



2015 Rocky Mountain Synod Pre-Assembly Information Packet

2015 ASSEMBLY MAY 1-3, 2015 + SHERATON SALT LAKE CITY

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As members of the Rocky Mountain Synod, we are Church: Better Together! This coming spring we will gather as the Church Together May 1-3 at the Sheraton Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah, for our 2015 Synod Assembly. Gathered under theme “Our Life Together,” we will spend time celebrating the many ministries of the Rocky Mountain Synod, collectively making decisions for how we will move into the future, and spending intentional time in relationship with our full-communion and ecumenical partners in ministry.

In the following pages you will find important information regarding details of the assembly and opportunities for your congregation to participate in the assembly. Please share this with your leadership and congregation. Our Assembly Planning Team is busy putting together an exciting program, including these highlights:

- **We are Church: Better Together** with our partners from the Churchwide offices and will be joined by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.
- **We are Church: Better Together** as we fight Malaria and celebrate the completion of the Malaria Campaign.
- **We are Church: Better Together** with our full-communion ecumenical partners as we worship together as the Body of Christ.
- **We are Church: Better Together** when we spend time learning from our Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) brothers and sisters through conversation and excursions.
- **We are Church: Better Together** through all of the many ministries that comprise the Rocky Mountain Synod that will be celebrated in our Church Together Celebration!

Lenten Invitation:

“A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Our time together at Assembly will be framed by the theology and practices that ground us in our Lutheran Identity. Our assembly will begin with a corporate confession, knowing that we are also the Church: Better Together when we take time to name out loud the places of hurt and ask God to help us begin again.

We invite you and your congregation to spend some time during Lent reflecting on the ways we as a body have made mistakes, missed opportunities, and hurt God’s people by our words and deeds. We hope that this exercise provides an opportunity for honest conversation, a safe place to share concerns, and an invitation to grow as a congregation into who God is calling you to be, as we leave behind those things that are holding us back from living the Gospel. We invite you to compile your confessions and send them to Erin Power: epower@rmselca.org. These will be compiled and shared during our time of confession & forgiveness as we begin our assembly.

Yours in Faith,

Bishop Jim Gonia



Assembly Location & Travel Information

Location

Sheraton Hotel: 150 W 500 S, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101

Convenient public transportation via light rail (train) is available from the Salt Lake Airport. The train stop is two blocks from the hotel. The Sheraton also offers a free shuttle to and from the airport. It will not be necessary to rent a car. We will provide specific and stress-free information about the simplicity of the low-cost train opportunity.

Date and Time

The assembly will begin at 2 p.m. on Friday, May 1, and conclude by noon on Sunday, May 3.

*We recognize that taking time away from work is a hindrance to some who might otherwise attend assembly. In an effort to expand who is able to attend and require youth to miss fewer days of school and working persons to have to take off fewer days of work, our assembly will be Friday-Sunday, rather than the usual Thursday-Saturday. **The Assembly Planning team will be providing worship resources for congregations for that Sunday including texts, hymns, and a message from Bishop Gonias, providing the opportunity for worshipping as the Church Together at the Assembly and across the Rocky Mountain Synod that Sunday morning!***

Assembly Registration Fee, which includes program costs, materials, three meals, and breaks

Voting Member: \$310

Visitor with Meals: \$260

Visitor without Meals: \$135

Exhibitor with Meals: \$175

Exhibitor without Meals: \$50

Hotel: \$115 per room per night (single or double occupancy)

The room rate does NOT include breakfast. The hotel rate for breakfast was simply not the best stewardship of your congregation's resources. There is a restaurant and a Starbucks in the hotel, as well as a number of options within walking distance: Little America Coffee Shop, Raw Bean Coffee, Dennys, Garden Café, and McDonald's. You are also invited to "bring-your-own" breakfast to enjoy in your room, such as oatmeal packets and fruit, along with the provided in-room coffee. You will need to also bring your own paper bowls, spoons, etc.

Travel Assistance

Because nearly everyone will be traveling long distances, we will not be able to offer travel equalization.

However, we believe that as the Church: Better Together, we are better when we have everyone around the table and will do our best to assist congregations who need financial assistance in order to attend assembly. To request assistance, email Cheryl Almquist: cheryl_almquist@rmselca.org

Acting as the Church Together, there will be an option at registration to donate a small amount to Assembly Scholarships if your congregation is able.

Registration deadline is Friday, March 27

Registration will be available online in early February. The on-line request form for exhibitors will also be available at that time.

Nomination deadline is Friday, March 6

The nomination form will be posted by January 15. During this assembly we will be electing people for the following positions:

Secretary

Campus Ministry

3 at large Lay or Clergy

Congregation & Leadership Health

Border

Colorado/not Denver area

Wyoming

2 at large Lay or Clergy

Congregational Ministries

New Mexico

Wyoming

at large Lay or Clergy

Consultation

2 Lay

Global Mission

Denver & Suburbs

2 at large Lay or Clergy

Mission Outreach Board

Colorado/not Denver area

Utah

3 at large Lay or Clergy

2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

August 8-13, 2016

New Orleans, LA

Border

Colorado

Colorado

North New Mexico

Utah

Wyoming

At Large

At Large

At Large

(Deaconess/Diaconal/Associate)

At Large

At Large person of color

At Large person of color

At Large Youth/Young Adult

At Large Youth/Young Adult

Clergy

Lay Female

Lay Male

Clergy

Lay Female

Lay Male

Clergy

Clergy

Lay Roster

Lay Male or Female

Clergy

Lay Male

Lay Female

Lay Male

Resolutions and Memorials deadline is Friday, March 6

Information about resolutions and memorials will be posted by January 15, including a form for submitting them.

Ministry Booklet and Display Requests due March 6

The on-line request form for exhibitors and ministry booklet pages will be available early February. The deadline for submitting requests will be March 6.

Voting Member Information

The voting members of the assembly are determined as follows:

- A. Congregations are allowed 2 lay voting members, 1 male and 1 female. If a congregation is not able to find both a male and female, contact Janice Ladd-Horkey at the Office of the Bishop for permission to send 2 of the same gender: jladd-horkey@rmselca.org.
- B. In addition, based upon baptized membership records for the previous year
 - (1) Congregations having membership of 650 to 1,199 baptized members shall be allowed one additional lay voting member (male or female).
 - (2) Congregations having membership of 1,200 or more baptized members shall be allowed two additional lay voting members (one male and one female).
- C. In the selection of voting members, congregations are urged to be aware of the matter of inclusiveness of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

- D. All ordained ministers under call or on leave from call on the roster of the Rocky Mountain Synod are voting members.
- G. All retired ordained ministers on the roster of this synod who are currently serving as interim pastors and all ordained ministers on leave from call on the roster of this synod who are currently serving as interim pastors and who are in attendance at the assembly are voting members.
- H. All associates in ministry, deaconesses of the ELCA, and diaconal ministers, under call or on leave from call, of the official lay rosters of this synod shall be voting members.

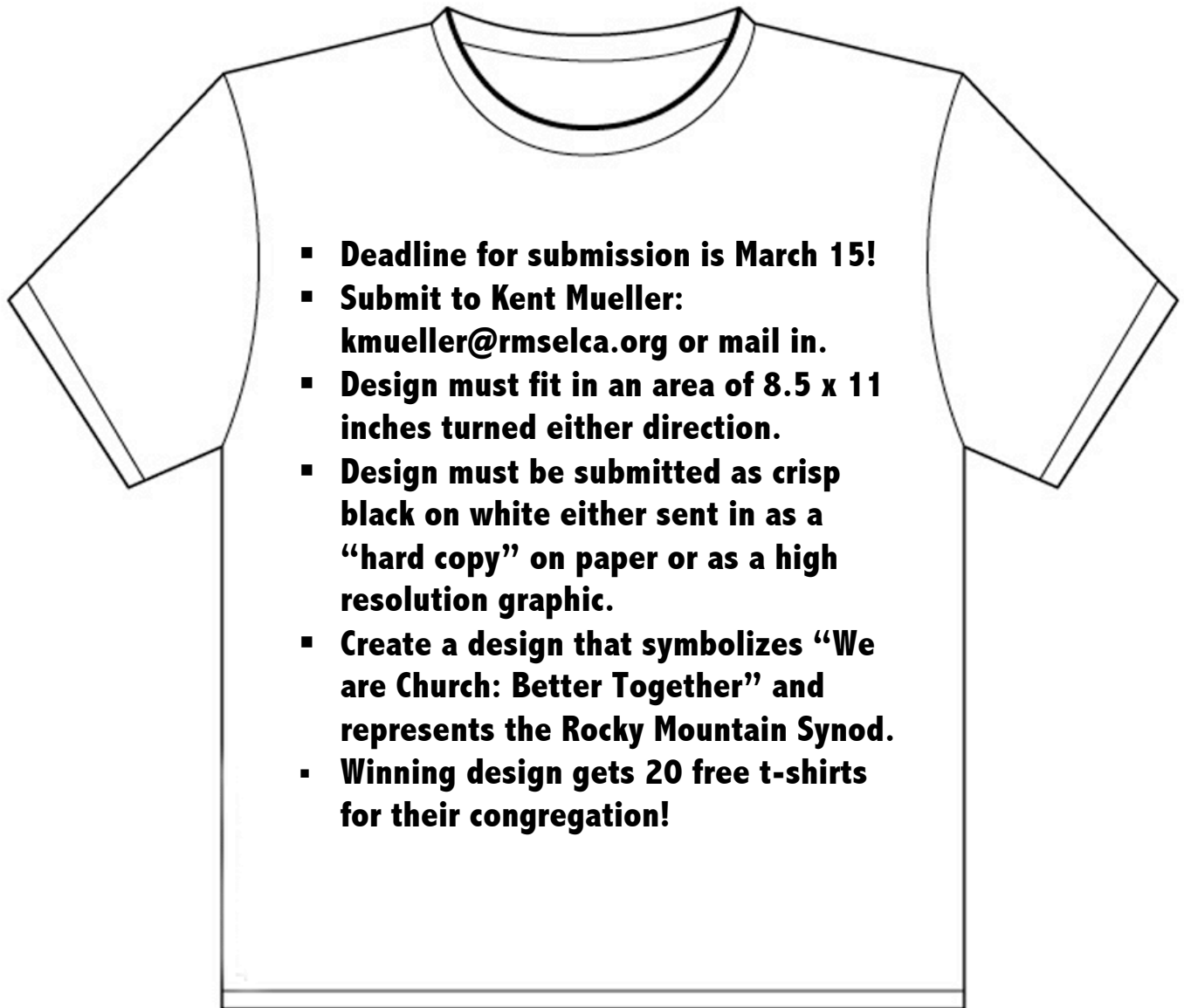
I. **Youth/Young Adult Voting Members**

It is the goal of this synod that at least 10% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

Information to assist you and your congregation in inviting, selecting and supporting your youth and young adult voting members for the upcoming Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly:

- A youth or young adult attending the Assembly, as a voting member from your congregation, will sit with the members of your congregation and fully participate in the assembly schedule. Some special opportunities for youth and young adults to gather together will also be offered.
- When youth arrive at the Assembly, they will check in at a special “Welcome Table” for youth and young adults who are a voting members or attending as registered visitors.
- It is our hope that each youth/young adult voting member attending the assembly would have an adult mentor—someone who is also a voting member from your congregation and has previously attended an Assembly. This could be a rostered or lay leader. This adult's role is to support the youth during the event, answer questions, explain the business at hand, and offer encouragement for full participation.
- Make sure ALL of your congregation's voting members have copies of the schedule, reports and documents. If possible bring the congregation's voting members together before the Assembly to review the schedule, resolutions and documents which are posted at www.rmselca.org/assembly.
- Set a date for your voting members to present a report to the congregation following the Assembly. Include your youth and young adult members!
- Youth who are 17 and younger are the legal responsibility of the congregation. Permission and medical forms and all other critical documents for responsible and safe participation are the responsibility of the congregation. Hotel housing is also the responsibility of the congregation. Sample forms, covenants, and guidelines for appropriate adult/youth interaction may be requested from the Office of the Bishop.

We are Church: Better Together Assembly T-Shirt Contest



**T-shirt will be included in the assembly registration fee.
Additional T-shirts will be available for order for
congregations post-assembly.**

YouTube Video Challenge

The Challenge

Working together within your own congregation, with neighboring congregations, or in your RMS Conference, create a YouTube video of about two minutes or less using the exact wording of the script below. Embellish the script with images, action, additional dialogue or any other means that help bring our story to life!

Creativity Counts!

Choose a genre and style for your video: live action, cartoon animation, inspirational images ... add music, comedy or drama. The more creative the better!

What next? Once you've made your YouTube video, upload it for public access under the title "RMS: Life Together" and send the link to Kent Mueller, kmueller@rmselfca.org. (Contact Kent for any technical assistance as well.) We'll provide access to all uploaded videos through our RMS website and RMS Facebook page. We'll also feature Life Together videos at our 2015 Synod Assembly in Salt Lake City! **Please post your videos by April 15.**

Synod means **Church: Better Together**

As the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod

We are **Church: Better Together**

From the wilds of Wyoming Through

the Great Salt Lake Valley

Across Colorado's mountains, Front Range, and Eastern Plains

Throughout the Land of Enchantment

To the El Paso banks of the Rio Grande

We are **Church: Better Together**

We are passionate about God's love in Jesus

Love that is boundless

Love that meets you where you are

Love that anchors you in a messy world

Love that frees you to make the world a better place

Together we are a both/and church in an either/or world

We are **Church: Better Together**

We grow together

We struggle together

We explore together

We share together

We celebrate together

Being church together allows us to make things happen
that we could never do on our own

As the ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod

We are **Church: Better Together**

