

SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD ASSEMBLY
BURLINGAME, CA
MAY 13-15, 2011

It was indeed a pleasure to attend this year's Synod assembly as your voting delegates with Pastor Dawn. It is heart warming to witness so many good people working very hard to promote God's mission at all ELCA levels. It is especially heartening to see the overall direction of our Lutheran faith and to feel the validation of our congregation's ministry. The conference demonstrated a very strong emphasis on inclusion of all God's people regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual preference, etc. We were encouraged to go beyond the four walls of CLC to serve the needs of the community and the world, working towards becoming a Matthew Chapter: 25 church. It is important to be good stewards of all God's gifts including our money and the one and only earth we are blessed with.

There were many inspirational moments at this year's assembly. Here are a few that are particularly memorable.

Arch Bishop Gomez of El Salvador was an honored guest who preached and worshipped with us. He survived capture and torture during the civil war in El Salvador. He told of his mentor Archbishop Romero who was murdered while promoting the rights of the poor and oppressed in his country. Bishop Gomez converted from Roman Catholicism to Lutheranism and led a reformation that grew from eight people to over 50 congregations with over 20,000 members. These congregations are totally inclusive.

It was exciting when the announcement that St. Francis Lutheran Church in San Francisco was welcomed back into full membership in the Synod. St. Francis' support of gay and lesbian clergy led to its expulsion from the ELCA in the mid nineties.

Dr. Mark Allen Powell from Trinity Lutheran Seminary spoke on the conference theme, Matthew, Chapter 25, and on stewardship. He emphasized the fact that we spend our money on what our lives focus on.

Rev. Ruben Duran gave the ELCA Church- wide report. Pastor Ruben "rocked" the assembly with a message of outreach that was extremely inspirational. He challenged us to get out in the community and live the Matthew 25 message.

The worship service on Sunday was thrilling and inspiring. The service included a magnificent processional and recessional with bishops, pastors, lay leaders and children Banners waved, and approximately 500 members sang accompanied by organ, tympani and the beautiful sounding choir from Palo Alto. Bishop Gomez gave a meaningful sermon.

We encourage you to take advantage of any future opportunity to attend a conference assembly. It will be worth your while. We guarantee it!!

Dick & Joan McBride