



2023 Synod Assembly gathered at Bethany Baptist Church in Syracuse, New York June 2-3 with the theme G.R.A.C.E. Mindset: Restorative Justice. We worshiped, sang, prayed, laughed, cried, shared time together in conversations and at meals, learned about Restorative Justice practices, welcomed guests, received reports, and took actions of the work of the church together. Highlights included:

- The Keynote Address by The Rev. Amy Reumann, Senior Director for Witness in Society who focused our assembly on what Restorative Justice looks like in the criminal justice system, and what God’s reconciling and restorative justice looks like in the church.
- A Combined “Conversation” with the Racial Justice and Gender Justice Task Force Facilitators The Rev. Kwame Pitts and The Rev. Tonya Eza sharing how justice work is a part of what it means to be the church for the sake of the world, today.
- The “Bee-Generous” World Hunger Campaign raised thousands of dollars (final report to be shared by the Hunger Justice Team) for World Hunger including

designated funding to support Honeybees and community gardens in communities living with food scarcity. Special thanks to Melissa “Bee” and the whole committee for their hard work.

- Engaging workshops assembly Winter Kits, learning about Racial and Gender Justice, and Advocacy with the ELCA and New York State Council of Churches.
- The celebration of the UNYS Discipleship Award recipient, Maureen Gensler. Maureen is the chair of the Hunger Justice Committee and member of Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Depew, NY.
- The celebration of significant congregation anniversaries and the anniversary of ordination of many of our rostered leaders.
- Many wonderful reports including from United Lutheran Seminary, Seafarer’s Ministry, Atonement Lutheran Church and The Barbara Macholz Grimaldi Legacy Fund, Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center, The Women of the ELCA, the ELCA Foundation, ELCA Fund for Leaders, New York State Council of Churches, New Mission communities, and Synod Staff.
- The approval of the 2024-2025 Mission Proposal
- Elections: Pastor Andrew Nelson was elected to Synod Council from the Hudson Mohawk Conference, Gary Roller was elected to Synod Council from the Genesee Finger Lakes Conference. Atif Dean was elected to Synod Council to serve in one of two, at-large seats designated for a person of color or whose original language is other than English. Will Platnick was elected to a lay position with the Discipline Committee.
- Resolutions approved included a resolution permitting Ministers of Word and Service to serve as a Conference Dean, providing Synod Assembly voting privileges to Assigned Synod Authorized Ministers, creating a designated at-large Synod Council seat for a person who identifies as LGBTQIA2S+, and supporting New York State legislation addressing the debt crisis for developing nations through the New York Taxpayer and International Debt Crises Protection Act.
- Wonderful worship experiences throughout the assembly.
- Outdoor Fellowship at the Doubletree Hotel, and dinner from Dinosaur Barbecue
- The gracious hospitality of Bethany Baptist Church and their staff and ministers.
- And so much more!