

West Central Conference

Report to Synod Assembly

May 2019

Pastor Greg G. Busboom, Dean

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

Over the past year, the West Central Conference has focused on building relationships with one another and growing in support and encouragement of our various ministries. We sought to achieve these objectives through a number of fellowship, learning, and worship experiences.

On June 8, we enjoyed a gathering around pizza at Riggs Brewery in Urbana on the Friday evening of Synod Assembly. A large turnout of rostered leaders and lay leaders made the gathering a fun and meaningful event, including Bishop Roth enjoying an adventurous ride down a playground slide.

On July 27, we enjoyed a rostered leaders family cookout at the home of Pastors Stefan and Cynthia Munker. Delicious food and engaging conversation were enjoyed by all.

On Tuesday, September 18, leaders gathered together at the Wood Duck in Carlinville following evening worship at the Professional and Lay Leaders Conference. A large group quite literally filled the place as we enjoyed good and robust fellowship with one another. We even welcomed several leaders from other conferences as well!

On Thursday, October 18, Faith Lutheran in O’Fallon hosted our conference gathering, featuring Pastor Kevin Strickland, ELCA Director of Worship who led both a morning and an afternoon presentation on the practice of Christian worship within our congregations. In addition to his two presentations, Pastor Strickland led us in both morning and afternoon worship, including Holy Communion. In addition to a good turnout of rostered leaders, we invited music leaders from our congregations to join us for the day as well. It was a good and meaningful event.

On Friday, December 14, Pastors Stefan and Cynthia Munker hosted the conference rostered leaders and their families in their home for an Advent gathering of good food and fellowship during which we shared Holden Evening Prayer together. Several us even tried gluhwein for the first time which I believe will become an annual tradition!

Our 2019 Bishop’s Colloquy was held on Thursday, February 21. We enjoyed strong attendance and the congregation of Immanuel in New Douglas graciously hosted. Following worship together, Bishop Roth led us in an engaging conversation primarily centered around his recent sabbatical report. Following lunch, leaders shared with one another how and where they see God’s activity in their various ministries. It was both affirming and inspiring to be reminded of all that God continues to do across our conference.

On Tuesday, March 5, Our Lord's Lutheran in Maryville hosted our 2019 Conference Assembly. After enjoying a delicious pancake and sausage supper with the congregation at Our Lord's, the assembly began with a Shrove Tuesday Evening Prayer service. Our synod's Director for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Elise Rothfusz, shared a presentation on Growing Stewards, lifting up a number of ELCA resources for consideration. Pastor Ken Sandlin, Assistant to the Bishop, shared greetings with the conference. The following people were elected to positions on synod committees:

- Elaine Chapman, Faith/Jacksonville, was elected to the Adult Faith Formation Committee
- Pastor Cynthia Munker, Trinity and Mt. Zion/Litchfield, was re-elected to the Candidacy Committee
- Pastor Gary Sproat (Retired), St. John's/Springfield, was re-elected to the Leadership Support Committee

On April 11, rostered leaders gathered at Grace Lutheran Church in Springfield. After an opening worship service led by Pastor Tom Christell, we traveled together to the African American History Museum of Springfield and experienced a powerful morning learning about the experiences of the early African Americans in Sangamon County, including the Race Riots that took place in Springfield in 1908, leading to the establishment of the NAACP. In the afternoon, we began working on plans for the synod assembly in June.

As we enter the coming year, we look forward to exploring what God is doing across our conference and how God might be calling us to partner together for the work of ministry in West Central Illinois.