

2017 Alaska Synod Assembly

Shepherd of the Valley (SOV) Lutheran Church
Juneau, AK April 28-30, 2017

This was my first assembly and I didn't know what to expect. I did not expect it to be so much fun with lots of laughter and good fellowship. It is just wonderful to meet fellow Lutherans from all areas of our large state. One person I ran into was Pastor Mark Peterson. He was FLC's interim pastor a few years ago and is now the interim pastor for Resurrection Lutheran Church in Juneau. He is looking good.

Throughout the assembly, names were drawn to pick items off the table from Augsburg Fortress. It was announced that Augsburg has changed their name only to "1517 Media". Other than the name change, the address, their merchandise, staff, and everything else stayed the same. I confirmed this with an email to the publishing house.

The schedule ran pretty much on time. There were plenty of breaks throughout the 2 days. One never got too stiff from sitting too long. And always time to introduce yourself to someone new and have a conversation.

There were basically 3 nominating events over the 2 days. On the first day, was the nominating and electing of 2 representatives to the synod council. These 2 representatives were already on the council and extending their term another cycle. Also, nominations and elections were held for the Region 1 representatives to the PLU board. The 4 that were listed were approved. On the second day, was a vote on the election process as sent from the synod council to elect a new bishop. The vote was approved. Bishop Shelly Wickstrom is now on her last year of her first term. The synod constitution allows for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms. She has until this fall to decide if she wishes to continue for a second term or not. More on this at a later date.

Reports were given by various people for the committee/task force each represented. If interested, I can give you the list.

One of the special events was a joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran service at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Juneau. Bishop Shelly was one of the pastors that lead the service with the Catholic leaders. It was a special service for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. It was well attended and with a reception afterwards.

The theme of the assembly was "Come to the Table!" from Luke 13:29. The keynote speaker for this was by Rev. Dr. Mark Allen Powell. He made the point that in the book of Luke, there were 19 instances of Jesus going to/at/or coming from a meal. And SOV brought this point home with plenty of food and snacks throughout the days of the assembly.

During the off-time, I had a chance to see Mendelhall Glacier and the governor's house. Alaska is the ONLY state that allows its citizens to ring the doorbell, walk in, and receive a tour of the historical artifacts located in the living residence of our Governor. The artifacts are located on the first (main) floor of the 3-storey house.

I would encourage everyone who has not been to a synod assembly to volunteer to represent your church and participate. It is great to hear what other churches are doing in their area and it may give you ideas for your own church. And besides, it's a lot of fun!

Respectfully submitted,
Trina Anderson, Interior Cluster Representative