

◆ SYNOD NEWS ◆

The Spirit of Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

July 2006

Highlights of the 2006 Synod Assembly

ACTION 
Sharing the Story of God's Love

Nearly 700 people spent time *sharing the story of God's love* at the 19th annual assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod May 19-20, 2006.



Held at the Wachovia Arena in Wilkes-Barre, the assembly featured lively music; an opening "awards show" by the Pulpiteers that introduced assembly-goers to the bishop's "brother," Donald; visitors and speakers from a companion synod, the ELCA, the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Scranton; video reports from anniversary celebrants and others; and a fun-filled evening at Bear Creek Camp.

Forums Feature Variety of Topics

Assembly activities began at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, May 19, with forums at the Woodlands

Inn and Resort, a few minutes from the arena. Approximately 200 people attended forums on topics ranging from civil law to why it's good to be a Lutheran, from relational ministry to youth and money. This year voting members could pre-register for forums, which also enabled them to get their assembly materials at the forums.

Pulpiteers Introduce Rules — and Donald Strobel

The Pulpiteers from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Fountain Hill, introduced the rules of procedure — and the bishop's "brother," Donald — to assembly-goers. Many remembered Pappy and the gang from last year's assembly.



(For more pictures, visit the photo gallery at www.godslove.org.)



Following that dynamic introduction and the adoption of an amended agenda, the assembly proceeded with business interspersed with videos, PowerPoint presentations, music, and "advertisements" from Bear Creek Camp.



Visitors and Guests

Among the visitors to the assembly were representatives of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Scranton, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and one of our companion synods, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina and Uruguay (IELU).

Roberto Stein, secretary of the IELU and a regular visitor to our synod, was accompanied by his wife, Graciela, this year.

The Rev. Philip Krey, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at



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Philadelphia, brought greetings and an update on campus activities, Fr. Phil Altavilla, ecumenical officer for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Scranton, read a welcoming letter from the Most Rev. Joseph F. Martino, bishop of the diocese, and the Rev. Gary Harke brought greetings on behalf of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.



(Check out pictures of our guests at www.godslove.org.)

ELCA Representative Brings Greetings



This year's ELCA representative was Phillip Harris, general counsel for the ELCA. Mr. Harris

described the many ministries of the ELCA and told about the ways our congregations have contributed to the work of the church around the world. He also brought a video message from Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson.

Wisteria Vines and Vine-dressers

In his sermon during the Eucharist on Saturday morning, Bishop Strobel used the text from John 15 ("I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower...") and spoke of his experience with



a wisteria vine that seemingly would never flower. So he cut it down and burned it

Later he found out that some wisteria do not flower for twenty years, and was forced into some serious reconsideration of his impulsive, radical pruning.

"Jesus' description of his relationship with his disciples, the church, as true vine and branches, seems so

very simple," he said. But at this synod assembly "we have begun to appreciate the magnitude and complexity of this vine, who is Jesus Christ, and its branches, which is his church – congregation, synod, ELCA, one, holy, catholic and apostolic – the communion of saints abiding in the true vine."

(Read the entire sermon on the assembly link at www.godslove.org.)

A Taste of Bear Creek Camp

A highlight of the assembly this year was a trip by school bus to Bear Creek Camp for dinner, games, walking tours, rock climbing, and worship around the campfire.



"The Bear Creek Camp experience was fabulous," wrote one person. "Great food – lots of s'mores." Another noted that the Friday evening campfire worship was "AWESOME!"

(See pictures from Bear Creek Camp at www.godslove.org.)

Resolutions and Elections

Only two resolutions were presented at the assembly in addition to the final resolution of thanks. One asked that the year 2007 be designated for special recognition and celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of Lutheran campus ministry. The other called for individuals and congregations to strive for justice and peace, especially through understanding and participating in the political process.



(Read all of the resolutions on the assembly link at www.godslove.org.)

Elected at the assembly:

Synod Council: Nancy Bleam, Christie Kaufman, Pr. Carl Shankweiler, Donald Smith, Jr.

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia: Jack Bradt

Voting members to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly:

Clergy: Cindy Camp, Barbara Davis, Maritza Torres Dolich, Gregory Frey, John Fritch, Mary W. Gade, Kurt E. Garbe, Charles Grube, Wayne Matthias-Long, Bruce MacLaughlin, Samuel Zeiser; **Lay Female:** Nadine R. Anderson, Marlane Druckenmiller, Deborah Matern Graf, Priscilla Schlenker Kinney, Ruth T. Miller, Joan Moyer, Jean Sandberg, Lois Sterling; **Barbara-Anne G. Taylor, Beth Titus; Lay Male:** Lee Becker, Joshua Buzzard, Edward C. Cool, Guy W. Ehler, Martin L. Everhart, Stephen P. Fellman, Michael P. Reitz, Charles Rush, Bruce Saylor, Edward Vermillion

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