**Minutes of the**

**Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly**

**Thirty-First Regular Assembly**

**June 9-10, 2017**

**John S. Knight Center, Akron**

***God’s Word – Our Heritage – Our Hope***

**Friday, June 9, 2017**

1. The Assembly began with morning prayer. The liturgy concluded with the order for opening of a synod assembly led by Bishop Abraham Allende. The assembly was called to order at 9:02am.
2. The Bishop welcomed the assembly members and recognized the following:
	1. Ms. Julie Rossate, Program Director for Young Adults in Global Mission.
	2. The Rev. Dan Caruso, Assembly Planning Committee chair; The Rev. Jean Hansen, Onsite Assembly Coordinator; Sony Gilroy, Assembly Planning Coordinator; Marilyn Matevia, Statistician; and Tana Fligor, Registration Volunteers chair.
	3. The Rev. Darla Ann Kratzer (chair), Chuck Mosberger, The Rev. Julianne Smith, and The Rev. Eric Edwards who comprise the Reference and Counsel Committee. It was noted that timely and germane resolutions are due to the Assembly office by 3:15pm today.
	4. David Lenz, Synod Secretary
	5. Bryan Penvose, Synod Vice President
	6. John Sleasman, the Synod Treasurer. John will also be serving as Parliamentarian. It was noted that proposed budget revisions are due to the Assembly office by 12:00pm today.
	7. Our synod’s two First Call candidates Katie Jacobs and Cindy Striker along with The Rev. Karl Biermann, Deacon Patti Jabre, The Rev. Kari Lankford, and Roger Lankford will be serving as pages.
	8. Marjorie Ellis, ELCA Church Council representative from our region
	9. Tim Barrage, Mason Shamp, and Morgan Stewart are taking care of the Powerpoint presentations and Social Media.
	10. A/V and camera are being operated by Owen Blakslee and Rex Rickely
	11. Josephine Wright, The Rev. Ann Paynter, Karen Rodda, and Robert Rodda comprise the Credentials Committee.
	12. Kate Venable, The Rev. Duane Jesse, and The Rev. Erin Burns comprise the Elections Committee
	13. Cathy Byers and Nancy Blewitt comprise the Minutes Committee.
3. Assembly Planning Committee Chair The Rev. Dan Caruso made various introductory announcements to orient voting members to the John S. Knight Center, and also encouraged use of #NEOSA17 for social media or to tweet @NEOSELCA. He also led an orientation to the new electronic voting system. He provided reminders about the deadlines for submitting resolutions and proposed budget changes. He announced that the prayer labyrinth will be available not just at workshop times but throughout the assembly.
4. Secretary David Lenz presented the list of excused rostered leaders, which appear at the registration desk and appear online. He noted that we received an excuse request from Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, who is at the Central States Synod Assembly in Kansas City.
5. The Rev. David Anderson
6. The Rev. Scott Bacon
7. The Rev. Karen Biggerstaff
8. The Rev. David Conrad
9. The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton
10. The Rev. Jaclyn Gasior
11. The Rev. H. David Hammel
12. The Rev. Robert Henderson
13. The Rev. Walter Jordan
14. The Rev. Richard Kidd
15. The Rev. Steven Krebill
16. Deacon Carol Lauterbach
17. The Rev. Kermit Lauterbach
18. The Rev. William Leitch
19. The Rev. William Lucht
20. Deacon Deborah Metzger
21. The Rev. James Metzger
22. The Rev. Laurie Miller
23. Deacon Joana Pretz-Anderson
24. The Rev. Steve Ritter
25. The Rev. David Saylor
26. The Rev. Lynn Schlessman
27. The Rev. David Thielo
28. The Rev. Harry Werner
29. Due to the fact that the Assembly was running ahead of schedule at 9:20am, with registration closing at 9:25am, the Synod Council Report was moved forward in the agenda. Vice President Bryan Penvose presented the report. Bryan began by recognizing and thanking the Bishop, the staff, the Synod Council members, the officers, and the voting members of the Assembly for their service. He also recognized the youth participating in the youth gathering at this year’s assembly, noting that we are blessed by the opportunity to be with the youth as a part of our church, today, not just in the future. He also recognized his father, The Rev. Lee Penvose, who retired after 39 years of ordained ministry.
30. Where is the Holy Spirit calling us to be as a Synod? The Council built on communication, mission interpretation, and support for the greater churchwide organization in 2016-2017. In 2017 the Council will be taking spiritual gifts inventories to examine our gifts and the ways in which we can collaborate and use our gifts to give back to our Synod. Bryan encouraged the voting members to identify team members, mission interpreters, and Synod Council members who have gifts of leadership. Synod Council will hold its October meeting as a retreat at Camp Mowana. We will also engage in a mission support consultation at that retreat.
31. There are so many stories of how, as a part of the ELCA, we are using our hands to do God’s work to make a difference in the world. We are able to tell and share these stories through the ministry of mission interpretation. All who have a passion for their congregation, the synod, or the ELCA, who have gifts of storytelling or who know someone who does, are encouraged to come to the Mission Interpreter training on July 25th at the Synod office from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Bryan concluded his report by sharing a story of how our church works together in the form of the “Where Does My Mission Support Go?” video that premiered at the Churchwide Gathering in New Orleans in 2016.
32. The Rev. Diana Thompson, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of nominees printed on pages 8-16 of the pre-assembly materials and asked for additional nominations from the floor:
	1. Synod Council Akron Wooster Clergy: The Rev. Kristina Heise;
	2. Synod Council Canton-Massillon Lay: Edward Rehfus, Jr.
	3. Synod Council Cleveland East Clergy: The Rev. Laura Barbins and The Rev. Barbara Holzhauser
	4. Synod Council Cleveland East Lay: Charles Benning, Sr. and Thelma Williams. Dale Veres was nominated from the floor.
	5. Synod Council Cleveland West Lay: Helen Dupont
	6. Synod Council Eastern Clergy: The Rev. Chelsea Spencer. The Rev. Diane Gunderson was nominated from the floor.
	7. Synod Council Richland-Ashland Lay: Larry Venton and Valda Washburn
	8. Synod Council Southern Lay: Kevin Kampfer and Kim Meek-Obed
	9. Synod Council Young Adult Lay – Kailyn Buyok
	10. Synod Secretary – David Lenz
	11. Consultation Committee Lay: Diane Bennett and Deacon Judy Hoshek
	12. Consultation Committee Clergy: The Rev. Ann Paynter
33. Josephine Wright presented the report of the Credentials Committee: As of 9:30am, 387 individuals were registered: 201 lay members, 8 official lay rostered (88 males and 121 females); and 128 clergy. There were 337 voting members total—62% lay; 38% clergy. There were 50 registered visitors.
34. Bishop Allende presented the agenda for adoption as presented.

**SA17.06.01 To adopt the agenda as previously distributed and proposed (Moved by council action; carried)**

**Friday, June** 9

7:40 am Registration Upper Corbin Rotunda

Displays

8:10 am Orientation for first time voting members

8:40 am Morning Prayer

\* \* \* 9:25 AM REGISTRATION CLOSES (till 10:00 am) \* \* \*

9:25 am Opening of synod assembly & call to order

Welcome by Planning Committee

Electronic Voting Explanation and Review

Announcement of excused

Nominations

9:35 am Report of Credentials Committee

Adoption of agenda

Adoption of Rules of Procedure

9:45 am Elections Committee Report

First ballot

\* \* \* 10:00 AM REGISTRATION REOPENS \* \* \*

9:55 am Synod Council report

10:00 am Bishop’s Report

10:35 am Break

10:45 am Eucharist Service

12:00 pm Lunch

Displays/Social time

1:00 pm ELCA Report

1:45 pm Treasurer’s Report

Report of the Audit Committee

Presentation of budget

Adoption of Budget

Adoption of Compensation Guidelines

Report of Credentials Committee

2:05 pm Report of Elections Committee (1st Ballot Results)

Second ballot

2:15 pm Report of Reference and Counsel

2:20 pm Break

2:30 pm Workshop Session I

3:15 pm Break

3:25 pm Workshop Session II

4:10 pm Break

4:20 pm Report of Elections Committee (2nd Ballot Results)

Constitutional and Bylaw Amendment

Resolutions

Other business

4:40 pm Evening Prayer

5:30 PM Dismiss assembly for the day

**Saturday, June 10**

8:15 am Assembly reconvenes

Announcements

8:20 am MORNING PRAYER

9:00 am Report of Credentials Committee Credentials Chair

Report of Minutes Committee Minutes Committee Chair

Third ballot (if needed)

9:10 am Dr. Elizabeth Paul President, Capital University

9:20 am Ecumenical Greetings

9:45 am Anniversary Recognition Presentation

10:00 am Break

10:10 am Workshop Session III

10:55 am Break

11:05 am Report of Reference and Counsel

Report of Elections Committee (3rd Ballot Results)

Other business

11:15 am Recognitions

11:25 am Closing Eucharist (installation of newly elected)

12:55 pm Adjournment

1. Secretary David Lenz presented the Proposed Rules of Procedure, which were unchanged from last year except for portions addressing resolution and budget modification deadlines. The Rev. David Connor moved certain modifications to the Rules of Procedure, and John Sleasman provided background history to the evolution of the Rules.

**SA17.06.02 To amend the proposed rules of procedure to delete Item IV.A. in its entirety and to delete the phrase “of an urgent nature” in Item IV.B. (Moved by The Rev. David Connor, seconded, failed)**

**SA17.06.03 To adopt the Rules of Procedure as previously distributed and proposed (Moved by council action; two-thirds vote required; carried)**

1. **General Rules**

A. Upon recognition by the chair, a speaker shall identify oneself by name, congregation (or agency or institution), and town (or city).

B. Chairpersons of standing committees or committees of the synod council who are not voting members of the synod assembly are accorded voice but not vote on all business relevant to the committees' work.

C. Unless otherwise determined by a two-thirds vote, speeches during debate shall be limited to two (2) minutes.

D. The chair may bring forward items as necessary or as helpful to the business of the assembly.

E. Motions shall be submitted to the secretary in writing on forms provided for that purpose.

F. To afford voting members the option of expressing “no opinion” on a question, the chair will call for yeas, nays, and abstentions.

G. In the event that the assembly must adjourn before completing its business, all remaining items shall be referred to the synod council for disposition.

**II. Nominations and Elections**

A. The consent of all nominees shall have been obtained prior to their nomination. Time constraints prevent distribution of biographical information for persons nominated from the floor.

B. Nominees for offices except for bishop shall be listed in alphabetical order on the first ballot, in two groups. Nominations made prior to the assembly shall be alphabetically listed first, followed by nominations made from the floor. This grouping is necessary for efficient handling of vote counting. On subsequent ballots, listing will be in descending order according to votes received on the previous ballot.

C. Upon completion of all elections, a printed summary of the results shall be published.

1. **Consideration of the Budget**

A. Changes to the proposed budget shall be submitted to the assembly office (behind registration tables) for the Finance & Budget Committee by 12:00p.m., Friday, June 9, 2017. All proposals shall be in writing and shall include 1) the amount of increase for a committee total, 2) the committee total to be decreased, and 3) the rationale for such change.

 B. Proposed changes shall be reviewed by the Finance & Budget Committee and presented to the synod assembly with its recommendations.

**IV. Consideration of Resolutions**

A. Resolutions to be considered by the assembly shall be received in writing in the synod office by Wednesday, March 15, 2017 for consideration by the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall report their action on such resolutions to the assembly, whether a recommendation for discussion and Assembly action, reference to an appropriate synod committee, no action, or postponement of further discussion to the next Assembly (with possible interim action, if appropriate). Actions of the Committee on Reference and Counsel shall be final unless the Assembly chooses to discuss such actions by a majority vote.

B. Resolutions of an urgent nature which could not be submitted prior to the above deadline because of changing situations in the church or the world shall be submitted in writing to the assembly office (behind registration tables) by 3:15 p.m., Friday, June 9, 2017 for consideration by the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Committee on Reference and Counsel, in consultation with the bishop and Executive Committee, may decline to report such resolutions or may report such resolutions to the assembly as in (A) above.

C. A resolution of a general nature shall be referred to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, which shall give an opportunity to each voting member of the assembly who proposes such a resolution to comment on it. The committee shall report back to the assembly on any suchresolutions submitted to it together with any recommendations it may have, as well as prepare courtesy resolutions for consideration by the assembly.

D. The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall also grant or deny permission to distribute material to assembly voting members.

1. The Rev. Robert Ferro, as a point of order, requested that the screens display total number of votes cast rather than percentages of votes. The display was modified to show total numbers of votes first, then percentages for future votes.
2. Kate Venable, on behalf of the elections committee, presented the voting procedure. There are six positions for which only one person was nominated: The Rev. Kristina Heise (Synod Council Akron Wooster Clergy), Edward Rehfus, Jr. (Synod Council Canton-Massillon Lay), Helen Dupont (Synod Council Cleveland West Lay), Kailyn Buyok (Synod Council Young Adult Lay), David Lenz (Synod Secretary), and The Rev. Ann Paynter (Consultation Committee Clergy). These nominees were affirmed to these positions by acclamation.
3. Voting opened at 10:06am. Electronic votes were cast for Synod Council Cleveland East Lay; Synod Council Eastern Clergy and Synod Council Richland-Ashland Lay. A question was raised as to how biographical information about floor nominees can be known to voting members. It was requested that biographical information be distributed about floor nominees or that there be separation between nominations and voting. The Parliamentarian ruled this discussion to be out of order while elections were open. Votes were then cast for Synod Council Southern Lay and Synod Council Consultation Committee Lay. Voting closed at 10:15am.
4. Bishop Allende relinquished the chair to Vice President Penvose, who recognized Bishop Allende for his report:
5. Bishop Allende started with a few introductions, including the Synod team—which is the term he prefers over staff: (1) The Rev. Karl Biermann, assistant to the bishop in charge of the call process; (2) Karen Kaufman, resource center specialist, also works with the nominating committee, stewardship table, and various other roles (Bishop Allende noted we have one of only 5 or 6 freestanding resource centers in the ELCA); (3) The Rev. Laurie Miller, Coordinator for Candidacy; (4) Deaconess Mary Ann Schwabe coordinates the Congregational Resource Team; (5) Mary Ann Sima, LYO Liaison; (6) Joy Hacker, Synod Accountant; (7) Sony Gilroy, Office Administrator; (8) Marilyn Matevia, Administrative Assistant and statistician. In April, we said farewell to our Director for Evangelical Mission, The Rev. Terrance Jacob. The Rev. David Daubert will be the Interim Director for Evangelical Mission. He is an author, pastor, and consultant. He is not present today but will be accessible to our mission developers electronically even when not on the territory. The Rev. Brad Ross (North-West Lower Michigan Synod) is at Lutheran Church of the Covenant, Maple Heights, and The Rev. Rosalina Rivera from Southwest Texas Synod will be at First, Lorain.
6. Bishop Allende recognized the newly ordained from last fall and the conference deans The Rev. Sherman Bishop of Cleveland West, The Rev. Doug Fidler of Akron Wooster, The Rev. Scott Henderson of Richland Ashland, The Rev. Don King of Cleveland East, The Rev. Steve Patrick of Southern, The Rev. Bruce Roth of Canton Massillon, and The Rev. Julianne Smith of Eastern.
7. June 8-9, 2018 will be next year’s Synod Assembly, again here at the John S. Knight Center.
8. We gather under the theme: God’s Word – Our Heritage – Our Hope. Bishop Allende’s birthday is October 31st. Perhaps he was destined to be Lutheran from birth—but what does it mean to be Lutheran? Not a follower of Luther, but a follower of Christ—believing, proclaiming, and living the gospel. Luther spent a great deal of time trying to understand who God was and to help others get to know God, too. He was a scholar but used everyday language, hymns with familiar words, translations of the Bible in the common language. We should all be able to grapple with God’s word. Pastor Jim Watson has taken responsibility for the Discipling/Evangelism table, gathering around the Synod to discuss how different corners of our Synod are making Christ known in the world.
9. Bryan Penvose is leading the Mission Interpreters; Dick Brenaman and Karen Kaufman are leading the Stewardship and Mission Support Table.
10. Bishop Allende traveled to our companion synod in South Africa and was struck by the unwavering faith and the full churches many times per week. The youth were excited to reach the end of the week for their Friday night youth gatherings. He longs to develop a deeper relationship with our companion Synod and help our Synod learn from their deep faith and passion for the gospel. Our companion synod table is led by The Rev. Chuck Knerem.
11. Bishop Allende described his trip to the Guatemala-Mexico border and presence among communities resisting displacement from industry. Many from that part of the world leave to escape violence, poverty, and displacement on a scale that we cannot imagine.
12. Our youth have been invited to participate robustly in today’s assembly from worship to workshops, to service. They have been serious in their planning and paid attention to detail, but not too serious to avoid having fun. As we grow older, we lose the sense of wonder that comes with creativity. We risk losing awareness that there are other ways to do the things we do. The Synod wants to know about congregations with active youth groups and ministries to help connect participants in youth ministry to continue to strengthen this vital part of our church’s present and future.
13. We give thanks for first-call pastors even as we develop mentoring programs. We have emphasized Intentional Interim Minstry training and will feature that in a workshop today. The entire support structure for theological education is under stress. We are exploring alternate routes to ordination. We are exploring covenant partnerships to support pastors. Our congregations are exploring mergers to re-formulate ministries after intentional conversations.
14. The Spirit brought the gifts of unity and purpose/mission. We should make time to re-examine our faith. We are paving the way toward Lutheran-Catholic covenant. Please read the Declaration on the Way. The Northeastern Ohio Synod and the Youngstown Diocese have been in a covenant relationship with each other. These covenant members will be leading a workshop today. Pr. Dan Caruso will also be leading a workshop on the 95 theses.
15. We unceasingly proclaim and live the good news as Lutherans: The just live by faith. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but all are saved not by works but by faith. Let us think of Lutheranism in biblical, rather than cultural and ethnic terms. Jesus did not avoid others due to perceived danger—he went to the cross, what danger could he fear? We are encouraged to reach out across cultural divides and will be presenting a workshop today on the subject of talking together cross-culturally.
16. At 10:57am, Bishop Allende declared the Assembly on break for 10 minutes.
17. Announcements were made that voting machines are to be turned in at the end of the day and will be reissued tomorrow only to members with yellow nametags.
18. Worship began at 11:13am.
19. Julie Rossate preached on John 3:1-21. Millenials are checking out of the church. Nicodemus gets stuck on the biology of being born again. We, as a church, also get stuck and struggle to understand what is possible. As director of YAGM, in the face of statistics, she sees young people getting involved through the church. In some ways it is easier to see God at work in the world when you cannot rely fully on yourself. This year 95 young adults were placed into 11 country programs. The focus is on simple living and building relationships. We want young people’s participation, but are we ready for their visions for the future? We need their participation in vision and leadership, and they need the church to realize their vision and leadership.
20. The Assembly adjourned for lunch at 12:39pm and reconvened at 1:34pm.
21. It was announced that Pr. Diana Thompson is available during breaks, willing to take feedback concerning getting information to the voting members about nominees from the floor. Bishop Allende also noted that Pr. Thompson and the Nominating Committee work hard, but indifference and apathy puts the church at risk. If you are interested in leadership, please put your name forward with the Nominating Committee before the assembly. Bishop Allende also noted that one introduction had been missed—The Rev. Ruth Anderson at Holy Trinity, Akron is new to our Synod from the Northern Illinois Synod.
22. Bishop Allende introduced Julie Rossate, Program Director, Young Adults in Global Mission to present the ELCA Report. She noted that this is her first Synod Assembly as a churchwide representative.
23. Started with a slide of Amanda Silcox, a Northeastern Ohio Synod member who served in Cambodia with YAGM. Julie herself previously served YAGM as country coordinator for Jerusalem/West Bank. Our synod shared over $683,000 to churchwide in 2016-2017, which makes programs like YAGM possible.
24. Called Forward Together in Christ: Five strategic directions have been identified by the churchwide organization: (1) A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all; (2) A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church; (3) An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings; (4) A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world; and (5) A well-governed, connected and sustainable church.
25. There are two primary foci for the ELCA: Congregational vitality and Leadership. A recently announced $3 million grant will provide 60 full-tuition seminar scholarships over the next 3 years. The ELCA Fund for Leaders endowment is now $48.7 million. The churchwide expression partners with synods, seminaries, campus ministries, and outdoor ministries to prepare new Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service.
26. Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations: Lutheran-Muslim relations have taken two forms—rapid response to anti-Muslim bigotry and engagement in long-term relationship-building, education, dialog, and cooperation. We are also working in partnership with historically black churches, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church.
27. AMMPARO Strategy: (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection Advocacy Representation and Opportunities). We are working to provide opportunities to the displaced in the country of origin; support in their transition; or support upon their arrival in the country.
28. The ELCA Foundation has helped place more than $56 million in planned gifts, of which more than $10 million will benefit congregations and nearly $3 million will benefit synods.
29. A Social Statement on Women and Justice is in process. Go to [www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice](http://www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice) for more information. Feedback is requested by August 31, and a draft statement will be released in November.
30. A Social Message on Human Rights is also in process.
31. The “Always Being Made New” Campaign has raised $113.4 million in 3 years. Last year’s focus was ELCA World Hunger, which received $21.9 million. New Covenant, East Cleveland’s hunger center, which serves 17,000 people per year, has received funds through ELCA’s hunger programs.
32. YAGM had 84 young adults in service in 2016. Contact Amanda Silcox at Amanda.Silcox@gmail.com if you want her to speak at your congregation about her YAGM experience. The ELCA has 225 missionaries serving in 44 countries. Since 2014, the International Women Leaders program has supported 100 global women in short-term or long-term educational and networking opportunities. Some of the youngest and fastest-growing Lutheran churches are found in Asia in Indonesia, India, Nepal, Cambodia, and Myanmar. The ELCA is also at work in South Sudan to cultivate peace and a sustainable future for millions affected by civil war and famine. Go to [www.elca.org/southsudannow](http://www.elca.org/southsudannow) for more information. Support through Lutheran Disaster Response is necessary for this work.
33. We are working with more than 35 synods on strategies for improving congregational vitality. We have 124 new congregations and communities of Jesus. Our advocacy programs have encouraged faithful efforts at voter participation.
34. God’s Work. Our Hands. Sunday will be September 10, 2017.
35. Ms. Rossate concluded her report by sharing a video from Bishop Eaton.
36. John Sleasman presented the Treasurer’s Report: He began by encouraging voting members to sign up for the Synod E-News for more information about the Synod’s work. The Treasurer’s Report is on pages 46-48 for narrative, followed by the financial and audit reports. We have received an unqualified opinion from the auditors, which is the highest possible opinion of our financial practices. The synod’s first quarter for 2017-2018 was just over 25% (25.3%) of the annual forecast in income and just under 25% (24.9%) of the annual forecast in expenses. In 2016-2017 there was a surplus of $19,061 against a projected deficit of $13,870. Congregational mission support is detailed on pages 79-84. There was a special appeal after a particularly weak second and early third quarter, and we are grateful for the response it received. There were significant changes in the format of our financial reports due to changes in accounting standards. Attention was called to the statement of Functional expenses on Page 57 which helps to explain synod expenses by broader categories of ministry.
37. Overall, the assets of the Synod did increase. Much of this is in donor-restricted funds. We need to be responsible so we can continue to fund missions over time, but we should not be accumulating unused funds instead of engaging in ministry. It is also worth noting that some of our increase in assets comes from gifts from closing congregations.
38. Dale Veres, St. John, Highland Heights, asked questions about the process of getting access to unused funds. John referred to Page 69, which showed balances of restricted funds. Pages 60-62 also provide general statements and descriptions about the accounts. Synod staff is the initial point of contact for requests to use these funds, but certain committees may have final authority over some of them.
39. John Sleasman presented the Audit Report. Pages 49-72 of the pre-assembly material are the audit report, which has already been received and reviewed by the Synod Council. He also noted that the Council has accepted the recommendation to retain Apple Growth Partners as our auditor.
40. The Rev. Dan Cammarn presented the Budget. He noted that there is a 3-level budget presented. We would begin the year on Level 1. As funds are available and the congregations continue to respond in their giving, we could move up to level 2 or level 3. Level 1 is based on a 2% decrease in congregational mission support relative to 2017-2018, which would include a $36,000 deficit. Level 2 keeps giving even with 2017-2018. Level 3 is based on a 1% increase in congregational mission support, which includes an increase in expenditures on our ministry partners. Pages 73-74 show the changes between the 2017-2018 budget and the 2018-2019 proposed budgets. The Synod Council provides the 3-level budget as a challenge to what the ministry could be with increased support from the congregations.
41. The Rev. Robert Ferro, Bethany English, Cleveland asked about the special fund for deficit reduction, which he did not see in the reports. It was created by the Synod Council after the close of the fiscal year, so it does not appear in the Audit report. We compute the cash unrestricted assets, retain 4.5 months of the next year’s budget as the emergency fund; the balance is put into a separate fund for future budget deficits. It is now $107,595 dollars. Next year’s budget at level 1 would draw $36,000 from the fund.
42. The Rev. Chelsea Spencer New Life, Youngstown asked if our Synod is starting budget discussions from a place of fear and a place of scarcity. If we start with C level achievement and only expect that, that’s probably all we will get.
43. The Rev. Don King, Hope, Cleveland Heights noted a point of clarification or emphasis and the need for future leaders and the tsunami of coming retirements and advocated for campus ministry funding. He observed we are single-handedly turning over students to Campus Crusade and Fellowship of Christian Athletes and other fundamentalist organizations.
44. The Rev. Dan Caruso, St. Paul, Ravenna noted that the church is where to find faithless people. God will provide. Let us have courage and faith in that.
45. The Rev. Bruce Roth, St. Stephen Martyr, Canton noted we have several congregations giving $0 in mission support. Let us challenge each other to get to 10% giving—or at least a 1% increase.
46. Ken Reinoehl noted we have to rely on the giving of the congregations to make our budgets. We set them based on history. The last couple of years, we have seen the congregations not giving as they should. We need to keep giving to the appropriate levels.

**SA17.06.04 To approve the budget as presented (moved by council action; carried).**

1. Chuck Mosberger of Synod Council presented the Synod Compensation Guidelines. A 0.3% Cost of Living Adjustment is recommended to increase the base salary, and there is a recommended increase of $310 for the additional year of experience in ordained ministry.

**SA17.06.05 To approve the compensation guidelines as presented (moved by council action; carried).**

**NORTHEASTERN OHIO SYNOD 2018 COMPENSATION**

**GUIDELINES AND WORKSHEET**

**MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT (PASTOR)**

**INTRODUCTION:**

A pastor assumes many responsibilities. We expect our pastors to be preachers, evangelists, administrators, teachers, counselors and leaders. We require eight years of study (including a bachelor’s and master of divinity degrees) as a part of preparation for ordained ministry. Compensation for pastors should be comparable to professional positions of equal responsibility, education, and time commitment.

Adequate compensation enables a pastor to fulfill responsibilities and obligations, encourages vocational satisfaction, and encourages a pastor’s best efforts and gifts. Congregations and our synod have an obligation to review compensation plans annually. We also expect pastors to take initiatives in seeking annual reviews of compensation.

Inadequate compensation may result in discouragement and dissatisfaction. This sometimes occurs as a pastor’s family cannot maintain financial stability, as negative attitudes toward the congregation and church begin, as an inability to participate in continuing education programs, or as “moonlighting” becomes a necessity. Inadequate compensation means low contributions to retirement plans, which leads to inadequate retirement income. All of these realities increase the occurrence of resignations from ordained ministry of word and sacrament make it more challenging to recruit able candidates for ordained ministry of word and sacrament, and create a poor image of the church in the community.

Our synod recognizes there are pastors and congregations who, for a variety of reasons, choose to be content with salaries that are below the synod minimum. We caution these pastors and congregations, however, that they may be doing disservice to the congregation, other pastors, and pastoral successors by allowing the compensation package to remain below recommended guidelines. In such situations, the congregation, pastor, and bishop’s office should work together to implement other support strategies.

Congregations should develop procedures whereby they review their pastor’s salary and discuss their pastor’s personal financial concerns. This may be best accomplished by a small and understanding committee of three to six individuals appointed by the congregation council. The committee should bring to the council or appropriate committee its recommendations for annual compensation adjustments. The ELCA has published a guide to use in organizing a mutual Ministry/Staff Support Committee and for compensation planning: *Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work (ISBN 0-8066-4651-9)* which is available from Augsburg Fortress (1-800-328-4648).

It should be noted that these are suggested base salaries. The total compensation package should also reflect any special concerns of the pastor and his/her family, and other factors as discussed in this document.

**I. SALARY**

A. BASE CASH SALARY

1. The minimum base salary recommendation for 2018 is $37,700. This represents a 0.3% living adjustment to the 2017 minimum base cash salary recommendation, which was in turn based on the 2017 Social Security Administration cost-of-living adjustment. It is still strongly recommended that $310 for each year of ordained service be added to this minimum base; or

2. A congregation with experienced clergy may use a 0.3% cost of living adjustment to the current base salary plus a $310 increase for the additional year of experience in ordained ministry.

B. ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustments to the base cash salary may consist of, but are not limited to:

1. Merit

2. Local COLA (to reflect significant differences in local cost of living)

3. Responsibilities

4. Education (either advanced or specialized)

5. Other concerns identified by the congregation/pastor.

**II. HOUSING**

A. WITHOUT PARSONAGE

1. This is for pastors who own their own house. A fair approach to determining the housing and utilities allowance is:

a. One percent per month of the reasonable market value of a house within the general community in which the congregation resides, plus

b. The cost of utilities for such a home, plus

c. The difference in cost for the rental value of such a home furnished as compared to rental value of such a home unfurnished.

A realtor can help determine this figure. This allowance is to cover the mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, utilities, furnishings, and maintenance of the house.

2. *Housing allowance must be officially designated in advance by the congregation. This can be done by a separate line in the budget or by official action of the congregation council.*

3. A pastor may elect to use this allowance to rent a home, in which case the allowance should cover rent, utilities, furnishings, and insurance.

4. The congregation council may also consider the establishment of a loan policy to assist the pastor in the down payment on a home if a parsonage is not provided.

B. WITH PARSONAGE

1. HOUSEHOLD FURNISHINGS / UTILITIES ALLOWANCE

If a parsonage is provided, it should be comparable to at least the average home in the congregation or community. For pastors who are in parsonages, it is appropriate for the congregation to provide a household furnishings/utilities allowance. This allowance will cover the expenses of the parsonage: utilities, maintenance, and furnishings needed to keep up the parsonage. This may be done in several ways:

1. The congregation may provide a fixed monthly parsonage allowance, based on the needs of the pastor and parsonage. This amount needs to be designated by the congregation council at its first meeting each year, or separately stated in the budget.
2. The congregation may choose to pay the utilities (gas, electric, sewage, water, trash collection, internet, telephone (except personal long-distance) directly.
3. The congregation should generally pay for the costs of maintaining the parsonage. If not, an allowance would be provided to cover expenses to maintain the parsonage.

2. HOUSING EQUITY ALLOWANCE

An equity allowance should be provided if the pastor lives in a congregation-owned home. The equity allowance provides the financial resources for a pastor to provide housing upon retirement, or to provide a down payment for the purchase of a house during active ministry. It is suggested that the equity allowance be:

a. An amount equal to 3% of the annual pension defined compensation.

b. The congregation pays the total amount in monthly installments to a depository agreed to by the church and the pastor.

c. Each congregation would stipulate at the beginning of each pastor’s ministry (or when the plan begins) that the funds become available to the pastor only:

1. at the pastor’s retirement, or

2. at the time the pastor is granted a housing allowance and purchases a home, or

3. at the time of total and presumably permanent disability, or

4. at the time the pastor leaves the clergy roster of the ELCA, or

5. at the time of death, at which time the funds would be disbursed as stipulated by the agreement.

Our synod recommends that congregations and pastors consult with ***Portico Benefits Services*** (the ELCA Benefit Provider) and the IRS regulations and examine the pastor’s individual financial situation prior to implementation of this program.

3. It is important that parsonages be sufficiently maintained. An annual walk-through of the parsonage by the council is advised. The purpose of the walk-through is to note the general condition of the home and plan regular maintenance.

**III. BENEFITS**

A. PENSION / HEALTH CARE

1. The congregation shall provide full pension, health, and death benefits for the pastor and family in accordance with ***Portico*** provisions. The “Gold+ level of health benefits has been recommended by the ELCA Church Council and the NEO Synod Council.

2. A “Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan”, established in accordance with specific IRS requirements, could provide tax advantages for the pastor by reimbursing deductibles, copayments, and other medical expenses not covered by insurance. For more information, please contact the synod accountant (jhacker@neos-elca.org)

3. The pastor may elect to waive the health care benefit under the coordination of the benefits clause in the ***Portico*** Handbook. The congregation should consult with ***Portico*** (612-333-7651 or 800-352-2876) or the synod office for assistance in determining the effects of these guidelines.

B. FICA ALLOWANCE (SOCIAL SECURITY)

1. A congregation cannot pay the social security tax for a pastor. By law, the pastor must personally pay both the employer and the employee portions of social security taxes. However, a congregation can pay a pastor a special allowance which the pastor may then use to put toward whatever self-employment social security tax he or she owes. This allowance is taxable when computing income tax and social security taxes, and must also be considered income in computing pension plan contributions.

2. The congregation should provide a minimum allowance that corresponds to the employer portion of social security taxes (currently 7.65%). In order to assist the pastor, the congregation may further choose to provide for some or all of the remaining social security taxes (currently 7.65%). Whatever is provided, the pastor reports it as salary.

3. The allowance can be calculated as follows:

a. Minimum social security allowance for pastor receiving a housing allowance (nonparsonage):

 Salary

+ Housing Allowance

= Social Security Base

x 7.65 % (employer rate)

= Social Security Allowance

b. Minimum social security allowance for pastor living in parsonage:

 Salary

x 1.3 (housing equivalency factor)

= Subtotal

+ Furnishings/Utilities Allowance

= Social Security Base

x 7.65% (employer rate)

= Social Security Allowance

4. The synod recommends the pastor periodically check records to be certain accounts have been properly credited. A pastor may do this by obtaining Form SSA 7050 from the Social Security Administration office or online at https://www.ssa.gov/ from the local Social Security Administration office or post office. It is important that pastors do this periodically because one can only go back 39 ½ months to correct errors. This is critical in assuring the receipt of the maximum benefits available.

**IV. PART-TIME CALLS**

Compensation for part-time calls should be made in consultation with the synod staff.

**V. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES**

These items are considered congregational administrative expenses and are not items to be considered as

compensation.

1. AUTOMOBILE EXPENSES: Congregations should adequately provide for the pastor’s business mileage expenses in one of the following ways. In determining the method, usage should be considered including factors such as geographical limits of the congregation, distance to commonly used hospitals, etc.
2. Use an accountable reimbursement plan to reimburse the pastor for miles driven in service of the congregation. Such reimbursement must be based on documentation as required by the IRS, should be reimbursed at the maximum IRS Standard Mileage Rate for use of a personal car for business purposes and is not taxable to the pastor; or
3. Provide the pastor with a fixed automobile allowance of at least $4,000 per year in addition to salary. This allowance must be included as taxable income on the pastor’s Form W-2. The pastor is accountable to the IRS for use of this allowance and may be eligible to deduct a portion of the expenses based on accurate records of church mileage. Contact your accountant or the synod office for further guidance; or
4. A congregation may, in accordance with IRS guidelines, buy or lease a car and assume the total cost of operating the vehicle.
5. OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

Other ministry related expenses incurred by the pastor should be paid by the congregation in one of the following ways:

1. Paying these amounts directly as they occur; or

2. Setting up a line item in the budget for reimbursement of these expenses, preferably combined with the automobile reimbursement into a single line item; or

3. Paying a monthly professional expense allowance to the pastor.

*Note*: Congregations are strongly encouraged to set up an “Accountable Professional Expense Reimbursement” for all rostered leaders in the congregation. Reimbursable professional expenses include, but are not limited to: automobile (mileage, parking tolls), overnight travel (including lodging and meals), professional and liability insurance, vestments and vestment cleaning, long distance business phone calls, books, magazines/journals, professional dues, continuing education, media resources, supplies, meals associated with official meetings and appointments, business gifts (maximum of $25.00 per person per year), and equipment purchases. Such professional expenses, when reimbursed by the congregation with adequate accounting as specified in the Internal Revenue Code, are not taxable for either income tax or social security/self-employment tax and are excluded from Form W-2. When the congregation provides an expense allowance without accountable reimbursement, the allowance is taxable income included in Form W-2. Professional expenses not reimbursed under an accountable plan, including expenses in excess of the budget for reimbursement, are deductible for self-employment tax, but only a portion of the expenses is deductible for federal income tax (and only if the rostered leader is eligible to itemize deductions), and none are deductible for state, city or school district income tax. For more information, please contact the synod accountant.

1. COMPUTERS AND CELL PHONES

It is recommended that the congregation provide the pastor with a computer and cell phone to facilitate ministry. Note the following in this regard:

1. Computer

a. A computer owned by the church and provided for the pastor’s use is a business expense that is not taxable to the pastor.

b. A computer purchased by the pastor is NOT a deductible business expense, even when used for business purposes.

2. Cell Phone

a. A cell phone provided to the pastor is a nontaxable business expense if the council minutes state it is primarily provided for noncompensatory business reasons (such as the need to be accessible at all time for work-related emergencies).

b. The pastor may be provided with a nontaxable cell phone reimbursement if council minutes state that the pastor is required to maintain a personal cell phone for noncompensatory business reasons and the reimbursement amount does not exceed reasonable business needs (i.e. reimburse the basic monthly plan, not family plan for extra minutes).

**VI. OTHER PROVISIONS**

1. VACATION

The minimum vacation should be four weeks (including four Sundays). Attendance at official functions is not to be construed as vacation time.

*Note:* If financial constraints of a congregation make difficult monetary raises for clergy, a congregation might consider providing an extra week of vacation (including Sunday) as

compensation.

1. SICK LEAVE

Sick leave should be provided for up to eight weeks per year (including Sundays) with full salary, housing, and benefits. An agreement may be made for partial disability beyond that time in coordination with ***Portico***.

1. MATERNITY LEAVE

Maternity leave should be provided for up to six weeks (including Sundays) with full salary, housing, and benefits. Because of special concerns or needs, actual time may be negotiated between the pastor and congregation.

1. PATERNITY LEAVE / ADOPTIVE PARENTAL LEAVE

Paternity leave and adoptive parental leave may be negotiated between the pastor and congregation. It is recommended that up to six consecutive weeks (including Sundays) with full salary, housing, and benefits be provided. Because of special concerns or needs actual time may be more or less than six weeks.

1. CONTINUING EDUCATION

The ELCA expects of its pastors to complete a minimum of 50 contact hours annually in organized continuing education.

1. Congregations are encouraged to make available to their pastors at least two weeks (including Sundays) per year for continuing education.

2. The scheduling of continuing education should be determined by the pastor in consultation with the council.

3. $1,000 is recommended; a minimum of $700 per year should be provided for this education.

4. A pastor should have the privilege of accumulating educational leave and funds over a two-year period.

1. SABBATICAL LEAVE

Sabbatical leave offer an extended block of time for study, personal growth, and reflection apart from usual congregational responsibilities.

1. Normally, an extended study and renewal period of one to three months after five years in the current call should be provided with full salary, housing, and benefits.
2. The leave plan is to be developed in cooperation with the council. The parties shall seek the counsel of the bishop before finalizing an agreement.
3. The congregation shall be responsible for arranging for pastoral coverage, including pulpit supply, during the leave.
4. Within six weeks of the completion of the sabbatical leave the pastor shall present the congregation a written reflection on the experience and the implications for the ministry of the congregation and ministry in the parish. This written reflection shall be added to the pastor’s file in the bishop’s office.
5. WORK WEEK

Because of the nature of ministry, it is recognized that pastors are expected to fulfill many evening and weekend responsibilities in addition to Sunday morning worship. Therefore, adequate time off (one day per week minimum) should be granted that would be free from ministry-related responsibilities.

1. SPECIAL CONCERNS

Where there are special needs within a pastor’s family, these should be considered separately.

**VII. ASSOCIATE / ASSISTANT / SPOUSE TEAM COMPENSATION**

1. The synod recommends that the above guidelines be applied to associate / assistant pastors taking into consideration their relationship with the senior pastor, e.g., duties, responsibilities, etc.
2. For rostered spouse teams the synod staff should be consulted.

**VIII. INTERIM / TEMPORARY / SUPPLY MINISTRIES**

1. INTERIM

At the time of a pastoral vacancy in a congregation, the bishop, working with the congregation council, recommends an interim pastor to provide basic leadership and pastoral care until another pastor is secured and, if needed, to address any special concerns of the congregation. No pastor is to be considered as a candidate for call to a congregation while serving it as an interim.

Depending on congregational need and pastoral availability, an interim pastor may serve on a part-time or full-time basis during a pastoral vacancy. An active pastor serving in an interim ministry, whether full or part-time, should be compensated according to the current guidelines based on the time negotiated with the church council. For example, if the pastor is serving half-time (50%), compensation should be 50% of a regular compensation package. A retired pastor who serves as an interim minister shall negotiate with a church council in consultation with the synod staff.

1. TEMPORARY PASTORAL SUPPORT

Temporary pastoral support will be compensated at $200 per month for a congregation council meeting and emergency pastoral care. Mileage will be paid at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate (see V.A. above). Compensation beyond this is to be determined in negotiations between the congregation council and the temporary pastor with guidance provided by the synod staff.

1. SUPPLY PASTOR

During a pastoral absence, it may be necessary for a congregation to secure a supply pastor. A current Pulpit Supply List is available and may be obtained from the synod office. Those asked to serve as pulpit supply should be contacted well in advance of the date needed and, upon acceptance, be provided with a copy of the worship bulletin and pertinent information about the service. A member familiar with congregational worship practices should be on hand to welcome the pastor prior to the service. The recommended honorarium for one worship service is $150 plus mileage at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate (see V.A. above). For additional services, scheduled within three hours of the conclusion of the initial worship service, whether at the same congregation or at another, as in two-point parishes, an additional $50 per service should be paid plus any additional mileage. If additional services are scheduled during the week that are similar in nature e.g., Sunday evening, Wednesday, Saturday, etc., an additional honorarium of $85 for each additional service plus mileage at the current IRS mileage reimbursement rate (see V.A. above) should be paid. For additional responsibilities, appropriate compensation should be provided. Expenses for lodging and meals, if necessary, are to be paid by the congregation.

**COMPENSATION WORKSHEET**

**MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT (PASTOR)**

**A. COMPENSATION**

1. Cash Salary

a. Annual base salary (before salary-reduction contributions) (I.A.,B.)\* $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Clergy Social Security tax allowance (if paid directly to pastor) (III.B.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Total of (1a.) plus (1b.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Housing (only one housing option may be included) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

a. Cash housing allowance without parsonage (including any
household furnishings and utility allowances) (II.A.)

or

b. 30 percent of line 2 (if parsonage or other housing is provided)

4. Pastor’s household furnishings and utilities allowances (only if parsonage $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 is provided and the allowance is paid directly to the pastor) (II.B.1.)

**5. TOTAL ANNUAL DEFINED COMPENSATION (Add lines 2, 3, 4).** $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS**

1. ELCA pension and benefits (***Portico***) (III.A.1.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Medical reimbursement (III.A.2.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Housing equity allowance (II.B.2.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL PENSION AND BENEFITS** $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**C. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES**

1. Automobile reimbursement or allowance (V.A.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Other professional expenses (V.B.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Cell Phone (V.C.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Continuing Education (VI.E.) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**D. SPECIAL CONCERNS (VI.H.)**

1.

2.

\*Roman numerals, letters and numbers refer to sections within the guidelines.

*Helpful calculators for defined compensation and ELCA benefits contributions are located on the Portico website at*

*www.porticobenefits.org. Please note, however, that you should insert your own calculations for the social security allowance with*

*guidelines III.B. For more information, a workbook entitled, “Nuts and Bolts of Clergy Tax” is available from the synod accountant.*

**NORTHEASTERN OHIO SYNOD 2018 COMPENSATION**

**GUIDELINES AND WORKSHEET**

**MINISTER OF WORD AND SERVICE (DEACON)**

**INTRODUCTION:**

A Minister of Word and Service assumes many different responsibilities. Job descriptions vary and are developed by the congregation. We require specialized training for certification as a Minister of Word and Service (hereafter referred to as deacon). Compensation for a deacon should be comparable to professional positions of equal responsibility and training. Adequate compensation enables a deacon to fulfill responsibilities and obligations, encourages vocational satisfaction, and encourages a deacon’s best efforts and gifts. Congregations and our synod have an obligation to review compensation plans annually. We also expect deacons to take initiatives in seeking an annual review of compensation.

Inadequate compensation may result in discouragement and dissatisfaction. This sometimes occurs as a deacon’s family cannot maintain financial stability, as negative attitudes toward the congregation and church begin, as an inability to participate in continuing education programs, or as “moonlighting” becomes a necessity. Inadequate compensation means low contributions to retirement plans, which leads to inadequate retirement income. All of these realities increase the occurrence of resignations from the roster make it more challenging to recruit able candidates for deacon, and create a poor image of the church in the community.

Our synod recognizes there are deacons and congregations who, for a variety of reasons, choose to be content with salaries that are below the synod minimum. We caution these deacons and congregations, however, that they may be doing disservice to the congregation, other deacons, and their successors by allowing the compensation package to remain below recommended guidelines. In such situations, the congregation, deacon, and bishop’s office should work together to implement other support strategies.

Congregations should develop procedures to review their deacon’s salary and discuss those personal financial concerns that may apply. This may be best accomplished by a small and understanding committee of three to six individuals appointed by the congregation council. The committee should bring to the congregation council or appropriate committee its recommendations for annual compensation adjustments.

It should be noted that these are suggested base salaries. The total compensation package should also

reflect any special concerns of the deacon and his/her family, and other factors as discussed in this

document.

**I. SALARY**

A. BASE CASH SALARY

1. The minimum base salary recommendation for 2018 is based on their level of education within the area of expertise as follows:

NO DEGREE BACHELORS MASTERS

$34,045 $39,435 $40,850

This represents a 0.3% increase to the 2017 minimum base cash salary recommendation, as the Social Security Administration has set the 2017 cost of living allowance at 0.3%. It is recommended that $310 for each year of rostered service be added to this minimum base, or

2. A congregation with an experienced deacon should offer a $310 increase for the additional year of experience in rostered ministry.

3. It should also be noted that these are suggested base salaries which include money for housing.

B. ADJUSTMENTS: Adjustments to the base cash salary may consist of, but are not limited to:

1. merit

2. local COLA (to reflect significant differences in local cost of living)

3. responsibilities

4. education (either advanced or specialized)

5. other concerns identified by the congregation / pastor.

**II. HOUSING**

In compliance with federal tax law, the congregation council may consider providing housing or a

housing allowance for the deacon similar to that for pastors (see Minister of Word and Service

guidelines). The council may also consider the establishment of a loan policy to assist the deacon

in the down payment on a home. Synod staff is available for counsel.

**III. BENEFITS**

A. PENSION / HEALTH CARE

1. The congregation shall provide full pension, health, and death benefits for the deacon and family in accordance with ***Portico Benefit Service*** (the ELCA Benefit Provider). The “Gold+ level of health benefits has been recommended by the ELCA Church Council and the NEO Synod Council.

2. A “Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan”, established in accordance with specific IRS requirements, could provide tax advantages for deacons by reimbursing deductibles, co-payments, and other medical expenses not covered by insurance. For more information, please contact the synod accountant (jhacker@neos-elca.org)

3. The deacon may elect to waive the care benefit under the coordination of the benefits clause in the ***Portico*** Handbook. The congregation should consult with the ***Portico*** (612-333-7651 or 800-352-2876) or the synod office for assistance in determining the effects of these guidelines.

B. FICA ALLOWANCE (SOCIAL SECURITY)

1. Normally a congregation will pay Social Security tax for deacons. Social Security law regulates the amount to be paid.

2. R deacons who are considered self-employed as defined in current Social Security guidelines, by virtue of a “teaching call,” please refer to Section III.B. of the clergy guidelines.

3. The synod recommends the deacon periodically check records to be certain accounts have been properly credited. A deacon may do this by obtaining Form SSA 7050 from the Social Security Administration office or online at www.ssa.gov. It is important that deacons do this periodically because one can only go back 39 ½ months to correct errors. This is critical in assuring the receipt of the maximum benefits available.

**IV. PART-TIME CALLS**

For part-time calls, salary, housing, and benefits should be calculated then reduced to reflect the

percent of call, e.g., a call at half-time would receive 50%. All part-time calls should be made in

consultation with the synod staff.

**V. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES**

These items are considered congregational administrative expenses and are not items to be

considered as compensation.

1. AUTOMOBILE EXPENSES: Congregations should adequately provide for business mileage expenses in one of the following ways. In determining the method, usage should be considered including factors such as geographical limits of the congregation, distance to commonly used hospitals, etc.
2. Use an accountable reimbursement plan to reimburse the deacon for miles driven in service of the congregation. Such reimbursement must be based on documentation as required by the IRS, should be reimbursed at the maximum IRS Standard Mileage Rate for use of a personal car for business purposes and is not taxable to the pastor; or
3. Provide the deacon with a fixed automobile allowance of at least $4,000 per year in addition to salary. This allowance must be included as taxable income on the deacon’s Form W-2. The deacon is accountable to the IRS for use of this allowance and may be eligible to deduct a portion of the expenses based on accurate records of church mileage. Contact your accountant or the synod office for further guidance; or
4. A congregation may, in accordance with IRS guidelines, buy or lease a car and assume the total cost of operating the vehicle.
5. OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

Other ministry related expenses incurred by the deacon should be paid by the congregation in one of the following ways:

1. Paying these amounts directly as they occur; or
2. Setting up a line item in the budget for reimbursement of these expenses, preferably combined with the automobile reimbursement into a single line item; or
3. Paying a monthly professional expense allowance.

*Note*: Congregations are strongly encouraged to set up an “Accountable Professional Expense Reimbursement” for all deacons in the congregation. Reimbursable professional expenses include, but are not limited to: automobile (mileage, parking tolls), overnight travel (including lodging and meals), professional and liability insurance, vestments and vestment cleaning, long distance business phone calls, books, magazines/journals, professional dues, continuing education, media resources, supplies, meals associated with official meetings and appointments, business gifts (maximum of $25.00 per person per year), and equipment purchases. Such professional expenses, when reimbursed by the congregation with adequate accounting as specified in the Internal Revenue Code, are not taxable for either income tax or social security/self-employment tax and are excluded from Form W-2. When the congregation provides an expense allowance without accountable reimbursement, the allowance is taxable income included in Form W-2. Professional expenses not reimbursed under an accountable plan, including expenses in excess of the budget for reimbursement, are deductible for self-employment tax, but only a portion of the expenses is deductible for federal income tax (and only if the rostered leader is eligible to itemize deductions), and none are deductible for state, city or school district income tax. For more information, please contact the synod accountant (jhacker@neos-elca.org).

1. COMPUTERS AND CELL PHONES

It is recommended that the congregation provide deacons with a computer and cell phone to facilitate ministry. Note the following in this regard:

1. Computer

a. A computer owned by the church and provided for the deacon’s use is a business expense that is not taxable.

b. A computer purchased by the deacon is NOT a deductible business expense, even when used for business purposes.

2. Cell Phone

a. A cell phone provided to the deacon is a nontaxable business expense if the council minutes state it is primarily provided for noncompensatory business reasons (such as the need to be accessible at all time for work-related emergencies).

b. The deacon may be provided with a nontaxable cell phone reimbursement if council minutes state that the deacon is required to maintain a personal cell phone for noncompensatory business reasons and the reimbursement amount does not exceed reasonable business needs (i.e. reimburse the basic monthly plan, not family plan for extra minutes).

**VI. OTHER PROVISIONS**

1. VACATION

The minimum vacation should be four weeks (including four Sundays). Attendance at official functions is not to be construed as vacation time. Note: If financial constraints of a congregation make difficult monetary raises for a deacon, a congregation might consider providing an extra week of vacation (including Sunday) as compensation.

1. SICK LEAVE

Sick Leave should be provided for up to eight weeks per year (including Sundays) with full salary, housing, and benefits. An agreement may be made for partial disability beyond that time in coordination with ***Portico.***

1. MATERNITY LEAVE

Maternity Leave should be provided for up to six weeks (including Sundays) with full salary, housing, and benefits. Because of special concerns or needs, additional time may be negotiated between the deacon and congregation.

1. PATERNITY LEAVE / ADOPTIVE PARENTAL LEAVE

Paternity leave and adoptive parental leave may be negotiated between the deacon and congregation. It is recommended that up to six consecutive weeks (including Sundays) with full salary, housing, and benefits be provided. Because of special concerns or needs actual time may be more or less than six weeks.

1. CONTINUNG EDUCATION: The ELCA expects of its deacons to complete a minimum of 50 contact hours annually in organized continuing education.
2. Congregations are encouraged to make available to their deacon at least two weeks (including Sundays) per year for continuing education.
3. The scheduling of continuing education should be determined by the deacon in consultation with the council.
4. $1,000 is recommended; a minimum of $700 per year should be provided for this education.
5. A deacon should have the privilege of accumulating educational leave and funds over a two year period.
6. SABBATICAL LEAVE

Sabbatical Leave offers an extended block of time for study, personal growth, and reflection

apart from usual congregational responsibilities.

1. Normally, an extended study and renewal period of one to three months after five years in the current call should be provided with full salary, housing, and benefits.
2. The leave plan is to be developed in cooperation with the council. The parties shall seek the counsel of the bishop before finalizing an agreement.
3. The congregation shall be responsible for arranging for required coverage during the leave.
4. Within six weeks of the completion of the sabbatical leave the deacon shall present the congregation a written reflection on the experience and the implications for the ministry of the congregation and ministry in the parish. This written reflection shall be added to the deacon’s file.
5. WORK WEEK

Because of the nature of ministry, it is recognized that deacons are expected to fulfill many

evening and weekend responsibilities in addition to Sunday morning worship. Therefore,

adequate time off (one day per week minimum) should be granted that would be free from

ministry-related responsibilities.

1. SPECIAL CONCERNS

Where there are special needs within a deacon’s family, these should be considered

separately.

**COMPENSATION WORKSHEET**

**MINISTER OF WORD AND SERVICE (DEACON)**

A. **COMPENSATION**

1. Base Salary (I.A.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Housing (II.) (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Other (I.B.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL DEFINED COMPENSATION \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

B. **PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS**

1. ELCA pension and benefits (***Portico***) (III.A.1.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Medical Reimbursement (III.A.2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PENSION AND BENEFITS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

C. **PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES**

1. Automobile reimbursement or allowance (V.A.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Other Professional expenses (V.B.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Cell phone (V.C.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Continuing Education (VI.E.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

D. **SPECIAL CONCERNS (VI.H.)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*Roman numerals, letters, and numbers refer to sections within the guidelines.

**NORTHEASTERN OHIO SYNOD 2018 COMPENSATION**

**GUIDELINES AND WORKSHEET**

**NON-ROSTERED**

Due to the wide range of non-rostered duties that may be performed at a congregation, this guideline will only reflect general guidance and not specific recommendations.

**INTRODUCTION:**

A congregation employs many non-rostered people in various positions such as musicians, custodians and administrative assistants. Compensation for these positions should be comparable to professional positions of equal responsibility and training. Adequate livable compensation for the non-rostered employee, as for anyone else, is necessary to fulfill responsibilities, obligations and maintain satisfaction in ministry. The congregation and the synod have an obligation to review compensation plans annually using the guidelines as adopted by the synod assembly. Non-rostered personnel are also urged to take initiatives in seeking an annual review of compensation.

The congregation should develop procedures whereby it may review the employees’ salary and discuss those personal financial concerns that may apply. This may be best accomplished by a small and understanding committee consisting of the pastor(s), one or more representatives of the congregation council, and other persons as deemed necessary. The committee should bring to the congregation council its recommendations for annual compensation adjustments.

Written job descriptions should be developed for each position. The job description should include, but is

not limited to:

1. duties

2. days of work

3. hours

4. whether salaried or hourly

5. benefits

6. rate of pay and overtime policy

7. other

A special effort should be extended in determining actual hours worked, (e.g., for musicians, detailed

listing of time requirements is available from Association of Lutheran Church Musicians). Local

considerations could include:

1. regular services (number per week)

2. choir practice(s)

3. additional services, e.g. Lenten

4. practice time

5. educational level

**I. SALARY**

A. BASE CASH SALARY: An effort should be made to determine adequate local compensation levels. There are several ways to accomplish this including but not limited to:

1. Consult with local school districts, especially for custodians, secretaries, and Christian educators.

2. U.S. Department of Labor

3. other local congregations

4. classified ads

5. local Chamber of Commerce

6. negotiation with the employee (e.g., an employee who is also a member of the congregation may volunteer a portion of their compensation to the congregation)

7. professional organizations, (e.g., Association for Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM), International Association for Office Professionals).

B. ADJUSTMENTS: Adjustments to the base cash salary may consist of, but are not limited to:

1. merit

2. local COLA (to reflect significant differences in local cost of living)

3. responsibilities

4. education (either advanced or specialized)

5. other concerns identified by the congregation/employee

**II. HOUSING**

not applicable

**III. BENEFITS**

A. PENSION / HEALTH CARE

1. The congregation shall provide full pension, health, and death benefits for the employee and family in accordance with ***Portico Benefit Services*** (ELCA Benefits Provider) provisions. Health care issues may be addressed through other agencies (e.g. a local Chamber of Commerce).

2. A “Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan”, established in accordance with specific IRS requirements, could provide tax advantages for employees by reimbursing deductibles, co-payments, and other medical expenses not covered by insurance(subject to legal regulations). For more information, please contact the synod accountant (jhacker@neos-elca.org)

3. The employee may elect to waive the spouse and dependent health care benefit under the coordination of benefits clause in the ***Portico Benefit Services*** Handbook. The congregation should consult with ***Portico*** (612-333-7651 or 800-352-2876) or the synod office for assistance in determining the effects of these guidelines.

4. For part-time employees refer to Section IV.

B. FICA ALLOWANCE (SOCIAL SECURITY)

1. A congregation shall provide FICA payments in accordance with current Federal regulations.

2. The synod recommends the employee periodically check records to be certain accounts have been properly credited. An employee may do this by obtaining Form SSA 7050 from the local Social Security Administration office or online at www.ssa.gov. It is important that employees do this periodically because one can only go back 39 ½ months to correct errors. This is critical in assuring the receipt of the maximum benefits available.

**IV. PART-TIME EMPLOYEES**

1. For part-time employees (less than 40 hours), salary and benefits should be calculated then reduced to reflect the percent of employment, e.g., an employee at half-time (20 hours) would receive 50%.
2. When employed less than 20 hours, ***Portico Benefit Services*** is not available.

**V. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES:** These items are considered congregational administrative expenses

and are not items to be considered compensation.

1. AUTOMOBILE EXPENSES: If congregations require the employee to use his/her own vehicle, congregations should provide an adequate automobile allowance. Such reimbursement should be consistent with the maximum IRS Standard Mileage Rate for use of a personal car for business purposes.
2. OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES: These expenses include, but are not limited to books, subscriptions to magazines or journals, media resources, and official meetings. They may be covered by:

1. paying these amounts directly as they occur; or

2. setting up as a line item in the budget; or

3. setting up as a monthly allowance.

**VI. OTHER PROVISIONS**

1. VACATION: A graduated schedule for vacations should be used. The minimum vacation should be two weeks. The maximum is four weeks. Attendance at official functions is not construed as vacation time.
2. SICK LEAVE: Sick leave should be provided for up to eight weeks per year with full salary and benefits. An agreement may be made for partial disability beyond that time in coordination with the ***Portico Benefit Services***.
3. MATERNITY LEAVE: Maternity leave should be provided for up to six weeks with full salary and benefits. Because of special concerns or needs, additional time may be negotiated between the employee and congregation.
4. PATERNITY LEAVE / ADOPTIVE PARENTAL LEAVE: Paternity leave and adoptive parental leave may be negotiated between the employee and congregation. It is recommended that up to six consecutive weeks (including Sundays) with full salary, housing, and benefits be provided. Because of special concerns or needs actual time may be more or less than six weeks.
5. CONTINUING EDUCATION:
6. If applicable, provision should be made for assisting with continuing education with paid time off and tuition reimbursement. The scheduling of continuing education should be determined by the employee in consultation with the council.
7. SABBATICAL LEAVE: Sabbatical leave offers an extended block of time for study, personal growth, and reflection apart from usual congregational responsibilities. If a sabbatical is appropriate, refer to the sabbatical guidelines in the rostered person’s guidelines.
8. WORK WEEK: Because of the nature of church employment, it is recognized that employees may be expected to fulfill evening and weekend responsibilities. Therefore, adequate time off (one day per week minimum) should be granted that would be free from church-related responsibilities.
9. SPECIAL CONCERNS: Where there are special needs within an employee’s family, these should be considered separately.

**COMPENSATION WORKSHEET**

**NON-ROSTERED EMPLOYEE (POSITION)**

**JOB DESCRIPTION:** Duties and expectations should be provided for each position. These duties will

normally be performed on (days of the week) from (list regular hours). This position is classified as

hourly/salaried.

**A. COMPENSATION**

1. Base Salary (I.A., B.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL COMPENSATION \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS**

1. ***Portico*** or other Pension and health (III.A.1.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Medical Reimbursement (III.A.2., 3.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Other Benefits \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PENSION AND BENEFITS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**C. PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES**

1. Automobile Reimbursement or allowance (V.A.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Other Professional expenses (V.B.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Continuing Education (VI.E.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**D. OTHER PROVISIONS (VI)**

1. Vacation

2. Sick leave

3. Maternity leave

4. Paternity/adoptive parental leave

**E. SPECIAL CONCERNS (VI.G.)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*Roman numerals, letters, and numbers refer to sections within the guidelines.

1. Josephine Wright reported on behalf of the credentials committee: As of 1:45pm, Registered attendees were 408. Total voting membership was 354. There were 214 lay persons (206 lay, 8 official lay rostered), 91 male, and 123 female. There were 140 clergy, for a ratio of 60% lay and 40% clergy. There were 54 registered visitors.
2. Kate Venable presented the report of the Elections Committee:
	1. Synod Council Cleveland East Clergy: Laura Barbins 196; Barbara Holzhauser 125
	2. Synod Council Cleveland East Lay Charles Benning Sr. 121; Thelma Williams 159; Dale Veres 40. This election moved to a second ballot.
	3. Synod Council Eastern Clergy: Chelsea Spencer 266; Denise Gundersen 52.
	4. Synod Council Richland-Ashland Lay: Larry Fenton 207; Valda Washburn 107
	5. Synod Council Southern Lay: Kevin Kampfer 182; Kim Meek-Obed 139
	6. Consultation Committee Lay: Diane Bennett 51; Deacon Judy Hoshek 278
3. The second ballot was presented: Thelma Williams and Charles Benning for Synod Council, Cleveland East Lay
4. The Rev. Darla Ann Kratzer presented the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee. There was one resolution anticipated to be submitted by the 3:15pm deadline, pertaining to the impact on this assembly of visa restrictions. She again announced that any additional resolutions relating to timely changes in the church or the world may still be submitted by 3:15pm. Bishop Allende dismissed the Assembly to break and workshops at 3:00pm
5. The first workshop session ran from 3:10-3:55pm. Topics included Integrating Youth: LYO Board; Intentional Interim Ministry: Making the Most of the Meantime; The 95 Theses; and Growing Together in Christian Unity: Lutheran-Catholic Covenant.
6. The second workshop session ran from 4:05 to 4:50pm: Topics included: Integrating Youth: LYO Board; Talking Together as Christians Cross-Culturally; God Has a Place for You! (And it’s called Australia??); and Let’s Talk (led by Dale Veres).
7. The assembly was called back to order at 5:02pm. Bishop Allende announced that items on the original agenda for 4:10pm and later in the afternoon (e.g., constitution and bylaw amendments and resolutions from Reference and Counsel) would be postponed until Saturday morning and reminded voting members that they will not be re-issued a voting device unless they bring their nametag back tomorrow. The assembly moved to evening prayer at 5:07pm and adjourned for the day at 5:27pm.

**Saturday, June 10, 2017**

1. The Assembly opened on Saturday with morning prayer service beginning at 8:21am.
2. Bishop Allende called the Assembly back to order at 8:53am The Rev. Dan Caruso made introductory announcements for Day 2 of the Assembly.
3. Josephine Wright presented the report of the Credentials Committee. As of 8:30am, there were 414 people registered: 210 lay, 9 official lay rostered for a total lay voting membership of 219; of these, there were 92 males and 127 females. There were 141 clergy for a ratio of 61% Lay, 39% Clergy. Voting members who were persons of color or whose primary language is other than English were 21; there was 1 voting member under age 18, 9 voting members age 18-30, and 350 voting members over age 30. There were 54 registered visitors.
4. Cathy Byers presented the report of the Minutes Committee. They had reviewed the business of the day with the Secretary and found the minutes to be in order.
5. Kate Venable presented the results of the second ballot for Synod Council, Cleveland East, Lay: Thelma Williams 195; Charles Benning 116
6. Bishop Allende introduced Dr. Elizabeth Paul, President of Capital University, who brought greetings from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and Capital University. Dr. Paul is new to Capital University and new to Ohio. When she was less familiar with these entities, she thought that Capital and Trinity were part of the same institution. As she dug into the history, she learned that Capital grew out of Trinity seminary. She comes with great reverence for the community and its history but also a fresh view and a fresh relationship. Transitions like the unification create hope and excitement for the future but also bring pain and grieving. Capital and Trinity are trying to create a sustainable future for the seminary. Dr. Paul asked for the assembly’s thoughts, well-wishes, and prayers in order to move forward in the best way possible. They are very much in the midst of the search for the next dean and are still searching for the right leader. If necessary, they will define interim leadership. They also welcome conversations with prospective students and are appreciative for the support the Synod has shown.
7. Bishop Allende introduced various ecumenical partners who brought their greetings:
	1. The Rev. Joseph Witmer, Ecumenical Officer, Roman Catholic Diocese of Youngstown: He noted that decisions made in 1517 are being revisited today in conversation and activities. Their Diocese is looking forward to hosting a joint service in the cathedral in Youngstown to celebrate the covenant relationship on the last Sunday in October.
	2. The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr., Eleventh Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio: This is the bicentennial year of the Episcopal Church of Ohio—the first one established beyond the 13 colonies. In his prayer he was reminded that this is the eve of the feast of the Trinity. This reminds us that God is relational, and he values the relationship between himself and our bishops; his diocese and our synod; and most importantly our congregations’ partnership with each other. As the ecclesiology in our country changes, the opportunities for serving together as companion and single congregations are increasing. Just as Bishop Hollingsworth’s relationship with Bishop Allende makes him a more complete as a Christian, so relationships among congregational leaders make them more complete. In these anniversary years, he encouraged us to celebrate not the past, but what is yet to be.
	3. The Rev. Ed Peterson, Canal District Superintendent, United Methodist Church: He brought greetings from Tracy Malone, their newly elected bishop. Their District has been praying for us, and they solicited our prayers for their assembly, which will start tomorrow in Lakeside (with high temperatures and no air conditioning!)
	4. The Rev. Sharon Core, General Presbyter of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve was unable to attend.
8. Bishop Allende introduced The Rev. Jim Watson of Zion, Valley City to discuss the Discipleship and Evangelism table. Evangelism sounds like a thing or an ideology. He prefers to think of evangelizing as a verb, where we are “good-news-ing” people—treating them like human beings, listening to them, understanding their needs, and meeting their needs. He also uses discipling as a verb. For some outside the church, no one has ever taught them about grace or about love in the way our church understands it. It is our job to teach and bring people in as disciples. The Discipleship and Evangelism table is not a program or a set of answers, just a network of people coming together with different skills and experiences trying to make a difference in discipling and evangelizing in our Synod. The next gathering will be at Martin Luther, Youngstown. This is an organic movement, from the grassroots, not from the top down. Assembly members are encouraged to take the challenge to go out and make disciples. Our Synod staff cannot do it alone.
9. Dick Brenaman was recognized to discuss the Stewardship Table. This began as a think tank with The Rev. Terrance Jacob. The Table hosted a training event for first-call pastors in February. They will meet again later this summer. Assembly members with a passion for Stewardship are invited to join the conversation.
10. Bishop Allende recognized significant anniversaries for congregations and clergy members:
	1. 175 year congregations:

St. John Minerva;

St. John’s Perrysville;

Rowsburg, Polk;

Mount Hope, Shiloh;

St. Paul’s Smithville

* 1. 150 year congregations:

Pleasant Valley, Lucas

* 1. 125 year congregations:

Trinity, Girard;

Faith, Massillon;

Emmanuel, Salem

* 1. 100 year congregations:

Holy Trinity, Salem;

* 1. 75 year congregations:

Euclid, Euclid

* 1. 50 year congregations:

St. Stephen Martyr, Canton

* 1. 65 year rostered leaders:

The Rev. Paul Milheim

Deacon Edward Kirst

* 1. 60 year rostered leaders:

The Rev. Ronald Morgan

* 1. 55 year rostered leaders:

The Rev. Edward Balint;

The Rev. Carl Cunfer;

The Rev. John Zimmann

* 1. 50 year rostered leaders:

The Rev. James Cline

The Rev. R. Landis Coffman, Jr.

The Rev. Dennis Engler

The Rev. Joseph Ertl

The Rev. Richard Seaks

* 1. 25 year rostered leaders:

The Rev. William Burkett

Deacon Linda Kempke

The Rev. Scott Silcox

The Rev. Julie Thoms

1. Bishop Allende dismissed the Assembly to workshops at 9:51am. Workshops ran from 10:00am to 10:45am. Topics included: The 95 Theses; Growing Together in Christian Unity: Lutheran-Catholic Covenant; God Has a Place for You! (And it’s called Australia??); and Shared Ministry. There was also an intergenerational service project led by LYO in the Exhibit Hall.
2. The Assembly was called back to order at 11:00am
3. The Rev. Darla Ann Kratzer presented resolution 1 on the subject of the Visa process. The Reference and Counsel committee recommends discussion but did not recommend for or against its adoption due to lack of time to research.

**SA17.06.06 Visa Process and Impact On Assembly Moved (Bob Rodda, Zion Wooster); seconded, carried.**

**WHEREAS, the lack of staffing in foreign consulates results in a lengthy and complex visa application process; and**

**WHEREAS, the lack of a visa prevented our companion synod Bishop SWS Sihlangu of the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa from attending this Assembly;**

**THEREFORE, be it resolved that the synod council be directed by this assembly to send a letter of concern to United States Representatives and Senators representing the Northeastern Ohio Synod territory expressing our great disappointment and indicating that our assembly was greatly diminished by his absence.**

**SA17.06.07 To approve the Courtesy resolution.**

**WHEREAS the Northeastern Ohio Synod, gathered in assembly, commemorates and is committed to observing 500 years of God’s grace in action; and**

**WHEREAS the 2017 Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly has sought discernment for its work through Word, Sacrament, and prayer; and**

**WHEREAS we are freed in Christ by grace through faith; and**

**WHEREAS we, the body of Christ, recognize we are all ambassadors of reconciliation and serve our neighbors in concert with our ecumenical and interfaith brothers and sisters:**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northeastern Ohio Synod in assembly extends its appreciation and thanks for the dedicated work and commitment of time to onsite coordinator Jean Hansen, coordinator Sony Gilroy, committee chair Dan Caruso, the planning committee members, worship leaders and musicians, and all others who helped to organize this assembly, and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we give thanks for Julie Rossate, Program Director for Young Adults in Global Mission for her presentations, insights, and encouragement in our role within the Kingdom of God that we work for here and now; and for the Lutheran Youth Organization who carefully planned a concurrent young-peoples’ event and led us in hope-filled worship; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will, as congregations of the Northeastern Ohio Synod, pray for the Spirit-filled leadership and guidance in the many and various ministries of our Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop Abraham Allende, Synod officers, council, and staff; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will continue to empower the diversity of our communities: people of color, youth and young adults, LGBTQ families, and those whose first language is not English; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we embrace our opportunity to be Mission Interpreters called to tell stories of how the ELCA uses contributions of time, talent, and offerings to do God’s work; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we affirm our commitment to the ongoing work of being responsible caretakers of God’s earth and cultivating peace for a just world where all are fed; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we recognize the significant anniversaries and appreciate the loyal and faithful ministries of those congregations and rostered leaders who have used their God-given gifts to share the Good News of God, in Jesus Christ; and**

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we give thanks for 500 years of “God’s Word. Our Heritage. Our Hope” and adopt this resolution by acclamation.**

1. The Rev. Huck Usgaard, Church Relations Rep. to the Conference of Bishops presented a video concerning Portico benefits that emphasized financial health for our rostered leaders in addition to physical and emotional health.
2. David Lenz presented the proposed constitution and bylaw amendments. The constitutional amendments were largely to make language of non-mandatory sections of the constitution parallel to the language of the required sections—particularly concerning the unification of the rosters for diaconal ministers, deaconesses, and associates in ministry to Ministers of Word and Service.

**SA17.06.07** **To adopt *en bloc* 2016 CWA recommendations for amendment of the constitutional and bylaw provisions S7.22, S7.24, S7.27, S9.03.01,S11.03.01, S11.11, S12.01.12, S13.11, S13.12, S14.15, S14.17, S14.33, S14.34, S14.42, and S14.47. (Moved from Synod Council, carried).**

1. The proposed bylaw amendment in part makes language parallel to a corresponding constitutional provision, in part eliminated redundancy, and made a substantive shift to the start date for terms of officers elected at Synod Assemblies. Previously, all terms started on September 1st, under the proposed amendment, they would start on the first day of the third month after the conclusion of the assembly.

**SA17.06.08 To amend the recommended modification to bylaw S9.01.01 to add the sentence “For example, a June Synod Assembly would result in a September 1st start of term.” At the end of the bylaw. (Moved, The Rev. Dan Caruso, seconded, carried)**

**SA17.06.09 To delete bylaw S8.52.01 in its entirety and to amend Bylaw S9.01.01 to read “The term of office of every person elected at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall begin on the first day of the third month following the adjournment of the assembly at which they were elected and conclude when their successor begin service. Exceptions include terms of representatives to the Churchwide Assembly and boards of institutions, those terms being determined by each respective institution. For example, a June Synod Assembly would result in a September 1st start of term.” (Moved from Synod Council, carried)**

1. Bishop Allende announced that the offering from yesterday’s morning Eucharist was $2,472.27, which will be added to today’s offering and split b0etween Northeastern Ohio Synod LYO and Lutheran World Hunger.
2. Karen Kaufman and Barbara White announced winners of drawings
3. Bishop Allende recognized outgoing Synod Council members: The Rev. Lisa Arledge, Ron Blackley, Bernie Bresson, Tom Fox, Kim Meek-Obed, and The Rev. Julianne Smith, who are going off of Synod Council.
4. Adjourned to closing Eucharist at 11:38am. The Assembly’s closing Eucharist concluded with the closure of assembly at 1:18pm.