

Bishop Selbo is reelected

The Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo was reelected as bishop of the North American Lutheran Church by delegates to the 2023 NALC Mission Convocation Aug. 9-11 in Oklahoma City.



More than 600 delegates and visitors gathered for the convocation around the theme, “Missio Dei: The Work and Mission of God.” The convocation and the events preceding it comprise the NALC’s biennial Lutheran Week.

Bishop Selbo received 77 percent of the votes for bishop. The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, assistant to the bishop for ministry and ecumenism, was the other nominee for bishop.

Other Elections: Julia Hartfelder of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Westerville, Ohio, and the Rev. Dr. Scott Ness, pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Fayetteville, Georgia, were elected to four-year terms on the Executive Council. The Rev. Leslie Haines, executive director of Lutheran Military Veterans and Family Ministries in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the Rev. Ryan Henkel, pastor of Emmons Lutheran Church in Emmons, Minnesota, were elected to the Court of Adjudication.

“**On Fire for Mission**” sessions made the convocation a Mission-Driven gathering. Two-hour blocks of time each day focused on domestic mission, international mission and mission related to congregational life. Dr. David Luy of the North American Lutheran Seminary opened the sessions with a reflection on Scripture, and NALC staff members provided presentations on each day’s theme. Delegates then talked about the presentations and discussed ways to “take it home” to their congregations.

Six new NALC Global Workers were commissioned: Randy Stubbs in Tanzania; the Rev. Sam Chim in Cambodia; the Rev. Dr. Thomas Thorstad in Laos; the Rev. Dr. Slavomír Slávik in Slovakia; the Rev. Aleksandr Gröss in Ukraine; and Dagaga Gamechu in Kenya.

The ministry of the Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, assistant to the bishop for international mission, was celebrated. He will now be serving the NALC part time from Ethiopia and will expand his teaching and leadership ministries around the world.

Randy Stubbs, a new NALC global worker in Tanzania, and his daughters delighted delegates with their music throughout the convocation. His ministry training church musicians and pastors in Tanzania was highlighted at the convocation banquet.

The Rev. Dr. Yonas Yigezu Dibisa, president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, was the preacher for the closing service of Holy Communion.

A large increase in the number of candidates for ministry preparing to become NALC pastors was celebrated by the convocation.

A \$3.8 million budget was approved for the NALC for 2024. The budget anticipates spending some of the church’s reserve funds. Congregations are encouraged to support the NALC with at least 5-8 percent of their regular offerings.

Today, Tomorrow & Forever 2020 Vision appeal has received \$2 million in pledges toward its \$5 million goal.

The Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology preceded the convocation. The theme for this year’s lectures was “God the Father Creates ... in His Image (Genesis 1:27).”

Other Lutheran Week events included a Faith Formation Festival, the Women of the NALC Gathering, the Lutheran Theologians for the Church Conference, the Global Confessional and Missional Forum, and a gathering of Latino church leaders from across the NALC. A variety of workshops were also offered for delegates.

Documents and videos from the convocation and other events of Lutheran Week are available online at lutheranweek.com.