

## Experiences at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly

By: Chuck Thomas, NGLS Vice President



I was privileged to be one of the seven NGLS voting members at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix. The week was exhilarating, inspirational, and exhausting! We experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit, especially in the music and messages provided during daily worship services. I personally found it very rewarding to network in-person with other synod vice presidents and to connect with a cadre of people from other synods working on or considering “Caring for Creation” projects.

The over 800 voting members at the assembly respectfully debated and voted on multiple issues that will give direction for the ELCA, its member synods, and its congregations for the next three years and beyond. Through the ecclesiastic ballot process, we as the Assembled Church, elected Rev. Yehiel Curry, Bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod as the next ELCA Presiding Bishop and Lucille (CeeCee) Mills as the next ELCA Secretary. The Holy Spirit was indeed at work during the elections as neither one of the elected persons were pre-identified candidates.

In addition to attending marvelous and inspirational daily worship services, and enjoying great camaraderie at mealtimes, voting members:

- Approved 84 Memorials, including the Indian Boarding School Remembrance Memorial, which the NGLS was one of the twenty-two sponsoring synods,
- Saw three additional Memorials be referred to the Churchwide Council for consideration after the times allotted for debate ended with no action on the three,
- Approved a new social statement: Faith and Civil Life,
- Approved editorial updates to the social statement: Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,
- Heard an inspiring Keynote Speaker, Rev. Chad Rimmer, who gave a theological presentation on the Assembly’s theme, “For the Life of the World”,
- Approved the budget for the next three years,
- Heard in the Secretary’s report that the ELCA has 2.7 million baptized members in 8,357 congregations,
- Approved the “en bloc” suite of amendments to the constitutions of the ELCA,
- Debated and voted on individual constitution amendments that were removed from “en bloc” in either their original form or in a further amended form. and
- Referred some proposed amendments to Churchwide Council for further consideration and action.

A summary of all the actions taken at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly should be available soon at [ELCA.org](https://www.elca.org). The next Churchwide Assembly will be in Des Moines, Iowa in early August 2028.