

Bishop's Newsletter - Assembly Edition May 2025



North/West Lower
Michigan Synod

P.O. Box 517
Dewitt, MI 48820

517-321-5066
mittensynod.org

In this Issue:

Tips and
tricks to help
you plan for
Synod
Assembly!

Special
Synod
Assembly
Edition

Planning Ahead

I'm going to Walt Disney World in late August. A curious few have asked how this trip fits into the start of the bishop's term on September 1 and, as I explained to them, the trip will either be a brief retreat from my work as bishop and I will return refreshed for a new term or I will go visit Mickey Mouse, have some fun, and return to Michigan ready for new opportunities. Either way, I am planning ahead.

As my family always does, we have been planning our trip to Walt Disney World for months. If we don't attend to the details, we might find ourselves standing on Main Street USA sharing a turkey leg for supper or locked out of the Magic Kingdom because the park reached capacity before we arrived. We know people who have had both experiences. And we have witnessed fellow guests heaping their frustration and blame on cast members when, in reality, it was the guests' fault for not doing their homework and planning ahead.

While I would never call Synod Assembly "The Most Magical Place on Earth," Synod Assembly is similar to Walt Disney World in that it requires a great deal of planning. Some of us have been planning for this assembly since June 2023 and plans are already underway for the 2026 Synod Assembly.

Like guests at Walt Disney World, voting members and visitors have their own planning to do. This includes deciding where they are going to have dinner on Sunday, reading the "Assembly Book," printing out worship resources, being aware of the schedule, and praying. When we don't do our homework and plan ahead, it is inappropriate to heap our frustration and blame on those staffing Synod Assembly when our frustration is our own fault. This special newsletter is intended to help us prepare, though the contents are not exhaustive.

As I prepare for Synod Assembly, it is important to me to share three things with you. First, I will not be preaching at this assembly because our friends at Churchwide determined that it might give me an unfair advantage in the bishop election. Preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments in our synod is one of the greatest parts of my call and I am therefore disappointed that I will not be preaching. However, I respect our friends at Churchwide and I will honor the process. As I will not be preaching, I am excited and grateful that two of my colleagues, Bishop Daniel Beaudoin and Bishop Tim Graham, will be preaching and I hope you will make time to attend these worship services.

Second, visitors need to sit in the visitor section and not with voting members. I know this is disappointing because we would all prefer to sit with our friends. This requirement again comes from our friends at Churchwide. And while we are disappointed, having voting members and visitors in separate sections helps our general elections and bishop election committees efficiently do their work. So we will honor the process and invite those looking to connect with friends to take advantage of the worship services, meals, and workshops as voting members and visitors will be able to sit together during those times.

Third, I am so very grateful for our synod staff. I honor them, respect them, am inspired by them, and have fun working with them. I cherish these relationships and want to ensure they are not forgotten in the busyness of Synod Assembly. If we seem a little anxious this assembly, it might be because we know each of us may need to plan for what we will be doing beginning September 1. So I ask you to pray especially for Ann, Rebecca, Chelsey, Kjersten, and Chrisy. As Dr. Taylor so eloquently shared in his reflection on our assembly theme, our work is to build each

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

other up. And while some use “the synod” to mean “the bishop,” it’s important we understand “the synod” is bigger than one person and that bishop elections affect more than one person. As you prepare for Synod Assembly, I invite you to read Dr. Taylor’s reflection (available in Section A of the Assembly Book) and consider how you can build up those participating in the assembly and care for the synod staff who work so hard to build our synod up.

Finally, don't forget to download the scavenger hunt app! Perhaps you will be one of the few to get a selfie with Craig and Mickey.

See you at assembly!

The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop



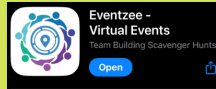
2025 SYNOD ASSEMBLY SCAVENGER HUNT

Featuring Eventzee

HOW TO PLAY

1

DOWNLOAD THE EVENTZEE APP



On your smartphone, go to the App Store (iOS) or Google Play store (Android) and search for “Eventzee.” Download the free App.

2

CREATE AN ACCOUNT

Fill in the fields to create an Eventzee account.

We recommend playing on a team! Only one account is needed for a team so if you’re playing on a team with other members of your congregation, just have one person create an account.

Submit the information by clicking “I Agree and Sign Up.”

3

ENTER THE JOIN CODE

After creating an account, you’ll be prompted to enter the event’s join code.

The join code is **MITTENSYNOD**

Once you enter the join code, click “Use Code” to join the event.

4

COMPLETE THE CHALLENGES

Review the list of challenges and complete them to earn points!

Challenges may involve taking photos or videos, scanning QR codes, entering text, or taking quizzes.

The scavenger hunt challenges will go live on May 16! The top 3 teams will receive prizes!

Challenges Go Live May 16!

Those attending Synod Assembly have the option to participate in the Synod Assembly Scavenger Hunt!

Similar to the ELCA Youth Gathering, this is an opportunity to connect with fellow participants throughout the Synod Assembly.

The scavenger hunt will be available through Eventzee, a free mobile application. Eventzee is available through the App Store (iPhone) and Google Play (Android).

We encourage voting members and visitors to download the application and set up an account prior to Synod Assembly.

We recommend playing on a team! This could be a congregation team or other group. Only one account is needed for a team so if you’re playing on a team with other members of your congregation, just have one person create an account.

Tasks may involve taking photos or videos, scanning QR codes, entering text or taking quizzes!

The top three teams will receive prizes packages from our friends at Augsburg Fortress!

May the odds be ever in your favor!

what is the ASSEMBLY BOOK?

All voting members and visitors are **strongly encouraged** to read the Assembly Book **in advance** of Synod Assembly so that they are fully prepared to participate in the business.

Given our synod's commitment to the environment, **printed copies of the Assembly Book (and worship bulletins) will not be provided.** Voting members and visitors should bring a computer/tablet/smartphone to access these resources. If you need a printed copy, please print it at home and bring it with you.

Any updates to the Assembly Book will be posted on the assembly page of the synod website. Please check the website frequently as information will be posted there leading up to and throughout Synod Assembly.

To make it easier to parse, the Assembly Book is divided into sections. Each section contains various reports and information centered around one topic. An overview of each section is provided below. It is **strongly encouraged** that voting members and visitors read the entire Assembly Book; however, if time is limited, a list of key parts to read is included below.

Section A - General Information (Agenda, Rules of Organization, etc.)
 Section B - Staff and Officer Reports
 Section C - Reports from Synod Ministries
 Section D - Reports from Shared Ministries
 Section E - Financial Reports
 Section F - Nominations

The Assembly Book is a series of pdf documents that is published on the synod website in advance of the Synod Assembly.

It contains important logistical information such as the agenda and rules of organization and procedure, reports from synod officers and ministries, and financial information such as the proposed budget and compensation guidelines.

How to Access:

1. Visit <https://mittensynod.org/events/assembly> in an internet browser.
2. Scroll down to "The Assembly Book" section.
3. Find the desired section.
4. Click "Download Section [Letter]"
5. A pdf document will open in your internet browser. You can read the section in the internet browser, download it to your computer, or print it.

Key Parts to Read:

- Assembly Theme Overview
- Building Up: A Reflection on the Synod Assembly Theme
by Dr. Walter Taylor
- Code of Conduct
- Agenda and Rules of Organization and Procedure
- 2025 Bishop Election Process
- Memorial A
- Report of the Bishop
- Report of the Vice President
- Report of the Treasurer
- Proposed Budget
- Proposed Compensation Guidelines
- Nominations Slate and Nominee Bios

WELCOME

to Synod Assembly

We are excited to have a number of visitors and special guests at the 2025 Synod Assembly!

Special guests include Deacon MaryAnn Schwabe, our Churchwide Representative, and the Region 6 Bishops.

If you would like to learn more about our special guests, please read Section A of the Assembly Book.

Visitors are registered participants who do not have voting privileges. These visitors include members of congregations both in and outside of our synod and representatives from Synod and ELCA Ministries. These visitors are welcome to attend the worship services, business sessions, workshops, meals, and display tables throughout the 2025 Synod Assembly. To access these sessions, all voting members and visitors must wear the name tag lanyard provided to them during check-in at the Assembly Desk.

Per ELCA Churchwide's requirements, **all visitors will need to sit in the assigned visitor section** throughout the business sessions of 2025 Synod Assembly. The visitor section will be a section of chairs in the back of the main conference room at the Comfort Inn & Suites. This requirement is to help our general elections and bishop elections committees during voting. Voting members and visitors will have opportunities to sit together during worship, meals, and workshops.

As a reminder, to attend Synod Assembly all voting members and visitors must have registered in advance. There is **no walk-in registration or drop in visitors**. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation!

What Should I Bring to Synod Assembly?

When packing for Synod Assembly, make sure to bring comfortable clothes and anything you will need for three days.

In addition, we recommend bringing:

- a sweater or sweatshirt (the conference center can be cold!)
- a computer/tablet/smartphone to access the Assembly Book and worship resources
- printed worship bulletins and songbook (if not accessing online)
- a pen for paper ballot voting and/or taking notes
- smartphone for scavenger hunt
- patience, a prayerful spirit, and a positive attitude!

What Do I Need for Assembly Sessions?

The business of Synod Assembly will take place over multiple meeting sessions. The agenda is available in Section A of the Assembly Book.

Make sure to bring the following to each session:

- name tag/lanyard (provided at check-in)
- red/green/white voting cards (provided at check-in)
- computer/tablet/smartphone to access the Assembly Book and worship resources
- printed worship bulletins and songbook (if not accessing online)
- a pen for paper ballot voting and/or taking notes
- patience, a prayerful spirit, and a positive attitude!

Code of Conduct for Synod Events

As part of registering for Synod Assembly, all voting members and visitors agreed to uphold the Code of Conduct for Synod Events created and approved by Synod Council in February 2025. The Code of Conduct is available in Section A of the Assembly Book and is also available at <https://bit.ly/3SikMLP>.

If you see or hear something that is inappropriate or causes concern during Synod Assembly, please contact Pastor Rosanne Anderson, Chair of the Code of Conduct Task Force promptly. The Task Force will address the matter, and if necessary, take appropriate action to resolve the issue, up to and including a person's removal from the event. We appreciate your dedication and support in making Synod Assembly a welcoming, kind, and safe place for all!

Where is the 2025 Synod Assembly Located?

All assembly sessions, worship services, and display tables will be held at the Comfort Inn & Suites, which is located at 2424 S. Mission St., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

All workshops will be held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, which is located at 320 South Bradley St., Mt Pleasant, MI 48858. Choir practice may also be held at Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Immanuel Lutheran Church is an 8 minute drive from the Comfort Inn & Suites. The Synod is not providing transportation between the two locations so voting members and visitors should plan travel via their own vehicle or arrange alternate transportation.

Blocks of hotel rooms for voting members and visitors are located at the Comfort Inn & Suites and the Fairfield Inn & Suites (2525 University Park Dr., Mt. Pleasant, MI 4885). The Fairfield Inn & Suites is a 4 minute walk (across the parking lot) from the Comfort Inn & Suites.

The check-in time at both the Comfort Inn & Suites and the Fairfield Inn & Suites is 3:00pm on May 18. The Assembly Desk will be located in the foyer of the Comfort Inn & Suites' Conference Center. It will be open for voting member and visitor check-in starting at 4:00pm on May 18.

How Do I Receive My Lanyard?

Voting members and visitors will need to check-in at the Assembly Desk when they arrive at Synod Assembly. During check-in, voting members and visitors will receive their name tag lanyards and voting members will receive their green/red/white voting cards.

Voting members and visitors will need to wear their name tag lanyards throughout Synod Assembly. Voting members will need to bring their voting cards and a pen to each assembly session.

The Assembly Desk hours are available in the agenda in Section A of the Assembly Book. Please make note of the hours and plan to arrive and check-in at the desk prior to the session you wish to attend. For example, if you would like to vote in Meeting 1 of the 2025 Synod Assembly (May 18 from 8:00-9:15pm), you will need to arrive and check-in between the hours of 4:00pm and 7:15pm on May 18.

Is There a Schedule?

Yes! The agenda is located in Section A of the Assembly Book.

The Assembly Book is located on the Assembly page of the synod website: <https://mittensynod.org/events/assembly>.

The agenda has the basic overview of the business, greetings, breaks, and presentations included in the 2025 Synod Assembly.

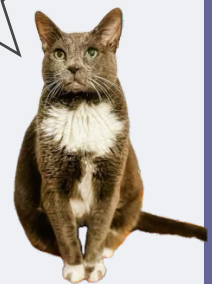
Where Can I Find Food?

There are lots of food options in Mt. Pleasant! Voting members and visitors will have snacks and Monday lunch and dinner provided, but will need to find dinner on their own Sunday night.

Some options for dinner, coffee runs, and snacks include:

Olive Garden
 Red Lobster
 Texas Roadhouse
 Jet's Pizza
 McDonald's
 Los Amigos
 Five Guys
 Wendy's
 Jimmy John's
 Panera
 Culver's

Tell me your favorite restaurant meal! Bonus points if it's cat friendly!



Starbucks
 Tim Hortons
 Cops & Doughnuts Central Precinct
 Insomnia Cookies
 CRUMBL Cookies

What Time is the First Session?

The first business session will be held from 8:00pm - 9:45pm on Sunday, May 18. The first session includes the first ballot for the office of bishop. If you would like to vote in this session, you will need to check in at the Assembly Desk by 7:15pm.

things to do at **SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

Participate in the Business Sessions

The 2025 Synod Assembly is divided into different business sessions. An overview of the different sessions is available in the agenda found in Section A of the Assembly Book.

This year's business includes reviewing a memorial, adopting a budget and compensation guidelines, electing synod council and committee members, and a bishop election.

It is voting members' responsibility to come prepared and ready to participate in the business of Synod Assembly!

Visit Display Tables

Display Tables featuring a variety of Synod and ELCA Ministries will be available to visit throughout the Synod Assembly!

Display tables are located in the rooms off of the main meeting room at the Comfort Inn & Suites. They will be available Sunday evening through Tuesday morning.

Information about the different display tables is available in Section A of the Assembly Book.

Gather with Friends and Colleagues

As this is an in-person event, voting members and visitors are encouraged to gather and connect with each other. Meet colleagues for dinner on Sunday, spend some time exploring Mt. Pleasant, make new friends at the display tables, or relax and enjoy the hotel amenities!

As we want this assembly to be welcoming and safe for all, please make sure to review and uphold the code of conduct! If you have any concerns during the assembly, reach out to Pastor Rosanne Anderson, Chair of the Code of Conduct Task Force (revrosanne@aol.com).

Worship with Others

There are four opportunities to worship together during Synod Assembly:

- Opening Worship (Sunday Evening)
- Morning Prayer (Monday Morning)
- Evening Prayer (Monday Evening)
- Closing Worship (Tuesday Afternoon)

Worship bulletins are available on the synod website. Printed copies will not be provided so please bring a device to access them or print a copy at home and bring it with you!

Attend a Workshop

As part of registering, voting members and visitors had the option to select a workshop to attend on Monday afternoon. If you chose to attend a workshop, it is listed on your name tag.

Workshops provide an opportunity to gather together and learn more about specific ministries in our synod and the ELCA.

Descriptions of the different workshops are available in Section A of the Assembly Book.

Participate in the Scavenger Hunt

Experience a new way to connect with each other and engage with aspects of the Synod Assembly!

Create a team, download the Eventzee app, and join the 2025 Synod Assembly Scavenger Hunt. Learn more about how to play in Section A of the Assembly Book.

Complete the challenges by 11am on Tuesday for a chance to win a prize package!

Pick Up a Gun Lock

In partnership with End Gun Violence Michigan and the Michigan State Police, all participants are invited to take home a gun lock to use themselves, give to someone who needs one, or distribute as part of a food pantry or other outreach event.

We thank End Gun Violence Michigan and the Michigan State Police for providing these tools to help us keep each other safe!