

Where is God in all this?

Church-Wide Assembly 2025 Experiences by Tom B.

The 2025 Church Wide Assembly (July 28 through August 2, 2025, in Phoenix, AZ) was an awesome event. We elected new leadership, helped heal a thousand-year rift, debated and voted on social statements and the church constitution, and were moved by extraordinary preaching and messages.

I was elected to the CWA at the 2024 Virginia Synod Assembly. While I was looking forward to the experience, (I called this my National Youth Gathering), I knew almost no one who was going. That changed by the end of the assembly. One of the gifts of the Church Wide Assembly is the opportunity to meet and become friends with people in our synod and across the country. Through worshiping, breaking bread, and sharing ministry and personal stories with others, I was amazed and excited about the diversity of ideas and passionate people in the church. Experiencing the Holy Spirit move through the singing and praying assembly in real-time as we elected a new Presiding Bishop was incredible.

Of course, all that could be anticipated. What I will remember most was something completely different. Long days and jet lag can wear on people. What people think they're saying or doing can be heard or received as hurtful. While undoubtedly occurring often, there were several instances that occurred in full display during the main sessions. In each of those cases, those involved identified the hurt, met with each other to communicate and seek understanding, and then made public repentance. Instead of leaving the assembly with division, we concluded, going out into the world, with a spirit of forgiveness and new understanding.

Hot Take: Traveling thousands of miles to go to a church assembly can be trying. Then again, the Apostle Paul would like to add a word or two.