

The Voice of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

112 Middletown Road, Holmdel, NJ 07733 732-842-4596 GoodShepherdHolmdel.org

Open Minds ... Open Hearts ... Open Hands July 2025

PASTOR PAT'S PONDERINGS:

Congratulations to David Kim, Miae Park's son, who is on his way to medical school in Syracuse! We celebrated a blessing/Godspeed for him on June 29th. We also celebrated a Godspeed for the Proksch family on June 22nd, because Michael, Kristen, Liesel and Lukas are moving to Tampa, Florida and we will miss them. I had a wonderful experience visiting the Art Exhibit at Middletown West and got to see the amazing artwork by the students there, and in particular, our own Morgan Summey, who just completed 11th grade. My favorite piece of art is her picture of fish. What a talented church family we have! And what a blessing you are!

When I am out in a store or at the mall and just happen to be wearing a clerical collar, I often will often say to a person who has served me, "God bless you!" Then I often joke, "And that's a **professional** blessing!" Recently my husband heard me do it and said to me, "But is **your** blessing any better than that of a layperson???" And I responded, "Probably not!"

The Bible passages appointed for the church in the green Pentecost season during July tell us how Jesus prepares ordinary people like you and me for ministry and daily life as a person of faith. We get the story of the Good Samaritan which challenges us to serve our neighbors, yes, to see everyone as a neighbor. We get the story of Mary, seated at Jesus' feet being blessed for listening and learning, while Martha slaves, and stews, preparing the meal, and we are calmed when we are struggling with the pressures of life, that only one thing is necessary—and his good news teaching is a gift. Jesus teaches us how to pray. Paul tells us that "Christ is in you!" Let us come to sit at Jesus' feet and trust that this is so!

I will miss you during the month of July!!! My husband Roy and I will be traveling to Australia to attend the Baptist World Alliance meetings. He has managed their membership committee and served as a world leader among Baptists. I am looking forward to seeing the many friends we have made from at these meetings, and I enjoy the workshops, hearing others preach, and particularly supporting women clergy from around the world. It is exciting that just recently, the Lutherans in Australia finally voted to approve the ordination of the first women pastors there. Some Australian friends have invited us to come and vacation with them at their home as well, after the meeting. From there, we will go to Bali and Cambodia and see Angkor Wat (checking things off our "bucket list.")

I know that you will be in good hands while we are traveling. Pastor Bob Fritch is an experienced retired pastor who has supplied for me before and I am so happy that he will cover the first three weeks of July, celebrating communion and preaching for you. On the last Sunday in July, Andy Mathisen, a graduate of the Lay Preaching course recently offered by the New Jersey Synod, will lead a Service of the Word and preach. I know you will show up to worship God, grow in your faith, welcome guests--and get them to sign the guest book, and encourage one another. I'm sure that someone will count how many people are present and write the number on the attendance form on the Secretary's desk. Miae Park has been practicing setting up the live stream on our YouTube channel. I will look forward to watching it there, but likely not see it while it is live-streaming, as Australia is twelve to sixteen hours AHEAD of our time zone. While I am away, you can email me or text me at 732-822-0711, but please do not attempt to call me. **If you have an urgent prayer request, please email it to both Andy Mathisen at armathisen@gmail.com and Pastor Bob Fritch at revbobnyc@gmail.com as well as to PatMedlev@aol.com so that I know about it when I return.** I will see you again on August 3rd and miss you while I'm gone.

Pastors available to cover for a hospital call or another pastoral emergency during July are:
Pastor Leigh Pezet: Cell: 732-778-1054, Email: lpez100@gmail.com

Pastor John Mack: Cell: 336-392-5839, Email iampastorjmack@gmail.com
Pastor Matt Cimorelli, Cell: 908-391-8906, Email: pastormattwlb@yahoo.com

Much Love in the Lord, Pastor Pat Medley

REMEMBERING DON AND SHARON DEMING:

Don and Sharon's daughter, Janice Whelan recently called to let Pastor Pat know that Sharon died on June 7th. Don, who was our music director, died about six years ago, she said. We are faithfully remembering Sharon in our prayers and trust that God will wipe away all our tears.

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd welcomes and fully includes all people regardless of age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or economic condition.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL has concluded for the year. We will meet again in September.

WORSHIP WITH US IN JULY:

Please join us for Worship every Sunday at 10 AM. Please bring a relative, friend, co-worker, or neighbor. Be bold and invite a stranger! All are welcome! WE LOVE GUESTS!

July 6, The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost:

God is the source of our nourishment. Jesus' invitation to "take and eat... take and drink" is a repeated one. In holy communion, in the word read and proclaimed, in the assembly of the people of God, the dominion of God has come near. Rejoice! Your name is written in heaven. Please welcome warmly our Guest Pastor Bob Fritch, who will be with us for three Sundays.

July 13: The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost:

To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind is to reflect God's mercy in responding to one's neighbor. That mercy found its most profound expression in the "gospel that has come to you"—namely the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That gospel mercy comes to us again today: at the font, at the table, and from the pulpit. It is very near to you. Please welcome warmly Guest Pastor Bob Fritch, who will be with us next Sunday also.

July 20: The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost:

Perhaps the church, at its best, is "all ears." God urges the faithful, again and again, to "listen up!" – to heed the word that gives life. So it was with Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Martha, and the early church at Colossae. So it is today as we join the assembly to hear the word of God, the word of life. Please welcome warmly our Guest Pastor Bob Fritch.

July 27, The Seventh after Pentecost:

Persistence in prayer is encouraged by Jesus and wins the attention of God when Abraham intercedes for Sodom. The life of the baptized—to be rooted and built up in Christ Jesus – is to be nurtured with prayer. God hears and answers prayer and so strengthens God's own. "When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me." Thanks to Andy Mathisen, who is leading worship today and preaching. Pastor Pat returns next Sunday.

IF YOU CANNOT BE PRESENT AT WORSHIP:

Our Services are live-streamed on our YouTube channel @patriciamedley4915 and a button to the recordings is on our website: GoodShepherdHolmdel.org. The viewing link is also emailed soon after each service. We only record the portion of the Service up until the Holy Communion, as it seems impolite to feast on Holy Communion when the viewers cannot join us. Thanks to all who share our emails with the links with family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, or post them on social media!

COFFEE HOUR: We have delicious snacks and wonderful fellowship after worship each Sunday. Donations are always enjoyed! Items you bring for Coffee Hour needing refrigeration can be placed in the refrigerator/freezer in the mini kitchen by the sacristy to avoid confusion with the preschool.

BIBLE STUDY/LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: We have been offering classes on Zoom, or in person, to assist people to prepare for baptism or membership. If you would like such a class, please let Pastor Pat know. We will schedule Bible study classes again in the fall. Is there a Bible book or topic you would like to study? Please let Pastor Pat know.

CHURCH COUNCIL: We have a wonderful, very engaged Church Council at Good Shepherd and I am continually thankful for the contributions of these talented leaders. Our Council includes Jessica Voto-Pellegrino, President; Michael Kohlhaas, Vice President; Pam Keyl, Secretary; Doreen Hoffmann, Financial Secretary; Michael DiPiazza; Rikki Gracia, (Social Ministry); and Rob Pellegrino, who shares a seat with Jessica. Clem Hergenhan has completed his Council term, but continues to serve as our Treasurer. We do have openings for those who might wish to serve. Our 2025 spending plan does not yet include a monthly payment toward the cost of the replacement of the heating and air conditioning in Frank Hall and the classrooms, as well as making our building more energy efficient by replacing lighting with LED bulbs. We hope to know more about that very soon. We are caring both for our facilities and also for God's good creation! We only meet if absolutely necessary in the summer. You will be notified if a meeting will be held. Our meetings are open and we invite you to join us, share suggestions, offer help, get better informed, or just listen in. You are totally welcome. The link to join our Council Meetings is here: Please save it! Join Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83950827925?pwd=CNKNEe0wpbp6aNUxJJpWiEd7PP6FEU.1>
Meeting ID: 839 5082 7925 Passcode: 797818

“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED.”

Grief is so painful and death brings unwanted, difficult separations into our lives. Our Bereavement Support Group will not meet in July, while Pastor is away. Our next meeting will be at church at 10:30 AM on Thursday, August 21st. No matter who it was and no matter how long ago your loss occurred, all are welcome to join us. If you have questions, call or text Pastor Pat at 732-822-0711.

YOUR BLOOD DONATION CAN BE LIFE-GIVING TO THREE PEOPLE:

Call 1-800-933-2566 or go to nybc.org to schedule your blood donation with the NY Blood Center. Join Pastor Pat in giving blood every 56 days, or as often as you can, if you are able.

LIVING LUTHERAN MAGAZINE

The Living Lutheran Magazine is returning in print with four editions, Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter for \$19.95 per subscription. If you would like to receive it, send your name, address, phone and email to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730.

FREE MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

The St. James Medical Ministry at 69 Broad St., Eatontown is open Wednesdays from 11 AM to 3 PM and Saturdays from 10 AM to noon. They accept donations and give away needed medical supplies and equipment, like walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, canes, and even mobility scooters have been available for the taking.

LUNCH BREAK ANNUAL COMMUNITY PICNIC:

Saturday, August 16th, 9 AM to 2:30 PM at Count Basie Park, 11 Henry Street, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Free BBQ, Health & Social Services, Softball tournament, video game truck, bounce houses and & fun bus, book giveaway, and a backpack distribution from 10 to 1 PM. Child must be present to receive the backpack. For more information, contact Gina Vastola at gvastola@lunchbreak.org, or Mille Jeter at mjeter@lunchbreak.org.

Thy Will . . . My Will

Careful advance planning avoids many future problems. Have you remembered The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Holmdel, NJ, in your will?

Sample bequest statement: “I give, devise, and bequeath ___% or \$___ of my estate to The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 112 Middletown Road, Holmdel, NJ 07733”
and then choose one: to be used for its unrestricted general purposes or
to be used for the following specific purpose: _____.”

THE BISHOP'S CHALLENGE: CARE OF GOD'S GOOD CREATION:

We hope that you are trying some Meatless Mondays—or any day you choose. Recently, for a meatless Monday, your pastor had a really good slice of white veggie pizza with spinach and mushrooms and another delicious meatless meal was a roasted veggie wrap with a yummy dipping sauce.

Dotty Anderson's Cucumber and Onion Dill Salad

1 large cucumber
3 Tablespoon sugar (or replace with substitute)
1 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup vinegar
Dill, fresh or dried, to taste
Thin slices of onion

Slice cucumbers paper thin. Sprinkle with salt and sugar. Add vinegar and dill. Mix thoroughly, fold in onions. Serve cold. Keep refrigerated and serve cold. Tastes better each day. Dotty Anderson was our favorite church grandma. Our Jordan **loved** this salad as a toddler and still loves it today.

If you have a recipe you would like to share with us in a future edition of the Voice, send it to PatMedley@aol.com.

Having a special event? Let us know if you would like to hold it at Good Shepherd.

WE LOVE TO PRAY WITH AND FOR YOU: While Pastor Pat is away in July in Australia, please email your urgent prayer requests to Andy Mathisen at armathisen@gmail.com and Pastor Bob Fritch at revbobnyc@gmail.com as well as to PatMedley@aol.com for future bulletins. We have been remembering many needs in our prayers:

We prayed for God's blessing on creation. We prayed for peace, mercy, unity and justice here at home and in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Libya, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Burma, Gaza, the Holy Land and Ukraine and areas affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. We prayed for refugees, immigrants and persons displaced because of persecution, war and disaster. We prayed for all people experiencing poverty and food insecurity, and for all struggling with debt and economic uncertainty. We asked God to reassure all who experience hopelessness or need care, especially political prisoners and any who are exploited, denied due process, unjustly accused, or wrongly convicted, to strengthen those whose lives have been disrupted by disasters especially recent floods, plane crashes, wildfires, tornadoes, earthquakes and gun violence. We asked God to bring joy to those yearning for a child. We prayed for fellow human beings around the world dying from Ebola, malaria, TB, AIDS and hunger because of the end of US funding for PEPFAR and USAID. We asked God to care for those suffering with dementia, addiction, and all on our

prayer list: Former President Joe Biden
Bob Robinson (requested by Pastor Pat)
Rachel Fink (daughter of the Mathisens)
Tianna Mickens
Baby Rowan (Requested by Sandy Mickens)
Kaitlin Kropa (daughter of Pastor Ed Kropa, Hope, Freehold)
Harold Brown (husband of Susan Martens-Brown)
Francine Brogan (friend of Rikki Gracia)
Sung Ok Hahm (Miae Park's mother)
Nancy DiPiazza (Mike's niece)
Terry McCord (John's brother)
Cindy Coakley (Kathe DaGiau-McCord's daughter)
Sue McCabe (Kathe DaGiau-McCord's sister)
Ed Lustenberg (friend of Garry Westerweller)
Michelle VanDerwalker (Kathe DaGiau-McCord's daughter)
Megan More (young daughter of Holly Wilgus' friend)
Matthew Fisher (son of Kathe DaGiau-McCord's friend)
Kevin McCord (John McCord's brother),
Kathy Curran (Mike Carp's cousin)
Lucy Bakalian (Anne Bakalian's mother)
Mike Paul (friend of Pastor Pat)
Dolores O'Brien (widow of Pastor Tom O'Brien)
Pastor Jack Elstad
Brian Stauffer (Pastor Pat's brother)
Lauren Hyde (Pastor Pat's relative)
Barbara (requested by Taylor Fitzgerald)
Dolores Keeler (stepmother of Lori Lashenick)
Amparo Mir (friend of Karen and Dave Rajala)
Dolores Rajala (Dave's Mother)

Dr. Karlfried Froehlich (Pastor Pat's Seminary Professor),
 Dawn Petr (Clem and Nancy Hergenhan's daughter)
 Charlotte Brodfuhrer (Kim Wehrli's friend Karen's Mom)
 Chuck Johnson (Clem and Nancy Hergenhan's friend)
 Michael Voto (Jessica Voto-Pellegrino's uncle and godfather)
 Courtney Brown (niece of Doreen & Glenn Hoffmann)
 Stephanie Liuzzo (Doreen & Glenn Hoffmann's daughter)
 Joey Livingston (Pastor Pat's former parishioner)
 Bruce Solomon (cousin of Karen Rajala)
 Nila and Ashok (In-laws of Michael Kohlhaas)
 Karola (Michael Kohlhaas' grandmother)
 Courtney (Pareen Kohlhaas' friend)
 Wayne (the Elstads' cousin)
 Mena Gendy & Frida de la Parra & their daughter Mia,
 Toni Tschampion (Michael DiPiazza's sister-in-law, recovering well from major surgery)
 Joshua and Loren Corsello (requested by Bob Sislian)
 Bob & Jennifer Sislian (requested by his father Bob Sislian)
 *Sonja Ongsiako, *Pam Baglieri, Bob & Vivian Sislian, *Bob Fulmer, *Ines Csulak, *Gil Vatter, little *Jackson Pellegrino (getting a new rod in his leg), *Lynne & *Garry Westerweller, *Phyllis Castello, *Jennifer Bull, the McKnight family*, *Holly Wilgus, Ellen Muench.*

We prayed for all those we love, for our enemies and those we need to forgive, and finally for ourselves. We thanked God you the blessings showered upon us each week. We prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the NJ Synod, ELCA elected a new bishop and thanked God for our bishop-elect, Rev. Dr. Christa Compton. We praised God for the witness of the saints of all times and places, especially Anna Diaz-White (recently retired director of 180-Turning Lives Around Women's Shelter), Melissa and Mark Hortman (Melissa was assassinated with her husband and had served as the Democratic Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives), Jukyung Kim (Miae Park's father-in-law), Eleanor Hoffmann (Glenn's mother), Pope Francis, Wendell Smith, Frank Csulak, Bunny Kuhl, Lillian Di Piazza, Janice Kraus, Patty Vatter, Chris Dall, Jack Battipaglia, Sebastian Dall, Sonia Gracia, George Quintyne, Eleanor Hoffmann, Sharon Deming, and our own beloved dead.

YOUR OFFERINGS MAKE MISSION HAPPEN:

Would you like to receive offering envelopes??? These assist us in preparing a giving statement for your taxes. Join us in the joyful, grateful adventure of planning your charitable giving and setting a goal to strive for! It is possible to securely set up giving on our website: www.goodshepherdholmdel.org by clicking on the yellow "GIVE" button on the page. You can make a one time gift, or set up recurring gifts weekly, every two weeks, or every month from your credit card, bank or Apple Pay. Thanks a million to all who do this, or mail your offering, bring it to church, or place it in our locked mailbox in the parking lot. **We have some big insurance bills that come in the summer!** Good Shepherd always manages to offer ministry excellence, to care generously for others, to support our New Jersey Synod and the ELCA and many community agencies that care for those who are most in need. Did you know that Good Shepherd has an endowment fund? Did you know that our church can accept donations of stock? Here's good news: if you are 73 years of age or older and must withdraw a Required Minimum Distribution, you may be able to have the fund send a check for all or a portion of your RMD to Good Shepherd (or any charity) directly and it will not be taxable to you! Speak to Clem Hergenhan at clemhergenhan@gmail.com or 732-895-7555.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- July is Disability Pride Month:
- The ELCA continues its work to recognize the gifts of all God's children and more deeply explore what it means to live as one in the body of Christ. In-person and virtual events are planned around the country throughout the month. The Arc offers a list of known events being planned. If there is no event near you, now is the time to start planning for 2026.
- [Why and How to Celebrate Disability Pride Month - The Arc](#)
- [Why Disability Pride v. Disability Awareness](#) (Note: the "disability pride" sections have been updated since this article was published.)
- July 26 marks the 35th anniversary of the signing of [the Americans with Disabilities Act](#).
- July is [Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month](#)

- The [ELCA Churchwide Assembly](#) takes places July 28-August 2 in Phoenix, Ariz. Please keep the assembly in your prayers.

THE NEW JERSEY SYNOD ASSEMBLY was held at the Hilton East Brunswick Hotel & Executive Meeting Center in E. Brunswick on Thursday evening beginning with Worship at 6:30 PM, Friday and ending on Saturday at 12:30 PM, June 5th, 6th and 7th. The theme was "Behold! I Make All Things New." Our voting members were the pastor, Diane and Andy Mathisen. Sandy Mickens was too ill to attend as planned. On the final ballot, The Rev. Dr. Christa Compton was elected bishop. Please keep her in your prayers. She will be installed August 23rd and her term begins in September.

The report the Synod provided about our assembly is provided further down in this newsletter.

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AROUND THE PARISH

by Gil Vatter

Summer is the season of growth around here; flowers, shrubs and trees prosper in June, July and August. It is also the time for fresh fruit and vegetables to be harvested and offered for sale at our local markets and farm stands around Monmouth County. They don't call New Jersey the "Garden State" for nothing. Sweet corn, tomatoes and a long list of other vegetables grown in this state supplement our diets during the summer months in this part of the country.

But, lots of folks go a step father to insure fresh vegetables on their dinner tables. Like my daughters, they grow some of their own fresh vegetables and take advantage of the growing season right in their own backyards. Both of my girls have been growing vegetables at home for a long time. Since I am the beneficiary of some of their crops, I always look forward to the summer growing season. There is just nothing quite like a tomato or a cucumber freshly picked from a backyard garden to tickle your taste buds. A newly picked, sliced tomato sandwich is the highlight of my summer menu. A big salad with all garden grown ingredients can't be beat.

Years ago, both my father and my father-in-law had vegetable gardens. During the economically difficult 30's food from backyard gardens helped supplement the family diet. Then, during World War II, they called them "Victory Gardens". Different name, same purpose. Grow some of your own food. After the war, a summer vegetable garden was still the shortcut to fresh, tasty meals. Over the years, I have tried growing my own vegetables, mostly tomatoes. I've had moderate success but the natural enemies of a gardener usually win the battle. Varmints, bugs and plant diseases were my downfall.

However, if you have never tried to grow vegetables at home, you are missing out on a great experience as well as a perfect chance to guarantee the freshest, tastiest food for your household. There is nothing like harvesting fresh vegetables from your own garden and then enjoying them as part of your daily menu. Give it a try.

There was a young hiker named Cher
Who came face-to-face with a bear.
The bear broke her nose,
Tore off all her clothes
And pulled out a hank of her hair.

1. We all wish Pastor Pat and Roy a bon voyage as they begin their trek to the Baptist World Alliance meetings in Australia. Please return home safe and sound.

2. Janice Whelan, the daughter of Sharon and Don Deming, reports that her mother passed away in early June. Sharon and Don were members of the Good Shepherd choir for several years. Don passed away six years ago.

A Norwegian spaceman named Lars
Made a long lasting journey to Mars.
There he made his new home

In a glass covered dome
With a wonderful view of the stars.

3. Good Shepherd said farewell to the Proksch family as they moved south to a new home in Tampa, Florida.
Auf wiedersehen.

4. Thanks to Pastor Pat for bringing communion to my house.

A robot whose name was Pauline
Was not your usual machine.
It could clean up the house
While ironing your blouse
And make you some lunch in between.

BE VERY CAREFUL IF YOU EXPECT TO BE NEAR FIREWORKS THIS MONTH

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Taylor Fitzgerald, Charles Reyes and his
mother Barbara Reyes.
Taylor and Charles are new members



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The Proksch Family is moving to Tampa
A Godspeed was held for them on June
22 with a special coffee hour.



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Lori Lashenick and her mother Theresa Keeler joined on the second Sunday of Easter. They are pictured with Pete Lashenick, Lori's husband.

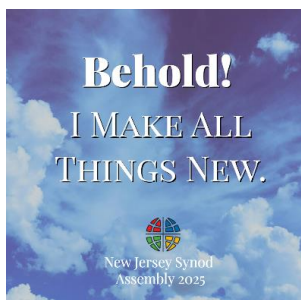


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A picture by Morgan Summey in the Art Exhibit at Middletown West!



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Behold! I Make All Things New NJ Synod Assembly 2025 Recap

The NJ Synod met in Assembly on June 5-7 at the Hilton, East Brunswick. 376 voting members and 59 visitors worshiped, celebrated, elected a bishop, and conducted the synod's business during these days. Below is a brief recap of our time together.

Worship

We began the assembly with a service of Holy Communion. Bishop Bartholomew preached and presided, Vice-President Arundel Clarke assisted. Pastors new to the synod, along with lay members distributed communion. Assembly musician, Brian Conover (Reformation, Galloway/Absecon) provided accompaniment throughout the assembly and was assisted by James Harris on trumpet (synod treasurer) and Pastor Linnéa Clark on flute and drum (St. Mark, Hamilton). Pastor Kat Steinly (Zion, Oldwick) joined Pastor Clark in leading the assembly in Holden Evening Prayer on Friday evening. Thank you to all our worship leaders.

In addition to opening worship, we sang and prayed throughout the assembly, returning to the theme song, Behold! I Make All Things New by John Bell at the beginning of every plenary. Pray-ers at the beginning of our plenary sessions included Pastor Burton Vincent (celebrating the 65th anniversary of his ordination), Pastor Moacir Weirich and Nicole Krenz (St. Stephans Grace, Newark) who led us in a litany for immigrants, and Deacon Shirley Talluri (newly ordained chaplain at Hackensack Meridian Health Hospice).

Resolution/Memorials

We adopted one resolution and two memorials. The resolution calls us to oppose attacks on the civil liberties of transgender/nonbinary (TGNB) adults and children and to advocate for and protect our TGNB neighbors.

Memorial 1 calls for the ELCA to affirm transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer people of God by speaking out on behalf of these neighbors and consulting with them as to the best ways to advocate with them.

Memorial 2 calls the ELCA to eliminate gendered language in all governing documents.

Both memorials now go to the Churchwide Assembly for action. The resolutions and memorials can be found on the synod website (njsynod.org/assembly).

Synod Council Elections

We elected the following members to serve on synod council:

Jennifer Emerson (St. Mark, Oaklyn), Delaware Mission District
Jose Sanchez (Bridge of Peace, Camden, 2nd term), Delaware Mission District
Nansi Krauss (Abiding Love, Kendall Park, 2nd term), Middle Mission District
Cari States-Codding (Living Waters, Ringoes), Middle Mission District
The Rev. Jane McCreedy (Faith, New Providence) Western Middle District
Rob Rinderer (St. Paul, Beachwood), Shore Mission District

Agnetta Fasasi (Redeemer, Trenton), at-large youth
The Rev. Jack DiMatteo (Holy Trinity, Rockaway and Shepherd of the Hills, Sparta) at-large clergy

Celebration of the Bishop's Challenge: Caring for God's Good Creation

On Friday evening we celebrated the completion of our year-long Bishop's Challenge with a return of our superheroes who introduced the challenge to us a year ago. They presented awards in several categories to synod congregations. These "Tracies" went to:

Worship and Education – **St. Mark, Hamilton** for their Lenten study "Our Kairos Moment"
Building – **First, Clifton** for their Building First in Faith renovations
Grounds – **Good Shepherd, Weehawken** for The Good Shepherd Garden Project
Programs – **St. Timothy, Wayne** for their Bring Your Own Mug Project
Community Action/Activism – **St. Matthew, Jersey City** for their Food security, food stewardship, food salvage
Compost Award – **Zion, Egg Harbor City** for their Composting and Earthworm Farming and Composting Coffee Grounds projects
Solar Award - **Prince of Peace, Marlton** for their new Solar Installation
Plant-Based Award – **St. Stephen, Woodbury** for their Meatless Sunday Social
Youngest - **St Michael, Cherry Hill** for their Wildlife Habitat-Pollinator Garden Development
Oldest – **Holy Trinity, Manasquan** for Supporting and Expanding the 100th Anniversary Monarch Waystation & Pollinator Garden
Teamwork Awards – **St. Mark, Oaklyn** and **Bridge of Peace, Camden** for their Feed My Sheep/Community Garden
St. Bartholomew, Trenton and **Prince of Peace, Princeton Junction** for their Reducing Waste by collecting soft plastic for NexTrex project
Overall Award – **Living Waters, Ringoes** for their various efforts in the building, on the grounds, and in the community.

While the Bishop's Challenge has concluded, the work of caring for God's good creation continues.

Election of a Bishop

Through a process of prayer and discernment, the assembly elected The Rev. Dr. Christa Compton (Gloria Dei, Chatham) to serve as the next bishop of the NJ Synod. Pastor Compton was elected on the fifth ballot. Results of all the ballots can be found on the synod website (njsynod.org/assembly). We thank all of those who allowed their names to go forward in this election process.

Pastor Compton's term begins on September 1, 2025. Until that time, Bishop Bartholomew continues in office. Please respect Pastor Compton's transition time as she bids farewell to the congregation she has served for 12 years, moves, and gets oriented to this new call. Now is not the time to contact her for bishop related questions; you are invited to pray for her during this transition time and for the people of Gloria Dei. Installation of the new bishop will be held on Saturday, August 23, 1:30 pm at First Baptist Church, Lincoln Gardens, NJ. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will preside at this service.

And more...

The assembly recognized significant anniversaries of rostered leaders and congregations. Congregational anniversary videos are posted on the assembly page of the website and will be shared throughout the year in Jersey Jottings.

The 2026 Spending Plan recommended by synod council was unanimously approved. Details of the plan can be found in the Bulletin of Reports on the website.

In addition to these official actions, we said farewell and thank you to Pastor Sara Lilja as she prepares to leave our staff to become the Executive Director of the NJ Coalition of Religious Leaders on July 1. We honored her at the banquet and presented her with gifts to the Culinary Institute of America and to ELCA World Hunger in her honor. We will miss Pastor Lilja's presence on our staff, even as she leads us in this

interfaith effort of expanding our advocacy efforts.

We also said thank you to Bishop Bartholomew for her 12 years of service as bishop and presented her with a jar of well-wishes and a song. A fuller goodbye will take place at a dinner dance on Sunday, June 29; you can register for that dinner at njsynod.org/bishopcelebration.

This recap does not do justice to the spirit of joy and gratitude that was present throughout our time together. You can watch the live-stream of the assembly on our synod's YouTube channel – feel free to share it with others.

Plans are already underway for the 38th Assembly to be held Saturday, May 30 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel and Conference Center in Somerset, NJ. We hope to see you there