



*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

Thank you to all who participated in the 2025 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly—in person, online, or in spirit. Together, we listened, discussed, and made bold decisions for the sake of the world. Highlights include:

### **Memorial Passed:** Human Rights & Palestinian Statehood

The Assembly adopted a memorial urging the ELCA and U.S. government to:

- Advocate for Palestinian and Israeli human rights
- Recognize Palestinian statehood and UN membership
- Review U.S. military aid to Israel
- Support peace efforts by Lutheran and ecumenical partners

### **Resolution 1:** Campus Ministry

The Synod affirmed support for campus ministries through prayer, funding, and stronger congregational partnerships.

### **Resolution 2:** Honoring Indigenous Peoples

Congregations are encouraged to:

- Learn about Indigenous history and rights
- Use land acknowledgments
- Support Indigenous-led justice and sustainability efforts

### **Resolution 3:** Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Commitment

The Synod reaffirmed its commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion by:

- Highlighting LGBTQIA+ observances
- Promoting RIC Sunday and Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Opposing anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation

Thank you for being part of this church body striving for justice, inclusion, and God's mission.



## 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

## 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*



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

### 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.*

**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*