

Bishop Ann's Welcome Letter

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. Acts 2:44-47

Welcome to the 2022 Minneapolis Synod Assembly under the theme "Life Together!"

Just as Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrestled with what "life together" meant for Christians in Nazi Germany, we wonder what "life together" means for Christians in the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and racial injustice.

With Dr. Eric Barreto as our guide, we will delve into the book of Acts – the foundational text for Christian community. Dr. Barreto asks: *"How might we read Acts in this challenging moment? With imagination! Acts invites us to imagine the dazzling, surprising, and transformative ways God has acted in the past to draw us together. **And to be on the lookout for the ways God is active today.**"*

In addition to our study on Acts, we will enjoy:

- A devotion and greeting by Rev. Dr. Javier Goitía-Padilla, former Dean of the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico and currently ELCA Program Director for Theological Formation
- Worship and hymn singing led by Cantor Mark Sedio
- Inspiration from our VP Felecia Boone and Treasurer Ty Inglis (whose reports are so much more than reports!)
- Some surprising announcements and celebrations, including one from Archbishop Musa Filibus of Nigeria
- A unique opportunity to vote on welcoming Holy Cross Lutheran Church into the ELCA
- A delicious lunch and yummy snacks

As much as anything, we will rejoice at the chance to be together, in person, for the first time in three years!! In the recent months, we've all experienced how powerful these reunions can be. When our synod staff was finally able to return to work in the office, the energy was palpable. When we are finally able to hug family or friends after a Delta or Omicron outbreak, the joy is immense.

And, as we gather, we will imagine our shared future. We all wonder what the long-term effects of the pandemic will be on worshiping communities, especially the relationship between in-person gatherings and digital ministry. God's call for the church to engage people in new, faithful, and meaningful ways will be one of church's most important tasks for the future.

So, welcome! We're so glad you're here! And we pray that the Spirit will fill every heart and every moment as we gather, in-person, to experience "life together" in Jesus' name.

Bishop Ann Svennungsen