time to welcome the workshop leaders and vendors to the assembly.

### Report of Synod Council Treasurer and Finance Team

Bishop Dillahunt then called Mr. Kevin Pyle, Synod Council Treasurer, to the podium who, in turn, introduced the members of the Finance Team. The members of the Team include Rev. Jonathan Bull, Rev. Katie Kerrigan, Ms. Joy Hacker, Ms. Becky Witt, and Mr. Chris Clothier, along with Bishop Dillahunt.

The Treasurer reported that the Synod received Mission Support from the individual congregations as reported in the pre-assembly materials for the period beginning February of 2018 through and including January of 2019. Mr. Pyle commented that the Synod received its 3<sup>rd</sup> unqualified Audit Report from Applegrowth Partners. Mr. Chris Clothier reported that the Financial Controls Report was unqualified as well. Ms. Becky Witt then presented the 2020-2021 Mission and Ministry Plan in greater detail which calls for a budget of \$1.85 Million. She stated that the team wanted to be realistic and optimistic and was, at the same time, committed to a balanced budget. The team considered potential salary increases as the Synod staff has not received any significant increases since 2014. The team also evaluated the operating expense structure and investigated opportunities to reduce costs while simultaneously keeping Southern Ohio Synod partner support levels the same. Team relies heavily on the information provided by Pr. Katie Kerrigan. The proposed 2020-2021 Mission and Ministry Plan is based upon a budget of \$1,850,800 which is an increase of \$59,800 over the Revised 2019-2020 Mission and Ministry Plan. The 2020-2021 Plan assumes \$13,800 in miscellaneous income and building rentals. The expense side of the 2020-2021 Mission and Ministry Plan includes the payment of 40% of the Synod's income to the ELCA and 60% for mission partners, office operations, etc. Ms. Witt reiterated the need for regular and consistent support from congregations.

Rev. Jonathan Bull then presented information regarding the income sources for the Mission and Ministry Plan. He indicated that the Assembly members would hear several mission stories. Rev. Bull asked the members of the Assembly to listen carefully, and he thanked everyone for their support.

Bishop Dillahunt then introduced the Pastors Advisory Cabinet for the Thrive! Campaign. Rev. Gil Santiago presented information about Thrive! Rev. Santiago indicated that the capital campaign was designed to raise funds for the Synod over and above regular Mission Support. He explained that the Campaign has five goals, namely; to equip leaders; to raise up leaders for smaller congregations; to strengthen rostered leaders; to launch new congregations and reach new people; and to enhance worship practice. Rev. Santiago then directed the attention of the Assembly members to a video presentation which reinforced Rev. Santiago's comments.

Vice President Marjorie Ellis then addressed the assembly about the Thrive! Campaign. She explained that Thrive! will support rostered leaders and eventually will allow seminary students to graduate debt-free. Thrive! programs will educate congregations regarding ways to increase stewardship and giving.

Rev. Barry Scott was also asked to address the Assembly. He explained other aspects of the Thrive! Campaign and urged support for the Campaign. Rev. Beth Clothier then added that she felt that obstacles are actually opportunities for grace. Bishop Dillahunt emphasized that Thrive! will provide hope for communities, churches, and people. Rev. Jonathan Bull also commented that participating in the Thrive! Campaign is an opportunity for individuals and congregations to be part of something much larger than themselves. Together we Thrive! Rev. Bonnie Gerber then introduced Rev. Mike Ward as the Synod's Thrive! Campaign consultant. Rev. Gerber also introduced Rev. Larry Donner as the Thrive! Campaign Director.

#### Results of the Nominating Ballot

Bishop Dillahunt called upon Presiding Bishop Eaton to take the gavel once again, and Rev. Rebecca Grate reported the following results:

Those receiving one (1) vote were:

Rev. Lisa Arrington	Rev. Aly Mazzei
Rev. John David Bryant	Rev. Lowell Michelson
Rev. Rob Bork	Rev. Mark Nodo
Rev. Grant Eckhart	Rev. John Pollock
Rev. Jonathan Eilert	Rev. Roger Quay
Rev. June Fryman	Rev. Peter Rudowski
Rev. Vicky Garber	Rev. Robert Swanson
Rev. Diana Gugel	Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler
Rev. Dr. Roy Hammerling	Rev. Dr. Nancy Trimble
Rev. Katie Kerrigan	Rev. Andrew Tucker
Rev. Aaron Layne	Rev. Fritz Wiese
Rev. Steve Mahaffey	Rev. Charles Woodward

Those receiving two (2) votes were:

Rev. Bob Abrams	Rev. Dr. Cheryl Peterson
Rev. Jonathan Bull	Rev. June Wilkins

Those receiving four (4) votes were:

Rev. Elizabeth Lowery

**And receiving Two Hundred Fifty-Two (252) votes was:**

**Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt**

Rev. Rebecca Grate noted that Two Hundred Eighty-Eight (288) legal votes were cast and that Sixteen (16) illegal votes were cast; therefore, Two Hundred Sixteen (216) votes or Seventy-Five Percent (75.00%) of the total legal ballots cast are required to elect a Bishop on the Nominating Ballot.

Presiding Bishop Eaton then declared that Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt was reelected as Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod of the ELCA with 252 of 288 votes or Eighty-Seven and One-Half Percent (87.50%). Bishop Eaton then returned the gavel to Bishop Dillahunt.

Filled with emotion and a deep sense of gratitude, Bishop Dillahunt thanked the Assembly for its trust and confidence.

Bishop Dillahunt then called upon Rev. Monte Stevens to address the Assembly regarding disaster services in the Dayton, Ohio area. On May 27, 2019, fifteen tornados touched down in the Dayton area, resulting in one death and a tremendous amount of damage. No Lutheran churches were hit but six hundred residential homes were rendered uninhabitable. Rev. Stevens noted that many more homes are livable but damaged. He stated that help is needed to recover. Rev. Stevens went on to say that recovery is not a sprint but an endurance run. He described the recovery efforts currently under way. Rev. Stevens closed his remarks by indicating that recovery volunteers and financial donations are greatly appreciated.

Ms. Susan Barton-Nonno then provided some final announcements for the morning.

Rev. Tony Katko, Chaplain, offered prayer prior to lunch.

Bishop Dillahunt then declared a recess for lunch at 12:45 PM.

## Afternoon of June 7, 2019, Session 2

Bishop Dillahunt reconvened the Assembly at 2:53 P.M.

At the request of the Bishop, a hymn and prayer were offered by Rev. Tony Katko to open the afternoon session.

### Report of the Credentials Committee

Rev. Rebecca Grate reported that at 1:30 P.M. on June 7, there were 327 voting members registered and present.

Bishop Dillahunt called Mrs. Michelle Riesbeck, Chair of the Nominating Committee, and Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chair of the Elections Committee, to the podium.

### Report of the Nominations Committee

Bishop Dillahunt introduced Ms. Michelle Riesbeck who is currently serving the Synod as the Chair of the Nominations Committee.

The Bishop then made the following nominations on behalf of the Synod Council and stated the position for which each person has been nominated. After the nominees for each position were identified, Bishop Dillahunt called for additional nominations from the floor. Receiving no additional nominations for any of the positions as each position was announced, Bishop Dillahunt individually declared the nominations for each position closed. Those positions are as follows:

Synod Council – Four Year Term:

Synod Council - Secretary (Term 2019-2023)

Mr. Richard Freudenberger (Dayton)

Ms. Holly R. Fischer (Central Ohio)

Synod Council, Cincinnati - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)

Rev. Robert Bork

Rev. Matthew Byrd

Synod Council, Cincinnati – Lay Male (Term 2019-2023)  
Mr. Matthew Peterson

Synod Council, Muskingum - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)  
Rev. Mark Combs  
Rev. Ken Hacker

Synod Council, Muskingum- Lay Female (Term 2019-2023)  
Mrs. Michelle Riesbeck  
Ms. Pamela J. Thomas

Synod Council, Northwest - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)  
Rev. Larry Grunden  
Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler

Synod Council, Northwest - Lay Female (Term 2019-2023)  
Ms. Laura E. Schmidt

Synod Council, Northwest - Lay Male (Term 2019-2023)  
Mr. Dale Poppe  
Mr. Bob Taylor  
Mr. Douglas Ware

Synod Council, Scioto - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)  
Rev. Roger Quay  
Rev. Dr. Ken Witt

Synod Council, Scioto – Lay Male (Term 2019-2023)  
Mr. Roy E. Hart

Synod Council, Young Adult (Term 2019-2023)

Mr. Ethan Roberts (Central Ohio)

Ms. Morgan Walker (Central Ohio)

Rev. Rebecca Grate, Chair of the Elections Committee, then supervised the election process and announced the results of the First Ballot of the General Election for the Synod Council positions. The results are:

Synod Council – Four Year Term:

Synod Council - Secretary (Term 2019-2023)

Mr. Richard Freudenberger (Dayton) 135

Ms. Holly R. Fischer (Central Ohio) 146 Elected

Synod Council, Cincinnati - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)

Rev. Robert Bork 121

Rev. Matthew Byrd 151 Elected

Synod Council, Cincinnati – Lay Male (Term 2019-2023)

Mr. Matthew Peterson 270 Elected

Synod Council, Muskingum - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)

Rev. Mark Combs 166 Elected

Rev. Ken Hacker 98

Synod Council, Muskingum- Lay Female (Term 2019-2023)

Mrs. Michelle Riesbeck 200 Elected

Ms. Pamela J. Thomas 75

Synod Council, Northwest - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)

Rev. Larry Grunden 90

Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler 191 Elected

Synod Council, Northwest - Lay Female (Term 2019-2023)  
Ms. Laura E. Schmidt 268 Elected

Synod Council, Northwest - Lay Male (Term 2019-2023)  
Mr. Dale Poppe 60  
Mr. Bob Taylor 100 To second ballot  
Mr. Douglas Ware 110 To second ballot

Synod Council, Scioto - Clergy (Term 2019-2023)  
Rev. Roger Quay 137  
Rev. Dr. Ken Witt 141 Elected

Synod Council, Scioto – Lay Male (Term 2019-2023)  
Mr. Roy E. Hart 273 Elected

Synod Council, Young Adult (Term 2019-2023)  
Mr. Ethan Roberts (Central Ohio) 120  
Ms. Morgan Walker (Central Ohio) 156 Elected

At 4:08 PM, Rev. Grate then supervised the Second Ballot for the position of Synod Council, Northwest – Lay Male. The results are as follows:

Synod Council, Northwest - Lay Male (Term 2019-2023)  
Mr. Bob Taylor 104  
Mr. Douglas Ware 165 Elected

Mr. Matthew Peterson, newly elected to Synod Council, Cincinnati – Lay Male, then resigned.

#### On the Way Moment

Rev. Bob Abrams next addressed the Assembly by presenting information regarding the Consultation Committee. Rev. Abrams explained that he has been enrolled in the ELCA

Systems Academy in order to study how church and personal relationships affect us. As a result, the Southern Ohio Resource Team is outgrowth of Systems Academy. Team members have met privately with pastors and ask hard questions to make people think about where the individual congregations have been and where those congregations are called to go. The Consultation Committee provides workshops for those trying to think through difficult issues. Rev. Abrams concluded his remarks by stating that this is a new way to think about how we can be stronger together on the way to building stronger relationships.

### Report of the ELCA

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton then addressed the Assembly. She commenced her remarks by stating that the Southern Ohio Synod had recently shared \$632,000 with the larger church. Bishop Eaton thanked the Synod for its increase in financial support over the previous year. She also expressed her gratitude to the Assembly for sharing Bishop Dillahunt with the ELCA who is filling various positions on the Churchwide level.

The Presiding Bishop then turned her remarks to the “Always Being Made New Campaign”. She acknowledged \$595,000 having been donated to ELCA from the Southern Ohio Synod territory through this campaign and how various projects and initiatives have been funded through the Campaign.

Bishop Eaton asked, “What are we able to do as the ELCA?” A video was presented about various ELCA projects including the support of 365 new congregations in 54 synods nationally, and about \$23.6 million given to World Hunger.

The Bishop Eaton focused upon important issues for the ELCA including Women and Social Justice. New policies are now being developed. She also commented that coming up will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of women in the ELCA and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of the first woman of color in the ELCA. And 2019 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the human sexuality social statement.

The Presiding Bishop closed her address by asking the members of the Assembly, “How do we live out our baptismal vocation faithfully?” She went on to say that the most effective way is to ask friends and neighbors to join in worship – which begets the following question, “How do we invite other people to experience God?” By personal contact and invitation.

### Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Bishop Dillahunt called Rev. June Wilkins to the podium for the Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee. Rev. Wilkins responded by stating that the Committee received no resolutions for the Assembly to consider.

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Karen Alsnauer.

## Bible Study Session #2

The Bishop called upon Deacon Cory Driver to present the second session of Bible study.

Deacon Driver began his presentation by examining the prophesy contained in the Old Testament regarding the coming of Jesus. The prophesy included songs of praise, embracing of foreigners, jubilee, and release. Then Mr. Driver focused upon the New Testament. He talked about Jesus speaking of himself being fulfillment of the Scriptures including his death and pointing to the saving nature of God.

The Bible study returned to the Road to Emmaus. Cleopas and Mary ate of unleavened bread and shared it with Jesus although Jesus was not immediately revealed to them. It was only when the bread was broken that Jesus was revealed to them, and then He vanished. Cleopas and Mary hurried back to their friends in the upper room only to learn that their friends, too, had been visited by the resurrected Jesus. The death and resurrection of Jesus is a singular event in human history. The Spirit of God continues to move and continues to do new things. Jesus brings all these things together. Mr. Driver suggested that we recognize Jesus by his praying and by his providing food to us. Providing food is crucial to the witnessing of God. Being stronger together includes adding our witness to the witness of others. Having compassion for each other, allowing us to be strengthened by each other, being vulnerable with each other, continually brings us together for the good of the church and for the good of humanity.

## Report of the Thrive! Campaign Director

Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt called Rev. Larry Donner to the podium to address the Assembly. The Bishop introduced Rev. Donner as the Thrive! Campaign Director. During his remarks, Rev. Donner stated that our vision of being stronger and better together is transformational. “But,” he said, “vision without funding is little more than lip service.” Rev. Donner developed his presentation by commenting that a Pastors Advisory Cabinet had been created to assist in the development of the Thrive! Campaign. Rev. Donner articulately drove home the concept that the Thrive! Campaign is essential to the continuing life of the Southern Ohio Synod. Through a video presentation, the Thrive! Campaign was explained to the members of the Assembly and how it is designed to equip a vibrant Southern Ohio Synod.

After Rev. Donner presented the video to the Assembly, he invited the Synod’s congregations to watch the video on the Synod website. He then recommended that the congregations select a congregational leader to attend an upcoming Congregation Leader Training Event so that each congregation in the Synod can be instructed how to set a

three-year Thrive! Campaign financial goal. Rev. Donner explained that each congregation would conduct a five-to-six week financial gifts campaign seeking three-year pledges. Gifts and/or pledges would then be received and shared with the Synod. Rev. Donner was exuberant when he reported that \$182,544 had already pledged even prior to the official commencement of the Campaign!

#### Report of the Southern Ohio Synod Youth and Family Coach

Bishop Dillahunt then called upon Mr. Gary Pecuch, the Synod's Youth and Family Coach. Mr. Pecuch began his address by talking about building 2800 beds and distributing them to people who had no beds. Many of the volunteers don't know Jesus but are learning. This project was just one about bringing the story of Jesus to all people. He recited several other stories to the Assembly about being "On the Way". His approach to youth is to "Love the stuffing out of the kids into the Kingdom". Mr. Pecuch invites all congregations in the territory to request assistance from the Synod with youth programming as such programming can be challenging but yet so rewarding.

Closing prayer for this session was offered by Rev. Tony Katko.

At 5:38 P.M., Bishop Dillahunt declared a recess in the proceedings for the day.

#### **Morning of June 8, 2019, Session 3**

Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt opened the June 8 morning session at 9:08 A.M.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Rev. Rebecca Grate reported that at 8:50 A.M. there were 331 voting members registered and present.

#### Opening Prayer

Rev. Karen Alsnauer offered prayer to open the Third Session of the Assembly.

## Report of the Synod Council Secretary

Bishop Dillahunt then called upon Mr. Roy E. Hart, Synod Council Secretary, to present the Secretary's Report.

Mr. Hart reported that the 2018 Synod Assembly minutes were reviewed by the Synod Council at its April, 2019, meeting and approved. The minutes are available for review on the Synod website.

He also stated that since the adjournment of the 2018 Synod Assembly, the following rostered leaders have joined the Church Triumphant:

Rev. Richard Faust, Sr. (July 15, 2018)

Rev. Carl Roepcke (September 14, 2018)

Rev. Curtis Gast (October 25, 2018)

Rev. Thomas A. Wolfe (November 20, 2018)

Rev. Edward Bary (February 7, 2019)

Rev. William Schmidt (March 11, 2019)

Mr. Hart then reported that since the adjournment of the 2018 Synod Assembly, the following rostered leaders have retired:

Rev. Alicia Nierman (August 1, 2018)

Rev. Jarl A. Andeer (September 1, 2018)

Rev. Robert E. Miller (October 1, 2018)

Rev. Herbert R. Maxwell (January 1, 2019)

Rev. Jonathan W. Schriber (February 1, 2019)

Mr. Hart then stated that since the adjournment of the 2018 Synod Assembly, the following congregations have closed:

North Pointe Congregation at Peace Lutheran Church, Gahanna (July 1, 2018)

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Willowdell (April 14, 2019)

North Community Evangelical Lutheran Church, Columbus (June 2, 2019)

The Secretary also reported that since the adjournment of the 2018 Synod Assembly, no congregations have disaffiliated from the ELCA.

Mr. Hart then thanked the Bishop and the members of the Assembly for their attention and concluded his report.

### Report of the Director of Evangelical Mission

Bishop Dillahunt called Rev. Katie Kerrigan, Director of Evangelical Mission, to the podium to present her report.

Rev. Kerrigan reported that the Synod has an exciting new mission in the Thrive! Campaign. In addition, she shared her enthusiasm for a new initiative called “Stewardship for All Seasons”. Congregations have wanted to learn about where the Spirit is calling them to serve. The Stewardship For All Seasons Program is about many things, and among them, is how to do stewardship. Already, Rev. Kerrigan has received correspondence from people about results of the workshops, and she is excited about what she has received. Rev. Kerrigan truly believes that the Synod congregations “Are on the Way”.

Rev. Kerrigan reported that redevelopment programs have included five cohorts involving four retreats over the last 18 months. These redevelopment programs utilize “collaborative learning”. The cohorts are formed from congregational teams which are, in turn, supported by mentors who are rostered ministers. Rev. Kerrigan reported that the learning goes both ways in that the Synod staff is also learning through this approach.

Rev. Kerrigan thinks of herself as a bridge among the three expressions of the church—a bridge among congregations, the Synod, and the ELCA. As a result of the work that occurs in these programs, she notes that the Synod is experiencing renewed generosity in stewardship. She views stewardship as a demonstration of the health of the congregations in their relationships with the larger church.

The Director also works in the ELCA World Hunger Grant Program. She concluded her report by stating that the Synod was awarded two grants during this past year in addition to receiving two mental health ministry grants.

## Workshops

Bishop Dillahunt then informed the members of the Assembly about the various workshops that were available beginning at 10:00 A.M. The workshops included such topics as:

1. They are us! Extending Lutheran Welcome in Times of Great Challenges
2. Effective Congregation Councils
3. Welcoming the Stranger: immigrant Ministry
4. Redefining “Disaster”: a Community Conversation
5. Seeing Race Through Faith
6. Developing a Ministry Funding Plan

The Bishop recessed the assembly for the duration of the Workshop presentations.

Bishop Dillahunt reconvened the Assembly at 11:20 A.M.

### Report of the Synod Finance Team Proposed 2020-2021 Mission and Ministry Plan

The Bishop called Mr. Kevin Pyle, Treasurer of the Synod, to the podium who, in turn, called Ms. Rebecca Witt, Chair of the Synod Finance Team, to the podium.

Mr. Pyle addressed the assembly, and then asked Ms. Witt to present the Synod’s Mission and Ministry Plan for 2020-2021. She reported that under the Plan, congregational income and “other” unrestricted income should amount to approximately \$1.85 million while budgeted expenses would include such things as Faith Formation, Leadership, Office, and Staff, for a total of \$1.85 million. Thus, a balanced budget was presented to the Assembly for its consideration and approval. (For greater detail, see the Report of the Treasurer and Finance Team on page 8.)

Mr. Pyle then reported that Portico benefit costs would increase under the proposed Mission and Ministry Plan by 4.5%. He also noted that the Synod staff has not received salary increases for at least the last three years. The Treasurer noted that this proposed budget is as close to reality as the Finance Team could get.

Secretary Hart then moved the approval of the 2019 Mission and Ministry Plan.

**VOTED**

**SA.19.06.03**

**To approve the Southern Ohio Synod 2020-2021 Mission and Ministry Plan as recommended by the Southern Ohio Synod Council. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Report of the Compensation Guidelines Committee  
Proposed 2020-2021 Compensation Guidelines

Bishop Dillahunt called upon Rev. Peter Kruse and Deacon Diane Schwiger-Alexander of the Compensation Guidelines Committee to explain the proposed 2020-2021 Guidelines to the members of the Assembly. They explained that some changes to the guidelines were made and some adjustments to the compensation rates were made in order to recognize the differences in the work and expectations between Deacons and the Ordained.

Secretary Hart then moved the approval of the 2019 Mission and Ministry Plan.

**VOTED**

**SA.19.06.04**

**To approve the Southern Ohio Synod 2020-2021 Compensation Guidelines as recommended by the Southern Ohio Synod Council. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Report of the Pastors Advisory Cabinet

Bishop Dillahunt then gave the floor to Rev. Gil Santiago, Chair of the Pastors Advisory Cabinet. Rev. Santiago excitedly challenged the members of the Assembly to raise \$400 for the benefit of the Thrive! Campaign by raffling two Thrive! t-shirts for \$200 each. Each of the t-shirts would be autographed by Presiding Bishop Eaton and by Bishop Dillahunt. The t-shirts were raffled off, and a total of \$680 was received.

What happened next was unscripted. Rev. Santiago's exuberance became infectious. What started out to be a small raffle of two Thrive! Campaign t-shirts with the autographs of Presiding Bishop Eaton and Bishop Dillahunt on them actually turned into an Assembly-wide expression of fun-filled, genuine, and authentic generosity. Going beyond the concept of a raffle of two t-shirts (as one idea sometimes grows into something larger), the members of the Assembly were invited to purchase as many t-shirts as desired after both Presiding Bishop Eaton and Bishop Dillahunt agreed to autograph all purchased t-shirts. After the Assembly the t-shirts were sent to Chicago, autographed, returned to Columbus, autographed again, and distributed to the

participants. As a result, the Thrive! Campaign received a much larger contribution than initially anticipated! The presence of the Holy Spirit at the Assembly was undeniable!

Bishop Dillahunt took the floor and thanked all who made the 2019 Assembly possible. Thereupon, the Bishop took the time to install the new Synod Council.

Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt then conducted the closing worship service, and the 2019 Synod Assembly was adjourned at 12:25 PM on June 8, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Roy E. Hart  
Synod Council Secretary