



Pacifica Synod - ELCA

Office of the Bishop - Lutheran Center For Mission & Learning

June 17, 2020

Dear People of the Pacifica Synod,

As you know, the 2020 Synod Assembly scheduled to take place at California Lutheran University at the end of May was postponed due to COVID-19. We thought about rescheduling to August. However, we believe that the best advice will continue to deem it unwise to gather together in large numbers.

At a special Synod Council meeting held on Saturday, June 13 for the sole purpose of discussing this issue, the Council passed the following motion:

Due to the extraordinary circumstances of a global pandemic, Synod Council votes to postpone the 2020 Pacifica Synod Assembly to May 2021 and combine it with the regularly scheduled 2021 Pacifica Synod Assembly.

What Does This Mean?

(An excellent Lutheran question.)

During this time of physical distancing for the sake of the health of the neighbor, an assembly of the voting members of the Pacifica Synod is not possible in person.

We considered holding our assembly via Zoom. While this platform is being used successfully for smaller meetings, the expertise to conduct a synod assembly, in which everyone can hear and be heard to conduct the business of the synod is currently beyond our expertise. We need time for the synod staff and Assembly Planning Team to acquire the knowledge, skills, and technical equipment to successfully host an assembly on-line. The Synod Council has decided that the best way forward would be to plan now to hold the 2021 Pacifica Synod Assembly on Saturday, May 1 online either via Zoom with individual voting members attending from home, or at different satellite locations where smaller groups could gather (if allowed by public health regulations). If we use satellite locations, the locations will be connected with each other either through Zoom or another platform. This plan will allow time to obtain the necessary tools, expertise, and training for staff and voting members.

This decision was not made easily. We thank the Synod Council and staff for many hours of deliberation to find the best solution to a problem none of us could have foreseen.

Frequently Asked Questions are listed on the reverse. For additional questions, please reach out to your pastor, conference dean, or the Office of the Bishop.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Andy Taylor (he/him/his)
Pacifica Synod Bishop

Lori Herman, (she/her/hers)
Pacifica Synod Council Vice President

Frequently Asked Questions

Will our congregation receive a refund if we already paid for the 2020 Assembly?

Yes. Refunds will be sent by check to congregations and individuals who have already paid the 2020 Assembly fees. You will receive these refunds by June 30. Please contact Terri Robertson at the synod office if you have any questions.

What about the approval of the 2021-2022 budget?

The Synod Council has the authority to approve a Spend Plan in between assemblies and will continue to do so until the 2021 Assembly.

What about Synod Council elections?

Those whose terms have expired will continue serving until elections at the 2021 Assembly if they are willing. Council members have the ability to resign at any time and vacant positions will be appointed by the Synod Council.

What about resolutions?

There were no resolutions received before the deadline for the 2020 Assembly (February 28, 2020). Resolutions and memorials will be considered at the 2021 Assembly.

Isn't the Pacifica Synod required to hold an annual assembly?

The Bylaws of the Pacifica Synod Constitution state that regular meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be held annually.

S7.11.01 Regular meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be held annually, as scheduled by the Synod Council, generally in the months of April, May, or June.

We believe that the Pacifica Synod Council is acting in the best interest of the synod. If there were a challenge to their decision to postpone, upheld by a court, an assembly would be called for the late Autumn or Winter 2020. This would then require the synod staff, Assembly Planning Team, and congregations to hastily put together an online meeting, including congregations registering voting members and training them to use Zoom. Synod Council has determined that should such a late Autumn or Winter 2020 meeting be called, the only item of business on the agenda would be to postpone the assembly to 2021. Postponement would allow time for the Office of the Bishop and Assembly Planning Team members to put into place what is needed for an online Synod Assembly.