

# God's Work. Our Hands.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly 2008 >> [www.sepaassembly.info](http://www.sepaassembly.info)



## It's always God's mission!

The Spirit was present at the 2008 Synod Assembly, as God's people from across Southeastern Pennsylvania met for inspiration, praise, and to do the work of the Church May 2-3. *Learn more and watch video at [www.sepaassembly.info](http://www.sepaassembly.info).*



"Let's not be afraid, and together let's imagine a revitalization of our beloved ELCA," Bishop Claire Burkat challenged the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Assembly during her address Saturday morning.

Appealing to the Assembly's "missional imagination," the bishop unveiled a set of principles developed in the first phase of the Synod's strategic planning process, that will inform ongoing efforts to reshape the Synod for mission.

**"It's God's mission. Jesus is Lord. The Holy Spirit guides us."** Together "I believe we can make a difference in our witness and in the mission to which we have been called by God," she said.

Based on a Trinitarian formula – It's God's mission. Jesus is Lord. The Holy Spirit guides us. – the six principles outline foundations for ministry that are grace-filled, contextual, and responses to God's sending action:

- We are embraced by God's grace
- We are claimed, called and sent by Christ
- God doesn't play favorites
- Tell it like it is
- Right here. Right now
- Vision and leadership required

## Emmaus Road: A resurrection story



Emmaus Road Lutheran Church, formed from the merger of Trinity, Fairless Hills and Christ, Levittown,

was the first congregation received by the Synod since 2006. "The resurrection story of the Emmaus Road is the story of these two congregations who were unsure of their future, but God was at work in their midst," said Pastor Nancy Wiseman.

"The people of Emmaus Road will be helping other congregations as they struggle with risk-taking in the future," starting with a \$5,000 birthday gift to the Synod, Bishop Burkat said. "In this way we will all be blessed to be a blessing."

## **Fryer: You are God's plan for mission!**



“God is on a mission in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and YOU are his plan for getting it done!” Dr. Kelly Fryer told the Assembly as part of her “A Wake Up Call” keynote presentation. True evangelical ministry, Fryer said, starts with asking “How is my life different because of what God has been up to?” – and telling people about it.

Fryer (left), co-director of A Renewal Enterprise, had the Assembly members discuss two key questions: How has God’s loving mission for the world come to me, and how has it come through me to bless others? Those two questions “are the core of Lutheran theology,” Fryer said.

Luther’s only metric for ministry, she said, was “Does it serve the neighbor?” Research shows that congregations that are engaged missionally with their communities are committed to doing what it takes to connect with their communities, believing God is alive and active among them and that people are changed by an encounter with Christ. Such congregations, she said, are awake to God’s call to mission and willing “to break the rules” in pursuit of that mission.

## **Youth members to increase generational diversity**

Addressing a concern for generational diversity at future synod assemblies, the 2008 Assembly passed a resolution encouraging congregations to elect one additional voting member under the age of 25 to their annual delegations. The resolution was presented for consideration to the assembly by the Synod Council. “Our voices deserve to be heard, too,” said Melissa Valentine. “We’re very much a part of the church.”

“There is room at the cross for all of us,” said Pastor Andrena Ingram, “There is room at the Table for all of us. There is certainly room for youth at this Assembly.”

---

## **A new linking for long-time partners**

### **Synod, seminary ink agreement to bring office to campus**



Sporting broad smiles, Bishop Claire Burkat and President of the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia, Pastor Phil Krey sat side by side as they signed the official agreement for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod to relocate to the seminary in December 2008.

“The move is a tool for mission so God’s grace will flow through us,” said Burkat. “It has already uplifted partners we could never have imagined, she said referring to the City of Philadelphia who has agreed to pay for the plaza outside the synod office.

“We are going ‘back to the future,’” said Dick Reimet, the synod treasurer, “back to when Henry Muhlenburg purchased 49 acres in Philadelphia to serve as the site of a Lutheran Seminary and a Church Center.” The Synod will pay \$1.5 million from reserves toward the cost of the \$3 million renovation of the undercroft of the chapel, which will be repaid from savings in rental payments over the next 17 years, Reimet said.

---