



# Pacifica Synod



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

22nd Annual Synod Assembly ♦ May 21-23 ♦ Riverside Convention Center

## Using Our Hands



Bible Study with Mary Preus, Tom Witt and The Rev. Susan Briehl

### Bible Study

The Rev. Susan Briehl led the morning Bible study, reflecting on Luke 7:36-40. In this text, while Jesus attends a dinner party, a woman washes the feet of Jesus with her tears, dries them with her hair, and anoints them with oil from her alabaster jar.

Who is this woman? Briehl describes her as an uninvited guest, one who was once condemned, an outcast, whose actions arise out of

deep gratitude; she has heard Jesus' message of love and redemption, she has experienced his compassion and her tears flow. She breaks open her heart and pours out her gratitude just as she breaks open the flask and pours out the oil. God's grace generates gratitude. Like lightning follows thunder, gratitude follows grace.

Her actions raise complaint from the host of the dinner, but Jesus speaks on her behalf through the story of two men who owed a sum to a moneylender—one a little, one a lot. Both debts were forgiven: who would love the moneylender more?

Briehl asks us: does it take one with great sin to remind us of God's great grace? Have we forgotten our own death sentence and our own release? What are the signs of our own great gratitude in response to God's great grace? She closed with the striking image of Jesus turning to the woman and saying, "Your sins are forgiven. I see your gratitude; your faith has set you upright. Dancing in your 'Holy Spirit dress', go in peace—go back to city to proclaim the good news."

### BUSINESS SESSION 2

#### Memorials to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly

In the interest of clarity, the Synod Council reformatted Resolution 09-5 into two parts, 09-5a and 09-5b, each speaking separately to the Proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality and the Recommendations for Ministry Policies.

In order to provide an opportunity for voting members to speak about these memorials, 12 minutes was allotted for small group conversation. Each of the four memorials regarding these topics (09-3, 09-4, 095a, 09-5b) were amended to state that the voting results would be included on memorials that were passed and transmitted to the Secretary of the ELCA. The debate included many heartfelt,

thoughtful, and respectful comments reflecting deeply held, yet differing points of views; a paper vote was conducted for these memorials (see p. 2 for results). Bishop Finck thanked The Rev. Gloria Espeseth, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, for her assistance in facilitating this portion of the assembly business.

### Keynote Speaker

The Rev. Dr. Frederick Niedner again provided an enriching presentation, focusing on the ruined hands of the crucified Christ as the center point for reflection on our theme of compassion.

Niedner used the Gospel of Luke to show us how Jesus both acted on and taught about compassion. Jesus' acts of healing and of ministering to and feeding the crowds were held up as ways for us to see the compassion of Jesus in action. Even as Jesus hung on the cross he expressed forgiving compassion for his executioners and for the repentant criminal who hung beside him.

Jesus taught about compassion in parables such as the "prodigal son" and "the good Samaritan", which are centered on compassion. Niedner pointed out that this teaching of Jesus was followed by the command, "Go and do likewise", and then connected this command with Jesus' teaching to "take up your cross daily and follow me."

In doing so Niedner asks, "Where do we get the strength to do this?" We do what Jesus did as he died, says Niedner, praying the words of Psalm 31:5, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Niedner concluded: "That's how you can 'do' a day of cross-bearing... in those hands. The hands of the one that held Jesus. The hands that will never, ever let go of you or me, or all of us together, as we hang here in a group, the community of the crucified. And that is our only hope."

### "Peace Without Walls"

During lunch voting members had the opportunity to hear Bishop and Rhoda share their experience of traveling to the Middle East with the Conference of Bishops earlier this year.



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**ELCA Report**



Director for Renewed Evangelizing Congregations

The ELCA Representative to our assembly, The Rev. Neil Harrison, used the assembly theme of “Compassionate God, Use Our Hands” as a “call and response” throughout his presentation as he thanked the Pacifica Synod for our faithful ministry in this synod and our partnership in the ministry of the ELCA. Harrison also described plans for assisting congregations to revitalize their ministry of evangelism and brought greetings (via DVD) from ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark

Hanson. Bishop Hanson spoke about the uncertainty of these times and of the hope of Easter, reminding us of the words the angel spoke to the women at the empty tomb, “Do not be afraid.” These words are both an encouragement and a promise of hope in the face of fear. “We stand at the intersection of fear and hope as heirs of that promise,” Hanson proclaimed, and asked the assembly to lay hands on one another as he offered a prayer of encouragement and blessing. *Note: Bishop Hanson’s greeting is available on the ELCA website.*

**Banquet Celebration**



Hope/Temecula Puppet Ministry and “Mary, Mary and Tom” blessed our time together!

**2009 Lay Recognition**

- #1 Sonshine - Marilyn Harper
- #2 W. San Diego - Don Snowden
- #3 Harvest - Vivian Johnson
- #4 Raincross - Susan Downer
- #5 Big Bear - Erwin Buschauer
- #6 Mariposa - Klaus Witte
- #7 Saddleback - Trisha Gebhardt
- #8 Son & Surf - Jim Huffman
- #9 Rejoice - Andrea Mathews
- #10 Hukilau - Juli Patten

**Workshops**

Voting members and guests were given the opportunity to choose from thirteen general interest workshops on Friday afternoon. These included topics such as worship, social justice, prayer, immigration, Book of Faith, lay education (PALLMM) and more.

**ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**

**Election Results**

Treasurer	Fred Luhman
Youth Representative	Laura Szabados
Lay at Large	Lyle Roberts
Clergy at Large	The Rev. Steve Bieghler
Clergy at Large	The Rev. Karin Boye
#2 W. San Diego Conference	The Rev. Karen Marohn
#4 Raincross Conference	The Rev. Charles Aden
#5 Big Bear Conference	The Rev. Tim Edmondson
#7 Saddleback Conference	The Rev. Kim Eifert Krogstad
#8 Son & Surf Conference	Georgina Califf

**Memorials, Resolutions and Actions**

**Assembly Actions**

SA09.05.09 It was moved, seconded, debated, and approved that seminary interns would be allowed to sit with the voting members and have voice.

Resolution 09-6 Immigration Detention Practices: **Adopted**

**Memorials to Churchwide**

09-3 Memorial to Reject Proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality and Affirm Current Teaching Documents on Sexuality: **Failed**

09-4 Memorial to Reject Report and Recommendations for Ministry Policies: **Failed**

09-5a Memorial to Adopt Proposed ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality: **Adopted**

09-5b Memorial to Adopt Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies: **Adopted**

	<u>09-3</u>	<u>09-4</u>	<u>09-5a</u>	<u>09-5b</u>
Total	362	355	362	355
Yes	137	144	210	188
No	201	189	137	151
Blank	24	22	15	16