



CW REFLECTIONS

Bishop Meghan Johnston Aelabouni

Although I've attended many synod assemblies—and even served as a North American delegate to the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in 2010—I've never participated in an ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

I'm eager to represent our Rocky Mountain Synod (complete with "Dios está aquí" shirts and hundreds of tiny Jesus figures to share—because *#everybodyneedsaLittleJesus!*).

After a year as bishop, I understand my role more deeply, so I'll be prayerfully listening for the Spirit's guidance as we elect a bishop and secretary for the next six years. May our decisions reflect the boldness, courage, and faith God calls us to.

I recognize that this assembly may feel distant from the daily realities of congregational ministry. Yet it's precisely those on-the-ground ministries that shape our delegates' perspectives, prayers, and decisions. Each voting member isn't bound to synod or bishop instructions, but called to listen, learn, discern, and act as the Spirit leads. This assembly is where "the ELCA" expresses what it believes, teaches, and prioritizes in ministry.

Please pray for us as we seek clarity on how the ELCA can faithfully meet the moment—not for our own sake, but, as our theme reminds us, for the life of the world that God loves and sent Jesus to redeem and heal.

EMMY BAYLIS

Emmy Baylis is a youth representative on Synod Council from First Lutheran in Colorado Springs. She will be a senior at Rampart High School. Right after Churchwide Assembly, Emmy heads out on college visits to Luther, St. Olaf, Gustavus Adolphus, Augustana, and Concordia Moorhead.

Emmy is involved at First working with the Children's ministry team and Peel House volunteers. She especially loves working with kindergarten age kids and all their shenanigans. She has participated in four mission trips, the last one just ending on July 20th after spending 8 days in Ecuador with the good people of Bethany Lutheran Church in Cherry Hills, Denver.

Emmy is excited to see the larger church come together as one body. Her faith drives her call to lead by example as a young adult in the church who wants to see the church grow for future generations. Emmy says **“the church is important to me because it’s a community that lifts me up and reminds me that I have purpose beyond what I might know now.”**

Emmy is also excited to hang out with her pal, Bishop Meghan.





Deacon Sarah Bjornebo is a Colorado native who loves hiking, gardening, biking, singing in the Augustana Chancel Choir, coaching pre-professional dancers, and playing outside with family and friends.

DEACON SARAH BJORNEBO

Dn. Sarah serves as the Director of Discernment for the Lutheran Diaconal Association (LDA). The LDA has been training individuals to serve the church and the world for 106 years and just celebrated the 800th member of the community. She accompanies individuals as they discern a call to diakonia. Diakonia, a Greek word which means service, is defined as prophetic acts of justice inspired by faith. The church is not the church without diakonia.

Deacon Sarah is honored to have been elected by the 2024 RMS Synod Assembly to serve as a voting member of the Churchwide Assembly. She is looking forward to the important elections and work that we will do together. She is also excited to assist with the opening worship and serve on Reference and Counsel. **“I’m looking forward to connecting with others as we strive to boldly live our faith through acts of love and justice, ‘for the life of the world.’”**

PASTOR KATIE CHULLINO

Katie Chullino serves as pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Longmont, Colorado. She is deeply involved in every aspect of church life—from shampooing carpets and unlocking doors to small plumbing repairs, weeding, teaching confirmation and adult education, all while fulfilling her pastoral duties.

When she's not doing church things, her hobby is developing new hobbies—pottery and teaching their dog, Tater, new words are among her favorites.

Katie is excited about participating in the ELCA Churchwide Assembly's voting process on the Faith and Civic Life social statement, a topic that one of her adult education groups studied and responded to last year.

She looks forward to bringing their collective wisdom to Assembly and after the event, strengthening Bethlehem's connection to the broader church.



TERRY COLE

“Hi I'm Terry Cole. I am a member of St Paul Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, NM. I served on Synod Council, and am the Companion Synods representative on the Global Church Network. My interests are singing, hiking, kayaking, and reading.”



CELIA DAVIS

Bethel Lutheran Church
Loveland, CO,

“Hello! My name is Celia Davis and I’m so incredibly excited to be apart of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly! I am a junior in high school and absolutely love my beautiful state of Colorado! **I’m also passionate about serving and supporting others through the love and justice of Jesus Christ and can’t wait to explore new communities at this Assembly!**”

VICKY DAUB

Vicky Daub, a lifelong member of the Rocky Mountain Synod, worships at Bethany in Cherry Hills Village, CO, and lives in Highlands Ranch with her husband, Larry. They’ve been married at Joy in Parker, CO. nearly 35 years ago.

Vicky is the Executive Director of the Veteran Servant Corps Project, a ministry of the synod, and a retired high school math teacher. An avid reader, she cherishes quiet moments with a good book.

She’s long dreamed of attending an ELCA Churchwide Assembly and is honored to represent the Rocky Mountain Synod as a lay delegate this year. **She’s especially excited for the worship services and for participating in the important decisions ahead—including electing the next ELCA Bishop.**





RAY FERRY

Ray Ferry, Vice President of the Rocky Mountain Synod, lives in Monument, CO, and worships at Trinity Lutheran Church. A proud University of Tennessee alum, he jokes that his blood “runs a very particular shade of orange” 🍊

After eight years on Synod Council, Ray felt called to deeper service and accepted the vice-presidential role when Ruth stepped down. While he'll spend more time on Zoom, he's most thrilled to collaborate with Churchwide, Region 2, and local congregations to advance the ELCA with hope and creativity.

Ray sees Council's role as the voice of the people—listening, supporting the Bishop and staff, and charting a faithful path forward. His prayer this season is that the Holy Spirit guide every decision. Though we're not perfect, he trusts that, with God's help, we can choose love and act with purpose.

Outside of meetings, Ray loves simple joys: cheering on UT football on Saturdays, off-road adventures with his wife, and online gaming—feel free to ask him about it!

He asks for your prayers. In a world often divided, may we respond in love and remember we are one in Christ.

Ray looks forward to joining the others at this year's Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix!



MARISSA SEUC HESTER

Marissa Seuc Hester serves as Director for Faith Formation at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church in Louisville, CO.

KEN MALDONADO

I'm looking forward to learning more about the broader church—how we live out our shared call to proclaim the gospel in all corners of the ELCA. I'm especially excited (and honored) to participate in electing our next Presiding Bishop.

This is a holy moment of discernment, and it matters deeply to me because the church's leadership shapes how we show up for justice, inclusion, and the flourishing of every child of God.

As someone called to serve as, this gathering connects my local ministry to the wider body of Christ. It reminds me that I'm not alone—and that the Spirit is still moving, stirring us toward bold love and faithful witness in the world.



Ken serves as Vicar of Zion Lutheran Church Idaho Springs, CO

Ken also currently serves as Executive Director of Domus Pacis Family Respite in Summit County.



PASTOR JOEL PANCOAST

Pastor Joel Pancoast has served at Zion Lutheran Church in Loveland, Colorado, for the past 17 years. He and his wife have two daughters in college: Sophia, a junior at Pacific Lutheran University, and Hannah, now a freshman at Luther College.

In his free time, Joel stays active through running, biking, and hiking—and takes full advantage of Colorado winters, skiing as much as possible.

In a time of rapid change for both church and world, Joel carries deep hope and strong expectations for the church's witness to others. **He feels grateful for the opportunity to contribute to shaping the church's future gospel witness as important decisions unfold at this year's Churchwide Assembly.**