



Assembly gathered to experienced the Word

The 393 voting members and 63 visitors were engaged by the Word:

- Celebrating opening Eucharist at the historic Trinity United Methodist Church, Denver's oldest congregation.
- Maintaining connections with our companion synods in Northern Madagascar
- Connecting us in the Rocky Mountain Synod to the work of the ELCA around the world, together bringing the Good News "wherever our Gospel feet take us," said the Rev. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, representing the ELCA.
- Sharing in conversation about how the ELCA will "Live Into the Future Together" (LIFT).
- Recognizing rostered leaders new to the synod, giving thanks for their presence and ministry.
- Welcoming United Church of the San Juan's, Ridgeway, Colorado, as a new federated congregation in the Rocky Mountain Synod, relating to the ELCA, the United

Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the United Church of Christ. Missions 25 presented the new congregation with a gift of \$4,335.



- Celebrating the work and ministry of the Rocky Mountain Synod Lutheran Youth Organization at a festive "family dinner" on Friday evening, concluding with Taizé worship and song. The youth shared their commitment to the Lutheran Malaria Initiative.
- Noting that every congregation in the synod is engaged in mission partnerships. Each congregation was named and appreciated as a Mission Partner.
- Participating in workshops and excursions throughout Denver, which were opportunities for assembly guests to be engaged by the Word.
- Giving offerings that totalled more than \$12,000.

— Jim Drury

Assembly engaged by Word, Image & Story

Under the theme, "Word, Image, Story" the Rocky Mountain Synod gathered in assembly May 27-29 in downtown Denver to delve into the ELCA's Book of Faith Initiative and celebrate the Church's mission and ministry.

Bishop Allan Bjornberg, in his address to the assembly, focused on the Rocky Mountain Synod's mission as being "thoroughly global and intensely local."

Recalling the subway system in London where riders are continually cautioned to "mind the gap" between the moving train and platform, Bishop Bjornberg said we must pay attention to where we are at this moment in the Rocky Mountain Synod, not getting too far in front of ourselves, requiring adaptive change and paying attention to any "gap" issues in our mission and ministry.

"The Empty Tomb exploded the world and pushed the community into the gap where they had to adapt to their new reality," he said.

Just as we say farewell to three congregations that have left the ELCA due to its new ministry policies, one that was removed from the roster for other reasons, and one that closed its doors, we also celebrate new ministry starts, new conversations,



The assembly opening eucharist took place at Trinity United Methodist Church, Denver's oldest congregation.

and a new future for the gospel in the synod, he explained.

"We are a church firmly rooted in the gospel but we are not standing still. There is a great capacity in this church for ministry and witness," he said, noting that there are 55 candidates for ministry in the synod's candidacy process.



Rocky Mountain Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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Resolutions focus on care and compassion

Assembly actions include resolutions, elections and constitution changes

Assembly actions included adopting three resolution and approving constitutional and bylaw changes. Approved documents and the elections report are posted at rmselca.org/assembly.

RESOLUTION 1: Energy Stewardship

Encourages congregations and institutions in the RMS to reduce energy use through conservation, efficiency, or clean energy measures. Additionally, the ELCA is to be memorialized to challenge all expressions of the

2010 Spending Plan Faces Challenges

RMS Treasurer Dennis Reynolds was elected to a second term in office. He reported on the synod's financial circumstances.

A shortfall of \$297,000 in 2009 necessitated reducing our giving to church-wide ELCA by \$148,000 and reductions to RMS ministries and programs by the same amount. The largest reductions were borne by Campus Ministries (\$60,000), Lutheran Family Services Colorado (\$46,000), and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (\$33,000).

The 2010 budget faces even more serious challenges with a projected shortfall of \$482,000. Reynolds assured the voting members that we are living realistically with a measure of faithful expectations as we work through our financial situation. "The more involvement from people across the synod on these issues, the better our budgeting/spending plans will be," he said.

ELCA to set goals to reduce emissions 25-40 percent by 2020.

RESOLUTION 2: Lutheran Malaria Initiative

The Rocky Mountain Synod is to become a Pilot Synod for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative in 2011 and create a task force to carry out this cause.

RESOLUTION 3: Safe Haven Guidelines and Trining

Each congregation is charged with developing Save Haven guidelines and participating in training designed for keeping safe the children and the vulnerable in the congregation's midst. The Rocky Mountain Synod will provide synod-wide training to church leaders in "Safeguarding God's Children," an established and recognized training program in sexual abuse awareness, providing tools for clergy, Christian educators, youth ministers, nursery workers, council members and all who work with minors in our churches, to keep everyone safe.

BYLAW: On Leave from Call Voting

A bylaw to the RMS constitution was adopted enabling rostered leaders in the synod who are on leave from call to have not only voice but also vote at synod assemblies.

CONSTITUTION REVISIONS:

After Vice President Linda Bobbit's passionate report, and in recognition of all the work that has been done in the last five years, the assembly adopted sweeping constitutional changes to re-orient the way the synod conducts its mission to align the constitution with the synod's mission priorities as set forth in the Vision Passion Action planning initiative.

— Jim Drury and Kent Mueller



ASSEMBLY PHOTOS BY DALE HORKEY

Along with a check for over \$36,367 raised by the Rocky Mountain Synod Lutheran Youth Organization for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, the Rev. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl from ELCA Churchwide was presented a bag of balls, each representing \$1,000.

We must "dream in the language of faith"

Dr. Diane Jacobson, director of the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative, challenged the RMS assembly to immerse in Scripture until "we are so saturated we dream in the language of faith." She named several obstacles to reaching this point: our busy-ness, fear, shame, confusion, difficult history with or disregard for the Bible. Creative venues, names, and invitations to "Bible Study" can help overcome these barriers in a congregation.

The story of the walk to Emmaus from the Gospel of Luke provides the text to demonstrate four ways to read Scripture.

A devotional reading does not require an "expert" who might well get in the way by asking, "What do you think about the text?" Anyone or any group can "listen" closely to the text and appreciate what they "hear."

An "expert" such as a pastor, website, commentary, or study Bible is helpful in an

historical reading to provide some insight into the setting, but it is important not to



let this reading "steal" the text. Historical reading is not an exact science and many "facts" are unknowable.

A literary reading asks what kind of literature the text represents; is it a narrative, a letter, a teaching? What is the social, geographic, temporal setting?

A Lutheran theological reading considers how we hear law and Gospel in the text. Do we hear God's challenge and God's grace? How does the text show forth Christ? How do others, especially those from other cultures hear the text?

"Luther writes that the Bible is the manger that cradles the Christ," Dr. Jacobson concluded. "The Bible is where God meets us in the community and at home."

— Dena Williams