

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Minutes of the Nineteenth National Convention
Multi-Purpose Room, University Centre
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man.**

Orientation (11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.)

ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson welcomed attendees to the Orientation Session.

The following topics were reviewed:

Code of Conduct

Delegate Orientation to Convention Procedures

Standing Rules of Order

Guidelines for Those Speaking at Convention

Agenda/Program

(Bulletin of Reports Appendix 01 and Section C)

Voting Procedures

A representative from the audio-visual production team provided instructions on how to go about with the electronic voting using the online platform.

(Lunch)

Business Session #1:

Thursday, July 10, 2025, 1:30 p.m.– 5:00 p.m.

Welcome to Treaty One Territory

ELCIC Vice-Chair Bruce Cook welcomed everyone to the 2025 ELCIC National Convention. He called on Elder Amanda Wallin from the Diocese of Rupert's Land, Anglican Church of Canada to lead the convention in Land Acknowledgment.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook presented a gift to Elder Amanda Wallin as a token of gratitude.

Opening Worship

Led by Bishop Kathy Martin (BC Synod) presiding and National Bishop Susan Johnson preaching. An offering was collected for ELCIC's Praise Appeal.

ELCIC Bishop Susan Johnson reflected on the importance of hope in and for the church. She acknowledged the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the ELCIC, highlighting Rev. Pamela McGee as the first ordained Lutheran woman in the ELCIC. In her sermon, Bishop Susan emphasized the role of women in the church and reminded everyone that, as God's people, we are always called to hope. She encouraged the church to thrive and strive to be an open and welcoming presence in the community.

A special procession of vested ordained women in the ELCIC was part of the Opening Worship. This is in celebration of the 50th anniversary of ordination of women in the church.

(Afternoon Break)

National Bishop Susan Jonnson called Business Session #1 of the 19th National Convention to order.

Welcome to the 2025 ELCIC National Convention and Introduction at Tables

National Bishop Susan Johnson welcomed everyone to the National Convention.

She introduced everyone at the head table including herself; Bruce Cook, Vice Chair; Linda Grainger, Secretary; Stephen Holmes, Treasurer; Sheila Hamilton, Parliamentarian; and Desiree Mendoza, Recording Secretary. She invited the convention delegates to introduce themselves at their respective tables.

National Bishop Susan Johnson called on Secretary Linda Grainger to give the Registration Report.

Registration Report

Secretary Linda Grainger presented the Registration Report.

83 lay delegates

60 rostered delegates

13 NCC members

Total of 156 registered voting delegates

89 guests and visitors (no voting rights)

Establishment of Quorum

Quorum at the 2025 ELCIC National Convention was established.

Testing of Voting Procedures

Adoption of the Agenda

M/S That the agenda for the 19th National Convention including the consent agenda be adopted as presented. **CARRIED.**

National Bishop Susan Johnson reminded all participants that the ELCIC Code of Conduct applies to all delegates, visitors, sponsors, exhibitors, staff, volunteers, and invited guests. She then proceeded to introduce and thank the members of the following convention committees:

Complaint Response Team/Complaint Handling Committee

Rev. Susan Climo (EAST Synod)

Rev. Clifford Reinhardt (BC Synod)

Rev. Íris Kristjánsdóttir (SK Synod)

Rev. Kristian Wold (ABT Synod)

Carmen Ramirez (National Office Staff)

Committee Reference and Counsel

Boston Laferté (BC Synod) – Chair

Rev. Brooklynn Lane (SK Synod)

Deacon Michele Barr (MNO Synod)

Rev. David Malina (EAST Synod)

Selina Broadshaw (EAST Synod)

Rev. Elina Singh (BC Synod)

Tom Brook (MNO Synod)
Rev. Paul Gehrs (National Office Staff)

Dave Solheim (SK Synod)

Committee on Conduct of Elections

Rev. Adam Snook (EAST Synod) – Chair
Rev. Jane Gingrich (BC Synod)
Rev. Terry Gudmundson (MNO Synod)
Wayne Hyde (SK Synod)
Caitlin Kostna (MNO Synod)
Linda Grainger (Secretary)

Celly Manirakoze (BC Synod)
Ethan Mittleholtz (EAST Synod)
Murray Patzwald (SK Synod)
Rev. Prema Samuel (ABT Synod)
Bruce Thompson (EAST Synod)

Introduction of Special Guests and Partners

National Bishop Susan Johnson welcomed and introduced the following guests and partners to the 2025 ELCIC National Convention:

- The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
- The Rev. Dr. Imad Mousa Dawood Haddad, Bishop-Elect, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)
- Rev. Sonia Andrea Skupch, Regional Secretary for Latin America, the Caribbean and North America of The Lutheran World Federation
- The Most Rev. Gregory Kerr-Wilson, Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese of Calgary, The Anglican Church of Canada (ACC)
- The Rev. Margaret Rose, Ecumenical and Interreligious Deputy to the Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church (TEC)
- The Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller, Ecumenical Officer, Moravian Church, Northern Province
- The Rev. Vincent Solomon, Urban Indigenous Ministry Developer, Diocese of Rupert's Land, Anglican Church of Canada
- Rev. Dr. Willard Metzger, Executive Director, Citizens for Public Justice
- Emily Savage, Vice-President, The Canadian Council of Churches
- Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse, Interim Executive Director, Canadian Lutheran World Relief
- Barb Fortier, Executive Director, ELCIC Group Services, Inc.
- Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen, Board Chair and President, ELCIC Group Services, Inc.
- Wayne Hove, President, Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute

M/S That the 2025 ELCIC National Convention grants seat and voice privileges to the special guests. **CARRIED.**

National Bishop Susan Johnson turned the chair over to Vice-Chair Bruce Cook.

Report of the National Bishop *(Starting on page E-1, Bulletin of Reports)*

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on National Bishop Susan Johnson who presented an oral report to supplement her written report. After the presentation, delegates were invited to ask questions.

National Bishop Susan Johnson opened the ELCIC National Convention by acknowledging that the National Convention is meeting in Treaty One Territory and reflected on the theme

“Rejoicing in Hope” – a sentiment she said has defined her 18-year leadership in the church. Bishop Susan emphasized the importance of worship, fellowship, and honest conversations on both joys and challenges. While celebrating milestones like the 50th anniversary of women’s ordination as pastors in the church and ELCIC’s 40th anniversary, Bishop Susan also acknowledged financial struggles facing the church today. She introduced a three-year consultation process titled *Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future* to reimagine church structures for the years ahead.

Expressing deep gratitude to church officers, National Church Council, synods and synod councils, staff, partners, and congregations, she highlighted the strength of global and ecumenical partnerships and the support she felt through prayer and companionship. As she finishes her term, Bishop Susan encouraged the church to remain hopeful, prayerful, and committed to shaping a stronger, more faithful future together.

(The convention gave Bishop Susan a standing ovation.)

(Questions from the floor for the National Bishop on her report.)

Report of the National Church Council

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on NCC member Rev. Reg Berg to give the report of the National Church Council. Pastor Reg highlighted the motions coming to the National Convention in Session 5.

Report of the Committee on Nominations *(Bulletin of Reports, Section E-12)*

Secretary Linda Grainger thanked members of the Committee on Nominations composed of Kimberly Bortnak (BC Synod), Rev. Olav Traa (ABT Synod), Rafael Rodriguez (Eastern Synod), Rev. Victoria Mwamasika (SK Synod), and Rev. Heather Parrott-Howdle (MNO Synod). Linda Grainger (ELCIC Secretary) also sits on this committee.

National Church Council and Court of Appeal

Nominations from the floor were called. There was one nomination from the floor. Rev. Kate Zaiser for the ABT Synod rostered position.

National Church Council			
Positions Required: BC, ABT, SK, MNO—1 Lay and 1 Rostered EAST—2 Lay and 1 Rostered			
Synod	Type	Term	NCC Member
BC	Lay	3 years	Ben Lukenchuk
	Lay	3 years	Andrew Macauley
	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Katrina Vigen (e)
	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Aneeta Saroop
ABT	Lay	3 years	Sheryl Dubois
	Lay	3 years	Tammy Kirkwood
	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Reg Berg (e)
	Rostered	3 years	
SK	Lay	3 years	Jeff Barber
	Lay	3 years	Carol Maurer

MNO	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Sheldon Gattinger (e)
	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Victoria Mwamasika
	Lay	3 years	Sarah Harrington (e)
	Lay	3 years	Michael Kvern
	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Chris Bishopp (e)
	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Heather Parrott-Howdle
EAST	Lay	3 years	Bill Gastmeier (e)
	Lay	3 years	Cath Wilke
	Lay	3 years	Heidi Van Schaik (e)
	Lay	3 years	Judith von Wahl
	Rostered	3 years	Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb (e)
	Rostered	3 years	

Court of Appeal		
Positions Required: 3 Lay and 2 Rostered (any Synod)		
Type	Term	Member
Lay	3 years	Brent Latimer (e)
	3 years	Verlyn Olson
Lay	3 years	
	3 years	Kristi Burns
Lay	3 years	Boston Laferté
	3 years	Tom Brook
Rostered	3 years	Rev. James Whaley (e)
	3 years	Rev. Karen Stepko
Rostered	3 years	Bishop Cindy Halmarson (retired) (e)
		Rev. Prema Samuel

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared **Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb** acclaimed for the Eastern Synod Rostered position on National Church Council.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared **Kristi Burns** acclaimed for the lay position on Court of Appeal.

Nominations for Secretary and Treasurer

There were no nominations from the floor.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared **Linda Grainger** acclaimed for the position of Secretary in the ELCIC.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared **Stephen Holmes** acclaimed for the position of Treasurer in the ELCIC.

Announcements

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Secretary Linda Grainger to provide an answer to a question regarding elections for National Bishop. She cited Articles 10 and 14 of the ELCIC Constitution.

First Ballot for the Election of the National Bishop

Stewards handed out paper ballots to voting delegates. Convention Chaplain The Most Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer prior to the ecclesiastical ballot.

Closing Prayer

Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led the Closing Prayer.

Business Session #2 (6:30 p.m.-8:25 p.m.)

Opening Prayer

Led by convention chaplain.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called Business Session #2 of the 2025 ELCIC National Convention to order.

Registration Report

Secretary Linda Grainger presented her report to the National Convention:

84 lay delegates

60 rostered delegates

13 NCC members

Total of 157 registered voting delegates

Report of Committee on Conduct of Elections – First Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections to give the report on the first ballot for national bishop.

Number of Ballots Cast: 154

Number of Spoiled Ballots: 5

Number of Eligible Ballots: 149

Number of Votes Required to Elect: 112

First Ballot Results:

Larry Kochendorfer	39	Katherine Gohm	2
Carla Blakley	14	Brad Mittleholtz	2
Paul Gehrs	13	Jordan Smith	2
Marc Jerry	12	Sarah Dymund	1
Chris Bishopp	10	Trent Felstrom	1
Courtenay Reedman-Parker	9	Matt Gillard	1
Aneeta Saroop	8	Tyler Gingrich	1
Jason Zinko	6	Jane Gingrich	1
Laura Holck	5	Gordon Jensen	1
Ali Tote	5	Greg Kiel	1
Adam Snook	3	Rebecca Klages	1
Kayko Driedger-Hesslein	2	Pamela Kormano	1

Karen Kuhnert	1	Lynn Robertson	1
Martin Malina	1	Ann Salmon	1
Kathy Martin	1	Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero	1
Kimber McNabb	1	Kate Zaiser	1

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared there's no election.

Second Ballot for the Election of the National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook announced that all eligible names will go to the next ballot. 2/3 votes cast are required to declare an election. The convention then proceeded to the Second Ballot for the Election of the National Bishop. Stewards handed out paper ballots to voting delegates. Convention Chaplain The Most Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer prior to voting.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook turned the chair over to National Bishop Susan Johnson.

***Rejoicing in Hope – Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future* Task Force**

National Bishop Susan Johnson introduced *Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future* which is the vision of the national and synodical officers who then proposed it to National Church Council for adoption. She explained that as part of this vision, the consultants are here to help guide the church through the process. Bishop Susan then introduced the consultation team composed of: The Rev. Peter Elliott, Alisdair Smith, and Jane Osler.

The Rev. Peter Elliot presented to the National Convention by providing a background on the *Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future* initiative and introduced his consultation team composed of: Jane Osler, Alisdair Smith, Ian Alexander, Bishop Greg Mohr (retired), and himself. He then added that there's a steering committee appointed by the National Church Council. Peter explained that this is a big project which will involve a lot of conversations. At a time in the future, the team will have discerned the themes revolving around these conversations. *Where are we as a church? Where do we want to be as a church?* There will be constant feedback. It's a three-year process that the church will be involved in.

Table Group Discussions:

Alisdair Smith introduced the activity to the National Convention. What are you hearing around the table? Summarize everything that has been said and email to dreamfuture@elcic.ca

Questions:

What are the signs of life in your local congregation?

What are the signs of life in your synod?

After the activity, Jane Osler thanked those who did the survey through *Countdown to Convention*. She also mentioned that the report on the key themes from the table group discussions will be shared the following day.

Bishop Susan thanked the consultants for their presentation and for leading an activity.

ELCIC Leadership Award

Bishop Susan Johnson called on Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Resource Generation to present the ELCIC Leadership Award to this year's recipient, Benjamin (Ben) Johnston-Urey from the ABT Synod. They're recognized for their visionary leadership, commitment to justice, and deep community engagement. Their work fosters spiritual growth and inclusive relationships, embodying what it means to *Live Out God's Grace and Unconditional Love*. Bishop Susan handed the award to Ben in which they accepted. Ben also shared their acceptance speech.

Bishop Susan Johnson turned the chair over to Vice-Chair Bruce Cook.

Report of Committee on Conduct of Elections

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections to give the report on the second ballot for national bishop.

Number of Ballots Cast: 152

Number of Spoiled Ballots: 0

Number of Eligible Ballots: 152

Number of Votes Required to Elect: 102

Second Ballot Results:

Larry Kochendorfer	58	Adam Snook	2
Carla Blakley	20	Ali Tote	2
Marc Jerry	19	Kayko Driedger-Hesslein	1
Chris Bishopp	10	Jane Gingrich	1
Paul Gehrs	10	Katherine Gohm	1
Courtenay Reedman-Parker	9	Greg Kiel	1
Aneeta Saroop	8	Kimber McNabb	1
Laura Holck	4	Kate Zaiser	1
Jason Zinko	4		

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared there's no election. He added that all eligible names will go on the next ballot. Candidates will be emailed the biographical form and these will be made available to convention delegates in Box.

Announcements

Evening Prayer led by Worship Committee

Reception at Marshall McLuhan Hall

Business Session #3:

Friday, July 11, 2025, 8:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Opening Prayer

Led by Convention Chaplain.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called Business Session #3 of the 2025 ELCIC National Convention to order.

Registration Report

Secretary Linda Grainger presented the report.

85 lay delegates

60 rostered delegates

13 NCC members

Total of 158 registered voting delegates

104 guests and visitors (no voting rights)

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook announced to the National Convention that the biographical forms of the nominees for National Bishop are now available in Box in the Bulletin of Reports, subfolder “Bios for Bishop.” He added that some choose not to submit a bio. More information was given with regards to the voting process.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook turned the chair over to National Bishop Susan Johnson.

Rejoicing in Hope – Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future Task Force (Part Two)

Bishop Susan called *Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future* consultation team to share the feedback received from the previous night’s table discussions.

Consultant Jane Osler mentioned that initial results were done with the help of AI. The consultant team used ChatGPT in a private mode to allow scouring through masses of data.

From 58 survey responses, key themes emerged. Congregations highlighted community, new beginnings, and engagement; synods focused on leadership, change, and support – and some disengagement. Jane reviewed insights from recent discussions, noting signs of life such as lay leadership, youth involvement, and diversity. Challenges included post-pandemic fatigue, leadership shortages, and sustainability concerns. The reflections revealed both hope and struggle, especially around closures, inclusion, and burnout. To view the results presented, please view the presentation notes.

The following activities were facilitated by Alisdair Smith:

Stand Up Meeting: What one thing from the reporting back struck you?

Table Group Discussion: What signs of life do you see nationally?

Consultant Peter Elliott thanked participants for their openness during discussions about the life of the church—at the congregational, synodical, and national levels. He noted that **next steps** will be led by a steering committee appointed by the National Church Council, with some members present at the convention and acknowledged during the session.

Next Steps

The consultation team plans to work closely with the steering committee in August, reviewing insights and shaping the path forward. A key focus will be engaging congregations more directly, with synods helping to facilitate that connection. One idea under consideration is gathering rostered ministers—such as pastors and deacons, and even with lay leaders as suggested on the floor via Zoom in the fall to update them on the process and invite their involvement. Meetings with synod councils are already scheduled, and additional time with bishops will help digest and reflect on the work. Once a new national bishop and vice-chair are elected, the consultants will reach out to begin collaboration. The team also thanked Trina Gallop Blank for her vital communications support. Peter noted that the presentation slides will be included with the minutes.

(See Attachment: Friday Morning Presentation with Notes)

Bishop Susan Johnson expressed her gratitude to the consultation team for their presence and contributions. She also acknowledged and thanked those who were participating in the convention online. She warmly welcomed visitors from Cameroon, Pastors Etienne and Jeanne Fomgbami, and encouraged delegates to take the opportunity to connect with them.

(Morning Break)

Bishop Susan Johnson called for the continuation of Business Session #3 of the 2025 ELCIC National Convention to order.

Announcements

Rejoicing in Hope – Rev. Dr. Willard Metzger, Citizens for Public Justice

National Bishop Susan Johnson called on Rev. Dr. Willard Metzger, Executive Director of Citizens for Public Justice to share a few words to the National Convention.

Pastor Willard began by thanking the ELCIC for its long-standing partnership and support. His presentation highlighted the growing concern around refugee and migrant rights, particularly the rise in anti-migrant rhetoric and the implications of the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA). He also offered a hopeful message, pointing to the vital role churches have played—and continue to play—in offering welcome and advocating for fair policies. He encouraged faith communities to help shift the narrative from fear to compassion, reminding us that all are made in the image of God. “Let us be a welcoming table and a light of hope.”

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked Pastor Willard and presented him a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

Greetings – Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

National Bishop Susan Johnson called on Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to share a few words to the National Convention.

Bishop Elizabeth brought greetings from the ELCA, in which their church will also be electing a new presiding bishop in August. She then continued to emphasize the ongoing impact of their church on the ELCIC, noting the ELCA's work to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery—a topic long addressed by the ELCIC. Bishop Elizabeth highlighted the ELCA's role as a beacon of hope in the midst of challenging times through faith-driven civic engagement, care for creation, and support for partner churches like the ELCJHL. She praised the strong collaboration exemplified by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) and affirmed the ELCA's commitment to partnership. She encouraged the ELCIC to continue growing in faith and hope on their shared journey.

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked Bishop Elizabeth and presented her a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

Greetings – Mr. Wayne Hove, Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute (LCBI) High School
National Bishop Susan Johnson called on Mr. Wayne Hove, President of LCBI to share a few words to the National Convention.

Mr. Hove shared LCBI's history and mission, highlighting the school's leadership program, which is deeply rooted in the teachings of God's gospel.

Bishop Susan Johnson turned over the chair to Vice-Chair Bruce Cook.

Third Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook facilitated the third ballot voting for National Bishop. This is an electronic voting. Results for the third ballot will be shared right after lunch time. Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer right before voting.

He also thanked Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), Advocate Sponsor for the 2025 ELCIC National Convention for their sponsorship for that day's lunch. Bruce encouraged the delegates to visit the exhibitors' display area.

Closing Prayer

Led by Convention Chaplain.

(Lunch)

Business Session #4: Friday, July 11, 2025, 1:30 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called Business Session #4 of the 2025 ELCIC National Convention to order.

Opening Prayer

Led by Convention Chaplain.

Registration Report

Secretary Linda Grainger presented the report.

85 lay delegates

60 rostered delegates

13 NCC members

Total of 158 registered voting delegates

Report of Committee on Conduct of Elections – Third Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections to give the report on the third ballot for national bishop.

Number of Ballots Cast: 153

Number of Spoiled Ballots: 0

Number of Eligible Ballots: 153

Number of Votes Required to Elect: 77

Third Ballot Results:

Larry Kochendorfer	56
Carla Blakley	35
Aneeta Saroop	20
Marc Jerry	16
Chris Bishopp	8
Paul Gehrs	6
Courtenay Reedman-Parker	5
Laura Holck	5
Jason Zinko	1
Katherine Gohm	1

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared there's no election. The five names that will proceed to the Fourth Ballot for National Bishop are Larry Kochendorfer, Carla Blakley, Aneeta Saroop, Marc Jerry, and Chris Bishopp. These candidates are invited to address the convention this afternoon.

***Rejoicing in Hope* – The Rev. Vincent Solomon, Diocese of Rupert's Land, Anglican Church of Canada**

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Rev. Vincent Solomon, the Indigenous Ministry Developer, Diocese of Rupert's Land to share a few words to the 2025 ELCIC National Convention.

Pastor Vincent reflected on the challenge of rejoicing during painful times, especially for Indigenous communities still facing the effects of colonization and the Indian Act. He shared a personal story of his grandfather who was marked by suffering through the residential school system, and who later encountered Christ through creation and learned to love differently. Pastor Vincent spoke of a hope rooted not in wishful thinking, but in eternal truth – a hope that sustains despite hardship. He reminded the convention that Indigenous Christians are still here, not as tools of oppression, but as a prophetic and prayerful church rooted in creation. Vincent called on the church to reckon with its past, to be a safe place, and to return to the One we first loved.

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked Pastor Vincent and presented him a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

Report of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook introduced Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse, Interim Executive Director, to share the report of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR).

Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse presented to the National Convention with a message grounded in gratitude and purpose. He described CLWR as a diaconal expression or vocation of discipleship – putting faith into action in practical, life-giving ways. He praised the work of the CLWR team, naming David Turner, Jason Carkner, Hanne Kuhnert, and Heidi Van Schaik for their dedication. Thanks to the faithful support of the ELCIC and its members, CLWR continues to carry out life-saving programs in places like Chad, Haiti, Palestine, and Cameroon.

A video highlighting the organization’s global efforts, including the Friends of Creation initiative, was shown during his presentation. Following the video, Michael emphasized the impact of collective effort, noting how this project can help bring about significant change. He also underscored CLWR’s ongoing commitment to refugee resettlement. He closed with heartfelt thanks to the ELCIC for its continued prayers and support by saying, “There’s no CLWR without you.” He also expressed deep appreciation to National Bishop Susan Johnson for her remarkable contribution to CLWR’s ministry in addition to serving on the board for 18 years. Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse along with Rev. Adam Snook, CLWR Board Chair and President handed a gift to National Bishop Susan Johnson as a token of appreciation on behalf of CLWR.

Announcements

(Afternoon Break)

Report of ELCIC Group Services, Inc.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook introduced and welcomed Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen, President and Board Chair, and Barb Fortier, Executive Director of ELCIC Group Services, Inc. (ELCIC-GSI) to present to the National Convention.

Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen in his presentation, acknowledged leadership transitions within the organization. He noted the retirement of Lisa Thiessen, the former Executive Director, and introduced Barb Fortier, as the new Executive Director, who brings 20 years of experience with GSI. He also recognized Shelley Litke, GSI’s Finance Manager. Barb then presented with updates on benefit plans, noting rising costs due to dental fees, chronic illness, and mental health needs. She also mentioned optional retirement health coverage and an employer-paid Life Plan. Gordon gave an overview of the Pension Plan, investment strategy, and governance, while Barb spoke on Continuing Education Plans. Both presenters emphasized transparency and encouraged delegates to reach out with questions or feedback. The presentation closed with a warm *thank you* to Bishop Susan for her steadfast support of GSI, along with well wishes as she embarks on her next chapter.

Video Greetings – Dr. Tom Pheonix, President of Luther College

Dr. Tom Phoenix, President of Luther College gave greetings through a video. He thanked ELCIC for the connection and also mentioned Brooklynn Lane, the school's chaplain, for representing Luther College. He also thanked National Bishop Susan Johnson, former Synod Bishop Sid Haugen, and current SK Synod Bishop Ali Tote for their support. He's truly grateful for the ongoing partnership.

Speeches From the Five Candidate for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on the candidates one by one to give their speech. He emphasized that the names were selected randomly by the committee to speak in this order: Larry Kochendorfer, Aneeta Saroop, Marc Jerry, Chris Bishopp, and Carla Blakley. Each one spoke to the convention for five minutes.

Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer right before voting.

Fourth Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook facilitated the fourth ballot voting for national bishop. This was an electronic voting. Results for the fourth ballot will be shared shortly.

Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer song before the results were shared to the convention.

Report of Committee on Conduct of Elections

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections to give the report on the fourth ballot for national bishop.

Number of Ballots Cast: 155

Number of Spoiled Ballots: 0

Number of Eligible Ballots: 155

Number of Votes Required to Elect: 78

Fourth Ballot Results:

Larry Kochendorfer	48
Carla Blakley	44
Aneeta Saroop	34
Chris Bishopp	17
Marc Jerry	12

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared there's no election. The three names that will proceed to the Fifth Ballot for National Bishop were Larry Kochendorfer, Carla Blakley and Aneeta Saroop. Bruce thanked Adam and his committee for their work.

Announcements

Closing Prayer

Led by convention chaplain.

(Dinner)

**Business Session #5:
Friday, July 11, 2025, 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.**

National Bishop Susan Johnson called Business Session #5 of the 2025 ELCIC National Convention to order.

Opening Prayer

Led by convention chaplain.

Registration Report

Secretary Linda Grainger presented the report.

86 lay delegates

60 rostered delegates

13 NCC members

Total of 159 registered voting delegates

**National Church Council (NCC) Report—
Action Items for National Convention:**

1995 ELCIC Statement to the Jewish Communities in Canada

NC-2025-01 That National Convention requests NCC to review the 1995 Statement to the Jewish Communities in Canada and report to the 2028 National Convention, including recommendations for any revisions. **CARRIED.**

(Appendix 06, 2025 Bulletin of Reports)

Report of the Task Force on Ability and Inclusion

NC-2025-02 That National Convention receives the Report of the Task Force on Ability and Inclusion. **CARRIED.**

(Appendix 08, 2025 Bulletin of Reports)

Recommendations from the Task Force on Ability and Inclusion

NC-2025-03 That National Convention adopts the following recommendations *en bloc*.

- a. A workshop, entitled, “Embracing Inclusion: Cultivating a Welcoming and Accessible Church Community” has been developed. We recommend that it be a “pilot” presentation at the September 2025 NCC meeting. A resource list of articles and videos will be compiled to be presented to allow individuals and groups to continue this work. Any necessary changes will be made following this trial run and then the workshop will then be offered to all other expressions of this church.
- b. That the assigned staff member recruit a group of individuals and train them to facilitate the workshop so that the workshop can be presented to congregational groups and other groups within this church.
- c. We requested that the worship planners of the 2025 Convention find ways to incorporate those who are differently abled in the worship of the convention.

- d. To NCC, we ask that the tenure and terms of reference for this task force be clarified. We believe that the work should continue, and that the task force, with expanded membership could serve as a resource to the Diversity Equity and Inclusion staff member and to help forward this work within this church.
- e. We are also unclear if there are/or will be similar initiatives taken at synodical levels, and if so, how the national and synodical groups would integrate.
- f. We recommend that the ELCIC establish a web-based blog so that individuals and congregations might share their stories and ask questions about the work of Abilities and Inclusion. We acknowledge that there are budget implications of such a recommendation, both for the technology and for staff time to moderate the blog.
- g. We recommend that the ELCIC develop a set of study guides for Bible study be developed using Disability Theology as their base.

CARRIED.

Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy and Racial Justice Issues

NC-2025-04 That National Convention receives the Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy and Racial Justice Issues. **CARRIED.**
(Appendix 09, 2025 Bulletin of Reports)

1991 Stewards of Creation: Respect for Human Life

NC-2025-05 That National Convention requests NCC to review the 1991 Stewards of Creation: Respect for Human Life.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Position on Abortion and report to the 2028 National Convention, including recommendations for any revisions. **CARRIED.**
(Appendix 07, 2025 Bulletin of Reports)

Greetings – The Most Rev. Gregory Kerr-Wilson, Anglican Diocese of Calgary, Anglican Church of Canada

The Most Rev. Greg Kerr-Wilson shared his appreciation for holding the convention in Winnipeg, where two rivers meet—a meaningful symbol of coming together. He then offered highlights from the Anglican Church of Canada’s recent General Synod, including the election of the new Primate, Shane Parker, who will serve a three-year term. A key focus was the future direction of the ACC, with the Primate’s Task Force presenting seven hypotheses, including “creative pathways” around communication, Indigenous partnership, and governance reform, to name a few. Greg noted the complexity of possibly holding a constitutional convention and emphasized continued support for Indigenous ministries through Sacred Circle and Indigenous of the North. Other significant motions included reviewing the primatial model, creating a national youth council, and affirming disability theology. The General Synod also passed a motion to sign an open letter denouncing inequality. Greg concluded with a heartfelt thank-you to Bishop Susan for her presence and leadership throughout his time at General Synod, reading a tribute in her honour.

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked The Most Rev. Gregory Kerr-Wilson and presented him a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

Greetings – Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller, Ecumenical Officer, Moravian Church, Northern Province

The Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller shared greetings to the National Convention. She highlighted the warm welcome the Moravian Church received. As a church south of the border that faces divisiveness and chaos, the Moravian Church needs prayers, help and encouragement. She greeted the National Convention in the name of Jesus Christ on behalf of Rev. David Bennett, President of the Provincial Elders Conference of the Moravian Church Northern Province. The Rev. Miller shared the mission of their church. She thanked the ELCIC-GSI for taking care of their pastors in Canada who are currently being served by GSI. She particularly expressed her thanks to the ELCIC for accepting the Moravian Church as a full communion partner. She highlighted that the Moravian Church is part of the Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian Commission (LAM-C). The creation of LAM-C is an expression of theological hospitality. The Rev. Dr. Miller introduced the Moravian Daily Texts in which she gave a copy to National Bishop Susan Johnson and another copy which awaits the next national bishop to be elected.

National Church Council (NCC) Reporting Task Force Videos—

Rev. Katrina Vigen introduced the report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (HBT). A video was presented to the National Convention.

Sarah Harrington introduced the report of the Task Force on Carbon Neutrality. A video was presented to the National Convention.

(NCC Reporting to be continued)

National Bishop Susan Johnson turned over the chair to Vice-Chair Bruce Cook.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on the Chair of the Committee on the Conduct of Elections Rev. Adam Snook.

Committee on the Conduct of Elections

Rev. Adam Snook thanked the convention as the committee received over 30 questions. These questions were sorted into three major themes in which one question that best represented each theme was chosen. Candidates will be asked the same questions. The Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb was the chaplain for these candidates during the convention.

Questions for Candidates for the National Bishop:

1. *How will you help us move from fear-driven, money centered decision-making to courageous, gospel-centered action, especially when it means letting go of old structures that no longer serve our mission?*
2. *What paths do you envision to support Youth/Young Adult voices at a national level? How would you support Under 30 leaders?*
3. *How would you further the work of inclusion with 2SLGBTQIA+ community from a national level that can be implemented or felt in the congregational and synodical levels?*

The three candidates who spoke before the convention and will proceed to the fifth ballot were Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Rev. Carla Blakely and Rev. Aneeta Saroop.

Convention Chaplain The Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer before the fifth ballot began.

Fifth Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook facilitated the fifth ballot voting for National Bishop. This was an electronic voting.

Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in a prayer song.

Report of Committee on Conduct of Elections – Fifth Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections to give the report on the fifth ballot for national bishop.

Number of Ballots Cast: 155

Number of Spoiled Ballots: 0

Number of Eligible Ballots: 155

Number of Votes Required to Elect: 78

Fifth Ballot Results:

Carla Blakley	66
Larry Kochendorfer	56
Aneeta Saroop	33

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared there's no election. The two names that will proceed to the Sixth Ballot for National Bishop are Larry Kochendorfer and Carla Blakley. The sixth ballot will take place on Saturday morning.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on the Chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel Boston Laferté to give the report.

Report of Committee of Reference and Counsel

Eucharistic Practices and Presiding

NC-2025-06 That the 2025 ELCIC National Convention refers the following motion to the National Church Council.

That the ELCIC implement a three-year missional pilot initiative focused on Eucharistic practices and presiding, guided by the synod bishops and the teaching faculty of this church's seminaries. This initiative will give particular attention to the intersection of ecclesiology and sacramental theology, and be conducted in dialogue with the principles from Reimagining Our Church. A summary of the initiative, including learnings and recommendations for the future of ministry leadership in the ELCIC, shall be presented to the 2028 ELCIC Convention.

CARRIED.

Emancipation Sunday

NC-2025-07 That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada formally designates the last Sunday in July as Emancipation Sunday. Members are encouraged to observe this day through worship, reflection, and community engagement. **CARRIED.**

Evening Prayer

Business Session #6:

Saturday, July 12, 2025, 8:30 p.m.- 12:00 p.m.

Delegates Ben Johnston-Urey (ABT Synod) and Eric Davidson (ABT Synod) began the National Convention with a duet ensemble. After their performance, the convention applauded and gave them a standing ovation. Vice-Chair Bruce Cook thanked Ben and Eric for their gifts of music which only highlighted the gifts we have in the church, the conversations we have, and how these gifts can be lifted up.

Opening Prayer

Led by convention chaplain.

Registration Report

Secretary Linda Grainger presented the report.

86 lay delegates

60 rostered delegates

13 NCC members

Total of 159 registered voting delegates

Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer before voting.

Sixth Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook facilitated the sixth ballot voting for National Bishop. This is an electronic voting. Results for the sixth ballot to follow shortly.

Report of Committee on Conduct of Elections – Sixth Ballot for National Bishop

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called on Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections to give the report on the sixth ballot for national bishop.

Number of Ballots Cast: 156

Number of Spoiled Ballots: 0

Number of Eligible Ballots: 156

Number of Votes Required to Elect: 79

Sixth Ballot Results:

Larry Kochendorfer	87
Carla Blakley	69

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook declared **Larry Kochendorfer** elected as the fifth National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC).

Bishop-elect Larry Kochendorfer gave his acceptance speech and asked the convention to say a prayer with him.

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook thanked all those candidates who let their names stand through the election process and turned over the chair to National Bishop Susan Johnson.

First Ballot for the Vice-Chair (paper ballot)

National Bishop Susan Johnson facilitated the first ballot voting for Vice-Chair which is an ecclesiastical ballot. She reminded delegates that the vice-chair needs to be a lay member of this church. Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led the convention in prayer before voting. Stewards handed out paper ballots to voting delegates.

***Rejoicing in Hope* – Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller, Ecumenical Officer, Moravian Church, Northern Province**

Rev. Betsy Miller opened her message with the reminder that “Whenever two or three are gathered, there is hope.” She shared a personal memory of first meeting Bishop Susan Johnson, setting a warm and relational tone. Betsy gave a brief history of the Moravian Church, describing it as a deeply relational and confessional community where no single body holds executive authority. Guided by faith, love, and hope — God creates, redeems, and sanctifies. The Moravian tradition emphasizes deep prayer and trust in the Holy Spirit when discerning difficult decisions. She acknowledged her church’s ongoing efforts to repent and make amends for past wrongs, emphasizing fellowship and humility. Betsy affirmed that true hope is found in Jesus Christ and renewed daily through the Spirit. Her message encouraged the convention to remain faithful, open-hearted, and united – trusting in God’s Spirit as we walk together in hope.

Table conversations (table groups are asked to pick one question):

What is one thing that has impacted you the most about the Moravians?

What is a gift that the Moravians could offer you as Lutherans?

What causes you to rejoice in hope through our full communion relationship among the Lutherans, Anglicans and Moravians?

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked The Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller and presented her a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

(Coffee Break)

Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer Stephen Holmes provided highlights of his report to the National Convention.

NC-2025-08 That National Convention receives the 2024 Audited ELCIC Financial Statements. **CARRIED.**
(Appendix 11, 2025 Bulletin of Reports – Audited ELCIC Financial Statements)

NC-2025-09 That National Convention approves the 2026 and 2027 Operating, ELCIC Mission Fund and LIFE Fund budgets. **CARRIED.**
(2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section E, pages 93 and 94)

National Church Council (NCC) Reporting (Continuation)

Heidi Van Schaik introduced the report of the Task Forces on Racism, White Supremacy and Racial Justice Issues. A video was presented to the National Convention.

Shirley Dubois introduced the report of the Task Force on Ability and Inclusion. A video was presented to the National Convention.

Bishop Susan called on Boston Laferte to give the report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

Report of Committee of Reference and Counsel (Continuation)

Term for Office of the National Bishop

That a limit of two (2) terms be implemented for the office of national bishop of the ELCIC, effective immediately.

M/S That the resolution be referred to National Church Council.

(floor discussion)

M/S That the 2025 National Convention goes into a Committee of the Whole to discuss the motion presented by the Committee on Reference and Counsel *that a limit of two terms be implemented for the office of national bishop of the ELCIC, effective immediately.* **CARRIED.**

M/S That the 2025 National Convention goes out of the Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That the 2025 National Convention refers the following motion to the National Church Council.

That a limit of two (2) terms be implemented for the office of national bishop of the ELCIC, effective immediately.

CARRIED.

NC-2025-10 That the 2025 National Convention directs the National Church Council to propose a bylaw change for a limit of two (2) terms for the Office of the National Bishop of the ELCIC effective from 2028 National Convention. **CARRIED.**

Report of the Committee on Conduct of Elections – First Ballot for Vice-Chair

National Bishop Susan Johnson called on Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections to give the report on the first ballot for vice-chair.

154 cast
16 spoiled
138 eligible
104 required to elect

First Ballot Results:

Bruce Cook	100	Ben Johnston-Urey	1
Boston Laferte	6	Candace Laing	1
Sarah Harrington	5	Ben Lukenchuk	1
Linda Grainger	3	Celly Manirakoze	1
Anthony Koobler	3	Tim McNabb	1
Heidi Van Schaik	3	John Nilson	1
Robert Granke	2	Dorothy Reid	1
Sheila Hamilton	2	Deb Roberts	1
Rebecca Anderson	1	Judy von Wahl	1
Cheryl Bauer Hyde	1	Rebecca Wong	1
Adri Booth	1	Laureen Wray	1

National Bishop Susan Johnson declared there's no election. The second ballot will follow.

Convention Chaplain The Very Rev. Peter Wall led in prayer for the second ballot

Second Ballot for Vice-Chair

National Bishop Susan Johnson facilitated the voting during the second ballot for Vice-Chair.

Announcements

Bishop Susan thanked Charitus for sponsoring the lunch on that day. She invited delegates to visit the exhibitors' area.

Closing Prayer

Led by convention chaplain.

(Lunch)

Business Session #7:

Saturday, July 12, 2025, 1:30 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel

Boston Laferte, Chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel presented their report.

Unfinished Business from the 2025 ELCIC National Convention

M/S That any unfinished business from the 2025 National Convention Agenda be referred to the National Church Council. **CARRIED.**

Extending Thanks

NC-2025-11 That the 2025 National Convention extend our thanks to all those who made it possible for us to be gathered together as church, and to conduct our business -

Bishop Susan Johnson

National Church Council

National Church Staff

Synod Bishops

Convention Planning Committee

Worship Committee

Committee on Conduct of Elections

Committee of Reference and Counsel

Code of Conduct Complaint Handling Committee

All University of Manitoba Staff

AV and Tech Team

Volunteers

Our Chaplain

All Special Guests

And thank you to all delegates who took the time to be present and actively participate, especially those delegates who used vacation time to be here.

CARRIED.

Creation of a National and Youth and Young Adult Council

NC-2025-12 We recommend that the National Church Council create a National Youth and Young Adult Council in consultation and collaboration with Youth/Young Adults across the ELCIC as an advisory board to the National Church Council. **CARRIED.**

In Solidarity with Palestine

NC-2025-13 In solidarity with the people of Taybeh, in the Israeli occupied territory of the West Bank of Palestine, the ELCIC decries attacks on Palestinian Christians - their churches, towns, and land. We call on the National Bishop to continue the work of advocacy on behalf of the ELCIC to be in solidarity with our Arab Christian sisters, brothers, and siblings in the Holy Land. We call on our National Bishop to continue to pray and advocate for a just peace for all people in the Holy Land and to encourage our partners to join us in the prayers and efforts

CARRIED.

Synodical Bishops As Members of NCC

NC-2025-14 That the 2025 National Convention refers the following motion to the National Church Council.

That Part IX, Section 2 of the ELCIC Administrative Bylaws be amended to include synodical bishops as members of NCC. The proposed wording is as follows:

In addition to the officers, the National Church Council shall consist of five (5) rostered members, one from each synod; five (5) laypersons, one (1) from each synod; the bishop of each Synod; and one (1) layperson at large from the synod with the most baptized members. There shall be one (1) additional member appointed by the Council of General Synod (COGS) of the Anglican Church of Canada for a term to be determined by COGS.

CARRIED.

Additional Members in the National Youth and Young Adult Council

NC-2025-15 That the 2025 National Convention refers the following motion to the National Church Council.

We recommend that the National Church Council change the Administrative Bylaws to include 2 additional members between 18 & 30 years of age who will act as liaisons (to the National Youth and Young Adult Council).

CARRIED.

Report of Committee on Conduct of Elections – Second Ballot for Vice-Chair

Rev. Adam Snook, Chair of the Committee on Conduct of Elections presented the report on the second ballot for vice-chair.

Number of Ballots Cast: 151

Number of Spoiled Ballots: 0

Number of Eligible Ballots: 151

Number of Votes Required to Elect: 101

Second Ballot Results:

Bruce Cook	119	Ben Johnston-Urey	1
Boston Laferté	14	Anthony Koobler	1
Sarah Harrington	4	Celly Manirakoze	1
Rebecca Wong	4	John Nilson	1
Robert Granke	2	Deb Roberts	1
Rebecca Anderson	1	Laureen Wray	1
Cheryl Bauer Hyde	1		

National Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Bruce Cook** re-elected for Vice-Chair (second term) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC).

***Greetings* – The Rev. Margaret Rose, Deputy for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, The Episcopal Church**

The Rev. Margaret Rose, representing Presiding Bishop and Primate Sean Rowe and past Episcopal Church presiding bishops, expressed deep gratitude for the ecumenical partnership. She affirmed the theme of unity in diversity and stated shared challenges like church realignment and reckoning with history. Margaret highlighted Bishop Susan Johnson's pivotal role in forming Churches Beyond Borders and celebrated the mutual exchange between full communion partners (ELCIC, ACC, ELCA, TEC). She read a letter from Presiding Bishop Rowe, praising Bishop Susan for her courageous leadership in Canada, the North American region, and globally, noting her generous spirit and faithful service to the wider church and ecumenical community.

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked The Rev. Margaret Rose and presented her a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

***Rejoicing in Hope* – Rev. Dr. Imad Mousa Dawood Haddad, Bishop-Elect, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land**

At the National Convention, Pastor Imad brought warm greetings from Bishop Azar and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), sharing a powerful message rooted in resilience and faith. He spoke of a community shaped by struggles and yet committed to life and hope even in the face of revoked rights, destroyed homes, and daily injustice. Even in the midst of harsh realities in the Holy Land, Pastor Imad reminded us that true hope is not blind to suffering, but rooted in justice and courage. “Rejoicing in Hope,” he said, is a choice – a faithful response to a broken world. The ELCJHL continues its prophetic witness through education, advocacy, and community care. “We love life whenever we can,” he said, calling the church to live with purpose and bold hope. In these times, may we too choose life, hold fast to who we are, and rejoice in hope.

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked Bishop-Elect Imad Haddad and presented him a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

Bishop Susan shared with the delegates that ELCIC and Eastern Synod will have a joint appeal with the hope to raise 50k for their current needs. She stressed it’s a difficult time and hoping the convention will assist in that. More information will come the following week. This is one way we can stand with ELCJHL.

Voting Results for National Church Council

BC Synod Lay

Ben Lukenchuk 91

Andrew Macauley 43

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Ben Lukenchuk** elected.

BC Synod Rostered

Rev. Katrina Vigen 66

Rev. Aneeta Saroop 80

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Rev. Aneeta Saroop** elected.

ABT Synod Lay

Sheryl Dubois 55

Tammy Kirkwood 75

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Tammy Kirkwood** elected.

ABT Synod Rostered

Rev. Reg Berg 65

Rev. Kate Zaiser 77

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Rev. Kate Zaiser** elected.

SK Synod Lay

Jeff Barber 88

Carol Mauer 47

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Jeff Barber** elected.

SK Synod Rostered

Rev. Sheldon Gattinger 32

Rev. Victoria Mwamasika 108

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Rev. Victoria Mwamasika** elected.

MNO Synod Lay

Sarah Harrington – 98

Michael Kvern – 42

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Sarah Harrington** re-elected.

MNO Synod Rostered

Rev. Chris Bishopp – 89

Rev. Heather Parrott-Howdle – 57

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Rev. Chris Bishopp** re-elected.

EAST Synod Lay 1

Bill Gastmeier – 50

Cath Wilke – 91

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Cath Wilke** elected.

EAST Synod Lay 2

Heidi Van Schaik – 115

Judith von Wohl – 28

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Heidi Van Schaik** re-elected.

Court of Appeal

Lay (1)

Brent Latimer – 81

Verlyn Olson – 44

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Brent Latimer** elected.

Lay (3)

Boston Laferté – 113

Tom Brook – 33

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Boston Laferté** elected.

Rostered (1)

Rev. James Whaley – 57

Rev. Karen Stepko – 84

Bishop Susan declared **Rev. Karen Stepko** elected.

Rostered (2)

Bishop (ret.) Cindy Halmarson – 69

Rev. Prema Samuel – 76

Bishop Susan Johnson declared **Rev. Prema Samuel** elected.

Bishop Susan thanked everyone especially those who allowed their names to be included in the electoral process.

M/S That all ballots be destroyed. **CARRIED.**

(Coffee Break)

Rejoicing in Hope – Rev. Sonia Skupch, Regional Secretary, Latin America and the Caribbean & North America, Lutheran World Federation

Rev. Sonia Skupch offered an uplifting overview of the Lutheran World Federation's global mission, rooted in unity, service, and justice. She highlighted the LWF's four guiding priorities: responsible theology, thriving churches, justice and peace, and care for creation. Despite funding challenges, the LWF continues to walk alongside vulnerable communities, offering support and hope through faithful action. Framed by the theme *Rejoicing in Hope*, Pastor Sonia encouraged delegates to see hope not just as a promise, but as a living witness—grounded in prayer, community, and global solidarity. She thanked Bishop Susan for her leadership and partnership in the communion, offering a gift of gratitude and blessing for the journey ahead. Her message invited the convention to continue embracing courage, compassion, and joy as we live out the gospel together.

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked Sonia Skupch and presented her a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention. In exchange, Sonia presented Bishop Susan a gift from the LWF.

Rejoicing in Hope – Emily Savage, Vice-President, The Canadian Council of Churches and Member, St. Philip's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Toronto

Emily led the Bible Study at the National Convention, focusing on finding hope in the unexpected. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 13, she emphasized that love is an intentional action shaping how we live and relate to others. Using the parable of the Good Samaritan, she challenged delegates to rethink "Who is my neighbour?" – highlighting how hope can emerge from unlikely sources. Attendees were invited to notice "glimmers" of hope, joy, and love as signs of God's presence in daily life. The study concluded with group discussions, where participants reflected on questions such as: *Who has been an unexpected neighbour in your life? Where do you see pockets of hope today? and What recent "glimmers" have you experienced?*

Bishop Susan Johnson thanked Emily Savage and presented her a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the National Convention.

Report of Committee of Reference and Counsel (Continuation)

Boston Laferte, Chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel presented the following motion to the National Convention:

Program for Installation of Renewable Sources of Clean Energy

That the church in convention direct the National Church Council to immediately facilitate a

program for the installation of renewable sources of clean energy, e.g. photo voltaic solar panels and heat pumps, on church buildings across the ELCIC, using start up funds from the ELCIC Mission fund and other sources, and creating a national church resource hub where expertise, creativity, and experiences are shared and accessible.

Recommendation by the Reference and Counsel Committee:

That the 2025 National Convention refers this motion to National Church Council.

M/S That the 2025 National Convention move the motion to Committee of the Whole.

CARRIED.

(Committee of the Whole)

M/S That the 2025 National Convention removes the motion from the Committee of the Whole.

DEFEATED

(Committee of the Whole continues)

M/S That the 2025 National Convention removes the motion from the Committee of the Whole.

CARRIED.

Original motion back on the table:

That the 2025 National Convention refers this motion to National Church Council.

NC-2025-16 That the 2025 National Convention refers the following motion to the National Church Council.

That the church in convention direct the National Church Council to immediately facilitate a program for the installation of renewable sources of clean energy, e.g. photo voltaic solar panels and heat pumps, on church buildings across the ELCIC, using start up funds from the ELCIC Mission fund and other sources, and creating a national church resource hub where expertise, creativity, and experiences are shared and accessible.

CARRIED.

Announcements

Closing Prayer

(Dinner)

Business Session #8:

Saturday, July 12, 2025, 6:30 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.

Recognition of NCC Members Ending Terms of Service

National Bishop Susan Johnson thanked members of the National Church Council (NCC) who finished their terms and called each one on stage.

Rev. Katrina Vigen (BC Synod Rostered)
Sheryl Dubois (ABT Synod Lay)
Rev. Reg Berg (ABT Synod Rostered)
Rev. Sheldon Gattinger (SK Synod Rostered)
Bill Gastmeier (Eastern Synod Lay) – *not in attendance at the National Convention*
John Nilson (SK Synod Lay)
Kathleen Jensen (ABT Synod Lay) – *not in attendance at the National Convention*
Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry (SK Synod Rostered)
Rev. Dr. Kevin Powell (ABT Synod Rostered) – *not in attendance at the National Convention*
Gene Blishen (Treasurer) – *not in attendance at the National Convention*

National Bishop Susan Johnson called on Emily Savage, Vice-President of The Canadian Council of Churches.

King Charles III Coronation Medal

Emily Savage presented the King Charles III Coronation Medal to Rev. Eric Dyck. Pastor Eric was called on stage to receive the medal. She read a letter from the general secretary of The Canadian Council of Churches stating the significant contribution Pastor Eric made to Canada.

Farewell to National Bishop Susan Johnson

Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Resource Generation, National Office; Rev. Christie Morrow-Wolfe, Assistant to the Bishop for Call Process & Interim Ministry, Stewardship, Youth & Young Adult, and Candidacy, Eastern Synod Office; and The Very Rev. Peter Wall, Assistant to the Bishop for Worship, National Office, led the farewell program to honour, give thanks, and highlight the dedicated service of Rev. Susan C. Johnson as National Bishop of the ELCIC in the past 18 years. Program highlights included messages from special guests representing ecumenical and full communion partners, and colleagues and friends from the ELCIC.

Evening Prayer Reception

Closing Worship Service

Sunday, July 13, 2025, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at Plenary Hall, Multi-Purpose Room, University Centre, University of Manitoba

The Closing Worship Service was highlighted with the procession of ecumenical guests and synod bishops. National Bishop Susan Johnson and Deacon Sherry Coman presided over the Closing Worship along with ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton who delivered the sermon based on the parable of the Good Samaritan. Bishop Susan Johnson presided over Holy Communion and the Blessing of Bishop-Elect Larry Kochendorfer. The Service was also highlighted by the installation of ELCIC National Officers and National Church Council. Bishop-elect Larry Kochendorfer delivered the Closing Blessing, and the conclusion of the 2025 ELCIC National Convention.

(You can watch the Business Sessions of the 2025 ELCIC National Convention and Special Events on ELCIC's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@ELCIC1/streams>)

Minutes by: Desiree Mendoza, Recording Secretary

DRAFT



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Convention 2025; Rejoicing in Hope

Facing Today – Dreaming for the
Future

July 11, 2025

Rejoicing in Hope – Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future

1



Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Canada
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada

Rejoicing in Hope – Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future

Conversations
today, tomorrow
and beyond...

Agenda Session 2

- Highlights from survey
- Highlights from last night's conversations
- New conversations
- Next Steps, Timeline & Thank you

2

Good morning - today I am going to spend about 15 minutes on highlights from the survey and last night's conversations

Alisdair – 30 minutes on a new area of conversation

Peter – 5 minutes on next steps

So let's dive in with a look at what people said in the survey

Survey – Signs of Hope

Congregations:

- Community
- New beginnings
- Engagement

Synods:

- Leadership
- Change and support
- Some disengagement

Differences in the themes and tone of what people identify as signs of hope for the **congregation and synod**, perspectives

Signs of hope for our congregations and synods include the following:

For **CONGREGATIONS** the key themes revolved around

1. **Community:** Words like people, community, members, together – all suggest a strong emphasis on relationships and shared ministry and life.
2. **New beginnings:** Terms like new, hope, church – often relate to pastoral transitions or new ministries.
3. **Engagement:** Frequent use of we, our, and see implies personal involvement and direct observation.

Signs most often mentioned – Pastoral searches or leadership transitions; Youth and children's ministry engagement; Acts of care, outreach, and inclusion; Vibrant worship and connection within the community.

CLICK

For **SYNODS** the key themes revolved around

Leadership: The word *bishop* appears frequently, as well as *support* and *leadership*.

Change and support: Words like *new*, *ways*, *support*, *congregations* indicate that hope is seen in structural support and leadership decisions.

Some disengagement: Still, there are mentions of people *not* being very involved.

Signs of hope most often mentioned – Strong or new synod leadership.; Support for struggling congregations.; Synod-level initiatives that address contemporary issues.

At this stage we do not have sufficient data to provide a synod by synod perspective. Early indications suggest hope in leadership is pretty much universal, however we suspect there will be differences shaped by local initiatives and leadership, even while sharing a common confidence in their bishops and synod staffs.

Survey – Signs of Hope

Rejoicing in Hope – Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future

4

Congregation perspective: you can see the emphasis on **community, people, church, and together** — reflecting hope grounded in relationships and local ministry.

One note, For Synods - People locate hope less in *structures* and more in *relationships and experiments that move the Gospel beyond the building*: supportive leaders, congregations helping one another, targeted grants, creative outreach, and young people taking ownership. Even the respondents who confessed “I’m not very involved” usually followed that with a story of one of the themes above that caught their attention.

Overview of Yesterday's Conversations

Congregations – Signs of Life

- Resilience after crisis
- Lay leadership growth
- Youth involvement
- Experimentation
- Diversity and inclusion

Rejoicing in Hope – Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future

5

Key themes included:

Resilience after crisis: Many congregations faced serious disruptions (e.g., loss of pastors, financial struggles, pandemic) but responded with creativity and commitment rather than defeat.

Lay leadership growth: Communities stepped up in leadership roles, showing that the church's vitality doesn't depend solely on clergy.

Youth involvement: Young people are returning, participating, and even leading—seen as signs of renewed life.

Experimentation: Willingness to try new worship styles, use of buildings, and community partnerships reflects adaptability.

Diversity and inclusion: There is a clear movement toward being more affirming, welcoming, and relevant to broader populations.

Rejoicing in Hope - Facing Today - Dreaming for the Future

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada

Overview of Yesterday's Conversations

Congregations - Acknowledged Struggles

- Post-pandemic fatigue
- Leadership shortages
- Survival mindset

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There were also some common themes regarding struggles, specifically these three -

Post-pandemic fatigue: Many mentioned burnout, declining numbers, and loss of momentum since the initial pandemic recovery

Leadership shortages: A lack of pastors and money causes uncertainty in some congregations.

Survival mindset: Some congregations still feel stuck, unsure how to pivot away from decline.



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Overview of Yesterday's Conversations – Congregations – Tone

Words and phrases like "signs of life," "hope," "joy," "experiment," "new energy," and "committed community" appear repeatedly.

Even when discussing closures or mergers, the framing is often about opportunity and faithful transitions, not failure..

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Overall – we found the sentiment to be **realistic but hopeful**. Congregations are not ignoring the difficulties — rather they are focusing on growth, creativity, and new forms of vitality. The repeated emphasis on *trying*, *caring*, and *adapting* shows a deep undercurrent of spiritual and communal resilience.

Overall, there is a lot of similarity to what we heard in the survey – though with a little more detail especially when it came to some of the struggles

Now let's look at Signs of Life in our Synods

Overview of Yesterday's Conversations

Synods – Signs of Life

1. Leadership – especially new bishops
2. Youth Involvement
3. Shared Ministry & Collaboration
4. DEI and Representation
5. Technology and Connection

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1. Leadership (especially new bishops)

Hopeful tone dominates.

Comments describe bishops as energetic, innovative, inclusive, and responsive.

“New bishop brings energy... seeing things done differently and enthusiastically.”

“Everyone is seeing new possibilities... very little local resistance.”

2. Youth Involvement

Strong source of hope.

Youth are participating, being trusted with leadership, and showing up for retreats and events.

“Youth involvement... is exciting... youth Council is a sign of hope.”

“Put your money where your mouth is... empower their voice.”

3. Shared Ministry and Collaboration

Generally hopeful.

Shared resources, joint worship, and lay-led initiatives are seen as creative responses to challenges.

“Confirmation done with a number of congregations together.”

“There’s a lot of benefit to teamwork and collaboration.”

4. DEI and Representation

Cautiously optimistic.

While gaps remain, there’s real movement toward inclusion.

“Synod level started emphasizing diversity; now we have a VERY diverse national convention.”

“First-ever queer committee. She has done a lot of listening.”

5. Technology and Connection

Seen as a breakthrough.

Zoom and digital communication are building relationships.

“Zoom allows much more collaboration... breaks down walls.”

Overview of Yesterday's Conversations

Synods – Areas of Concern

1. Sustainability of Congregations

2. Inclusion Gaps

3. Communication Gaps

4. Burnout and Capacity

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1. Sustainability of Congregations – Frequent and serious concern.

Comments about closures, financial strain, and pastoral shortages.

“The wide geography and lessening pastoral leadership has made maintaining relationships difficult.”

“Congregations can’t afford a full-time pastor... how do we do ministry in that?”

2. Inclusion Gaps – Progress acknowledged, but concern remains.

Some task forces seen as not diverse enough; youth welcomed but not always fully accepted.

“We want young people, but we don’t want them to be themselves.”

“Currently lacking the youth voice.”

3. Communications Gaps – Disappointment and disconnection.

Still a strong sense that many congregations operate in silos.

“We’re not telling our ‘individual’ stories enough.”

“Need to communicate across the synods, not just through them.”

4. Burnout & Capacity – Concern about long-term sustainability.

Especially among pastors and small congregations.

“So much work to do...”

“Strained financial circumstances... but sparking amazing new ideas.”



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Living with Grace & Discernment

Overview of Yesterday's Conversations Synods – Mixed Zones

- Many reflections contain **both hope and concern**—especially regarding:
 - **Congregational closures**
 - **Lay leadership**
 - **Geographic isolation**

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Many reflections contain **both hope and concern**—especially regarding:

- Congregational closures:** mourned, but sometimes seen as freeing energy for new beginnings.
- Lay leadership:** exciting, but also a necessity due to clergy shortages.
- Geographic isolation:** difficult, but being bridged by intentional efforts and tech.

Again, there is certainly some similarity in what we heard from the survey and what we heard last night. And once more the conversations seem to have provided a richer – more varied and detailed comments than what obtained through the survey. This is not surprising, simply something we are noting as we lean into collecting information as we move forward.



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Living Out God's Grace & Unconditional Love

Stand up Meeting



What one thing from the
reporting back struck you?

Facilitator and Notes

- 20 minutes for table conversation
- Facilitator
 - Ensures everyone at the table provides their thoughts on each question
 - Timekeeper
- Notetaker
 - Records what is said
 - Summarizes the groups comments
 - Sends the notes to dreamfuture@elcic.ca immediately following the session

Ask the facilitators and note takes to identify themselves – hold up hands

Timekeeper – will ask you to be succinct so that everyone has a chance to speak (~2-3 min each/question). Not a lot of time, so if your response is similar to one already made, please indicate agreement. If have something new to say, add it.

Notetaker – will present their summary to the table to ensure what has been recorded and reflects what was meant before moving to the second question

Conversation



What signs of life do
you see nationally?

Timeline and Next Steps?

- Conversations today, tomorrow and beyond...
- Notetakers – send notes NOW to dreamfuture@elcic.ca



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Thank you

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