

**ELCA Southeastern Synod
Report of the Vice President
September 12, 2020**

Blessing and Peace to all of you. I hope everyone has been well since we last met at our Synod Council/Mini-Assembly in June of this year. And to those who were voted as members of Synod Council at that meeting or since then, welcome! You've probably received an email from me over the Summer, welcoming you and providing you with a whole lot of information. During this meeting, we to go over some of those items (as we call it "Synod Council 101") and hopefully explain questions that you may have had after receiving those emails.

Most of you, like me, have continued to stayed home on Sunday mornings as most of our Churches have gone virtual to protect our fellow Church members. And I am sure many of you are wondering where we go next? When is it safe to return? And how will our congregations look when we do return? How will our budgets look? I am convinced, as I was in my report in June, that the Spirit is at work as we stay at home to protect others. The Spirit is at work as we continue to do the work of the Church from our homes. And the Spirit will make sure that we will be ok, in whatever way our beloved Church looks like when this pandemic is over.

Since our last meeting, I have continued to participate in many (many) Zoom meetings. The Executive Committee met in July to discuss and vote on a number of items that we will talk about today. I thank each of the Executive Committee for their time and efforts (and putting up with another Zoom meeting).

I have been a member of our Synod's COVID 19 taskforce, which have continued to meet and share information over email over the past few months to discuss and make plans for the new situation we find ourselves in. Each person on the task force (Bishop Kevin Strickland, Pastor Jill Henning, Dr. Erica Bjornstad, Pastor Jonathan Trapp, Pastor Tom Clark, Dr. Winton King, and Pastor Taylor Burton-Edwards, in addition to myself) has been essential to our efforts. I remain ever thankful for the extremely hard work that the taskforce has done.

I have also participated in a brand new monthly Synod Vice President Zoom call, which has come about due to the cancelation of annual Vice President's Meeting due to Covid 19. This monthly meeting (which seems likely to continue past this pandemic) has been highly beneficial not only for fellowship, but in the discussion of strategies on best practices for how Synods should operate during this strange and different time. It also gave me a high appreciation for the fact that our Bishop's election was last year rather than this year.

Over the last few months, I have continued to have conversations with the Bishop and Synod Staff members on matters affecting our Synod. I wish to express my thanks to the Bishop for all his work (you think you've participated in a lot of Zoom meetings?). I want to thank Pastor Karen Boda for all of her work on preparing the Agenda and Exhibits for this meeting. I also want to thank Pastor Jill Henning, Pastor Michael Jannett, Melissa Fuller-Sims, Pastor Patti Axel, Carolyn Davis, Holly Liersch, and Pastor Matt Steinhauer for all of their hard work during this challenging time. The staff have each and every one of them risen to the occasion.

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

Imran Siddiqui
Vice President, ELCA Southeastern Synod