

## Report of the Vice President

After wrapping up our Synod Assembly last year, many of the synod council members began preparing for the Churchwide Assembly held in August in New Orleans. The bishop, synod staff, synod council and delegates gathered to discuss only a few of the many, many resolutions that would be introduced at the week-long assembly. In our time together we briefly considered a few of the resolutions: the decision to unify the roster of Word and Service; the introduction of a strategy to assist migrants and refugees (particularly minors) crossing the border; and conversation about the future of the ELCA, particularly around the document “Called Forward Together in Christ”.

Then we were off! Twenty four delegates travelled from our synod. It was a busy week with long days of business, many resolutions to ponder, discuss and vote on. But at the center of each day we worshipped: we gathered for prayer, great preaching, beautiful music and deep inspiration. Bishop Eaton led the assembly with great command and attention to detail. Overall it was a true experience of “being church together”.

In September the council adopted a mission support strategy using a “3x3” model. Over the course of three years, each congregation in the synod will receive a visit, a packet of resources on synod ministries and the impact of mission support dollars, and share in a meal with members of the synod council. These will rotate each year until the cycle is complete. This stewardship initiative is intended to deepen our understanding about the shared work of the synod, to help us connect how congregational mission support is transformed into furthering ministry and mission in the east metro, through Chicago and around the world.

At our November council meeting we reviewed the proposed changes to the synod constitution. With much thanks to the Constitution Review committee, the Synod constitution is now in compliance with the constitutional changes made at the Churchwide Assembly, and more reflective of how we have lived into our ministries over the past few years. The synod council is forwarding the proposed revisions to this Assembly for approval.

We also reviewed and adopted the Sexual Misconduct Policy for the Saint Paul Area Synod. This policy formalizes the steps the synod will take when a rostered minister is accused of sexual misconduct. In addition, the synod strongly encourages all congregations to develop and adopt their own sexual misconduct policies. Resources to assist congregations in drafting a policy can be found on the ELCA website.

In January the council accepted the resignation of Treasurer Keith Anderson. David Laden, a member of the finance committee and former Treasurer for the Saint Paul Area Synod was appointed as Interim Treasurer. The council then reviewed a first draft of the 2018 budget. This budget was proposed to the council by the finance committee and came with a recommendation to adjust the percentage of mission support to the ELCA from 47.5% to 45%. Victoria Flood, director for mission support, ELCA, joined us

as we deliberated this change. The council acknowledged the important work of Churchwide and Ms. Flood acknowledged the important work of the Synod. We are all in ministry and mission together. The final deliberation on the budget occurred at our March meeting. The council approved a resolution which proposes adjusting the percentage of mission support to Churchwide at 45%. A motion to forward the 2018 proposed budget to the Synod Assembly was approved.

Once again I thank all of you for the opportunity to serve. I thank the bishop for her support and all of the members of council. Everyone from the bishop to the staff to the council members (both current and past) serve this synod with care and love for this church.

Carol Hood