

**ELCA Southeastern Synod  
Report of the Vice President  
September 20, 2019**

Blessing and Peace to all of you. I hope everyone has been well since we last met at our Synod Assembly in June of this year. I have had quite the busy summer since our Assembly. The election of a new Bishop requires quite a bit of work in the transition process, especially as staff retires and new staff needs to be selected and brought on and up to speed. As a result, we required a number of Executive Committee actions approving housing allowances and salaries for the Bishop and his new staff. In this work, I am grateful for the extensive work of our new Bishop Strickland, Synod Fiscal Advisor Dr. Sandra Gustavson, and Staff Liaison Melissa Fuller Sims. They made the work of transition easy and seamless. At least on my end. I am also grateful for the Executive Committee for being available to take the time to discuss these important decisions, especially as many of them required quick action. I look forward to the installation of our Bishop in October and hope that all of you can attend.

In addition, I was honored to attend the Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee from August 5-10. I am always in awe when I am in presence of ELCA Lutherans all over our country. It gives me a small view of the breadth of our Church and all the work we are doing together. The daily worship services were amazing and considering our new Bishop was the director of those worship services (as one of his last roles with his job with Churchwide), I am looking forward to what our future Synod Assembly worships will bring. No pressure, Bishop. At Churchwide Assembly we re-elected Presiding Bishop Eaton for another 6 year term and elected Sue Rothmeyer as Secretary of the ELCA. We also approved the Social Statement on "Faith, Sexism and Justice", the Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment, a Resolution that condemned White Supremacy, a Resolution to commemorate the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9, and a Memorial which, in part, declared the ELCA a Sanctuary Church Body. We also voted to make ordination the entrance rite for Deacons in our Church. In addition, on the Wednesday of the Churchwide Assembly, I joined a number of voting members as we marched to the ICE facility in Milwaukee as we prayed for justice regarding our country's immigration policy. It was a powerful week which strengthened my faith and made me ready to get down to work.

In the last few months, I also attended the Grace House Low Country Boil fundraiser, to benefit our Lutheran-Episcopal Campus Ministry at Georgia Tech, and the MILAGRO Gala and fundraiser, to benefit our partners in Guatemala. I have also been on the Atlanta Pride Planning Team and we have been working hard to have a strong Lutheran presence at this year's Pride March and Festival.

We have also finalized our Synod office lease with St. John's Lutheran Church in Atlanta, which was approved by the Executive Committee and St. John's Congregational Council. As a member of St. John's and our Synod's Vice President, I was sure to keep plenty of distance in the discussions (at times being more an observer), but I am very happy that we were finally able to get our lease signed to the satisfaction of both parties. I am very thankful for the exhaustive work of Dr. Sandra Gustavson on working on this on behalf of the Synod.

I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation for Bishop Julian Gordy, Treasurer Lee Smith,

and Synod Fiscal Advisor Sandra Gustavson for all their work and guidance. At the same time, I have strong faith that Bishop Kevin Strickland and Treasurer Steve Gehret will be able to continue the good work they have done. I am also excited for those of you who are new to our Synod Council. I look forward to the new perspectives and gifts you will bring to our gatherings.

Thank all of you for your work on behalf of the Southeastern Synod. I pray for safe travels and a productive meeting and I look forward to our time together.

Imran Siddiqui  
Vice President, ELCA Southeastern Synod