

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

As I write this, it is not even 48 hours since our week of Synod Assembly concluded.

I do believe the experience of Synod Assembly this year was uneven for many people. For those who received prompt answers to technology questions, for those who voted without incident, for those who simply accessed the YouTube feed and listened to workshops and business, I do believe this was, overall, a very positive experience for you.

However, I am also well aware of a certain level of frustration for those who waited on the phone for answers, got disconnected, who didn't know what a web browser was much less how to click on it, who had trouble with the web portal and impatient with the voting glitches, you will join me in being happy if we never have synod assembly this way again.

Please trust that the goal was **not** to add to the frustration of days that are already full of reasons to feel weary. That just happened by accident. I hope that we have all increased our knowledge and understanding of technology and the communication required to fine tune the details.

Despite the challenges, we did manage to accomplish some things worth celebrating and we have learnings that will definitely be applied to future efforts.

We passed, by a significant majority, the resolution to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, thereby adding our NGLS name to the other 17 synods who have done this work. It is an excellent beginning, as the Task Force is already thinking of ways to lead our synod into more meaningful ways of being good neighbors.

I wish to commend the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force for their creative and tireless efforts to educate our synod on what the doctrine is, what it has meant, and why repudiation was the right thing to do. From Lifelong Faith Formation

classes, to workshops, to video communications, their work was inspired and inspiring.

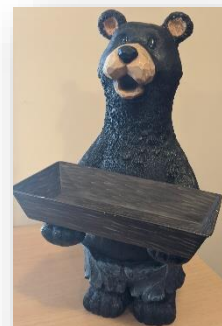
Thank you to:

- Jeff Henquinet-Good Shepherd, Houghton
- Pastor Melinda VanderSys-Our Redeemer and First, Presbyterian, Newberry
- Pastor Julie Belew- Holy Cross, Baraga
- Pastor Bucky Beach- Good Shepherd, Houghton and Lutheran Campus Ministry of MTU
- Pastor Scott Ehle of Bethel, Menominee
- Retired Pastor Dave VanKley
- Staff Liaison, Pastor Jim Duehring

The World Hunger Committee celebrated the winners of the Big Bear Awards and the Bread Basket Awards.

The Big Bear Award is given to a group that has made an exemplary effort in the area of hunger ministry. Congratulations to our Big Bear Award Winners:

- Board of Outreach at Faith, Three Lakes
- The Garden Crew at Calvary, Minocqua



The Bread Basket

Award is given to individuals who give an exemplary effort to address issues of hunger and poverty. We congratulate this year's winners:

- Ron Schickowski of Pioneer Lake, Conover and
- Elizabeth Beyne of Messiah, Marquette.



Thank you both for your inspiring example of compassionate commitment and generosity with your time and energy.

We celebrated the installations of Pastor Grant Van Lishout and Deacon Lori Ward.

Pastor Van Lishout will serve with our ministry partner, Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center and Deacon Ward will serve as our NGL Synod Missioner for Lifelong Faith Formation and LLM evaluation administrator. Livestreamed through

YouTube and Facebook, we enjoyed a lovely worship service complete with “All Creation Sings” liturgy, hymns led by the music team of Messiah, Marquette, a choral anthem offered by Ascension, Minocqua, and preaching by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

We had a week of communications, workshops, Prayfaithfully video devotions, and more.

The online workshops are something we will definitely do again as more than 400 participants were able to learn together through technology from every corner, hamlet, shoreline, and woodland copse in our synod territory. Special thanks to our pastors and deacon who contributed to the special devotions on Hope that week. Despite the challenges, we managed to update and amend our Synod Constitution, lift up the creativity of our congregations as ministry efforts have pivoted, and celebrate that the work of Christ in and through the Church has continued, unabated.

And most of all, we embraced HOPE. From scripture readings to the word proclaimed, from hymns sung to anthems heard, from the images of ministry in action that flashed across our screens to the plans for future gatherings, we embodied that we are people of hope; hope in the future God has prepared, hope in the plans that God has for us, hope that pandemic challenges will give way to creative solutions and making the most of unexpected opportunities – we hope together.

I hope to see you this fall at a Walking Together event near you. I hope you are able to join a Lifelong Faith Formation class. I hope to read about this assembly in your congregational newsletter. I hope that you are reminded, once again, that as a synod of congregations, we are in this work together, walking alongside each other and the presence of Christ who walks with us. It is a joy and a privilege to be in partnership with you!

Thank you for a great Synod Assembly week!

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan