



Moving from Zorn Arena to the more spacious Olson addition at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire allowed voting members at this year’s Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Assembly to enjoy a bit more “elbow room.” Also new this year, electronic voting machines were used to record and tally votes, saving a significant amount of time and effort.

## 2011 Northwest Synod of Wisconsin assembly

# Engaging the real world with the gospel

“I am proud to be part of a church that does not shy away from engaging the real world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, even when it is difficult,” said Bishop Duane Pederson in his remarks to the 2011 Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Assembly. “[A church] where partnerships matter, where our mission reach is literally around the world ... and where deep relationships allow us to move forward in mission, even in challenging times.”

More than 500 voting members, visitors and guests gathered June 3–4 at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire to conduct the business of the synod and to explore the missional theme “Sent to the Cross Roads.”

Keynote presenter, Marty Stortz, professor of religion and vocation at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, led participants through a Bible study about life in the “resurrection zone.” She helped them come to an understanding that our God is a God of second chances and encouraged

people to think of discipleship as a journey without a map.

An interactive Bible study led by Karl Jacobson, professor of religion at Augsburg, encouraged people to think about how their lives intersect with the Bible on a daily basis and to consider that the crossroads are where lives and faith are changed.

The Rev. Mary Francis, ELCA church-wide staff, was present to give a report from the ELCA with the theme, “Freed in

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# Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

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Christ to Serve.” Her report included a video of ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, who proclaimed that the ELCA is a church that “rolls up its sleeves” and “acts out of gratitude for all we have been given.” Both brought thanks for our mission support that helps people here and throughout the world.

Periodically throughout the assembly, speakers presented brief “Mission Moment” stories from their experiences within their congregational context.

Clergy and laypeople from several congregations including Peace Lutheran, Menomonie; Taylor Lutheran, Taylor; Good Shepherd Lutheran and Saron Lutheran, Ashland; Christ the Servant Lutheran, Park Falls; New Scandinavia Lutheran, Dallas; Ezekiel Lutheran, River Falls; and Faith Lutheran, Balsam Lake, shared stories depicting ways in which they and their congregations have reached out beyond their doors to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

## Assembly business

During plenary sessions Friday and Saturday, the following resolutions



**Voting members listened attentively as speakers from partnership ministries informed them about their work within our synod.**



**Bishop Duane Pederson was assisted during worship by Sue Zahrbock, synod vice president, who completed her term this year.**

were passed:

• **Resolution 1: 2012-13 Mission Plan**—that the 2012-13 mission plan for the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin be adopted. Yes: 360, no: 21.

• **Resolution 2: 2012 Minimum Standards for Compensation and Benefits**—that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin approve the salary guidelines included in the pre-assembly packet of materials. The

salary standards were approved with a minor amendment to page 11 changing “45 to 50 hours a week” to “40 to 45 hours a week,” and in the following paragraph changing “13-14 time blocks” to “14-15 time blocks,” and “7-8 time blocks” to “8-9 time blocks.” Yes: 278, no: 80.

• **Resolution 3: Synod Assemblies**—that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin continue to hold annual synod assemblies as per the recommendation of the task force and Synod Council; and that assembly planners move assembly dates, subject to venue availability, to a Saturday and Sunday format with an optional Friday evening educational experience; and that assembly planners seek to create an inclusive, intergenerational synod assembly that takes full advantage of modern technology. Yes: 262, no: 92.

• **Resolution 4: Synod Bylaw Amendment Regarding Commission Structure**—that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin amend bylaw S11.01.02 of its constitution to reflect

current practice and to position this synod to meet our future needs in evangelical witness by adopting the attached constitutional changes. Yes: 345, no: 22.

• **Resolution 5: Creation Care Task Force**—that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin establish a Creation Care Task Force, which will be charged with aiding the synod, congregations and individuals in adopting creation care awareness and action into their lives and mission; and that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin seek to become a partner synod of Lutherans Restoring Creation in order to aid in networking with other synods, with no synod funding required; and that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin commit itself to support stewardship of creation in the following five areas: worship, education, property, personal discipleship, and public ministry/political action; and that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin recruit members, both lay and rostered, to serve on a Creation Care Task Force. Yes: 272, no: 62.

### Other action

We give thanks for the many ways we have been blessed to be a blessing to others. This year’s “quarter offering” totaled \$39,908 and was designated as follows: one-third to ELCA World Hunger and two-thirds to food security/sustainability in Malawi. The assembly offering collected at worship was \$8,447 and was given to support the ministry of the Synod Resource Center.

Bishop Pederson presided at wor-

**Laying on of hands: the Rev. Todd Iverson, assistant to the bishop, was commissioned as a Naval Reserve chaplain during the assembly. He was sworn in by Navy chaplain Peter Muschinske.**

ship Friday morning. His sermon, “The Church Has Left the Building,” is available on the synod website ([www.nwswi.org](http://www.nwswi.org)). Musicians from First Lutheran Church, Barron, joined with the assembly choir, under the direction of Robbie Joern, to provide the wonderful music for this uplifting service.

Unseasonably warm tem-

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**Vocalist Libby DeJardin entertained the group during dinner Friday evening. She is the daughter of our synod’s LYO coordinator, Carole DeJardin.**



**Saturday morning’s opening devotions were presented in the form of a skit by campus ministry.**



# Northwest Synod of Wisconsin



**The Faster Pastors—Brian Ferguson (left), Jay Ticknor and Jim Page—encouraged others to “Catch the Buzz” during Saturday morning’s run/walk to benefit the ELCA Malaria Campaign.**

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peratures didn’t dampen the enthusiasm as assembly-goers were treated to an evening of recreation at UW–Eau Claire’s Hilltop Center. Some people found a quiet corner for conversation, others shot a few games of pool, and some challenged their friends in highly competitive frames of bowling. Funds donated during the evening were added to the assembly hunger offering.

Bright yellow T-shirts caught plenty of attention during Saturday morning’s “Catch the Buzz” run/walk. The event, part of the ELCA Malaria Campaign in our synod, raised awareness of the illness and helped participants get a little exercise. They raised more than \$400 to combat malaria.

Saturday morning, each person was given a box of macaroni and cheese as a “seed” to start a food collection within their home congregation. Ultimately, the food will be donated to a local food pantry to help those in need—another tangible way to reach out and make a difference in the community.

The 2012 synod assembly will be held June 2-3 at UW–Eau Claire. □



**Whether they were playing a game of pool or bowling to benefit hunger, participants enjoyed the Friday evening activities.**



**Amy Fondroy Eich, pastor of Joy Lutheran Church, Prescott, found a cool and comfortable spot to take a break during the recreation time Friday evening.**