

# A Word from Bishop Rindy

Freed in Christ to Serve was the theme around which we (22 voting members from the synod and myself) gathered, worshiped, deliberated, and prayed as your voting members at Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, Florida August 14-19. During the opening worship, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson asked the question, “*Is this church ready to move forward in mission?*” The answer he received at the closing worship on Friday was a resounding, “**YES!**”

- The Living Into the Future Together (LIFT) task force’s recommendations were received and accepted by the assembly, meaning that:
  - we will evaluate and discuss how we work with social statements, finding appropriate ways to discuss difficult topics in the future;
  - we will consider holding Churchwide Assemblies every three years if the 2013 assembly ratifies the motion;
  - we will explore other types of gatherings focusing on mission and ministry that are non-legislative; and more...
- We launched the ELCA Malaria Campaign to deal with the reality many of our companion synods face in sub-Saharan Africa: a child dies every 45 seconds from malaria.
- Farmers, geneticists, and people suffering from genetic disorders came to the microphone thanking our church for help in dealing with complex social, moral, and ethical questions facing our society around the topic of genetics. The social statement, “Genetics, Faith and Responsibility” was adopted by an over 95% vote.

Along with the budget, several constitutional amendments, resolutions and memorials, we spent time in small group Bible study and gathered as a whole to worship. Pr. Rene Larson, who was a seminary student serving in Haiti with her husband, Ben, when the earthquake hit, gave one of the most powerful sermons I have ever heard. To hear this witness to the Gospel, go to Friday Holy Communion, (13:43 of the video) <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Churchwide-Assembly/Watch-the-Assembly.aspx>

Finally, members of Peace Lutheran Church (hit by a category 5 tornado) in Joplin, Missouri presented each synod bishop with a wooden cross made from one of their remaining church beams. They asked us to thank you for your support. Through Lutheran Disaster Response *you* were there the day after the tornado hit. *You* are still there. *You* will be there until the job is finished.

I am grateful to be a part of a church that is able to have conversation around difficult topics, even if we won’t all agree. I’m grateful to be a part of a church that lives in mission beyond its walls, serving the neighbor in need. I continue to be humbled to serve as your bishop in this time of our church’s history.

God is good... all the time!

*Bill Rindy*

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*Bill Rindy*

## 2011 Churchwide Assembly Summary of Actions

Freed  
in Christ  
to Serve

The Twelfth Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was held Aug. 15-19, 2011, at the Orlando World Center Marriott. The theme was “Freed in Christ to Serve.”

- ELCA Malaria Campaign officially launched
- “Genetics, Faith and Responsibility” social statement adopted
- Review process for social statements adopted
- Living into the Future Together (LIFT) implementing resolutions adopted
- 2012-2013 Budget proposals adopted
- Memorials and constitutional changes adopted

For more information on the work of the assembly, including daily legislative updates, videos and a news blog, visit [www.elca.org/assembly](http://www.elca.org/assembly).



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