

Report of the Synod Vice President

I'm sure you are aware by now that we are electing a new Vice President at this assembly. I'm stepping down after 10 years. It's a job I have truly loved doing, and I thank all of you for electing me and giving me the opportunity to serve in this capacity. I will address this further in my report from the floor of the assembly.

I have met hundreds of wonderful people over the years that I have enjoyed serving with. We have a strong synod in northern Illinois and great leadership. I would encourage any of you to consider serving at the synod level. I believe it gives you a whole new perspective on what it means to be the church. I know that once you have experienced working in the synod you won't regret a minute of it. There are many different ways to connect at the synod level. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Pat Esker at the synod office.

Thank you again. See you at Assembly.

Peace,
Bill Bartlett

Report of the Secretary

"I think God must be very old and very tired. Maybe he used to look splendid and fine in his general's uniform, but no more. He's been on the march a long time, you know. And look at his rag-tag little army! All he has for soldiers are you and me. Dumb little army. Listen! The drum beat isn't even regular. Everyone is out of step. And there! You see? God keeps stopping along the way to pick up one of his tinier soldiers who decided to wander off and play with a frog, or run in a field, or whose foot got tangled in the underbrush. He'll never get anywhere that way. And yet, the march goes on."

The passage above is the opening paragraph to a story called Rag-Tag Army by Martin Bell from the book *The Way of the Wolf* (Seabury Press, 1970). It is a story that I have read numerous times for children's messages, around campfires, for devotions, and from the pulpit. For me, its power is in Bell's simple and wholly accurate depiction of God's church. If you glance around you in the pews on a Sunday morning, at a council meeting, or even at a synod assembly, you might notice that we really don't look like anything special. We are just a rag-tag group of people who are walking together, doing our best to love Christ and love all, for the sake of the world. Yet we are the ones God has chosen to be God's rag-tag army, fallible as we may be.

I am grateful to be a part of this rag-tag army, serving God with the people of the Northern Illinois Synod. I am grateful for the opportunity to walk together with you as the Secretary of the Northern Illinois Synod and share whatever fallible gifts I have for the sake of God's mission through the synod. I am grateful for the support of Deaconess Cheryl Erdmann and her discerning eye in proofreading the minutes of the Executive Committee, the Synod Council, and the Synod Assembly. I am grateful for the support and leadership of Bishop Clements as he joins hands with us in our ministry. I am grateful for the opportunity to walk with Mr. Bill Bartlett, who has faithfully and effectively served as our Vice-President for my entire tenure on the Synod Council. And I am grateful for you, the members of the 2019 Synod Assembly, for your willingness to walk together in our mission to love Christ and love all for the sake of the world.

The report of the Secretary continues within this bulletin of reports with the minutes of last year's Synod Assembly and the report of the Synod Council.

In Christ,

Pastor Donald L. Knowles
Secretary of the Synod