



Assembly Pictures by 3MorrPhotos

DIOS ESTÁ AQUÍ | GOD IS HERE

The 2025 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly gathered under the theme “**Dios está aquí. God is Here.**” This powerful reminder of God's ever-present spirit shaped three days of worship, learning, storytelling, and visioning for the future of ministry across the synod.

Hosted at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque, NM, the assembly brought together lay and rostered leaders from across the region. The theme was grounded in Scripture, particularly Exodus 3:1–15, where Moses encounters God in the burning bush, reminding attendees of God’s presence and call to leadership. Other key scriptures included Psalm 139, Matthew 18, and John 3.



Pictured: Pastor Rhonda Newby-Torres and Luis Lujan, Luther House

HOLY STORIES

The Assembly invited participants to share their personal stories of what it means to declare, “Dios está aquí. God is Here.” This invitation encouraged individuals to reflect on and express their experiences of God's presence in their lives. Through these shared narratives, the community was able to explore the profound significance of recognizing and affirming the divine presence among them.



Pictured: Meghan Johnston Aelabouni and Synod Council Youth Rep, Emmy Baylis



ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD SYNOD ASSEMBLY

MEMORIALS & RESOLUTIONS PASSED

SUMMARY OF THE MEMORIAL AND RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD 2025 ASSEMBLY

The majority of the voting members of the 2025 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly voted in favor of one memorial, **Stand up for Human Rights, an End to the Occupation of Palestine, and Recognition of Palestinian Statehood**. This memorial will be submitted for adoption at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

The Resolves of this memorial read:

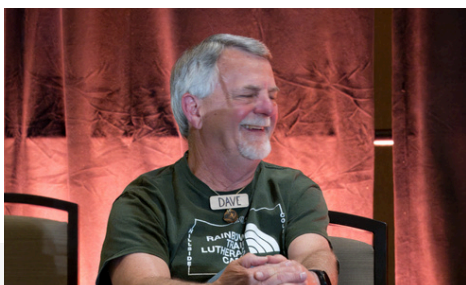
RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage ELCA members to advocate for the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives condemning the human rights violations listed above and calling on the U.S. government to

- recognize Palestine as a sovereign state and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations;
- halt military assistance to Israel (especially bombs and equipment that have been used to devastate Gaza), investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law, and work to end the genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza;
- reject schemes to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and work to end the rampant settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

This memorial was submitted by the Rocky Mountain Global Church Network



BLESSINGS

***Pictured Left:** Dave Jarvis, Executive Director of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, celebrated for 37 years of ministry*

***Pictured Right:** Ruth Hoffman, celebrated for her years of service as Synod Council Vice President*





ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD SYNOD ASSEMBLY

MEMORIALS & RESOLUTIONS PASSED

THREE RESOLUTIONS WERE ALSO ADOPTED BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The first, **The Campus Ministry Resolution to the 2025 Rocky Mountain Synod**, was submitted by the Rocky Mountain Campus Ministry Committee. The Resolves read:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod in Assembly support and affirm Campus Ministry as a crucial part of the whole church's ministry to and with young adults by:

- encouraging all of its members, pastors, support staff, representatives, and friends to pray for and support Rocky Mountain Synod Campus Ministries in proclaiming God's Word on our college and university campuses.
- lifting up campus ministry in print, online publications, and other media systems
- encouraging financial support from congregations and individual members both through benevolence to the Rocky Mountain Synod and direct support to RMS campus ministries
- encouraging congregations to highlight campus ministry one Sunday each year and strengthen their ongoing relationships with campus ministry and develop new relationships and methods of support, and

RESOLVED, that we embrace campus ministry as a way to encourage young adults in faith formation and leadership and celebrate that these young people grow to be pastors, lay leaders, teachers, and more within our congregations, and become leaders in our communities, and across the globe.

The second resolution, **Honoring Indigenous Peoples Through Faith, Respect, and Action**, was submitted by the Rocky Mountain Synod Creation Care Team. The Resolves read:

Therefore, be it resolved: that Lutherans of the RMS, in this time of natural resource challenges and opportunities, address Indigenous peoples through meaningful action appropriate to each state and local setting in the RMS.

Be it further resolved: that congregations be encouraged to engage with ELCA documents to guide their understanding of the underlying causes of harm to Indigenous peoples in the United States and within the RMS,

Be it further resolved: that congregations be encouraged to use appropriate land acknowledgements (6,7) of Tribal nations and Indigenous peoples for church gatherings, worship, programs and written materials,

Be it further resolved: that congregations be encouraged to study and utilize educational resources that address changing climate impacts to the entire RMS with special attention to the long-term stewardship of land, air and water,

Be it further resolved: that congregations be encouraged to recognize the value of indigenous ways of caring for land and creation and work to incorporate these values and methods in creation care policies and activities,

Be it further resolved: that congregations be encouraged to engage with and support Indigenous peoples and organizations that educate, assist and lift up tribal rights, repair social injustices, and spread stewardship knowledge.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD SYNOD ASSEMBLY

MEMORIALS & RESOLUTIONS PASSED

The third, **Renewing Our Welcome: Strengthening Our Reconciling in Christ Commitment**

Whereas all people are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and are called to love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34 and all people include those who identify as Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, or Asexual (LGBTQIA+);

Whereas the Rocky Mountain Synod in assembly adopted its welcome statement and became a Reconciling in Christ Synod, affirming its commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the life of the church;

Whereas LGBTQIA+ people celebrate their identities at various times throughout the year, including but not limited to Coming Out Day (Oct. 10), Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov. 20), Transgender Day of Visibility, Bisexual Awareness Day, and Pride Month;

Whereas the ELCA Conference of Bishops has affirmed in its statements a commitment to stand with those who are marginalized and oppressed;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Rocky Mountain Synod renew its commitment as a Reconciled in Christ Synod in the following ways:

1. Public Acknowledgment & Education

- The Synod office is encouraged to prominently acknowledge LGBTQIA+ observances (Coming Out Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Pride Month, Bisexual Awareness Day, etc.) through the Synod newsletter, website, and other communications.
- The bishop, alongside other pastors, deacons, synod staff, and lay leaders of this synod, resolve to publish statements and reflections in the synod newsletter to highlight the significance of these events for the life of the church and the wider world.

2. Worship & Community Engagement

- The Synod office is encouraged to support, encourage, and provide resources for congregations to observe Transgender Day of Remembrance and RIC Sunday.
- Synod staff is encouraged to actively participate in these services, reaffirming the synod's Reconciled in Christ status and commitment to LGBTQIA+ justice.

3. Advocacy & Public Witness

- The Rocky Mountain Synod, through the leadership of Bishop Megan and Lutheran Advocacy, will advocate against laws targeting LGBTQIA+ individuals in accordance with the social statements of this church.
- The Synod office will provide resources and guidance for congregations, clergy, and lay leaders to engage in advocacy and public witness in their communities.

4. Congregational Encouragement & Support

- The Synod office is encouraged to equip and encourage congregations to consider becoming Reconciled in Christ congregations, offering training, mentorship, and networking with existing RIC communities.

Submitted by: Pastor Bill Dohle, King of Kings, Pueblo, and Pastor Michael Stadtmueller, Our Savior, Ft. Collins



ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD SYNOD ASSEMBLY

ELECTIONS & SPECIAL GUESTS

At the 2025 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly, the assembly affirmed the following leaders to guide the mission and ministry of the church:

Vice President: Ray Ferry

- **Consultation Committee**
 - Matthew Kersten-Gray
 - Pattie Mather
- **Discipline Committee**
 - Ralston Deffenbaugh
- **Campus Ministry Committee**
 - Aaron Graff
- **Nominating Committee**
 - Kylie Jones
 - Mandy Achterberg
 - Paul Pane
 - Thania Drake

The Village Exchange Center



Pastor Marcel Narucki, a Lutheran minister and former Camaldolese monk, co-founded the Village Exchange Center (VEC) in Aurora, Colorado, alongside his stepdaughter Amanda Blaurock. In 2017, they transformed the declining St. Matthew Lutheran Church into a nonprofit dedicated to celebrating religious and cultural diversity. The VEC serves as a community hub for immigrants and refugees, offering programs like ESL classes, a food pantry, and multi-faith worship services. It has become a model for inclusive community-building in a diverse urban setting. The documentary, “My Father’s House” was a highlight of the Assembly.



Pictured: Pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey,
Assembly Chaplain

CREATIVE MIXERS

The Assembly was invited to share their favorite hymns and the types of music they listen to most, along with the reasons behind their preferences.



Pictured: Pastor Matthew Weber
(Boulder/Broomfield Synod Council Rep)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

**WORSHIP, ABQ ADVENTURES &
SYNOD STAFF**



ABQ ADVENTURES

Synod participants immersed themselves in Albuquerque's vibrant culture through activities like Beer & Hymns, painting sessions, s'mores by the fire, and reflective labyrinth walks. Hosted by local ELCA congregations and Campus Ministry, the evening blended fellowship, creativity, and spiritual reflection, offering a memorable Albuquerque-style adventure.

WORSHIP

The Assembly was blessed to worship & praise God together, with opening & closing worship services led by Lay Ministers from around the Synod. Morning prayer was led by Campus Ministry & Pr Kate Davidson led a morning prayer complete with a hot air balloon!

Photo by Pr. Kate Davidson

CREATIVE MIXERS

The Assembly was invited to share their craziest camp memories and encouraged to connect with others in their congregations who share similar interests and passions.



*Pictured: Pastor Gary Sandberg,
Synod Council Metro South Rep*

**At the 2025 Rocky Mountain
Synod Assembly, the assembly
was introduced to the Synod
Staff Team:**

Bishop Meghan Johnston
Aelabouni

Pr Barbara Berry-Bailey

Fr Quirino Cornejo

Pr Chris Davis

Pr Diana Linden-Johnson

Pr Katie Emery (Temporary)

Jon Johnson

Kurt Rager

Dn Mary Stoneback

Yvonne Wilken

Pr Sara Wirth



*Pictured: Jon Johnson, Synod Minister
for Finances & Human Resources*