

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This weekend is the **La Crosse Area Synod Assembly** (Friday, June 11, 6:30 p.m. - Sunday, June 13, Noon)! You will recall that last year there was to have been an assembly at which we were to elect our new bishop. But with the Coronavirus pandemic, no Synod Assembly was held in 2020, and Bishop Arends agreed to defer his retirement to a later date.

Bishop Arends continued in his leadership position throughout the summer, fall, and the beginning of winter. He joined us at the Drive-In Worship Service at St. Paul's on Confirmation Sunday (October 25, 2020), and retired at the end of December 2020. In January 2021, Interim Bishop Chris Boerger began to serve the La Crosse Area Synod. Interim Bishop Boerger will continue with us until the new bishop, elected at this year's assembly, takes office.

This weekend, Synod Assembly 2021 will take place virtually. John and Barb Ornes, St. Paul's delegates, will be accessing the events via their computers or smartphones. They, as well as I, will be participating as voting members and watching all of the events online. These events include: resolutions regarding the 2022 Mission Support Budget, ELCA World Hunger, and conferring of Bishop Emeritus status on Bishop Arends. There will be various reports, including the Synod Treasurer's Report, ministry videos, other assembly business, and multiple votes to eventually determine who our next bishop will be!

All of you will have the opportunity to **watch the Synod Assembly Worship Service on Sunday, June 13 at 9:00 a.m. in the sanctuary of St. Paul's Lutheran Church**. In fact, all churches in the synod have been encouraged to join together in watching this virtual service. A screen will be available for those who wish to gather in-person to watch the live-streamed worship service at St. Paul's. If you prefer to watch on your own computer or smartphone from another location, please use the information printed in last Sunday's bulletin to access the service, or follow the steps below.

**The assembly proceedings are available for you to watch at any time, as a nonvoting visitor or guest.** "The same link that allows you to watch Sunday morning worship live will also allow you to view all assembly proceedings live, AND will allow access to a recorded version of the Sunday morning worship service. Link is displayed...[on the Synod website under the heading "...We will sing...'All Virtual' Synod Assembly 2021'"] and on the Synod Facebook page..." (Synod Assembly, La Crosse Area Synod webpage, lacrosseareasynod.org).

You are encouraged to watch some or all of the Synod Assembly proceedings in order to gain a broader understanding of what is happening in the La Crosse Area Synod and the ELCA. (If you need assistance accessing any of the events, please contact Nalani at the church office.) You are also encouraged to pray for the bishop nominees: Pastors Meg Hoversten, Libby Howe, Felix Malpica, Steve Meyer, Becky Piper, Anna Sorenson, and Becky Swanson, as well as all persons who are participating in the assembly. Let us join together with our brothers and sisters in Christ from the La Crosse Area Synod in these special ways at this special time.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy