Carla Sunberg, president of Nazarene Theological Seminary, was elected the 43rd general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene on June 27. She was elected on the 11th ballot at the 29th General Assembly in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA.

“Dear church family,” she began after a lengthy ovation. “I am completely overwhelmed today. Thank you so much for believing that God might be able to use me in this capacity. I am simply God's child, and I am a child of this global church. You are the ones who raised me up, and I say thank you.”

Sunberg, who was born in Germany and raised on the mission field, thanked her German church family – in German – before switching to Russian to thank her Russian church family. Carla and her husband, Chuck, served as pioneer missionaries to the former Soviet Union, living in Moscow for 13 years.

Carla served as director of compassionate ministries there and later as director of theological education on the Commonwealth of Independent States Field.

In 2005, the Sunbergs returned to the U.S. and pastored at Grace Point Church of the Nazarene in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where Carla served as pastor of evangelism and discipleship. In 2011, she and Chuck accepted a call to serve as co-district superintendents for East Ohio.

Carla is the second woman general superintendent in the denomination’s history, joining Nina G. Gunter, who gave Tuesday's morning devotional to the assembly.

“Recently the Lord said to us, ‘You must be willing to be willing,’ and so, I stand before you today willing and committed to humbly serve my church.”

Sunberg, who was elected president of NTS in 2014, said she and Chuck had been praying in advance of General Assembly “should this day (the election) ever come.”

Carla has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Mid-America Nazarene University, a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Nazarene Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Historical Theology from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom. In May 2012, Carla was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Olivet Nazarene University.

She is the daughter of former general superintendent Jerald D. Johnson (1980-1997). She is the first second-generation general superintendent.

Chuck and Carla have two adult daughters, Christa (Maciver) and Cara (Shonamon). ■
LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS FOR 27 JUNE

In actions taken on Tuesday, 27 June, the General Assembly: (Go to ga2017.com/resolutions to view documents.)

- Voted to reconsider JUD-813, Article 10, “Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification,” which failed to reach a two-thirds vote Monday. After further discussion, another vote was taken and JUD-813 was referred to the Board of General Superintendents for further study.
- Authorized a study group to study the Manual’s ritual on infant baptism. The resolution gives the BGS the flexibility to either raise a special committee or to assign it to the Theological Study Committee.
- Revised the ritual for the baptism of believers to include the statement that the sacrament signifies “participation by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and incorporation into His Body, the Church. It is a means of grace proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.” This harmonizes language in the ritual with changes ordered yesterday to the Article of Faith on baptism. (JUD-828)
- Deleted paragraph 800.4 from the Manual. The paragraph was a special ritual for the dedication of the infant of a single parent. It was believed that a separate ritual for this situation was not necessary.
- Approved changes to the ritual for receiving new members. (JUD-830)
- Revised the wording in the ritual for the Lord’s Supper to harmonize with changes made Monday to the corresponding article of faith. (JUD-831)
- Adopted changes to Manual paragraph 803, “Matrimony.” (JUD-832)
- Added three new paragraphs to the Manual pertaining to conflict resolution and reconciliation in the church. The paragraphs recognize that conflict is a part of life, including life in the church. It urges an informal process of resolving conflict before formal processes begin. (JUD-835)
- Adopted changes to Manual paragraph 305.2 that removes the language that allows the Assembly to elect as many general superintendents “as it deems necessary” to “six general superintendents.” (GA-317)
- Designated Sharpe Memorial Church of the Nazarene (“Old Stone Church”) in Manzini, Swaziland, as one the Church of the Nazarene’s historic landmarks. The church is named for Rev. George Sharpe, regional superintendent for Africa in the 1920s. (CP-101)
- Added a new paragraph to the Manual that is a mission statement for Nazarene Publishing House. The paragraph states that the church “entrusts Nazarene Publishing House” to “protect and manage the media assets utilized by the Church of the Nazarene and its affiliates.” (CP-102)
- Adopted a comprehensive statement on “Human Sexuality,” replacing a series of position statements with an extended and carefully crafted text grounded in theological ethics. The action taken also deleted Manual paragraphs 30-30.4. (CA-701)
- Provided for church board meetings, including votes, to be conducted using digital technology. (LA-405)
- Considered LA-411, which sought to permit all church meetings via telephone conference or other electronic media, so long as all have opportunity to communicate and participate, and referred it to the BGS for further study. (LA-411)
- Voted to retain Manual paragraph 903.2, “Discrimination.” The Manual’s statements on moral and social issues in the 903 section are automatically re-examined every 12 years.
- Referred MED-517 to the BGS for further consideration.

UNOFFICIAL GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT BALLOT RESULTS 2017
JESUS IS LORD

General Superintendent David A. Busic delivered the Board of General Superintendents’ Quadrennial Address 26 June at the Church of the Nazarene’s 29th General Assembly. Titled “Jesus is Lord,” the report revealed statistical summaries for the general church and its six world regions. Busic celebrated the church’s growth in membership, churches, and diversity in the last four years.

Looking ahead to the next quadrennium, Busic asked “Can we become a movement again?” He continued:

We are living in unprecedented times. There are seismic cultural shifts affecting every continent on earth. In just two decades, we have seen the shift from industrial to information – from Gutenberg to Google; from rural to urban; from modern thinking to post-modern thinking. It is a hinge of history that our grandparents and those before them could never have imagined. We will not return to what once was.

Whether we are comfortable with it or not, we find ourselves in a pivotal time for Christianity. We are in mostly uncharted waters. We appreciate the legacy of John Wesley, but Wesley alone will not do. We are grateful for the vision of Phineas Bresee, but Bresee alone will not do. We have to go back to the first Nazarene. We have to go back to Jesus. He is our calibration point. We correspond to Him. We realign to Him. We must re-Jesus the church. Too much is at stake for anything less.

The seed of the future is in the womb of the present (Alan Hirsch). Not every seed will become a forest, but it can be. Not every spark will become a forest fire, but it can be. The potential is in the seed and the spark. And so it is for the Church of the Nazarene. The seeds of our future are in the womb of the present. The spark of a raging fire is in the soul of the church.

The year was 1944. World War II was raging. In one of the most precarious and uncertain times of the twentieth century, General Superintendent J. B. Chapman spoke these words to the General Assembly: “As a people, we love fire and cannot be content with smoke … Our church is a mechanism that can stand only while it moves forward. To stop is to fall… More self-preservation will mean stagnation for us. Our hope is in aggression. Our church is a force for which the whole world is a field.”

This kind of movement thinking will require a radical discipleship at every level of the church. It will require us to make mission our organizing principle. It will require us to change whatever keeps us from being fully surrendered to the will and purposes of God. It will require us to believe that Jesus really is Lord and to have the strength and courage to act on it.

Nazarene Essentials are helpful, but not enough. Thankfully we have THE Nazarene essential – Jesus is Lord! And we are not afraid. We are radical optimists of the grace of God and “prisoners of hope” (Zechariah 9:12 NIV).

“To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!” (Revelation 5:13, NIV).

For the full Quadrennial Address text, go to nazarene.org/ga and click on Resources. To watch, go to youtube.com/nazareneofficial.

ASSEMBLY DONATES MORE THAN $100,000 FOR REFUGEE SUPPORT

As a result of global Nazarenes’ generosity at the 2017 General Assembly, more than US$100,000 will be donated to Nazarene Compassionate Ministries for refugee support.

Offerings were received during each of the event’s five worship services both online at nazarene.org/give-ga and in person. Donations and pledges were also accepted during the plenary sessions. The goal for General Assembly was to receive at least $250,000.

The Board of General Superintendents stated anything over that goal would be given to NCM.

The total amount raised as of Tuesday evening was $365,172, helped in part by donors who agreed to match $50,000 if the assembly could top the event goal by $50,000. The BGS was elated to announce more than $100,000 would be given to refugee support through NCM.