



# Tri-County Ministry News

July — August 2024

## Synod Assembly Report by Marla Larson

Eighty rostered ministers, 183 lay voting delegates and 33 visitors convened at the 2024 Synod Assembly at the Holiday Inn, Fargo on June 1<sup>st</sup>- 2<sup>nd</sup>. The theme for the assembly was “Challenge: Learn, Discern and Respond.”

Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy, Native Theologian, was the keynote speaker on both Saturday and Sunday. She is the first Native American woman in the ELCA to graduate with a PhD. Her Lakota heritage and spirituality influences her Christianity and instills healing. She said, “Connectedness to ancestors is important as we carry them in everything we do.” We learned many Lakota words.

**Hey’okha** is a sacred clown or contrary who forces people to take notice of what is going on. For her, John the Baptist was a hey’okha as he challenged people’s assumptions.

Prairie Rose Conference met in caucus. Marvin Goplen was elected to synod council. Marla Larson was elected as lay delegate to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Jeffrey Halvorson, conference president, was re-elected to another 3 year term. Rev. Amy Kippen was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Approximately \$600 was in a savings account; a motion was made to clear the account by dividing the money between Red Willow Ministries and EaND Synod. Rev. Amy Kippen and Bob Schlotman are voting members at large to the 2025 churchwide assembly. Bob Schlotman is the Prairie Rose representative on Synod Council. Jenna Larson from Hannaford is the Young Adult representative to Synod Council.

Bishop Tessa presented the 2024 Strategic Plan and the Holy Innovations Endowment Fund. To find out more about check the Synod Website. The budget was a hot topic. Many delegates spoke to the budget as cuts were made.

Two resolutions were approved. Resolution #1 included the 2025 compensation and policy guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Paid Lay Staff. Can find this at the synod website. Resolution #2 is a Recommitment to Welcome which reads: “We, as the EaND Synod ELCA, welcome all into the fullness of God’s boundless love, without exception. This welcome is inclusive of people of every race, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical or mental ability, sex, or station in life. United in Christ, we pledge to use and celebrate our differences as gifts for our work together in all things, including racial equity, intentional invitations, and radical hospitality. Inspired by Christ, we commit to advocate for justice, working for dignity, equity, and wholeness for all people.”

Sunday morning Dr. Elna Solvang, EaND Synod Vice President reported on what she has seen in the synod. CATS! C- compassion, community, caring and gift cultivating. A= adapting and agility. T= trust, tied to one another to heal. S= sharing wisdom, time and resources.

Kristen Opalinski, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Manager gave the state of the ELCA address. Some highlights: \$20.2 million for World Hunger. God’s work, Our hands celebrated 10 years in 2023. \$13.6 million for Lutheran Disaster Response.

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**Tri-County Ministry**  
**Annual Parish Worship Service**

Sunday, August 4  
Red Willow Bible Camp Chapel

10:00 — Coffee and doughnuts  
10:30 — Worship

Noon — **Potluck picnic** on the deck at the cabin of Marvin and Vickie Goplen at the Red Willow Resort (cabin is located close to restaurant)

All are welcome!

*(Synod Assembly report continued)*

ELCA is working on the draft of the social statement on Civic Life and Faith. The commission for a ReNewed Lutheran Church has met five times to restructure the ELCA and change the purpose statement. Go to [ELCA.org/CRLC](http://ELCA.org/CRLC) to learn more.

During the closing worship, Trinity in Binford was recognized for their giving to World Hunger. Rev. Deborah Blood, UCC Northern Plains Conference Minister, gave the sermon on “Living Water.” She reminded us that water can be fun, but it is also destructive and we can be afraid of it. Water is wild, it gets in, and is always there. Jesus is our living water. She quoted Gracie Burns’ message to George when she died. “Never place a period where God has placed a comma.” And she also quoted *Return to Love* by Marianne Williamson:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our Light, not our Darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the World.

There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won’t feel unsure around you.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone.

As we let our own Light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

We were left with this challenge by Rev. Deborah: “What do we dare to be because Jesus gives us living water?”

The assembly closed with communion and the sending hymn *Baptized and Set Free*.

# Red Willow Ministries Annual Quilts and More Auction

## ONLINE AUCTION

Opens at 8:00 .m. August 17

Closes at Noon August 22

(Link is on the camp's website)

## ON SITE AUCTION

Saturday, August 24

10:00 — Viewing opens and silent auction begins

11:00 until gone — Lunch

12:30 — Live auction

Donations are already being received at the camp for the auctions. For more info, please visit the website [Redwillowministries.com](http://Redwillowministries.com)

If you wish to donate an item to the online or on site auction, donation forms are available on the website.

Need a raffle ticket? Contact Theresa Fiebiger or email the camp office — [office@redwillowministries.com](mailto:office@redwillowministries.com)

## Stewardship Planning for Small Congregations

August 27, 10am-4:30pm  
Trinity Lutheran, Cooperstown

How do we talk about money, do a stewardship campaign in a small congregation, tell the story of our mission and ministry?

Join Rev. Tim Brown, Director for Congregational Stewardship for the ELCA, and Deacon Erin Power for a day of stewardship planning for this fall. Participants will leave with new tools for telling the stories of their ministry and a plan for a fall stewardship focus. This day is for lay leaders, rostered ministers, and synod lay ministers. Individuals are welcome; congregations are encouraged to bring at least two people. Register on the synod website.

## Trivia Q & A (from the last newsletter)

1. How many books in the Bible?
2. How many books in the Old Testament?
3. How many books in the New Testament?
4. How many different authors contributed to the Bible?
5. How many gospels are there? Name them.
6. Who wrote the most books in the Bible?
7. Who wrote the majority of the Psalms?
8. How many years of silence from God were there between the Old and New Testaments?
9. What's an easy way to remember how many books in the Old Testament?
10. What's an easy way to remember how many books in the New Testament?

1. 66
2. 39
3. 27
4. 40
5. Four — Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
6. Paul
7. David
8. 400 years
9. Old = 3 letters; Testament = 9 letters put together: 39
10. New = 3 letters; Testament = 9 letters 3x9 = 27

***TRI-COUNTY MINISTRY STAFF***

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***Theresa Fiebiger ..... 676.2761  
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***Lay Leaders   Truley Trautman, SAM  
                  Marla Larson, SAM  
                  Gilbert Black  
                  Marvin Goplen, SAM***

***TCM CONGREGATIONS***

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***First Presbyterian of Cooperstown  
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***Grace of Grace City***

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**We exist to serve Christ in harmony  
with our member churches and  
communities.**