



## SEPA Synod May 5-6

## Assembly 2017

Franconia Mennonite Church

### Many voices offered perspectives on racism and reconciliation at the 2017 Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly May 5-6.

Bishop Claire Burkat encouraged those gathered to be “more open to engage, to explore, to repent, to be humbled, to align ourselves with this incredible and abundant new life in Christ.” She called on congregations and leaders to take steps this year to build relationships and listen to the stories of others. “We are on this road together to disrupt the system of evil by having the courage to address the complexities of race, class, and ethnicity,” the bishop said. “We are on this road together to proclaim that Christ changes everything.”

**“Race is a human-made concept, but racism is very real,”** said Judith Roberts, ELCA program director for racial justice. She led the Assembly through a series of conversations about how individual backgrounds and perceptions create our attitudes about race.

Though reconciliation is difficult and sometimes discouraging work, God accompanies us on the journey, the Rev. Carlton Rodgers said in a powerful sermon. **“We can act as if black and blue lives matter, that brown and yellow lives matter, that white and red lives matter, because all lives matter in God’s eyes.”**

Members of the Synod Anti-Racism Team (ART) shared their stories of coming to understand the privilege that they carry and how that affects others. The bishop called on congregations to invite the team to lead conversations about race and reconciliation in their communities over the next year.

The Synod commissioned a new hymn, “Now is the Time” by composer Paul Freisen-Carper, that addresses our call to reconciliation. Congregations will be able to reproduce the hymn for worship through next April. The worship team also created a **rite for Anti-Racism Confession and Reconciliation** that was the centerpiece of Saturday morning’s worship.

The Assembly also learned about the 2016 **repudiation of the doctrine of discovery** by the ELCA, voiced its **support for refugees and immigrants**, and learned of the kairos moments in the formation of United Lutheran Seminary. We also welcomed Deacons to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service.

Full report at [ministrylink.org/assembly](http://ministrylink.org/assembly)



We welcomed approved candidates Rachel Bailey, Lewis Tillman, Micah Krey, Leah Woehr-Grande and Rev. Chris Glod.



Diaconal Ministers and Associates in Ministry were welcomed as Deacons.



SEPA Women of the ELCA collected items for LWR through the annual Ingathering.

**"You are the ambassadors of Christ's reconciliation. And now is the acceptable time."**

SEPA SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2017  
#SEPAforward

- Bishop Claire Burkat  
SEPA Synod