



**THIRTY-FOURTH ASSEMBLY  
NEW JERSEY SYNOD  
May 6 & 7, 2022  
St. Paul, East Windsor  
*Together We Are God's Tapestry of Love***

**FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2022**

Voting Members and Visitors were given the opportunity to attend virtual Pre-Assembly workshops [BR page 7 & 8].

**OPENING PRAYER AND DEVOTIONS**

**6:45 PM, MAY 6, 2022**

The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, Bishop, welcomed all to the livestream. Along with Vice President Arundel Clarke; Synod Council member Daniel Fields, Messiah, Parlin; Pastors Giselle Coutinho, Bridge of Peace Camden; Jose Escalera, Temple and Misión Luterana Reconciliación, Pennsauken; Maristela Freiberg Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, and Jisun Kwak, Zion, Saddle River, led opening prayer and devotions, followed by the Assembly singing the opening hymn *We All Are One in Mission*.

**PLENARY SESSION #1**

Bishop Tracie Bartholomew welcomed everyone to the 34<sup>th</sup> Synod Assembly and began by acknowledging the land upon which we gathered is part of the traditional territory of the Lenni-Lenape, called Lenapehoking. In our acknowledgement of the continued presence of Lenape people in their homeland, we affirm the aspiration of the great Lenape Chief Tamanend, “that there be harmony between the indigenous people of this land and the descendants of the immigrants to this land, as long as the rivers and creeks flow, and the sun, moon, and stars shine.”

The Assembly continued with introductions of resource persons on-site and remotely available during the Assembly to assist voting members and the Bishop during the Assembly. They include Pastor Blake Scalet, Secretary; Mary Scout, Parliamentarian, LuAnn Barnes, Lois Parrett, Dawn Roberts, and Pastors Dean Brown, Maristela Freiberg, and Sara Lilja. Dan Egan and Dave Quinnan are again serving as our sound and media technicians. Anthony Trump, The Rev. Peter Hartney, and Rob Rinderer, all from St. Paul, Beachwood, were available off-site for technical assistance.

Zoom etiquette and voting procedures through the new voting platform Vpoll were reviewed and voting members participated in a practice session.

Bishop Bartholomew explained the concept of a Consent Agenda for the *2022 Assembly Agenda* [BR pages 5-6], *Rules of Procedure for the Thirty-fourth Synod Assembly* [BR pages 11&12], *Appointment of Assembly Committees* [projected through Zoom] and *2021 Assembly Minutes* [BR Section II].

**34<sup>th</sup> NEW JERSEY SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

**May 6 & 7, 2022**

**Together We Are God's Tapestry of Love**

**Friday, May 6**

2:00-3:15 pm Pre-Assembly Workshops  
3:30-4:45 pm Pre-Assembly Workshops

6:00 pm Zoom room opens

6:30 pm **Opening Prayer/Devotions**

6:45 pm **Session One**

Welcome and Introduction to Assembly  
Orientation to zoom etiquette and voting  
Establish quorum  
Consent Agenda  
Rules of Procedure, Minutes, Assembly Committees  
Report of Nominating Committee  
Rostered Ministers New to the Synod  
Report of Synod Council  
Spending Plan Presentation

Celebration and Thank You for Cassandra Mack  
Congregational Anniversaries

8:15 pm **Closing Prayer**

8:30 pm Assembly in Recess

**Saturday, May 7**

8:30 am Zoom room opens

9:00 am **Dwelling in the Word**

*"I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God's great mystery." Colossians 2:2 (The Message)*

9:30 am **Session Two**

Bishop's Report  
Bishop's Challenge Team report and celebration  
Ballot 1 – Synod Council

10:30 am **Break**

10:45 am **Session Three**

Churchwide Report  
Report of the Treasurer  
Report of Synod Council  
Adoption of Spending Plan

Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center report  
Ballot 2 – Synod Council  
Rostered Leaders Anniversaries and Retirements  
Synod Council Report  
Dates for 2023 Assembly

12:15 pm      **Closing Prayer and Commissioning for Mission**  
12:30 pm      Adjournment

**NEW JERSEY SYNOD, ELCA**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE THIRTY-FOURTH SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

1. Fifty percent (50%) of voting members who have confirmed registration upon the beginning of the assembly shall constitute a quorum as required by constitution (S7.14.). Registered Voting Members will receive the access link for Zoom participation. Visitors may view via livestream on the New Jersey Synod website. Microphones should be muted unless a person is recognized by the chair.
2. In order to vote, Voting Members must be registered and logged into the virtual Assembly.
3. Each attendee is responsible for their own connection to the internet and the meeting room; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented them from participating in the meeting.
4. Two (2) lay representatives of Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities of the New Jersey Synod shall be given voice and vote during the Assembly.
5. Persons who are on the roster of the New Jersey Synod, ELCA, On Leave From Call or Retired, Living Out-of-State, but who are serving New Jersey Synod congregations/worshiping communities by special appointment, and those Retired Pastors Living Out-of-State who are actively engaged in the life and ministry of the New Jersey Synod shall be given voice and vote during the Assembly.
6. Persons on the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in a Synod other than the New Jersey Synod, but who are serving New Jersey Synod congregations by special appointment, shall be given voice, not vote, during the Assembly.
7. Persons who are not on the roster of the ELCA, but who are serving New Jersey Synod congregations/worshiping communities by special appointment, shall be given voice, not vote, during the Assembly.
8. Persons who are not on the roster of the ELCA, but who are serving New Jersey Synod congregations/worshiping communities by special appointment and are ordained ministers of another Lutheran church body that is a member of the Lutheran World Federation or of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA shall be given voice and vote during the Assembly.
9. Chairs of Mission Teams and Committees listed by the Synod Council shall be given voice, not vote, on matters pertaining to their work during the Assembly.
10. Voting will take place in a variety of ways throughout the assembly. These may include various ways using electronic platforms. To have an abstention recorded, notify the secretary via the chat function. Abstentions do not count in the vote totals.

11. A voting member wishing to make a motion must first be recognized by the chair and then post the motion in the chat box to the secretary before speaking to it.
12. When an item of business is opened by the chair for discussion, those voting members wishing to speak shall do so as instructed. Before speaking, each person must indicate their name and congregation name and location. Members must specify if they are speaking for or against the item under consideration.
13. Debate shall be limited to two minutes per person per issue. Time will be kept by the Secretary. Debate will terminate when three speakers have been heard on each side, unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting of the assembly.
14. The deadline for submitting resolutions was March 7, 2022. Late resolutions will not be accepted; any resolutions received after the deadline will be considered by the Synod Council at its next meeting. The Synod Council and/or Executive Committee may submit resolutions directly to the Assembly.
15. All resolutions shall be reviewed by the Committee of Reference and Counsel, which, when reporting to the Assembly, may:
  1. recommend approval;
  2. recommend disapproval;
  3. recommend referral to the Synod Council; or
  4. recommend a substitute motion to the Assembly
16. Due to the online nature of the assembly, nominations from the floor will not be accepted.
17. All reports published in the Bulletin of Reports shall be received by the Assembly by virtue of that fact without vote.

#### **RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION OF THE 2023 SPENDING PLAN**

1. At the time of the introduction of the Spending Plan, discussion shall be limited to questions for clarification and information and the serving of notices of intent to move an amendment to the Spending Plan.
2. Voting Members desiring to present motions germane to the Spending Plan shall be given until **8:00pm, Friday, May 6** to submit written notice of such intent to the Treasurer, James Harris, using the chat function of the meeting platform.
3. The Fiscal Management, Administration, and Property Committee shall meet with voting members proposing an amendment.
4. At the time appointed for the adoption of the Spending Plan, the Fiscal Management, Administration, and Property Committee shall report to the Assembly all proposed amendments, with the Committee's recommendations.
5. When motions germane to the Spending Plan are presented on the Floor of the Assembly, the Fiscal Management, Administration, and Property Committee shall have an opportunity to respond to the recommendations. Any Voting Member wishing to increase a line item in any area of the Spending Plan shall propose a source of funding.

**MINUTES OF THE 2021 SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

The Minutes [BR Section II] of the Thirty-third Synod Assembly of the Virtual New Jersey Synod, ELCA, May 7 &-8, 2021, based at St. Paul, East Windsor, New Jersey, is our official record.

**APPOINTMENT OF 2022 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE**

Lynn Perry, Grace, Mendham  
The Rev. Scott Schantzenbach, St. Luke, Washington

There being no objections to the Agenda of the 2022 34<sup>th</sup> Synod Assembly, Rules of Procedure for the 34<sup>th</sup> Synod Assembly, Appointment of 2022 Assembly Committees, or 2021 Assembly Minutes the items are approved by consent.

**2022 REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Rev. Peter Hartney, St. Paul, Beachwood, and Shore Mission District Dean, in a prerecorded video, presented the Report of the Nominating Committee [BR, Section 1 Page 115]. Bishop Bartholomew pointed out there was a typo in the spelling of Pastor Jay Berry’s name. Ballot 1, when taken, will be correct.

**2022 ELECTIONS**

**SYNOD COUNCIL - (to be ratified by assembly):  
Mission District Elections - Terms Expiring 2025**

**Mission District Elections**

Delaware	Lay Lay Male or Non-binary	Andrea Gerrard, St. Stephen, Woodbury ~ José Sanchez, Bridge of Peace, Camden
Gateway		No District Elections
Middle -	Lay Lay Female or Non-binary	Daniel Fields, Messiah, Parlin ~ Nansi Krauss, Christ the King, Kendall Park
Northern		No District Elections
Shore	Lay	Steve Hernandez, Faith, Lavallette ~
Western	CLERGY	The Rev. Jane McCready, Faith, New Providence

~ Second term

**At-Large Clergy ( 1 to be elected) from any Mission District elected at the Assembly, Term ending 2025.**

The Rev. John J. Berry, St. Mark, Oaklyn  
The Rev. Linnéa K. Clark, Emanuel, New Brunswick  
The Rev. Haydée Colón-Hernández, St. John and Misión Pan de Vida, Passaic  
The Rev. Margarette S. Ouji, First, Montclair

Ballot 1 will take place in Plenary Session #2.

**ROSTERED LEADERS NEW TO THE NEW JERSEY SYNOD  
SINCE THE 2021 SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

A prerecorded video of those new to our roster was shown. The following rostered leaders entered the New Jersey Synod since the 2021 Synod Assembly, through ordination, transfer from another synod or through agreement as an ecumenical partner. We welcome each to our community, and offer our prayers and our support for their ministry. Those persons are:

**2022 ROSTERED LEADERS NEW TO THE SYNOD  
Ordained for First Call in New Jersey**

Haydée Colón-Hernández, M. Danielle McCleary, Mary “JJ” Simpson Keelan, Courtney D. Smith

**April 23, 2022 Ordination**

Mason A. Hahn, Jr., Frantisek Janak, Jr., Margarette S. Ouji

**Received by Transfer from Another Synod**

Russell Haab, Jessica Hahn, Patt Kauffman, Arden Krych, Margaret Krych, Austin Newberry,  
Charles Romanowski, Christine Ruth, Katherine Steinly, Jonathan Westerlund

**Rostered in Another Synod/Lutheran Churchbody/Ecumenical Partner**

Jisun Kwak, Peggy Ludlow, Dwight Mason

**REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL**

**Introduction of the 2023 Spending Plan**

The session continued with the presentation of the proposed 2023 Spending Plan [BR pages 13-16.] In a video presentation, Wannetta Phillips, Prince of Peace, Rockaway, member of the Synod Council and Fiscal Management, Administration, and Property Committee (FMAP) began the report by expressing thanks for the generosity of congregations through mission support sharing. The 2023 Spending Plan contains a projection of revenues as well as the financial strategy for carry out the mission of our Synod. Wannetta lifted up and importance of congregation mission support and invited voting members to listen to stories of how faith is lived out together and through mission support. Pastor José Escalera, Temple and Misión Luterana Reconciliación, Pennsauken; Patricia Klatt, St. Stephen, South Plainfield; Pastor Sara Lilja, Assistant to the Bishop; Beverly Ruggia, member of the coalition partner Citizen Action; Pastor Carol Lindsay, Calvary Cranford; Dylan and Helen Payanzo; and Noemi and Sean, Cross Roads Campers; and Pastor Dean Brown, Assistant to the Bishop, all lifted up examples of faith renewing experiences allocated through our Mission Support.

In closing, Pastor Brown expressed thanks for the overwhelming response of congregations submitting mission support intentions and invited anyone with specific questions or amendments related to the 2023 Spending Plan be submitted to our Synod Treasurer through the chat feature or email ([jharris@njsynod.org](mailto:jharris@njsynod.org)) by 8:00 PM. The 2023 Spending Plan will be brought to the floor of the Assembly for action in Plenary Session #3.

Bishop Bartholomew expressed thanks for the Fiscal Management, Administration and Property Committee's thoughtful work in bringing the 2023 Spending Plan to the Assembly.

### **CELEBRATION OF CASSANDRA MACK**

Bishop Bartholomew, LuAnn Barnes, Executive Administrative Assistant, and Synod Vice President Arundel Clarke led the celebration of the ministry of Cassandra Mack as Synod Secretary 2015 - 2022. Each speaker lifted up examples of Cassandra's faithful service as Secretary and as our "Ambassador of Joy." In appreciation for Cassandra, a framed scripture verse "*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*" (Matthew 11:28), a special magnetic USB pin crafted by Arundel Clarke, and a financial gift to Cross Roads Camp and Retreat designating a hole in the Bishop's Cup in her honor for a job well done! In closing, Bishop Bartholomew lifted a prayer of thanksgiving for Cassandra.

### **RECOGNITION OF MAJOR ANNIVERSARIES OF CONGREGATIONS**

Bishop Bartholomew introduced the video presentation produced by Synod Archivist The Rev. J. Francis Watson, Christ, Whiting, which included photos and brief histories for congregations celebrating significant anniversaries since our last Synod Assembly.

The congregations celebrating in 2022 include:

125 Years

*Faith, New Providence*

*St. John, Williamstown*

100 Years

*Holy Trinity, Manasquan*

75 Years

*Good Shepherd, Glen Rock*

25 Years

*Living Waters, Ringoes*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Bishop Bartholomew called on Assistants to the Bishop Pastors Dean Brown and Maristela Freiberg to lead closing prayer, with Pastor Blake Scalet providing musical accompaniment for the hymns *All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night* and *Christ Be Our Light*.

The Assembly was in recess until the opening of Plenary Session #2 at 9:00 AM, with the Zoom room opening at 8:30 AM.



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NEW JERSEY SYNOD  
May 6 & 7, 2022  
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**SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022**

**DWELLING IN THE WORD**  
**9:00 AM, MAY 7, 2022**

At 9:00 AM, Bishop Bartholomew introduced Pastor Maristela Freiberg, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission, to address the Assembly. Pastor Freiberg expressed thanks for the many ways of partnership with congregations, new starts and mission initiatives, supported and woven together in God's tapestry of love. Pastor Freiberg also gave thanks for other cohorts of congregations actively coming for conversation and support. Visitors and voting members are invited to participate in the ongoing monthly virtual gatherings for congregation leaders with a passion and interest in evangelism and outreach.

Pastor Freiberg joined by Pastor Jill Collicot, Faith, Hillsborough; Pastor Courtney Smith, Messiah, Oakland, and Pastor Danielle McCleary, St. Matthew, Secaucus, invited participants to join Dwelling in the Word, a Bible study based on "I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God's great mystery." Colossians 2:2 (*The Message*) Breakout rooms were arranged for those participating.

**PLENARY SESSION #2**

Following Dwelling in the Word, Bishop Bartholomew thanked the leaders and welcomed voting members and visitors to Plenary Session #2.

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP TO THE ASSEMBLY**

Synod Vice President Arundel Clarke assumed the chair during the Report of the Bishop [BR Pages 20 – 26] The text of Bishop Bartholomew's oral report follows:

*Together we are God's tapestry of love. This is most certainly true! It only takes a cursory glance through the Bulletin of Reports to see how we are woven together across this synod, throughout the ELCA, and around the world. The picture that emerges when all the threads of our common life come together is beautiful! My report will highlight some of those threads and hopefully help us to celebrate the entire tapestry of Christ's love for the world.*

*To start, I want to highlight and say thank you to those who make up the synod staff – the thread that weaves in and out of the entire tapestry. Through these last two years, the staff has worked differently but certainly not any less. Establishing hybrid schedules means that we gather in person all together on Wednesdays and*



*choose other days to be in person or work remotely, including a Monday morning zoom staff meeting which centers on a devotional start to our work week.*

*Please join me in thanking the staff who carry out synodical ministries in your behalf. LuAnn Barnes is my Executive Administrative Assistant, Lois Parrett is our Director of Operations and Accountant, Dawn Roberts serves as our Administrator for Mission and Ministry. These three staff members interact with you on a regular basis – answering your questions, caring for behind the scenes administration that allows our work to flow, praying for you, and keeping our synod ministries on track to make a difference in the world. People are often surprised to learn there are just three full-time office-based staff people. Thank you, LuAnn, Lois, and Dawn – for being the thread that pulls us together.*

*Our pastoral staff changed a bit this year. Pastor Sara Lilja moved from serving a ministry partner into the Office of the Bishop as an assistant with a particular focus on advocacy ministry but still taking on general responsibilities of an assistant to the bishop. I'll say more about this in a bit.*

*Pastor Dean Brown serves as an assistant to the bishop with an eye on stewardship and generosity. Pastor Maristela Freiberg is deployed staff from the ELCA and serves as the Director for Evangelical Mission and an assistant to the bishop. These three pastors walk with your congregations, support our rostered and lay leaders, and provide inspiration for the mission we share. Please be sure to read their reports to get a sense of how their work contributes to the tapestry of life in the NJ Synod. Thank you, Sara, Dean, and Maristela.*

*In addition to our fulltime staff, we contract a few hours each month with a number of people for specific work: Pastor Marc Stutzel coordinates our work with candidacy while also serving fulltime as pastor at Christ, Woodcliff Lake. Pastor Becky Resch works with our first call deacons and pastors while also serving fulltime as the Candidacy Manager for Regions 7 & 8 (an ELCA position). Matt McDevitt and Bob Poole are our property managers south and north respectively. Beth Peroni schedules supply preachers for our congregations in transition, a task which seems to get more difficult as the needs increase. Nicolas and Eugenia Sapon care for our building and grounds. While these folks may be very part-time, the work they do is important to the overall ministry of our synod.*

*But the NJ Synod's tapestry of God's love is not made up of just the synod staff – it would be an incomplete picture if we thought our synod's work and mission was only about the work of the staff or only what happened from the synod office. Rather, the tapestry is made up of the work we do together – the synod staff and each of us in our local congregations, at camp, through Lutheran Social Ministries, on the streets of our neighborhoods, at the state house in Trenton, in schools and daycares, and in the households of those connected to our ministries. Thank you for all of the ways you faithfully live out your calling to be the body of Christ. Thank you for helping to complete the tapestry of which we are all a part.*

*As I was thinking on our theme and the image of tapestries, it struck me that there are two sides to a beautiful tapestry – the picture we see from the front side and the back side that's often hidden. If you're a skilled artisan, the front and back may not look altogether different. But usually, you can see quite a contrast between the front and back – the part for viewing and the part that shows how it came together.*

*On the front side of a tapestry, the artisan's vision becomes reality, and we gaze on a beautiful scene or an abstract design meant to inspire us or tell a story. The different colored threads come together to create something more than the sum of its parts. The artist knows the colors needed and the placement of each thread in order to bring the tapestry to life.*

*On the back side, however, we often see a jumble of those threads – sometimes looking like a mess that is far from perfect and certainly not awe inspiring. This hidden side of the tapestry makes sense to the artist but isn't meant for anyone else. To the untrained viewer, the threads or fabric are jumbled up in a chaotic way. This side of the tapestry isn't so beautiful.*

*And I wonder – as the body of Christ called the NJ Synod, are we the front side of the tapestry of God's love or the back? Are we meant to be the beautiful, well-put together picture without flaws or mistakes or are we the flip side, the side where there is no clear picture but rather lots of parts coming together in what often looks like chaos? Is the full tapestry both sides together -- the messy threads sewn and knotted together as well as the beautiful picture that emerges on the other side?*

*I think so – I think the tapestry of which we are a part is both a beautiful picture created by God who weaves us together in such a way that it is awe inspiring AND the messy back side in which we see flaws and chaos and knotty threads all jumbled up. The hard part is often making sure we don't stay stuck on just one side.*

*The hard part of being woven into God's tapestry of Love is to see the messiness and the beauty; the whole picture together and the threads that make it up. If we get fixated on the messiness and the hard work that goes into being the church of Christ, we lose our joy. If we get stuck on wanting only the finished, flawless picture, we are quickly disappointed when real life enters in. Together, we can help each other see the whole tapestry and ourselves woven into it.*

*I'm going to start with the messy side – the unfinished, jumble of threads that make up the back of the tapestry. I don't need to tell you just how messy life has been. You know the hardships, the knots, the worries, the disagreements that have caused us grief, and I don't just mean the COVID pandemic, though that is a big part of it.*

*You know how your life has been disrupted and turned upside down. Some of our congregations have only recently come back together in person, others of you have been in person throughout the pandemic. Some of you have discovered creative ways to worship and learn together using improved technology. Some of you have experienced division and disagreements over how best we gather and what protocols should be in place. It's painful to see the places where folks have left a congregation because of decisions about wearing a mask or not.*

*Some of the messiness could be called creative abrasion – that is working out the best way to be church in this time, not always agreeing but always listening and praying and trying to live out the love of Christ for the world. So we see folks marching for peace in their neighborhoods, opening their spaces for community forums, working to build peace by pursuing justice.*

*As we look ahead, I don't see the messiness going away. In fact, I don't know of a time when being church wasn't messy. When we work to become an anti-racist church, when we stand with LGBTQ+ people, when we work for the dignity of our elderly, when we feed the hungry, when we provide Christian education for all ages, when we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in words and deeds, it is messy. The God we know in Jesus Christ upends life as usual. The Spirit of the Risen Christ emboldens us to live for our neighbors and take risks that look like jumbled chaos at times.*

*Raise your hand if you have been in the messiness of trying to figure out how to be church in this time?*

*Here's where the two sides of the tapestry come together – the prayerful decision making, the deep listening and wrestling together, result in something beautiful. A church that is faithful to its calling to be the body of Christ may be messy, but it is also awe-inspiring. God weaves us into a tapestry of love that changes lives for the better.*

*We made some changes as a synod this year around the way we will do our advocacy work – it's still a work in progress, everything is not yet neatly tied up but we believe it's a change for the better.*

*Since the mid-1980s, we've supported an advocacy or governmental ministry partner. First it was called the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry, which became Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry when the Episcopal Church joined with us, and when they pulled support, the acronym LEAM stayed but the words changed to Lutherans Engaging in Advocacy Ministry. We've had three directors of this ministry – Deacon Carol Kasabach, Pastor Bruce Davidson, and Pastor Sara Lilja. Pastor Lilja has been the director who has seen these changes and helped to keep the ministry nimble to respond to the changing landscape of financial support and congregational involvement.*

*As a ministry partner, the NJ Synod contributed a small part of the funding plus in-kind support of office space, administrative, support, etc. As other funding decreased, Pastor Lilja's position became part-time – something the synod council questioned.*

*Following recommendations of an ad hoc committee, the synod council voted to change structure of LEAMNJ and bring the work of advocacy into the Office of the Bishop. This means, that beginning February 1, LEAMNJ was no longer a ministry partner with a separate board and Pastor Lilja became a fulltime assistant to the bishop – with a focus on advocacy ministry but a full portfolio of the work all assistants to the bishop carry.*

*To support the work of advocacy across our synod that is in our congregations as well as at the statehouse in Trenton, Pastor Lilja is working to re-constitute the Justice and Peace Mission Team and its subgroups. To that end, you will be receiving a survey to help establish the priorities and subgroups that our advocacy will focus on this year, remembering that we use our church's social statements and messages as guides to what legislation and social issues we address. Look for that survey in the coming weeks and after completing it, pass it along to others in your network to complete as well.*

*The threads of this new way of doing our advocacy ministry are still a bit jumbled and some are still hanging loosely but the picture is coming together so that our voices of faith continue to be heard in the public square. Fortunately, Pastor Lilja is comfortable with both sides of the tapestry!*

*This year, being part of the tapestry of God's love in the NJ Synod has involved a Bishop's Challenge: The Jehu Jones Mission. We launched this challenge at last year's assembly and spent the year examining some of the harder parts of our history -as a church, a country, and our state. For some, the learnings were new and quite upsetting. For others, the racism inherent in our systems is well known and experienced to this day.*

*I want to thank the Bishop's Challenge team for preparing and providing the educational resources for us to use: LaMont Rouse, Carla Hoenigmann, Mimi Confer, Pastors Michael Linderman, and Sara Lilja. Their dedication to this challenge has been unwavering. They helped us engage in Bible study, a book study together, Advent materials, learn about quilting, coordinated a trip to Philadelphia, and provided links to learn more about the ways race is used to sustain inequities in our common life. Thank you! They will be reporting on the Challenge immediately following my report.*

*In addition to learning, we also raised funds for educational enrichment experiences for emerging leaders of African descent. Without stealing the thunder from the team's report, let me just say – thanks be to God for your generosity!*

*And finally in the Bishop's Challenge, we asked you to contribute a quilt square to be used to make a synod quilt. This quilt is a visible reminder of the work we did together this year and are committed to continue doing in the years ahead. Thank you to Wannetta Phillips, a member of synod council and Prince of Peace, Denville, who took these individual squares and turned them into the beautiful quilt you see today. This quilt tapestry is a beautiful work of art that knits together the individual parts of our synod to make something greater than the sum of its parts. Thank you for those who contributed and helped to make this a reality.*

*I know that this Bishop's Challenge leaned a little heavier on the word challenge than our last Bishop's Challenge. But if we've learned anything these past two years it's that we can do hard things and even when we fail, God continues to love us!*

*One of the tenets of our Lutheran faith is that we call a thing what it is and tell the truth about ourselves. We name sin for what it is, confess it, and seek to make amends to those we've hurt, that's what this Challenge has been about. At the bishop's election in 2013, I named the sin of racism as a social issue we would continue to take on if I was elected. And so we have – and so we will.*

*While the Bishop's Challenge is wrapping up with this assembly, our work to proclaim the extravagant love of Christ to all people and dismantle racism in all its forms continues – because as the body of Christ, who was crucified and risen for the sake of all people, we are woven into a beautiful tapestry of love that we want the world to see. Now let's celebrate!*

### **REPORT AND CELEBRATION OF THE BISHOP'S CHALLENGE**

The Bishop's Challenge Team: Carla Hoenigmann, Christ, Woodcliff Lake, LaMont Rouse, Cross of Glory, Aberdeen, The Rev. Sara Lilja, Assistant to the Bishop, and The Rev. Michael Linderman, Redeemer, Ramsey, presented the report. One year ago, we established The Bishop's Challenge: the Jehu Jones Mission, as a potential communal response in faith to the specter of racism in our society, designed to be a year-long effort to educate, inform, and inspire Christians to faithful action. Activities included an Advent wreath lighting liturgy, book discussions, workshop on quilting in the African American tradition, a field trip, and Bible study. All designed to encourage open participation, listening, and dialogue.

The main goal was to create a fund of \$50,000 used to support seminarian internships, camp stipends, international travel and other enrichment opportunities for students of African descent. With over 75 congregations participating, more than \$84,000 has been raised – thank you!

As part of the Bishop's Challenge, congregations were invited to decorate a quilt square. The quilt, containing more than 56 squares, is a symbol of our commitment and will be permanently displayed in the Synod Office. Many thanks to Wannetta Phillips, Gloria Brosious, and the quilting team for assembling the quilt. The presentation continued with a blessing of the quilt for the further work of reconciliation.

**ELECTIONS- BALLOT #1**

Bishop Bartholomew instructed voting members with technical support if needed. Bishop Bartholomew instructed Voting Members to cast their vote for the first category to ratify the Mission District elections. The category was closed and results reported. The Mission District elections were ratified.

Voting continued and Bishop Bartholomew instructed Voting Members to cast their vote for Synod Council at-large clergy. The category was closed and results reported.

**First Ballot for Synod Council At-Large Clergy, term ending 2025**

Number of Votes Cast		236	
Number Needed for Election		119	
Number Still Needed to be Elected		1	
Election Complete		No	
Linnéa K. Clark	64	Haydée Colón-Hernández	59
John J. Berry	58	Margarette S. Ouji	55

The Chair declared the names Linnéa K. Clark and Haydée Colón-Hernández on Ballot #2.

The Assembly was in recess for fifteen minutes and the start of Plenary Session Three.



**THIRTY-FOURTH ASSEMBLY  
NEW JERSEY SYNOD  
May 6 & 7, 2022  
St. Paul, East Windsor  
*Together We Are God's Tapestry of Love***

**SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2022**

**PLENARY SESSION #3**

Following the lunch recess, Bishop Bartholomew welcomed voting members and visitors to Plenary Session #3.

**REPORT OF THE CHURCHWIDE REPRESENTATIVE**

Bishop Bartholomew introduced Churchwide Representative Nick Kiger, ELCA Director for Mission Support, for the Report of the Churchwide Representative.

Nick began his report with a focus on our shared ministry giving thanks for the Synod's mission support sharing of over \$900,000 as well as financial support to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response, followed by details of ministries supported through mission support sharing. Nick expressed thanks for leaders from our Synod: Bishop Bartholomew, Pastor Maristela Freiberg, Arundel Clark, Mike Fallon, and Pastor John Mack, who share their gifts and skills well beyond our Synod borders.

The report concluded with the ELCA video greeting from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. The video is available for congregation use and is posted on the NJ Synod website.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

The Assembly continued with the Report of the Treasurer. The video presentation from Treasurer James Harris focused three questions.

*How did COVID affect the Synod?* The Synod adapted by supporting pastors and congregations, increasing support to mission partners, re-imagining programs which require gathering, and advocating on issues in our political environment.

*Is the Synod financially sound?* Yes. The complete audit for year end January 31, 2022 is found in the Bulletin of Reports.

*What is the plan to cope with declining Mission Support?* Synod leadership adjusts each year's planned activities to present this Synod Assembly with a balanced spending plan.

The report continued with a review of Synod administrated restricted gifts and bequests as well as grants provided through restricted funds and endowments.

In closing, Treasurer Harris expressed his thanks to all across the Synod who assisted in the oversight of finances and resources of the Synod. Special thanks were extended to our auditors Tait Weller and the Audit Committee, Director of Synod Operations and Accounting Lois Parrett, as well as the Investment, and Fiscal Management, Administration and Property Committees.

Bishop Bartholomew thanked Treasurer Harris for his ministry, as he helps manage our financial resources to further the mission of our Synod.

### **REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL**

Bishop Bartholomew called on Vice President Arundel Clarke to present the 2023 Spending Plan [BR 13-16]. Bishop Bartholomew opened the floor for discussion of the proposed plan. There were no proposed amendments to the Spending Plan. Utilizing the Vpoll the question before the Assembly was to approve the 2023 Spending Plan. The 2023 Spending Plan was adopted and is attached to the protocol copy of the Minutes.

### **CROSS ROADS CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER**

Anthony Briggs, Executive Director, addressed the Assembly reported staff is preparing for another safe summer camp season and retreat ministry is returning! Anthony expressed ongoing thanks for our partnership and those shared with many congregations in our Synod. Anthony shared a letters describing the impact of summer camp. Camp does change lives. The Cross Roads website has information on all upcoming events.

Cross Roads and Luther Crest, the outdoor ministry of our domestic companion synod Northwest Minnesota, continue to work together providing weekly Sunday School program BTF - Bold Transformational Faith (mybtf.org) for congregations of both Synods.

With the cancellation of the ELCA Youth Gathering in MN, Cross Roads and the Youth Ministry Mission are planning *Our Gathering at Cross Roads*, July 24 – 28. All welcome!

### **ELECTIONS– BALLOT #2**

Using Vpoll, Bishop Bartholomew instructed Voting Members to cast their vote for Synod Council at-large clergy. The category was closed and results reported.

#### **Synod Council At-Large Clergy, term ending 2025**

Number of Votes Cast	236
Number Needed for Election	119
Number Still Needed to be Elected	0
Election Complete	Yes

Linnéa K. Clark	119	Haydée Colón-Hernández	117
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The Chair declared The Rev. Linnéa K. Clark elected to the Synod Council.

### **RECOGNITION OF MAJOR ANNIVERSARIES**

Bishop Bartholomew introduced LuAnn Barnes to acknowledge and celebrate the rostered leaders celebrating significant anniversaries and those recently retired. The Bulletin of Reports [BR pages 24-30] contains a full list of anniversaries and our retired pastors and deacons.

#### **Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination**

Richard Brunsell, Jeffrey Eaton, Margaret Krych, and Frederick Schoenfeld

#### **Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Ordination**

Bernard Kelly and Stephen Sweet

#### **Recently Retired Pastors and Deacons**

The following rostered leaders retired since our 2022 Assembly:  
Deacon Kathy (Trink) Prinz, The Rev. Frederick Lentz, The Rev. Tiina Nummela,  
The Rev. Christine Regan, and The Rev. Paul Rorem

### **2023 SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

Bishop Bartholomew reported the 35<sup>th</sup> Synod Assembly will take place May 13, 2023 at the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton (Mercer County), NJ.

### **CLOSING PRAYER AND COMMISSIONING FOR MISSION**

Vice President Arundel Clarke and Bishop Bartholomew led the closing prayer and commissioning.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Members, traveling to Columbus, Ohio:

Pastor Wendy Abrahamson, Pastor Brett Ballanger, Arundel Clarke, Pastor Ramon Collazo,  
Pam Donovan, Sophia Howard, Riley Jakubowski, Alexandra Mack, Wayne Olsen, Lynn Perry,  
Willie Richardson, and Pastor Blake Scalet.

Bishop Bartholomew recognized and thanked the following outgoing members of the Synod Council for their service: Pastor Giselle Coutinho, Bill Emerson, Pastor Carol Lindsay, and Linda Murphy. Elected or reelected to serve on Synod Council: Daniel Fields, Andrea Gerrard, Steve Hernandez, Nansi Kraus, Pastor Jane McCready, and José Sanchez.

Bishop Bartholomew also thanked those traveling on mission trips locally and nationally, to serve in Jesus' name and represent our Synod. After closing prayer, Bishop Bartholomew declared the Thirty-fourth New Jersey Synod Assembly adjourned.