

**Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly Minutes**  
**St. Mark's, Bowling Green**  
**Saturday, June 1, 2024**

On Saturday morning, June 1, 2024, the Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly met at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Bowling Green. The following are the minutes of the business portion of the assembly. In addition to business sessions, members of the assembly participated in Living Stones: Living Learning Sessions, and two worship services.

Opening Worship was led by Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin and Rev. Robin Small with Holy Communion. During worship Bishop Daniel Beaudoin declared the Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly open.

Opening remarks were given by Bishop Daniel Beaudoin.

Bishop Daniel welcomed all voting members to the assembly, and continued by recognizing the following;

**Northwestern Ohio Synod Council Officers**

- President: Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin
- Vice-President: Nancy Yunker
- Secretary: Michelle Schaffer
- Treasurer: Shea McGrew
- Synod Council Members Wendy Bauer
- Caitlin Brink
- Rev. Melanie Haack
- Cindy Harris
- Kathy Jurrus,
- Rev. Robin Owen
- Rev. Brenda Peconge
- Clark Price
- Rev. Steve Ramsey
- Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri
- Jillian Russell
- Deacon Carolyn Steinfeldt
- Kevin Swagler
- Jerusha Walker
- Kelly Weber
- Deacon Rodney West-Estell

Conference Deans

- Rev. Janine Shearer - MV
- Rev. Mindy Elliott - MV
- Rev. Adam Sornchai - SE
- Rev. Will Haggis - SW
- Rev. Will Stenke – C
- Rev. Stacy Lauer-Scovanner - E
- Rev. Shawn O'Brien - NC
- Rev. Carol Pretorius - SW
- Rev. Beth Ferne-Johnson – TA

#### Northwestern Ohio Synod Staff

- Deacon Sherry Krieger
- Rev. Sarah Shaaf
- Cassie Mugler
- Chris Fye
- Cheryl Sondergeld
- Calla Gilson
- Linda Henschen
- Jacob Henry
- Brent Gnagey
- Diane Stultz

Bishop indicated where volunteers were waiting to assist guests and thanked those volunteers.

#### Bishop Daniel welcomed Special Guests:

- Mr. Hans Giller: ELCA Church Council as the Region 6 Representative
- Rev. Dr. Kathryn Kleinhans: Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University
- Rev. Greg Oleson: Genacross Lutheran Services
- Rev. Drew Tucker and Jillian Russell, Taylor Cox and Ella Girard of Hopewood Outdoors

Bishop extended a special thank you to Rev. Robin Small, the staff, and the dear people of God at St. Mark's for their great hospitality, and to Kate Philabaum, the assembly creative coordinator who prepared the decorations and helped develop the theme, Living Stones.

Bishop Daniel turned the chair over to the Director of Administration, Cassie Mugler, Vice-President Nancy Yunker, and Nomination Chair, Tom Ritter.

### **Testing of Voting Devices**

***Cassie Mugler, VP Nancy Yunker and Tom Ritter***

---

Cassie, Nancy and Tom ensured that all voting members had voting devices and that they were working and conducted testing of voting devices.

**Credentials Report**

***Credentials Committee: Rev. Mark Bauer and Diane Ninke***

---

Rev. Mark Bauer read S7.14 of the synod constitution which states that one-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

Diane Ninke reported that as of 10:00 a.m. we had 296 total registered voting members for this assembly and there were 272 voting members present. She certified that the voting membership of the Synod Assembly is in accordance with the constitution, and that we had a quorum.

**Adoption of Assembly Rules of Procedures, Floor Committees, Order of Business**  
***Nancy Yunker, Michelle Schaffer, and Bishop Daniel***

---

Bishop Daniel pointed out the Assembly Rules of Procedure.

Michelle read the standing non-parliamentary rules of the assembly. These rules may be adopted by a majority vote of the assembly.

Nancy explained decorum at the microphone, using cards to indicate how the individual would like to speak: Green in favor of the pending motion. Red against the pending motion; or Yellow for a question of procedure.

Michelle read the standing rules 1-5 of the assembly.

Bishop Daniel called for any objections. The standing non-parliamentary rules were adopted by unanimous consent.

Michelle read the standing parliamentary Rules 6-8 of the assembly.

Bishop Daniel called for any objections. The standing parliamentary rules 6-8 were adopted by unanimous consent.

**Adoption of Floor Committees and Task Force**  
***Michelle Schaffer***

---

Michelle read the Assembly Floor Committees Listed on Page 5 of the Assembly Business Materials. These Floor Committees were to be adopted by a majority vote of the assembly.

- Reference and Counsel Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Compensation Guidelines Task Force
- Credentials Committee

Bishop Daniel called for any objections. The floor committees and task force were adopted by unanimous consent. Bishop Daniel thanked all those serving on floor committees and the task force.

Bishop Daniel thanked Mr. Alan Fuhrhop who served as Assembly Parliamentarian. He mentioned that Alan was appointed by Synod Council to this position at our April 13, 2024 meeting.

### **Adoption of the Order of Business**

***Bishop Daniel***

---

Bishop Daniel called to adopt the Order of Business. The Order of Business was adopted by unanimous consent. Bishop Daniel reminded the assembly that as approved earlier, the Chair reserves the right to adjust the agenda to best facilitate the work of God through this Assembly.

### **2022 Synod Assembly Minutes**

***Michelle Schaffer***

---

Michelle shared that the 2022 Synod Assembly Minutes were approved by Synod Council at the September 17, 2022, council meeting. Those minutes are available on the synod assembly website in the Supplementary Reports Section. Approved Synod Council Minutes are posted on the Northwestern Ohio Synod website under the Synod Council tab, along with the 2023 Independent Auditor's Report.

Bishop Daniel thanked Michelle Schaffer for her faithful work as our Synod Council Secretary

### **Report and Close of Nominations**

***Tom Ritter***

---

Bishop Daniel invited Mr. Tom Ritter of the Nominating Committee to come forward and present the slate of nominees for elected office. He instructed the assembly where in their materials bios for the nominees could be found. He reminded the assembly that in 2017, the assembly approved a bylaw change that allows for a flexible assembly and Synod Council intends to hold the next Synod Assembly in 2026. As such, we will be voting on candidates who will begin their terms in 2024 and in 2025.

Tom presented the nominees for Synod Council terms beginning in 2024.

For Synod Council Secretary, 4-year term, Michelle Schaffer and Rev. Chris Young

For Synod Council North Central Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Alan Brown and Rev. Melanie Haack

For Synod Council North Central Conference Lay, 3-year term, Clark Price and Synod Authorized Minister Clione Schneider

For Synod Council Southeast Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Tanyce Addison and Rev. Mike Poole

For Synod Council Southwest Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Robin Owen

For Synod Council Southwest Conference Lay, 3-year term, Wendy Bauer

For Synod Council At-Large persons of color and / or persons whose primary language is other than English, 3-year term, Raiden Browning and Rodney West-Estell.

Bishop Daniel called for any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he declared the nominations for all Synod Council terms beginning in 2024 to be closed.

Tom continued with the Synod Council nominees for terms beginning in 2025.

For Synod Council Central Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Tucker O'Leary

For Synod Council Eastern Conference Lay, 3-year term, Beth Kieffer and Traci Zollar

For Synod Council Maumee Valley Lay, 3-year term, Denise Etzler, Jeannine Fuhrhop, Kelly Weber

For Synod Council Toledo Area Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Aaron Baughman and Rev. Brenda Peconge

For Synod Council At-Large Lay, 3-year term, Christine Reasoner and Synod Authorized Minister Frank Weaver

For Synod Council At-Large Youth / Young Adult, 3-year term, Raegan Roehm and Jillian Russell

Bishop Daniel called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he declared the nominations for Synod Council terms beginning in 2025 closed.

Tom presented the nominees for the Nominating Committee 3-year terms beginning in 2024.

For Nominating Committee North Central Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Robin Small

For Nominating Committee Southeast Conference Lay, 3-year term, Kevin McNeal and David Wolfe

For Nominating Committee Southwest Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Deb Monnin

This concludes nominations for the Nominating Committee for terms beginning in 2024.

Bishop Daniel called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he declared the nominations for Nominating Committee terms beginning in 2024 closed.

Tom presented the nominees for the Nominating Committee 3-year terms beginning in 2025.

For Nominating Committee Toledo Area Conference Lay, 3-year term, Kate Philabaum

For Nominating Committee Central Conference Rostered Minister, 3-year term, Rev. Will Stenke

For Nominating Committee At Large Lay, 3-year term, Sherry Ferne and Becky Seibert

Bishop Daniel called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he declared the nominations for Nominating Committee terms beginning in 2025 closed.

Tom presented the nominees for Discipline Committee 6-year terms beginning in 2024.

For Discipline Committee Rostered Minister, 6-year term, Rev. Deb Conklin and Rev. Brenda Peconge

For Discipline Committee Lay, 6-year term, Laurie Mauro and David Wolfe

Bishop Daniel called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he declared the nominations for Discipline Committee terms beginning in 2024 closed.

Tom presented the nominees for Discipline Committee 6-year terms beginning in 2025.

For Discipline Committee Rostered Minister, 6-year term, Rev. Beth Giller. Rev. Pete Bowmer removed himself from the ballot.

For Discipline Committee Lay, 6-year term, Paul Brooks and Hannah Mapus

Bishop Daniel called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he declared the nominations for Discipline Committee terms beginning in 2025 closed.

Tom presented the nominees for the Consultation Committee, 6-year terms beginning in 2025.

For Consultation Committee Rostered Minister, 6-year term, Rev. Howard Abts and Rev. Janine Shearer

Bishop Daniel called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he declared the nominations for the Consultation Committee terms beginning in 2025 closed.

Tom presented the 2025 Churchwide Assembly which is to be held July 28 – August 2, 2025, in Phoenix, Arizona. Tom presented the nominees who will serve as voting members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

For Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Central Conference, Lynn Brink and SAM Jacinda Jones, one to be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from Eastern Conference, Rich Henry, Paul Hiszem, and Alan (AJ) Mehlow, one to be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from North Central Conference, Synod Authorized Minister Bob Franks and Steve Roberts, one to be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Maumee Valley Conference, Mary Boals and Julie Sasseen, one to be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Southeast Conference, Jessica Sornchai and Kathryn Stroupe, one to be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from Southwest Conference, Charles Curry and Perry Luhn, one to be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, at large youth or young adult, Josh Billnitzer and Lydia Roberts, one will be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, At-Large persons of color and / or persons whose primary language is other than English, Birdena Martin and Ruth Whittle, one to be elected.

For Churchwide Voting Member, male Rostered Minister, Rev. Steve Bond, Rev. Paul Reichert, and Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri, two to be elected. Rev. Pete Bowmer removed himself from the ballot.

For Churchwide Voting Member, female rostered minister, Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy, Rev. Melanie Forrey, Rev. Ann Marshall, Rev. Deb Monnin, Rev. Cindy Ritter, Rev. Janine Shearer, and Rev. Beth Westphal, three to be elected.

Bishop Daniel called for nominations from the floor.

Rev. Adam Sornchai nominated Nate Stenke, Churchwide Voting Member, at large youth or young adult.

Hearing no other nomination Bishop Daniel declared the nominations for all 2025 Churchwide Voting Members closed.

Bishop Daniel declared the nominations for all elected positions complete and closed. He thanked Tom and the members of the Nominating Committee for their work. Bishop Daniel led the assembly in a stretch break before proceeding to voting.

### **Voting on Candidates** ***Bishop Daniel & Tom Ritter***

---

Bishop Daniel called to move onto voting on the slate of nominees.

Rev. Tim Philabaum prayed for all the nominees.

Bishop Daniel explained that, unless there was an objection, the assembly would elect by unanimous consent, nominees for which there is only a single nominee for terms beginning in 2024. This included:

- Rev. Robin Owen Synod Council Southwest Conference, Rostered Minister
- Wendy Bauer Synod Council Southwest Conference, Lay
- Rev. Robin Small, Nominating Committee North Central Conference, Rostered Minister



- Rev. Deb Monnin, Nominating Committee Southwest Conference, Rostered Minister

Hearing no objections, Bishop Daniel declared those nominees elected by unanimous consent.

Bishop Daniel explained that, unless there was an objection, the assembly would elect by unanimous consent, nominees for which there is only a single nominee for terms beginning in 2025. This includes:

- Rev. Tucker O’Leary, Synod Council Central Conference Rostered Minister
- Kate Philabaum, Nominating Committee Toledo Conference, Lay
- Rev. Will Stenke, Nominating Committee Central Conference, Rostered Minister

Hearing no objections, Bishop Daniel declared those nominees elected by unanimous consent.

**Voting on the Nominees for Synod Council Terms Beginning in 2024**  
***Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter***

---

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council Secretary,

- Michelle Schaffer 158 [59.40%]
- Rev. Chris Young 108 [40.60%]

Bishop Daniel declared Michelle Schaffer elected to the position of Synod Council Secretary

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council North Central Conference Rostered Minister,

- Rev. Alan Brown 96 [36.23%]
- Rev. Melanie Haack 169 [63.77%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Melanie Haack elected to the position of Synod Council North Central Conference Rostered Minister

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council North Central Conference Lay,

- Clark Price 141 [54.44%]
- Synod Authorized Minister Clione Schneider 118 [45.56%]

Bishop Daniel declared Clark Price elected to the position of Synod Council North Central Conference Lay

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council Southeast Conference Rostered Minister,

- Rev. Tanyce Addison 164 [63.81%]
- Rev. Mike Poole 93 [36.19%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Tanyce Addison elected to the position of Synod Council Southeast Conference Rostered Minister.

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council At-Large persons of color and / or persons whose primary language is other than English,

- Raiden Browning 121 [47.64%]
- Deacon Rodney West-Estell 133 [52.36%]

Bishop Daniel declared Deacon Rodney West-Estell elected to the position of Synod Council At-Large persons of color and / or persons whose primary language is other than English.

### **Voting on the Nominees for Synod Council Terms Beginning in 2025**

#### ***Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter***

---

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council Eastern Conference Lay,

- Beth Kieffer 152 [62.04%]
- Traci Zollar 93 [37.96%]

Bishop Daniel declared Beth Kieffer elected to the position of Synod Council Eastern Conference Lay.

Tom took a moment to explain how voting would proceed when there are more than 2 nominees for an elected position. In the Synod Constitution there is a provision in Chapter 9. S9.08 which reads, *"In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on the preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election"*.

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council Maumee Valley Lay,

- Denise Etzler 63 [25.30%]
- Jeannine Fuhrhop 82 [32.93%]
- Kelly Weber 104 [41.77%]

Jeannine Fuhrhop and Kelly Weber, the highest two vote getters, were entered onto the next ballot.

- Jeannine Fuhrhop 91 [35.55%]
- Kelly Weber 165 [64.45%]

Bishop Daniel declared Kelly Weber elected to the position of Synod Council Maumee Valley Lay.

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council Toledo Conference Rostered Minister,

- Rev. Aaron Baughman 94 [36.02%]
- Rev. Brenda Peconge 167 [63.98%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Brenda Peconge elected to the position of Synod Council Toledo Conference Rostered Minister.

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council At-Large Lay,

- Christine Reasoner 168 [63.64%]
- SAM Frank Weaver 96 [36.36%]

Bishop Daniel declared Christine Reasoner elected to the position of Synod Council At-Large Lay.

Tom called for the vote for Synod Council At-Large Youth / Young Adult,

- Raegan Roehm 115 [44.57%]
- Jillian Russell 143 [55.43%]

Bishop Daniel declared Jillian Russell elected to the position of Synod Council At-Large Youth / Young Adult.

**Voting for Nominating Committee Members, for Terms Beginning in 2024**  
***Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter***

---

Tom called for the vote for Nominating Committee Southeast Conference lay,

- Kevin McNeal 96 [38.40%]
- David Wolfe 154 [61.60%]

Bishop Daniel declared David Wolfe elected to the position of Nominating Committee Southeast Conference lay.

**Voting for Nominating Committee Members, for Terms Beginning in 2025**  
***Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter***

---

Tom called for the vote for Nominating Committee at Large lay,

- Sherry Ferne 95 [36.26%]
- Becky Seibert 167 [63.74%]

Bishop Daniel declared Becky Seibert elected to the position of Nominating Committee at Large lay.

**Voting for Discipline Committee Terms Beginning in 2024**  
***Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter***

---

Tom called for the vote for Discipline Committee at large rostered minister,

- Rev. Deb Conklin 145 [55.13%]
- Rev. Brenda Peconge 118 [44.87%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Deb Conklin elected to the position of Discipline Committee at large rostered minister.

Tom called for the vote for Discipline Committee, at large lay,

- Laurie Mauro 165 [64.71%]
- David Wolfe 90 [35.29%]

Bishop Daniel declared Laurie Mauro elected to the position of Discipline Committee at large lay.

**Voting for Discipline Committee Terms Beginning in 2025**  
***Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter***

---

Bishop Daniel explained that, unless there is an objection, we would elect by unanimous consent nominees for which there is only a single nominee for terms beginning in 2025. For Discipline Committee at large rostered minister

- Rev. Beth Giller.

Hearing no objections, Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Beth Giller elected by unanimous consent.

Tom called for the vote for Discipline Committee, at large lay,

- Paul Brooks 132 [52.59%]
- Hannah Mapus 119 [47.41%]

Bishop Daniel declared Paul Brooks elected to the position of Discipline Committee at large lay.

**Voting for Consultation Committee Terms Beginning in 2025**  
***Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter***

---

Tom called for the vote for Consultation Committee at large rostered minister,

- Rev. Howard Abts 93 [35.36%]
- Rev. Janine Shearer 170 [64.64%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Janine Shearer elected to the position of Consultation Committee at large rostered minister.

## **Voting for Churchwide Assembly Voting Members** **Bishop Daniel and Tom Ritter**

---

Bishop explained that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly is to be held July 28 – August 2, 2025, in Phoenix, Arizona. The next ballot would serve to select which nominees will serve as voting members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Central Conference,

- Lynn Brink 91 [35.55%]
- Synod Authorized Minister Jacinda Jones 165 [64.45%]

Bishop Daniel declared Synod Authorized Minister Jacinda Jones elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Central Conference.

Tom reminded the voters once again, for clarification, that constitutional provision S.9.08 will apply for electing the following candidates as Churchwide Voting Members.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from Eastern Conference,

- Rich Henry 81 [31.76%]
- Paul Hiszem 84 [32.94%]
- Alan (AJ) Mehlow 90 [35.29%]

Paul Hiszem and Alan Mehlow, the highest two vote getters, were entered onto the next ballot.

- Paul Hiszem 98 [39.36%]
- Alan (AJ) Mehlow 151 [60.64%]

Bishop Daniel declared Alan Mehlow elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from Eastern Conference.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from North Central Conference,

- Synod Authorized Minister Bob Franks 120 [46.51%]
- Steve Roberts 138 [53.49%]

Bishop Daniel declared Steve Roberts elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from North Central Conference.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Maumee Valley Conference,

- Mary Boals 119 [45.25%]
- Julie Sasseen 144 [54.75%]

Bishop Daniel declared Julie Sasseen elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Maumee Valley Conference.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Southeast Conference,

- Jessica Sornchai 162 [63.28%]
- Kathryn Stroupe 94 [36.72%]

Bishop Daniel declared Jessica Sornchai elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, lay female from Southeast Conference.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from Southwest Conference,

- Charles Curry 158 [62.95%]
- Perry Luhn 93 [37.05%]

Bishop Daniel declared Charles Curry elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, lay male from Southwest Conference.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, at large youth or young adult,

- Josh Billnitzer 75 [28.63%]
- Lydia Roberts 79 [30.15%]
- Nate Stenke 108 [41.22%]

Lydia Roberts and Nate Stenke, the highest two vote getters, were entered onto the next ballot.

- Lydia Roberts 114 [43.68%]
- Nate Stenke 147 [56.32%]

Bishop Daniel declared Nate Stenke elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, at large youth or young adult.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, At-Large persons of color and / or persons whose primary language is other than English,

- Birdena Martin 136 [54.84%]
- Ruth Whittle 112 [45.16%]

Bishop Daniel declared Birdena Martin elected to the position of Churchwide Voting Member, At-Large persons of color and / or persons whose primary language is other than English.

Tom explained, for clarification, constitutional provision S.9.08 would apply for electing the following candidates as Churchwide Voting Members.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, male Rostered Minister, two to be elected.

- Rev. Steve Bond 64 [24.15%]
- Rev. Paul Reichert 117 [44.15%]
- Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri 84 [31.70%]

Rev. Paul Reichert and Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri, being the highest two vote getters, were entered onto the next ballot for the first slot.

- Rev. Paul Reichert 144 [55.175%]
- Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri 117 [44.83%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Paul Reicher elected to the first position of Churchwide Voting Member, male Rostered Minister

Tom proceeded to call for the vote for the next position for Churchwide Voting Member, male Rostered Minister. The nominees are,

- Rev. Steve Bond 87 [33.08%]
- Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri 176 [66.92%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Dalton Rosa-Ruggieri elected to the second position of Churchwide Voting Member, male Rostered Minister.

Tom called for the vote for Churchwide Voting Member, female rostered minister, three to be elected.

- Rev. Melanie Forrey, 33 [12.60%]
- Rev. Juli Lejman Guy, 47 [17.94%]
- Rev. Ann Marshall, 49 [18.70%]
- Rev. Deb Monnin, 21 [8.02%]
- Rev. Cindy Ritter, 49 [18.70%]
- Rev. Janine Shearer, 33 [12.60%]
- Rev. Beth Westphal, 30 [11.45%]

Rev. Ann Marshall and Rev. Cindy Ritter, being the highest two vote getters, were entered onto the next ballot for the first position.

- Rev. Ann Marshall 116 [44.79%]
- Rev. Cindy Ritter 143 [66.21%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Cindy Ritter elected to the first position of Churchwide Voting Member, female Rostered Minister.

Tom called for the vote for the second position for Churchwide Voting Member, female Rostered Minister. The nominees were Rev. Melanie Forrey, Rev. Juli Lejman Guy, Rev. Ann Marshall, Rev. Deb Monnin, Rev. Janine Shearer, and Rev. Beth Westphal.

- Rev. Melanie Forrey, 31 [11.83%]
- Rev. Juli Lejman Guy, 60 [22.90%]
- Rev. Ann Marshall, 83 [31.68%]
- Rev. Deb Monnin, 16 [6.11%]
- Rev. Janine Shearer, 39 [14.89%]
- Rev. Beth Westphal 33 [12.60%]

Rev. Juli Lejman Guy and Rev. Ann Marshall, being the highest two vote getters, were entered onto the next ballot for the second position.

- Rev. Juli Lejman Guy 94 [36.43%]
- Rev. Ann Marshall 164 [63.57%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Ann Marshall elected to the second position of Churchwide Voting Member, female Rostered Minister

Tom called for the vote for the third position for Churchwide Voting Member, female Rostered Minister. The nominees were Rev. Melanie Forrey, Rev. Juli Lejman Guy, Rev. Deb Monnin, Rev. Janine Shearer, and Rev. Beth Westphal.

- Rev. Melanie Forrey, 33 [12.45%]
- Rev. Juli Lejman Guy, 105 [39.62%]
- Rev. Deb Monnin, 19 [7.17%]
- Rev. Janine Shearer, 57 [21.51%]
- Rev. Beth Westphal, 51 [19.25%]

Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy and Rev. Janine Shearer, being the highest two vote getters, were entered onto our next ballot for the third slot.

- Rev. Juli Lejman Guy 151 [57.63%]
- Rev. Janine Shearer 111 [42.37%]

Bishop Daniel declared Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy elected to the third position of Churchwide Voting Member, female Rostered Minister.

Bishop Daniel thanked Tom and offered a prayer of thanksgiving for all candidates. Bishop Daniel then turned the meeting over to Vice-President Nancy Yunker.



## **Presentation of Constitutional Updates**

### ***Nancy Yunker & Jacob Henry***

---

Nancy invited Synod Governance and Policy Specialist Jacob Henry forward to present the proposed Updates to the Synod Constitution.

As it was 11:53 PM, Jacob reminded the assembly that the deadline to submit any amendments was 12 PM noon.

Jacob continued with a brief explanation of the proposed changes to Chapter 7:14, 7:22, 7:24 clarifying, 7:26 & 7:27 language, and Chapter 8:42. He reminded the assembly that these provisions would be voted on during the afternoon session.

Nancy thanked Jacob for his report and let the assembly know that Jacob would be available for any specific questions.

## **Financial Reports and Mission Spending**

### ***Nancy Yunker & Shea McGrew***

---

Nancy Yunker invited Synod Council Treasurer Shew McGrew forward to present the Financial Reports and the proposed 2024-2026 Mission Spending Plan.

Shea McGrew pointed out the objectives of the proposed spending package; ultimately to continue to fund synod operations, and support ELCA/Churchwide. This package would fund priority initiatives, by strengthening parishes, identifying and supporting candidates, and training lay leaders. Adequate compensation for staff and investing in professional development were identified as goals of the team that put together this package. And the hope is to promote generosity and giving. We are looking at a projected 5.1% decrease in income for 2024-2025m and a downward trend in mission support from congregations. We are projecting a .02% increase in expenses. Our Proportionate Share tithe to the ELCA has been reduced from 51% to 41%. Most non-personnel expenses are flat and staff salaries are at a 4% increase. We will have a full year of salary for the Director of Generosity. Bottom line we are projecting a deficit of \$20,806 for 2024-2025 and \$71,036 for 2025-2026.) The five-year model is modest but has increasing deficits. This, he said, is a time to inspire and promote generosity.

Nancy thanked Shea and let the assembly know there will be time during the afternoon session to discuss and vote on the proposed 2024-2026 Mission Spending Plan. She mentioned that Shew McGrew would make himself available between now and the afternoon session if you have specific questions.

Nancy Yunker announced that due to the time, an adjustment would be made to the agenda. The Presentation of Compensation Guidelines would take place at 3:00 when the afternoon business reconvenes.

## **Announcements and Instructions**

### ***Cassie Mugler***

---

Cassie made a few lunch announcements and directions to share with the assembly. Lunch was provided by Call of the Canyon, a local BG restaurant owned by two Lutherans! She asked that members of the assembly planned to be in the Living Learning Session they had signed up for by the 1:00 PM start time. Dessert would be served back in the assembly hall after Living Learning sessions concluded.

Rev. Drew Tucker shared grace.

## **Lunch and Living Stones: Living Learning Sessions**

---

### **Business Session #2**

---

#### **Presentation of Compensation Guidelines**

##### ***Treasurer Shea McGrew & Pr. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri***

---

Nancy Yunker invited Synod Council Treasurer Shew McGrew and Compensation Task Force Member Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri forward to present the proposed 2025-2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of the Northwestern Ohio Synod.

Shea McGrew and Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri presented the compensation guidelines which included a 10% increase from 2024 base, plus a 3% COLA and \$600.00 on the base (increase of \$600.00 for each additional year of ordination) for Word and Sacrament salaries, and a 6.3% increase from 2024 base (zero years) of \$47,012.00 to \$50,000.00, plus an annual COLA adjustment and \$600.00 annual increment for Word and Service salaries. Housing changes amounted to % of median home value in zip code area, multiplied by 1.35-1.75, parsonage equity allowance also based on median value and chosen multiplier.

Nancy Yunker thanked Shea and Rev. Ashley for their presentation of the proposed 2025-2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of the Northwestern Ohio Synod.

## **Leadership Reports**

---

### **Rev. Sarah Schaaf**

Rev. Sarah shared with the assembly that one-fourth of the synods across the country were conducting their assemblies on the very same day. She shared about the great diversity throughout ELCA congregations, all united in baptism, and offered greetings from the many churches across the world in communion with the assembly. Greetings from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton were shared via video.

### **VP Nancy Yunker**

Nancy gave an update on the national Synod Vice Presidents meetings, most of which were hosted on Zoom, but the group also met in person in Chicago. They exchanged stories of what was happening in their respective synods. Nancy also gave thanks for the talent and dedication of Bishop Daniel, the staff, Synod Council, Executive Committee and all the other committees that made this Synod Assembly possible.

### **Treasurer Shea McGrew**

Shea shared that the Northwestern Synod is financially sound at present, and in a good position. Operation monies are in good shape, and endowment is growing. Changing tithe giving from 50% to 41% has helped with the stabilizing of our financial picture. Shea asked the question, "What do we need to do to promote giving?" This, he said, would help us look towards investing in the dream.

### **Bishop Daniel G. Beaudoin**

Bishop Daniel shared the Genesis 28 story of Jacob and reflected on how God shows up in our rest as we journey. Bishop directed us to his letter and the *On the Way* documents in the Assembly Business materials.

Bishop explained that 2024 is The Year of Rest, and that the corresponding memory verse is Hebrews 4:9 "*So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God*". Bishop Daniel encouraged those gathered to look at the bible study that was developed by the Synod Staff and the monthly calendar to experience new ways to rest. There are 7 types of rest, he explained: mental, sensory, emotional, social, creative, spiritual, and physical.

Bishop Daniel also shared how the church and its leadership is changing.

### **Debate and Voting on Constitutional Updates**

#### ***Bishop Daniel, Jacob Henry***

---

Bishop Daniel called for discussion before voting on the Constitutional Updates. Bishop Daniel invited Jacob Henry who serves as our Synod Governance and Policy Specialist to please come forward to help answer any questions. He explained that Synod Council had made a motion that the Assembly approve

the constitutional updates. The updates were considered en bloc. To open the discussion, Bishop Daniel asked for a second.

Rev. Dana Bjorlin (St Martin's-Archbold) seconded the motion.

Rev. Dana Bjorlin then made the request that S7:14 be amended for the quorum to remain at 50%. He also asked that item S7:14 of the Constitution Updates be voted on separate from the rest. The motion was seconded by Rev. Melissa Micham of Olivet.

Becky Seibert offered a prayer before voting.

Bishop Daniel called for the vote of the Constitution Updates (en bloc) without item S7:14.

In Favor 213 (92.61%)  
In opposition 17 (7.39%)

Bishop Daniel declared the Constitutional Updates en bloc without item S7:14 approved.

Discussion ensued on update S7:14 regarding quorum numbers of an assembly.

Rev. Jennifer Gonzales (St. Paul-Waldo) asked for clarification. Jacob Henry explained changing this was meant to assist the smaller synods.

Rev. Kristen Hunsinger (Hope-Toledo) asked if this meant registered voters "present" at an assembly. Jacob answered, yes, it is percentage of registered members present, to establish a quorum.

Rev. Mark Bauer of (Trinity-Moulton) requested the definition (Quorum 50%) on the slide for everyone to be able to see. It was displayed.

Bishop Daniel called for the vote on Constitutional Update S7:14 as amended. That vote failed.

Bishop Daniel called for a vote on the original motion.

In Favor 137 (57.56%)  
In opposition 101 (42.44%)

Bishop Daniel declared the Constitutional update item S7:14 approved as originally presented: by synod council S7.14: *"One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum."*

**Voting on Mission Spending Plan**  
**Bishop Daniel, Shea McGrew**

---

Bishop Daniel called for the vote on the 2024-2026 Mission Spending Plan. Bishop Daniel explained that Synod Council had made a motion that the Assembly approve the 2024-2026 Mission Spending Plan. To open the discussion, Bishop Daniel called for a second. Matt Wietzel (St. Peter-Norwalk) seconded the motion.

Bishop Daniel welcomed any discussion.

Rev. Beth Westphal of St. John/Bellevue came to the microphone to speak, in opposition. She remarked that she was delighted to see that the numbers are better but struggled with the idea of “robbing Peter to pay Paul”. She asked Council to consider full support for Churchwide.

Shea McGrew thanked Rev. Beth.

Seeing no further discussion, Bishop Daniel invited Rev. Nate Tuff to lead the assembly in prayer before the vote.

Rev. Nate Tuff led the assembly in prayer.

Bishop Daniel called for the vote on the 2024-2026 Mission Spending Plan.

In Favor 223(94.89%)  
In Opposition 12 (5.11%)

Bishop Daniel declared the 2024-2026 Mission Spending Plan approved.

**Voting on Compensation Guidelines**  
**Bishop Daniel, Shea McGrew, Rev. Ashley Rosa-Ruggieri**

---

Bishop Daniel called the vote for the 2025-2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of the Northwestern Ohio Synod. He explained that Synod Council had made a motion that the Assembly approve the 2025-2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of the Northwestern Ohio Synod and called for a second.

Rev. Mike Hanck of (Salem-Toledo) seconded the motion.

Rev. Kevin Maxey of (Hope-Ottawa Hills) asked if the COLA was reflected in the step increase?

Rev. Ashley responded that it was not, saying that it becomes way more expensive.

Rev. Kevin made a motion to amend the guidelines to apply COLA to every step increase of salary.

Jacob informed Rev. Kevin that the deadline for amendments had passed.

Point of order was called by Rev. Dana Bjorlin, who requested the rules be suspended.

Jacob informed Rev. Dana that a suspension of the rules would require a 2/3 vote.

Bishop called for the vote to suspend the rules and consider the amendment.

In Favor 88 (40.18%)

In Opposition 131 (59.82%)

Bishop announced that the motion to suspend the rules was defeated and the assembly would not consider the amendment.

Discussion restarted on the Guidelines.

David Charvat of (Grace-Toledo) questioned how to get congregations to approve the use of these guidelines within their parishes.

Rev. Ashley responded that the materials included wording in the document to help respond to such concerns. She suggested having conversations in advance of implementation.

Shea also added that it is important to secure good wages for rostered people.

Rev. Jennifer Gonsalves (St. Paul-Marion) added that she understood the need and would like to see some examples for different circumstances.

Shea responded that they would like to model that out.

Rev. Ashley suggested that folks look on the synod website for examples.

Rev. Melissa Micham of (Olivet-Sylvania) questioned the rationale of the 1.35%-1.75% range, part time impact on housing, and difference in Word and Sacrament and Word and Service, and housing benefits for incoming pastors.

Bishop Daniel shared that the team would offer to visit parishes that would like someone to help with the explanation.

Rev. Steve Smithberger of (Epiphany-Toledo) voiced his approval of the increases.

Rev. Shawn Schneider of (Frist-Galion) called the question.

Bishop Daniel called for the vote to call the question.

In Favor 191 (89.25)  
In Opposition 23 (10.75)

Bishop Daniel declared that the question had been called and invited Rev. Henry Seibert to pray before the vote.

Rev. Henry Seibert lead us in prayer.

Bishop Daniel called for the vote on the 2025-2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of the Northwestern Ohio Synod.

In Favor 194(86.22%)  
In Opposition 31 (13.78)

Bishop Daniel declared the 2025-2026 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of the Northwestern Ohio Synod approved. He emphasized that more informational resources on having conversations about the Guidelines and instructional videos will be coming to the Synod website soon.

The assembly closed with worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Schaffer  
Northwestern Ohio Synod Secretary

and  
Jeannine Grimm  
Calla Gilson  
Jacob Henry