



Assistant to the Bishop

2020 Synod Assembly Report

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At this point, we would usually be anticipating seeing many colleagues and lay leaders at the Synod Assembly in East Peoria. Now those face to face meetings at the Assembly will have to wait until June of 2021. Covid-19 has taken us into new territory as workers, teachers and students, families and friends, congregations and worshipping communities.

It has been a privilege to work as an Assistant to Bishop Roth and with the Synod staff for another year. My primary responsibility remains working with interim ministry. In consultation with Bishop Roth, I am in conversation with Council Presidents, rostered leaders, and those in Synodically Authorized ministry throughout the Synod when congregations are in transition and need interim ministers. We are grateful for the care and skills of pastors and lay leaders who serve in interim positions, and we are blessed as retired pastors and lay leaders continue to minister with congregations in transition.

I relate to congregations in the Northern and Northwest Conferences, attending Conference meetings, Assemblies, and special events. Since March those meetings have taken place through Zoom, as have text studies, the Bishop's weekly check-in with rostered leaders, recent meetings between the Bishop and Council Presidents, staff meetings, and Synod Council meetings.

Following up on Bishop Roth's sabbatical report, the Conference Deans and the Synod Council are focusing on two initiatives for congregations in the coming year: (1) Instructions and encouragement for congregation Councils and organizations to use "Dwelling in the Word" as a structure for devotions and conversation and (2) Sister congregation pairings throughout the Synod to offer opportunities for deeper connection between congregations.

The creativity of pastors and lay leaders in providing weekly on-line worship during these months of quarantine has opened the doors of the church community to many people who have never attended a Lutheran worship service. Whatever the consequences of these unsettling times, the Word is active and alive in familiar and new circumstances.

I am blessed to serve in ministry with you and with my colleagues in the Synod office.