

2016 Virginia Synod Assembly Update

A Heart for Worship

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 10-12, 2016 gathering was “Ambassadors For Christ: A Heart for Worship”.

During the weekend, **The Rev. Kevin L. Strickland**, Director of Worship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, helped explore the theme for the Assembly. He drew us together in song and word, focusing on the ritual of worship, “Rituals gather us together, embody Holy Scripture, and remind us of what's important alongside one another,” he said.

The Rev. Kevin Strickland also represented the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, bringing good news from the wider church. He told us of 62 new congregations started in the United States, as well as redevelopment efforts ongoing in 134 congregations.

Bishop Jim Mauney delivered a report for the ongoing \$2.5 million fundraising campaign, ForwardingFaith, that will endow the position for Youth Ministry and Christian Faith Formation in the Virginia Synod. It was announced that to date over \$1.5 million has been given or pledged towards the ForwardingFaith campaign.

Testimonials from prominent adults and youth across the Synod were given in support of the ForwardingFaith campaign, in addition to two short videos showcasing the many ministries this endowment aims to support.

Three resolutions were passed, which included: expressions of gratitude for military personnel through prayer and support, continued commitment to issues of diversity through the Tapestry steering team, and prayers to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit in electing a new Bishop in 2017.

Elections took place over the weekend with **The Rev. Evan Davis**, pastor of St. Jacob's-Spaders and Trinity Keezletown, in Mount Crawford elected as the Virginia Synod Council Treasurer. This election comes following the conclusion of **George “Skip” Zubrod's** two terms of office.

Both **Barry Proctor** of Redeemer Lutheran in Bristol, and **Jody Smiley** of St. Michael in Blacksburg were reelected to serve as lay members of the Synod Council. **Darrell Short** of St. Paul, Shenandoah, and **Molly Beyer** of Bethel, Winchester are the newly elected lay members on Synod Council.

Rev. Nathan Huffman was ordained into the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA during Saturday evening liturgy at St. Andrews in Roanoke. He will serve as Associate Pastor of St. Michael Lutheran Church in Virginia Beach

Four young women were commissioned for Young Adults in Global Mission. **Karen Griffith**,

Emily Edmonds, Mary Proctor, and Emily Dietrick have all accepted one-year appointments as YAGMs to Senegal, Australia, and Southern Africa.

Wyatt Gretka of Gloria Dai in Hampton, president of the Lutheran Youth Organization, presented the Youth Assembly report, centered on the Youth Assembly theme of “I Can Sing of Your Love Forever”. He presented the immeasurable value of youth events, and expressed his deep desire for their continued support across the Synod. The next LYO Board president will be **Michaela Loving** of Mt. Zion, New Market.