

Assembly Highlights

NEWS FROM THE DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD ASSEMBLY · JUNE 2010

Herz-Lane elected bishop on fifth ballot

"Brothers and sisters, I want you to go out with me into the neighborhood and do mission and ministry on the street corners." With that call to action, the Rev. Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane, currently serving as an assistant to the bishop and director of evangelical outreach for the Delaware-Maryland Synod, accepted the call as bishop.

Herz-Lane was elected to a six-year term on the fifth ballot Saturday morning at the Synod Assembly, held June 10-12 at the Eisenhower Conference Center, Gettysburg, Pa. His opponent on the fifth ballot, the Rev. John D. Ranney, a retired pastor from Delaware, garnered 224 votes to Herz-Lane's 255.



A bishop is elected using a procedure called the ecclesiastical ballot, in which the first ballot serves as the nominating ballot. Some 98 names of ELCA pastors were proposed on that first ballot, taken Thursday afternoon as the assembly began.

The second ballot contained 43 names, from which the top seven vote-getters went on to the third ballot. Those pastors were the Rev. James Cobb (Ascension Church, Towson, Md.), the Rev. Michael Dubsy (St. Luke Church, Hampden, Baltimore), Assistant to the Bishop Mary Miller-Zurell, Assistant to the Bishop Virginia Price, the Rev. John Sabatelli (Christ Church, Inner Harbor, Baltimore), Ranney and Herz-Lane.

The third ballot narrowed the field to three names to appear on the fourth ballot: Herz-Lane, Ranney and Sabatelli. Fourth ballot results showed that Herz-Lane received 224 votes, Ranney 168 and Sabatelli 116, which meant that Herz-Lane and Ranney would go on to the fifth ballot.

Interest in this year's election ran so high that the assembly attendance was record setting. As of Friday night, 642 people were in attendance: 548 voting members and 114 visitors.

Assembly approves \$3 million budget, etc.

The election of a bishop was far from the only business on the mind of voting members. Over the course of three days, they discussed at length an array of resolutions and the proposed 2011 Faith Spending Plan (budget). The assembly...

- approved, by a vote of 297 yes, 36 no, 19 abstain, the **2011 Faith Spending Plan** as proposed by the Synod Council, authorizing expenditures of slightly more than \$3 million.
- designated Nov. 21, 2010, Christ the King Sunday, as **ELCA World Hunger Appeal Sunday** in the Delaware-Maryland Synod. Congregations were further encouraged to make support of the Hunger Appeal a year-round emphasis, with recognitions given annually at the Synod Assembly by the Hunger Mission Force to model congregations for their support of the appeal.
- designated July 18, 2010, as **Lutheran Volunteer Corps Sunday** in recognition of the 30th anniversary of that group.
- conferred upon the Rev. H. Gerard Knoche the honorary title of **Bishop Emeritus** of the Delaware-Maryland Synod.
- received the proposed **African Descent Strategy** for review and study and authorized that it be placed on the 2011 Synod Assembly agenda for adoption, with financial support provided in the 2012 Faith Spending Plan.
- affirmed and celebrated the partnership between congregations and the synod as evidenced through **annual mission support (benevolence)**, expressing its conviction that the level of mission support is best determined as a percentage of unrestricted, regular giving in the local congregation and should fall within a range of 10% to 30% of such offerings, with a tithe (10%) being the expected minimum contribution in most cases.
- affirmed and celebrated the partnership between the Delaware-Maryland Synod and the church-

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wide expression, directing the Synod Council and Budget Development Committee to **move the synod from its current 53% mission support to 55%** over several years, reaching 55% in 2015. This means that, beginning in the 2015 fiscal year, 55 cents of every dollar the synod receives in mission support will be shared with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.



- **condemned a rally to be held by the white supremacist group, Aryan Nation**, at the Gettysburg battlefield June 19, calling for "continued

prayer on the part of the church to boldly proclaim God's work of changing the hearts and minds of those who spread hatred and terror" and for "continued action on the part of the church to promote racial justice." The assembly action is to be communicated to groups including local media, the National Park Service, the mayor, and the Aryan Nation.

- referred to the Synod Council for action two resolutions: one calling on the synod to continue its **anti-racism work** in a number of ways and one dealing with **casino gambling at Gettysburg**.

Who is this new DE-MD Synod bishop-elect?

Growing up as a Catholic in Germany, Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane dreamed that he might one day become pope. Now, in the United States in 2010, he has been called as the fourth bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America - not exactly pope, but, for this converted Lutheran, a new dream fulfilled.

Born in Schramberg, Germany, in 1954, he immigrated to the United States in 1975, becoming a citizen in 2008. His parents, Inge and Josef Herz, still live in the Black Forest area of Germany.

From what Herz-Lane describes as his "first love," being a reporter and newspaper editor, he came to the U.S. in October 1975 as a volunteer for a church-sponsored volunteer organization similar to the Peace Corps. He was to spend 18 months as a full-time youth worker with the Camden (N.J.) Lutheran Parish, then return to Germany. "I was planning to go back home and pick up my life where I had left off," he says. "Then I fell in love with Camden, with the kids and the people, with the Lutheran Church...so the Sunday before my return to Germany, I became a Lutheran and joined Grace Church."

Herz-Lane moves to Germany and back again

Returning to Germany in February 1977, Herz-Lane resumed his newspaper work. He came back to New Jersey in 1978 on a student visa to study social work and "once again work in my beloved Grace Church," he says. Herz-Lane graduated from the Rutgers University-Camden College of Arts and Sciences with a Bachelor of Arts in 1981, earning a Master of Social Work degree from the university in 1982.

After earning his MSW, he became executive director of the Good Samaritan Center in Camden, where he served until becoming administrator/director

of the Camden Lutheran Parish in 1986. In 1992, he became ELCA Mission Director for the New Jersey Synod, a position he held until becoming pastor/developer of Bridge of Peace Lutheran Church, Camden, in 2000.

In 2001, he graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia with a Master of Divinity degree. He was ordained January 13, 2001, at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Woodbury, N.J.

During Herz-Lane's years in Camden, he served as voting member to three ELCA churchwide assemblies, as well as a member of the New Jersey Synod Council from 1986 to 1992. As early as 1978, he'd begun to be involved in community organizing in the inner city.

ELCA calls Herz-Lane to serve in Region 8

The work with community organizing lasted until the bishop-elect accepted the call to serve as ELCA Mission Director in Region 8 for the Delaware-Maryland and Metropolitan Washington DC synods in 2006. When the ELCA's unit for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission was reorganized in 2009, Herz-Lane transitioned to serving just the Delaware-Maryland Synod in an expanded role - as assistant to the bishop and director for evangelical outreach. He is currently a member of Spirit of Life Church, Wilmington.

He and the Rev. Margaret Lane married in 1983. The couple has two sons: Josef, 23, of Camden, N.J., and Kyle, 25, of Allentown, Pa. Pr. Margaret Herz-Lane continues to serve Grace Church, Camden.



Delaware-Maryland Synod
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