



August 2014

Congregations, Clergy, Staff and Volunteers:

We are now some three months after the conclusion of the 2014 Pacifica Synod Assembly. Like many of you I have been gone for many weeks over the summer. I left home two days after the Assembly ended and only recently returned. Consequently I have not written to you sooner. My apologies.

I want to thank everyone who participated in conducting the Pacifica Synod Assembly. We had nearly 300 people from throughout the Hukilau Conference participate in the planning and execution of the Assembly. It was a huge undertaking that only happened because of the involvement, commitment and hard work of all of you.

Since the conclusion of the Assembly I have heard the feedback of many people. One person said the worship services reminded him of his visit to the Vatican. Another person said the Synod should come to Hawai'i more often so everyone in her congregation could experience what she did as a Lay Delegate. Another Delegate said the speakers and workshop leaders were terrific, especially those that told the story of ministry in Hawai'i. The Presiding Bishop remarked that this was an exceptional Assembly and was touched by her welcome to our Synod. Virtually everyone who saw the stoles made for the Assembly commented on their beauty. Several of our Hawai'i volunteers said that they felt a part of the whole Lutheran Church for the first time in their lives. And finally Bishop Finck said the evaluations following the Assembly were "off the page" positive. Delegates said they want to come back again.

I know there were rough points in our planning and conducting the Assembly. Just ask the coordinators who worked with many details in arranging excursions, planning worship, organizing a luau, securing plenary speakers, setting up workshops and making our guests feel infinitely welcome. However it seems well worth the bumpy spots to hear the positive impact the Assembly had on our Synod. People came with the expectation to do a modest amount of Synod business. That's what usually happens at other Synod Assemblies. They went home having "experienced Church", as one Delegate put it, "as I never have before".

Delegates left refreshed and ready to engage the work of the Church in the world. The ELCA has a motto, "God's work; our hands." If we helped bolster people in their faith journeys and readied them to be God's hands in the world, we did a wonderful thing.

As we begin a new year of ministry and service in our many congregations and communities I ask you to share the great thanks of the Assembly Planning Team and the whole Pacifica Synod with your congregations and all the people who worked with us. Please share the gratitude and deep appreciation of the Delegates, their guests, our Bishop and his staff. And thank them for being Church in the very best sense of that word.

I left the Assembly feeling exhausted. I know many of you did as well. It is just now that I can see past the exhaustion to appreciate what we accomplished. As I reflect from this vantage point on the whole experience over the last two plus years, I am struck at what marvelous things the Lutheran Church in Hawai'i can accomplish when we pool our energies, pray without ceasing, proclaim the Gospel, share our cultural understandings and enjoin God's work together.

We are the smallest and least well supported Conference in the Pacifica Synod. But when we work together we can do mighty things. I hope that energy and commitment displayed in creating the Assembly and serving the larger Church will guide us as a Hawai'i Conference in the next years. May our common purposes and will to be about God's work help heal some of the hurting people and places in our Hukilau Conference. I pray God's hand will continue to guide our planning as we engage the work of the ELCA in Hawai'i Nei.

On behalf of the Planning Team and the whole Pacifica Synod, thank you, thank you. I wish I knew everyone's name and could contact you personally to express my thanks. I will have to rely on this letter and the assistance of the Hukilau Pastors to get this message into the hands of those who need to be thanked.

The Scriptures call us a "remarkable people". I think that was well demonstrated last May.

Aloha Ke Akua,

Pastor John Moody
Planning Team Chairperson

Planning Team

Pastor Jeff Lilley, Co-Chairperson.

Pastors Ruth Peterson, Angela Freeman, Phyllis Hormann, Jayaprakash Sabbithi, Steve Jensen, David Krueger, Paul Kirchner, Steve Brauner, Wendi Gordon, Kevin Kline, Keith Wolter, Diane Martinson, Tim Mason, Yukio Hamada, and Dave Kieffer.

Linda Hanson, Dr. Jon Osario and Jean Lilley.

Bishop Murray Finck, Helga Bergthold and the Pacifica Synod Staff.