

Minutes for the
2024 CENTRAL STATES SYNOD ASSEMBLY

June 6-8, 2024

at the Embassy Suites
10401 S. Ridgeview Rd
Olathe, KS

Assembly theme: ***Spirit Breathed; Spirit Blown***

June 6, 2024

OPENING WORSHIP

Opening worship was held at St. Mark Lutheran in Olathe and began at 7:00pm. Bishop Susan Candeia preached and presided. At the end of worship, she officially opened the 2024 Central States Synod Assembly. There was an ice cream social after worship was concluded.

June 7, 2024

PLENARY 1

Worship & Land Acknowledgement

The assembly reconvened with morning prayer and worship at 8:30am at the hotel.

Rev. Peter Rehwaldt led the Assembly in an opening time of prayer and worship. Part of this opening prayer was a time of remembrance and acknowledgement for the native peoples who inhabited and cared for this land before us.

Bishop Candeia welcomed people back to assembly and introduced:

- Rev. Sara Cutter, our representative from Churchwide
- the synod staff, including new synod administrator, Rev. Rich Gates
- the synod officers and Sarah Thomas, the assembly parliamentarian
- Jerry Johnson, the new representative from the Mission Investment Fund

Bible Study

Rev. Donna Simon led us in a Bible study & table discussions on Ezekiel 37:1-14.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Candeia presented a written report and offered the following verbal highlights:

- She stressed the importance of having radical resilience as we face new realities like:
 - We are getting smaller. There are fewer congregations. The congregations themselves are getting smaller. This causes us to ask, What can we afford to do and what can we afford not to do? What is our purpose?
 - Providing pastoral leadership is a challenge. There are fewer rostered ministers available. The ability to afford a full-time rostered minister is also getting harder.

- Mission support continues to decline.
- Given these realities, where and who is the Spirit calling us to be? The Spirit is blowing us:
 - Into Collaboration – we need to collaborate with each other and our ecumenical partners. There are many examples of this throughout our synod.
 - To Rethink Leadership – How can we raise up and equip new leaders? What can and must that leadership look like? Can we share rostered leaders?
 - To Clarify Priorities – We need to be clear who we are and what we are being called to do and be. We cannot do or be what we were before.
- We are a Church in anxious and divisive times. Can we remain connected and unified in Christ? How do we remain resilient in these anxious & divided times when there are no easy answers?
- There is a new social statement in development on Civic Life and Faith. The draft of the statement reminds us that to be resilient is to take our faith out into the world. Could the Spirit of God be calling us out into engagement with the world?
- She quoted Brian McClaren and invited us to adopt this statement as kind of a mantra for the Synod and to really live into this:

*“We will live as beautifully, bravely, and kindly as we can,
as long as we can,
no matter how ugly, scary and mean the world becomes.”*

~Brian McClaren
- She invited us to breathe, be open in our hearts and minds, and to join together to see where the Spirit will blow us.

Vice President’s Report

Nancy Nagel presented her report. Verbal highlights included:

- She talked about the importance of taking time to breath during times of discernment.
- She introduced and talked about the role of the Synod Council. Throughout this past year, the Synod Council spent a lot of time working on:
 - The Budget – we’ve had to adjust to a significant decrease in mission support.
 - The resolution to become a Reconciling in Christ Synod – we’ve prayerfully considered bringing this resolution forward to the Synod Assembly.
 - The upcoming Bishop Transition – a Discernment Team has been formed to prepare for next year’s Bishop’s election.
- She continues to trust in the Holy Spirit to lead us, even as we talk about money, sex, and change.
- She shared a moving story about her own congregation, Peace Lutheran, Washington, MO, and how the Spirit has been blowing there.

Nominations Committee Report

Pat Bjuland gave a report from the Nominations Committee. She presented the following nominations:

- Synod Council:

▪ Western Kansas Conference (lay male)	Logan Simon
▪ Osage Conference (clergy male)	Rev. David Frerichs
▪ Eastern Missouri Conference (clergy female)	Rev. Kristina Reyes

- At Large Male POC
 - At Large Female
- 2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members
 - Eastern Missouri Conference (clergy male) open
 - Osage Conference (lay female) Vickie Donnell
 - Border Conference (lay female) Melodee Blobaum
Laura Kamienski
Sarah Thomas
Joyce Uber
 - Central Kansas Conference (lay male) Carol Swenson
 - Western Kansas Conference (clergy male) Rev. Lee Bennight
 - At Large POC (clergy female) Kaylie Ines
 - At Large POC (lay male) Terrance Freeman
 - At Large Youth/Young Adult (lay female) Brianna Dehn
Megan Mong
 - At Large Youth/Young Adult (lay male) Sam Neff

The assembly took a break from 10:15 – 10:45am.

Credentials Report

Chad Langdon offered a credentials report:

- Total Voting Members 271
 - Rostered 98 36%
 - Lay 173 64%
 - Male 80 47%
 - Female 93 53%
 - Non-binary 1 1%

Treasurer’s Report

Scott Schulte offered a written Treasurer’s Report. He highlighted:

- 2023 Year End Report
 - Total Revenue & Support was \$1,470,252
 - \$104,139 less than anticipated in revised budget
 - \$152,476 less than the previous year
 - Total Expenditures were \$1,470,252
 - \$81,443 less than budgeted
 - \$139,681 less than last year
 - Year-end Operating Surplus/Deficit of \$0
 - With the release of \$9,191 of temporarily restricted funds
 - Received \$1,339,010 in Congregational Support
 - \$115,138 less than the previous year
 - An 8.6% decrease
 - \$110,990 less than anticipated in the revised budget

- Contribution to Churchwide of \$669,505
 - Decreased by \$57,569 from 2022 (-8.6%)
 - Maintained a 50% contribution rate
- 2024 Revised Budget
 - Synod Council approved revisions to the approved budget and those are reflected in the written report. We tried to curtail spending in anticipation of continued decrease in congregational support. Key changes included:
 - \$200,000 reduction in anticipated support
 - Increased amount of temporarily restricted funds to be released
 - Adjusted salaries and benefits for the synod staff
 - Decreased campus ministry support
 - Eliminated partnership grants for Bethany College, seminaries, and the Planned Giving Partnership
- Proposed Budget for 2025
 - To support all our ministries, as a synod we will spend a total of \$1,291,575 in 2025. This is a decrease of \$72,513 from 2024.
 - These will be funded through a variety of means with this anticipated income:
 - Congregation support \$1,200,000
 - Annual appeal and donations \$18,400
 - Temporarily restricted funds, interest \$53,000
 - Grants, reimbursements \$20,000
 - Anticipated expenses will be:
 - Churchwide contribution \$600,000
 - Ministry entrusted to the Synod \$15,530 total, including:
 - Camp Tomah Shinga/Hollis \$10,000
 - Advocacy agency in Kansas \$2,500
 - Candidacy Committee & PMA \$2,000
 - Teams & Task Forces \$530
 - Region IV Support \$500
 - Ministry of Oversight and Pastoral Care \$596,913 total, including:
 - Synod staff compensation \$486,913
 - Campus Ministry pastors support \$75,000
 - Travel \$35,000
 - Ministry of Place and Property \$71,732 total, including:
 - Office rent \$26,400
 - Office operations \$43,332
 - Depreciation \$2,000
 - Ministry of Leadership & Outreach \$7,400 total, including:
 - Synod Council meetings \$650
 - Deans' gatherings \$750
 - Bishop transition \$6,000

Adoption of the Proposed Budget for 2025 (FYE 2026)

Discussion included:

- Will the new bishop next year have the same the number of staff? Answer: the new bishop can configure the staff however they see fit within the budget limitations.
- The work on the budget was commended and given thanks for.
- It was acknowledged that the decrease in Campus Ministry support is difficult.
- An appeal for more giving and to be generous was made.
- This budget reflects a further reduction in Campus Ministry, but it will be shared with all three campus ministry sites, including KU, which does not currently have a called pastor. In the future, Campus Ministry will be able to apply directly to Churchwide for grants and support.
- It was encouraged for each voting member to return to their congregations and appeal to give more to the Synod.
- Is there anything being done to address or investigate the decreasing income? 35 congregations have given no mission support over the past year. Our staff has not had the capacity to really dig into the income side of things.
- If the Reconciling in Christ (SA.24.03) resolution passes, it includes a financial piece. How is that reflected in the budget? Answer: It is not currently addressed in this budget because we did not want to make any assumptions about actions the assembly might take. Options to cover an RIC cost would include tapping into restricted funds or addressing it during the budget revision process that typically happens in January.
- Individual voting members were challenged to give generously so that we do not need to make further cuts.
- There are 3 kinds of funds that the Synod manages:
 - Permanently restricted funds – usually gifts that come with specific provisions
 - Board designated funds – funds that the Synod Council directs to be used for specific reasons
 - Temporarily restricted funds – grants, surpluses that are extra-budget that can be used for a variety of funds. These funds are usually invested in endowments until it is decided how to use them.
- **SA 24.06.07.A1 It was MSC to adopt the Proposed Budget for 2025 (FYE 1/31/2026).**

Bethany College

Steve Eckman, the Interim President of Bethany College, addressed the assembly. Bethany College has undergone significant change recently and is facing some financial struggles. He encouraged churches to send their students to Bethany. He also highlighted some positive fundraising that has been happening recently.

Synod Offering – ELCA World Hunger Appeal

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the creation of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. We watched a video highlighting some of their work. Andrea Hodges offered some more highlights and emphasized the local hunger work that is being done in our Synod. She encouraged us to network with them so that they can better know what other work is actually being done. This year's Synod Assembly offering has been designated for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

Mid-day Prayer

Jill Duis, a synodically authorized minister, shared a commemoration for Chief Seattle, and then she offered a prayer for our meal.

Elections

The Assembly was reminded to vote in the elections through Slido and to have their votes cast by 1:00pm.

Announcements

Lunchtime conversations were offered around:

- Churchwide with Rev. Sara Cutter
- KIFA & advocacy with Rabbi Moti
- Campus Ministry with the campus pastors
- Small Church Collaboration with Rev. Donna Simon

The assembly recessed for lunch at 12:05pm.

PLENARY 2

The assembly came back together at 1:30pm.

Bible Study

Rev. Aimee Appell led us in a Bible study & table discussions on Mark 1:9-18.

Election Results

Bishop Candea reported the results of the elections that were held during lunch.

- For the following Synod Council positions, the following people listed in bold were elected to the following positions: # of votes:

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|------------|
| ○ Western Kansas Conference (lay male) | Logan Simon | 229 |
| ○ Osage Conference (clergy male) | Rev. David Frerichs | 230 |
| ○ Eastern Missouri Conference (clergy female) | Rev. Kristina Reyes | 230 |
| ○ At Large Male POC | Rev. Richard Ashley | 230 |
| ○ At Large Female | no election yet | |

This will result in a run-off between Ingrid Peterson & Alesia Roccia:

Diane Bottorf	52
Ingrid Peterson	65
Alesia Roccia	106

- The following people listed in bold were elected to serve as Voting Members to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly: # of votes:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------|
| ○ Osage Conference (lay female) | Vickie Donnell | 230 |
| ○ Border Conference (lay female) | no election yet | |

This will result in a run-off between Melodee Blobaum & Sarah Thomas:

Melodee Blobaum	63
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	Laura Kamienski	33
	Sarah Thomas	104
	Joyce Uber	24
○ Central Kansas Conference (lay male)	Carol Swenson	229
○ Western Kansas Conference (clergy male)	Rev. Lee Bennight	230
○ At Large POC (clergy female)	Kaylie Ines	228
○ At Large POC (lay male)	Terrance Freeman	230
○ At Large Youth/Young Adult (lay female)	Brianna Dehn	90
	Megan Mong	140
○ At Large Youth/Young Adult (lay male)	Sam Neff	230

Greetings from the Churchwide Expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Sara Cutter, Senior Director of Operations for Christian Community & Leadership, offered greetings from ELCA Churchwide. She has a not-so-private personal goal of making us proud of the ELCA. To that end:

- She shared that the Central States Synod mission support was \$643,000 in 2023. This was part of \$37,000,000 given to Churchwide overall. This helps generate ideas together, supports ministry to share the love of Christ in the world, and sustains our ministry together.
- We watched a video of greetings from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton highlighting our call to serve as God’s ambassadors during the interesting times that we live in.
- She recognized Susan Boxberger, who serves on the Church Council, and Ruth Ellen Howard who serves on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church.
- The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church has met 5 times. Their work is listed at www.elca.org/crlc. They will be making a report to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.
- She also recognized:
 - Kevin Boatright, who serves on the Churchwide Committee on Discipline
 - Krista Harris & Todd Maloy, who serve on the Portico Board of Pensions
 - Lisa Peck, who serves on the board of 1517 Media Publishing House of the ELCA
- She addressed some concerns that have bubbled up to Churchwide and what they are hearing at the national level:
 - Shortage of Rostered Leaders – They are working to revamp the Candidacy Process. They are working to add more Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs). They are also launching discernment groups this summer.
- She highlighted the work of ELCA World Hunger over the last 50 years. Central States Synod has given \$428,898 to World Hunger, part of the over \$20,000,000 that they have received. Within the Central States, the following ministries have been the recipients of domestic hunger grants:
 - RSVP of Northeast Kansas
 - Gathering Table
 - ICT Food Rescue
 - Unity Lutheran Church
- She talked about Lutheran Disaster Response, which in 2023, worked in 51 countries and across 34 states and territories. The Central States Synod gave \$344,847 to LDR, part of the \$13,698,753 that was given overall.
- The ELCA Youth Gathering is happening this summer in New Orleans.

- ELCA Advocacy has put out a resource for civic engagement that is available for this election cycle.
- Two other programs are “Coaching for Everyday Life” and “Supportive Spaces.”

Ministry Highlights

- Hollis Renewal Center – Dave Mareske gave an update on the ministry of Hollis. Their ministry is busy and growing.
- Camp Tomah Shinga – Rev. Ethan Feistner gave an update on the ministry of Camp Tomah Shinga. He encouraged everyone to come visit camp and give generously to camp.

The assembly took a short break from 3:00 – 3:15pm.

Resolutions

Bishop Canda went over the rules and procedures for discussion.

- **Rev. Kaylie Ines, Olsburg & Walsburg Lutheran (KS), moved to limit our time for debate and discussion on each resolution to no more than 16 minutes per resolution. The motion passed.**

Rev. Dave Whetter, on behalf of the Resolutions Committee, presented the resolutions before the assembly. These resolutions come properly before the assembly and have already been moved and seconded.

SA 24.01 A Season of Global Awareness

The resolution was opened for discussion.

- Rev. Gary Teske spoke in favor of this resolution.

The final form of the resolution before the assembly reads:

- **Be it resolved that the Epiphany Season be designated as a “Season of Global Awareness” for congregations within the Central States Synod and that congregations intentionally lift up the church around the world through prayer, song, educational events and in any way appropriate to the context of the congregation. The focus would be not only on our Companion Synods in Papua New Guinea and Russia, but also the Global Ministry we share in and through the Global Mission Arm of the ELCA such as Missionary Sponsorship, Young Adults in Global Mission, and our support of Projects that promote the witness of the Gospel, works of compassion and Justice ministry around the world.**
- **Be it also resolved that Sunday, October 6th, 2024 shall be designated as the Sunday to remember, lift up and celebrate our companion church relationship with the “Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Urals, Siberia and Far East” (ELCUSFE) with a special focus on the Far Eastern Deanery. (This date was chosen because the first Sunday in October is widely observed by the churches in Russia as a harvest Sunday when they give thanks and celebrate the completion of the fall harvest).**
- **Be it also resolved that Sunday, February 23rd, 2025 be designated as the Sunday to remember, lift up and celebrate our companion church relationship with the Kote District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea (ELCPNG).**

This would be an appropriate way to conclude the Epiphany Season which is our season of Global Awareness.

- The Central States Synod Companion Synod Team will provide resources for mission education and worship for the Epiphany Season, and additionally, prayer requests, recent news and communications from our Companion Churches prior to the two Companion Synod Sundays to help us to “accompany one another” in our journey as followers, servants and witnesses to Jesus Christ in our respective parts of God’s world.
- SA 24.06.07.02 Resolution SA.24.01 was adopted.

SA 24.02 Bethany College

The resolution was opened for discussion.

- Rev. Mandy Todd spoke in favor of this resolution.

The final form of the resolution before the assembly reads:

- Be it resolved that the synod staff, clergy, and congregations of the CSS recognize and encourage our youth to consider attending a Lutheran institution of higher learning such as Bethany College which may enhance the future of the ELCA.
- Be it further resolved that the Central States Synod and its member congregations will recognize the Sunday nearest October 15th each year as Bethany College Sunday.
- SA 24.06.07.03 Resolution SA.24.02 was adopted.

SA 24.03 Resolution to Become a Reconciling in Christ Synod

The resolution was opened for discussion.

- Rev. Dean Apel, Assaria Lutheran (KS), moved to amend the resolution by adding the following statement:

“Because we do not want to contribute to further polarization and instead aspire to radical inclusivity, be it further resolved that the Central States Synod make know to all that our decision to become a Reconciling in Christ Synod in no way implies that we exclude or marginalize faithful and loving Christian pastors, diaconal ministers, other leaders, lay people and congregations who hold to historic Biblical understandings of human sexuality, i.e. that God’s gift of human sexuality is best expressed, enjoyed and stewarded in the public marriage of a man and a woman. On the contrary, we also want to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for faithful Christians who hold to such interpretations of the Bible. Even when we disagree on these potentially divisive issues, we commit ourselves to recognize our baptismal unity in Christ, to travel His way together, to love each other and to work with each other to be God’s voice of the gospel and God’s hands of love in the world. In a culture which is increasingly divisive, exclusionary and polarizing we want to allow Jesus through the Spirit to mold us into a contrast community of love which, in spite of our serious differences, witnesses to the possibilities of genuine fellowship and unity in Christ.”

- Rev. Dean Apel spoke in favor of the amendment.

- Rev. Meghan McGlaughlin, Christ Lutheran (Webster Groves, MO), spoke against the amendment.
- Stephen Phelps, Bethel Lutheran (University City, MO), spoke against the amendment.
- Brianna Dehn, Good Shepherd (Manchester, MO), spoke against the amendment.
- Rev. Peter Rehwaldt, Interim Pastor (Lancaster & Bendena, KS), spoke against the amendment.
- Sarah Guenther, St. Mark Hope & Peace (Kansas City, MO), spoke against the amendment.
- Linda Lewis, Messiah (Lindsborg, KS), spoke against the amendment.
- Kenda Calaruso, St. James Lutheran, spoke against the amendment.
- Robert Hannah, First Lutheran, moved to call the question on the amendment.
- Norm Koch, Atonement (Florissant, MO), asked that we could have a little more time to read the full amendment.
- **Robert Hannah, First Lutheran, moved to add 16 more minutes to the discussion of this resolution.**
 - Nathaniel Grody, Zion (Phillipsburg, KS) asked a clarifying question about time.
 - Rev. Jacque Thorton, Immanuel (Salina, KS) asked a clarifying question about time.
 - Stephen Phelps, Bethel (University City, MO) asked a clarifying question about time.
 - Rev. Jealeane Marple, First (Shawnee Mission, KS) asked a clarifying question about time.
- **The motion to extend discussion by 16 more minutes did not pass by a 2/3 majority as required. 169 (63%) voted in favor to extend, 99 (37%) voted against extending the time.**
- Because of the time limits in the rules, we moved immediately to vote on the amendment to the resolution.
- **The amendment failed.**
 - Josh Martinson, New Gottland, (New Gottland, KS) asked a question about the background of the resolution, but was ruled out of order.
- Because of the time limits on the rules, we moved immediately to vote on the resolution.

The final form of the resolution before the assembly reads:

- **Be it resolved that the Central States Synod in assembly become a Reconciling in Christ Synod.**
- **Be it further resolved that the Central States Synod adopt the following statement of welcome: Traveling the way of Jesus, who commanded his followers to love one another as Christ has loved, and believing that all persons are created in the image of God, this synod welcomes people of every race, background, age, political affiliation, economic and social status, sexual orientation, gender identity and**

expression, and mental and physical ability. As a synod we strive to enable all people to participate fully in the life and work of the church in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

- **SA 24.06.07.A4 Resolution SA.24.03 was adopted.**

Discerning Together

In 2025 there will be an election for a new bishop. Cathy Hohl led the assembly in a discernment discussion as we begin this process. Each table was asked to discuss the following questions:

- How will the Holy Spirit use the Central States Synod to proclaim the Gospel over the next five years? Where is the Holy Spirit calling us to minister?
- What unique gifts do the (a) congregations; and (b) people in the Central States Synod have to support that mission? What will occur if these gifts are used effectively?
- What obstacles must be overcome to fulfill this mission?
- What are the most important gifts for ministry that the incoming Bishop should exhibit to guide the Central States Synod in fulfilling its mission?
- Without identifying a specific person, what type of person is the Holy Spirit looking for to lead us in this mission?
- What organizational structure will best support collaboration throughout the Central States Synod in fulfilling the Holy Spirit's call?

The Discernment Team collected the answers that people at the tables recorded.

Ministry Highlights

- Campus Ministry – Tara Rindt, from Reformation Lutheran (Wichita, KS), worships at St. Andrew's Lutheran in Columbia, MO while she goes to college. She is also the vice president of the ecumenical Episcopal campus ministry at the University of Missouri. She introduced leaders from other campus ministry sites and showed a video talking about the various campus ministries throughout the synod.
- KIFA – Rabbi Moti Reiber gave an update on Kansas Interfaith Action, an advocacy group that we are partners with. He talked briefly about the ELCA Advocacy Network, of which KIFA is a part. He talked about some of their legislative priorities, which include:
 - Protection of Public Education
 - Medicaid Expansion
 - Protection of LGBTQIA+ Rights
 - Payday Loan Reform
 - Expansion of Net Metering (rooftop solar)
 - Protection of Childhood Immunization

Election Results

Bishop Candea announced the results of the run-off elections.

- Synod Council – At Large (lay female)
 - Ingrid Peterson 73 votes
 - **Alesia Roccia 141 votes**

Alesia Roccia was elected to the Synod Council.
- Churchwide Voting Member – Border Conference (lay female)

- Melodee Blobaum 72 votes
- **Sarah Thomas 142 votes**

Sarah Thomas was elected to be a Voting Member of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

We sang a song and then recessed for dinner at 5:00pm.

At 6:30pm there was a banquet where we recognized people and congregations celebrating milestone anniversaries.

June 8, 2024

PLENARY 3

The assembly reconvened with morning prayer and worship at 8:30am at the hotel.

Rev. Peter Rehwaldt & other musicians led the Assembly in morning prayer. The theme of this worship was God teaching us to sing.

Bible Study

Rev. Dave Whetter led us in a Bible study & table discussions on John 20:19-23.

Bethany Village

- **SA 24.06.08.A5 It was MSC for the Central States Assembly to go into recess and move into the Bethany Village meeting, led by Rev. Dean Apel.**
 - The Central States Synod Assembly went to recess at 9:20am.
 - Previous board president, Rev. Amy Truhe, has recently taken a new call. The new president of Bethany Village’s board, Ryan Biegert, could not be with us, so Rev. Dean Apel presented some information & updates about Bethany Village.
 - Rev. Dr. Mandy Todd, the chaplain of Bethany Village, brought greetings, although she is leaving soon to take another call.
 - **Bethany Village elected the following people to terms on the board of directors:**
 - **Rev. Laura Smith 3 year term**
 - **Rev. Jacque Thorton 3 year term**
 - In addition, the Bethany Village board of directors has elected the following people to serve as officers:
 - Ryan Biegert President
 - Karen Carlson Vice President
 - Connie Dorf Secretary
 - Galen Swenson Treasurer
- The Bethany Village meeting adjourned at 9:30am.

The Synod Assembly reconvened at 9:30am.

Compensation Guidelines

Rev. Dave Whetter, representative of the Compensation Guidelines Committee, was welcomed to the stage to present the 2024 Compensation Guidelines for approval by the Assembly. He reviewed the few changes that were made this year. The updated guidelines increase the pulpit supply rate. They also changed a couple things on the rostered ministers' compensation worksheet, increasing the baseline compensation to reflect inflation. Recommended by the committee and approved by the Synod Council, it was properly before the assembly and opened for discussion.

- **SA 24.06.08.A6 The 2024 Compensation Guidelines were approved.**

Resolutions

Bishop Canda reminded us that we are still operating under the time limits that we set yesterday. Rev. Dave Whetter, on behalf of the Resolutions Committee, presented the resolutions before the assembly. These resolutions come properly before the assembly and have already been moved and seconded.

SA 24.04 Resolution on Peace and Climate Justice

The resolution was opened for discussion.

- Rev. Kaylie Ines spoke in favor of this resolution.

The final form of the resolution before the assembly reads:

- **Therefore, be it resolved that faith communities and individuals in the Central States Synod commit themselves to worship, educate, and advocate for peace and justice for all the Earth by:**
 - 1) Including prayers for peace in every communal worship service and in our individual prayers.**
 - 2) Utilizing the resources of the ELCA and other appropriate sources to learn more about our call as earth keepers and peacemakers.**
 - 3) Advocating for peace and climate justice through ELCA Advocacy, Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA), and your designated legislators.**
 - 4) Highlighting peace-making during Advent 2024 and the month of December, utilizing the resources of the 2024 Creation Care Plan.**
 - 5) Working to end all wars through the above efforts as one way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as part of the ELCA efforts to reach net-zero by 2050.**

- **SA 24.06.08.A7 Resolution SA.24.04 was adopted.**

SA 24.05 Pastoral Leadership Transitions in the Central States Synod

The resolution was opened for discussion.

- Rev. Cynthia Schnaath, St. James (Kansas City, MO), and Rev. Jealaine Marple, First (Shawnee Mission, KS), spoke in favor of this resolution, recognizing the work of PMA Nancy Mitchell.
- Rev. Peter Rehwaldt, Interim at St. John's Parish (Lancaster & Bendena, KS), spoke in favor of this resolution.
- Dan Reason, Andover Lutheran (Windom, KS) spoke in favor of this resolution.
- Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse, Atonement (Florissant, MO) asked a question about whether this resolution is different than our current process. Rev. Dave Whetter

answered that this resolution is not different from our current process, and does reflect our current practice.

- Gail Kenny, intern at Trinity (Chesterfield, MO), spoke in favor of this resolution.

The final form of the resolution before the assembly reads:

- **Be it resolved that the 2024 Synod Assembly of the Central States Synod:**
 - 1. gives thanks for the work of**
 - a. call committee members and congregation council members as they faithfully reflect on their congregation's mission and ministry during leadership transitions;**
 - b. pastors, deacons, candidates for the ministries of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service, PMAs, and other pastoral leaders as they faithfully reflect on their gifts for ministry and how God is calling them to put them to use;**
 - c. seminaries, our synod candidacy committee, and others involved in leadership development, as they prepare leaders for service across this church;**
 - d. intentional interim pastors, interim consultants, other transitional leaders, and synod staff as they support congregations and related organizations going through leadership transitions;**
 - 2. encourages the raising up of new leaders by asking**
 - a. congregational leaders to seek out, invite, and support those in their midst who might be suitable candidates for ordination, for entering the Parish Ministry Associate program, or for preparing to serve in other leadership positions in the church;**
 - b. pastors and those who work with youth to plant seeds that might lead them to consider pastoral or other leadership positions as they grow and mature;**
 - 3. calls on congregations and leaders across our Synod to take note of the changing circumstances of pastoral call processes, and ask that**
 - a. all congregations entering a leadership transition recognize the increased length of time these transitions take, and ask that they be open to new and creative partnerships with transitional leaders throughout the entire transition;**
 - b. as smaller congregations face the departure of their previous rostered minister, they look at the possibility of shared pastoral leadership through a parish relationship;**
 - c. as larger congregations with multiple rostered leaders face the departure of one of their pastors, they look at the possibility of adding a lay staff member (or members) rather than automatically seeking to replace one pastor with another pastor, recognizing that calling multiple pastors in one congregation means some other congregation will go without any pastor at all;**

- 4. directs the bishop and synod staff to share this resolution with congregations, parishes, and other organizations who are entering leadership transitions in their ministries; and
 - 5. asks our bishop, synod staff, and synod council to engage with the ELCA Conference of Bishops, ELCA churchwide staff, ELCA Church Council, seminaries, and their counterparts in other synods to learn from their experience with leadership development and congregational leadership transitions, and to offer them our experience.
- SA 24.06.08.A8 Resolution SA.24.05 was adopted.

SA 24.06 _____ Thanksgiving for Ministry

The resolution was opened for discussion.

- No one spoke to this resolution.

The final form of the resolution before the assembly reads:

- **Baptized, we welcome one another as fellow members of the Body of Christ and workers with us in the reign of God. Our merciful God gives us particular companions to know and to love in our pilgrimage here on earth. Since the last assembly, the following rostered ministers, whom we remember with thanksgiving and reverence, have died:**
 - The Rev. Gerry Leaf, retired, McPherson, KS (12/6/2023)
 - The Rev. Ray Otto, retired, St. Joseph, MO (1/12/2024)
 - The Rev. Len Dale, retired, Olathe, KS (1/22/2024)
 - The Rev. Roger Gieschen, retired, Lenexa, KS (1/23/2024)
- **The following persons have served the Church faithfully, using their gifts and abilities to build up the Body of Christ, and have now retired from active ministry on the roster of the Church since the last Central States Synod Assembly:**
 - The Rev. Richard Mueller, from Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO (7/1/2023)
 - The Rev. Cynthia Schnaath, from Interim Ministry, Lenexa, KS (8/1/2023)
 - Cherri Jestmore, Deacon, Atonement Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS (8/1/2023)
 - The Rev. Mike Malone, from On Leave from Call, Jackson, MO (11/1/2023)
 - The Rev. Linda Bollenbach, from Disabled Roster, Springfield, MO (10/1/2023)
 - The Rev. Katherine Hayes, from On Leave from Call, Springfield, MO (10/1/2023)
 - The Rev. Barb Jones, from On Leave from Call, Shawnee, KS (3/1/2024)
 - The Rev. Merle Brockhoff, from Interim Ministry, Kansas City, MO (4/1/2024)
 - The Rev. Randy Chapman, from Specialized Ministry, Topeka, KS (4/1/2024)
- **The body of Christ gathers as congregations to proclaim the gospel, share the means of grace, and is empowered to carry out God's mission in the world. The**

following congregation(s) disaffiliated from the ELCA, discerning that they were called to participate in God's mission through other denominations:

- Zion Lutheran Church, Wakeeney, KS took their second vote to disaffiliate on 6/25/2023.
- Zion Lutheran Church, Beloit, KS, took their second vote to disaffiliate on 8/27/2023.
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Otis, KS took their second vote to disaffiliate on 12/3/2023.
- After many years of faithful ministry, the following congregation(s) closed, trusting that in the midst of death, there is always resurrection, and the mission of the church continues:
 - Cross of Glory Lutheran Church, Derby KS, (10/15/23)
- Therefore, be it resolved that this Assembly recognizes and gives thanks for the ministry of these ministers and these congregations.
- SA 24.06.08.A9 Resolution SA.24.06 was adopted. The assembly stood and applauded God in thanksgiving for these faithful ministers and ministries.

The assembly took a brief break from 10:05 – 10:20am to prepare for closing worship.

Closing Worship

We closed in worship, led by Rev. Gary Teske and Rev. Sara Cutter. Rev. Sara Cutter preached on Matthew 18, emphasizing that God is not done with us yet.

Bishop Susan Candeia declared the 2024 Central States Synod Assembly closed at 11:00am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rev. Chad Langdon

Central States Synod Secretary