

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
MAY 16-17, 2009**

The Eighteenth Assembly of the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was held at the McAllen Convention Center, McAllen, Texas, May 16-17, 2009. The theme of the assembly was *United in Ministry – God’s work. Our hands.*

**OPENING WORSHIP
May 16, 2009, 9:00 a.m.
McAllen Convention Center
Ballroom**

Opening worship was led by the Rio Grande Valley Conference assembly worship team with Bishop Ray Tiemann presiding, and The Rev. Dr. Jay Alaniz, LSPS, preaching.

**PLENARY SESSION I
May 16, 2009
McAllen Convention Center
Exhibit Hall A**

The assembly was convened at 9:47 a.m. by Bishop Ray Tiemann with the Order for the Opening of the Synod Assembly.

Bishop Tiemann recognized synod officers, Carl Teinert, vice president, Linda Zander, secretary, Bill Warncke, treasurer, Pr. Bill Sappenfield, parliamentarian, David Swartling, Secretary of the ELCA and ELCA representative, his wife, Barbara Swartling, Executive Director of the ELCA Deaconess Community, and Janet Fries, administrative assistant to the bishop. Jan Demro and Patti Larson, co-chairs of the planning team sent greetings from the Rio Grande Valley Conference.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Tiemann introduced Lois Eichman, chair of the Credentials Committee. As of 10:15 a.m., May 16, 2009, there were 360 voting members, of which 111 were Rostered Voting Members and 249 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 7 non-voting members, no ecumenical guests and 67 registered visitors for a total of 434 persons present.

ADOPTION OF STANDING RULES

Carl Teinert, vice president, presented the Proposed Standing Rules and moved for adoption of same pursuant to the recommendation of the Synod Council.

VOTED

SA09.5.01 To adopt the Proposed Standing Rules.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO STANDING RULES

Amendment No. 1: Motion made and seconded to amend the Proposed Standing rules regarding debate to be limited to no more than twenty minutes for each side with equal time to be afforded to speakers both for and against Resolutions 3, 4, 5 and 7.

With the vote being too close to call, written ballots were used for the proposed amendment.

VOTED

**SA09.5.02 To defeat Amendment No. 1 to the Proposed Standing Rules.
(238 Yes; 130 No)**

Amendment No. 2: Motion made and seconded to amend the Proposed Standing rules regarding individual speakers to be limited to two minutes each regarding Resolutions 3, 4, 5 and 7.

VOTED

SA09.5.03 To approve Amendment No. 2 to the Proposed Standing Rules.

Amendment No. 3: Motion made and seconded to amend the Proposed Standing rules regarding Resolution 3 to require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for approval.

With the vote being too close to call, written ballots were used for the proposed amendment.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Carl Teinert, vice president, presented the Proposed Agenda and moved for adoption of same pursuant to the recommendation of the Synod Council.

VOTED

SA09.5.04 To amend the Proposed Agenda to move the consideration of resolutions as early as possible on Sunday so that as many as possible could vote on them in the event they had to leave the assembly early to return home.

VOTED

SA09.5.05 To adopt the Proposed Agenda as amended.

REPORT OF SYNOD COUNCIL

Mr. Teinert presented the nominations for the position of Synod Treasurer: Heidi Franzen and Christopher Gold (see Exhibits F-1 and F-2).

VOTED

SA09.5.06 That nominations for the position of Synod Treasurer cease.

Pr. Tracey Breashears led the assembly in the "Book of Faith" Bible Study #1.

Bishop Tiemann announced the results of the written ballot for Amendment No. 3 to the Proposed Standing Rules.

VOTED

**SA09.5.07 To defeat Amendment No. 3 to the Proposed Standing Rules.
(194 Yes; 171 No)**

After announcements by Bishop Tiemann, Plenary Session I was recessed at 12:02 p.m., with the assembly to reconvene at 12:45 p.m.

PLENARY SESSION II
May 16, 2009
McAllen Convention Center
Exhibit Hall A

The assembly convened at 12:48 p.m. with a call to order by Bishop Tiemann.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Lois Eichman, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that as of 12:42 p.m., May 16, 2009, there were 369 voting members, of whom 116 were Rostered Voting Members and 253 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 8 non-voting members, no ecumenical guests and 68 registered visitors for a total of 445 persons registered.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTIONS

Former Southwestern Texas Synod Bishop Henry Schulte.

NEW TO THE SYNOD INTRODUCTIONS (first call, transfer and interns) May 1, 2008, to April 30, 2009

Assistant to the Bishop Michael Robinson introduced those persons new to the Synod.

Newly Ordained Clergy:

The Rev. Paul Bailie (Amazing Grace, San Antonio)
The Rev. M.L. Brasher (New Hope SAWC, Blanco)
The Rev. Amy Danchik (Christ the Victor, Victoria)
The Rev. Christopher Heinold (St. James, Ganado)
The Rev. Richard Kidd (Gethsemane, San Antonio)

New to the Synod:

The Rev. Charlotte Anderson (On Leave from Call)
The Rev. Scott Anderson (St. John, Jourdanton)
The Rev. Elaine Gomkula (United Dr. Martin Luther, Shiner)
The Rev. Christi Pursey (St. John, Goliad)
The Rev. Gary Veit (St. Paul, Taylor)
The Rev. Jeremy Walloch (Martin Luther, Giddings)
The Rev. Alan Williams (St. Peter, Hallettsville)

Interns:

Ellery Dykeman (First English, Victoria)
Richard Gates (First English, Austin)
Brian Julin-McCleary (St. John, Robstown)
Julia Miller (Abiding Presence, San Antonio)
Ashley Ritzmann (St. Paul, Yorktown)
Ryan Ritzmann (St. Mark, Cuero)
Nicholas Slater (Trinity, Victoria)

Mr. Teinert presented the 2009/2010 Clergy Compensation Guidelines as found on pages 31-40 and in Exhibit D. These will be voted upon in Plenary Session IV tomorrow.

Mr. Warncke presented the 2010-2011 Budget (page 16 of Synod Council Report). Voting on this budget will take place tomorrow.

David Bowman of St. Peter, Ander asked for special recognition to those congregations giving over \$50,000 in mission support, as well as those congregations that gave \$90 and above per voting member.

Bishop Tiemann presented a gift to Mr. Warncke for his years of dedicated service as treasurer of the synod.

Pr. Eric Petty led the assembly in the "Book of Faith" Bible Study #2

Bishop Tiemann reported that the assembly offering at this time totaled \$45,732.52.

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Gayle Gordon Bouzard, Chair of the Elections Committee, explained the written ballots being distributed for the election of Synod Treasurer. After prayer by Bishop Tiemann, delegates were to vote by circling one of the two names listed and passing their ballot to the center of the room.

ELCA REPORT

David Swartling presented a report from the ELCA and a video was shown from Bishop Hanson. Barbara Swartling brought greetings from the Deaconess community. Pr. Phil Blom brought greetings from the Board of Pensions.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Bishop Tiemann introduced the chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, The Rev. Steve Herzberg (Our Savior, McAllen). The members of the committee were also introduced: Shirley Schliessmann (Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Wimberley), Rev. Skip Brasher (New Hope SAWC, Blanco), Dr. Rodney Schorlemmer (Faith, Beeville), Rev. Chris Heinold (St. James, Ganado), Sherrie Palan (Immanuel, LaVernia) and Mark Helmke (Advisory Member).

RESOLUTION #1 FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD

CHERISH OUR CHILDREN INITIATIVE

**Submitted by: Commission for Congregation Life
The Rev. Mag Holm-Roesler, Holy Cross, Austin and
The Rev. J.R. Westerfield, Tri-County Cooperative Ministry, Moulton**

WHEREAS in 2001 the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted a Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation "to raise awareness of an industry that sexually exploits vulnerable persons, principally women and girls, but also men and boys" (Message, pg. 1), and

WHEREAS "commercial sexual exploitation includes the businesses of prostitution, pornography, and stripping" (Message, pg 2), and

WHEREAS "people in the United States spend more on pornography than on movie tickets or on all performing arts combined" (Message, pg 3), and

WHEREAS "the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth is pervasive. Globally, two million girls and boys are forced or lured by false promises into prostitution every year." (Message, pg 3), and

WHEREAS “the reality of sexual exploitation of children in Texas is addressed by numerous published articles and by various foundations and associations and by the experience of some members of the Southwestern Texas Synod, and

WHEREAS “love born of faith in Jesus Christ calls us to attend to, discuss, resist, and reject the system of sexual exploitation” (Message. pg 1), therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod of the E. L. C. A. will adopt the Cherish Our Children Initiative, and will establish a Cherish Our Children Ministry Team, reporting to the Commission for Congregational Life, charged with implementing the ELCA Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod’s Cherish Our Children Ministry Team will encourage prayers, education, raising awareness, relationship-building, and action among its congregations, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod shall seek to involve fifty percent of its congregations in the Cherish Our Children Initiative by the year 2012, with yearly status reports provided to the synod assembly.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee recommends **APPROVAL** with editorial changes and substitution for the 1st Resolved paragraph as follows:

RESOLVED that the 2009 Synod Assembly adopt the Cherish Our Children Initiative for the Southwestern Texas Synod, and direct the Commission for Congregational Life to establish and fund a Cherish Our Children Ministry Team, to report to that Commission and be charged with implementing the ELCA Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation; and be it further

VOTED

SA09.5.08 To adopt Resolution #1 with the changes as recommended by Reference and Counsel.

Prior to the presentment of Resolution #6, it was announced that there was a change in who was bringing the resolution as The Rev. Lucinda Zesch was unable to attend the assembly. Presenting Resolution #6 is The Rev. Casey Zesch, The Rev. Al Hoerig and Jean Weber.

**RESOLUTION #6
FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD**

**A resolution concerning full implementation of the
Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine**
Submitted by: The Rev. Casey Zesch and The Rev. Lucinda Zesch
Bethany Lutheran, Fredericksburg

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed itself to peace-making through the “Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine” adopted at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, which assumes that ELCA action will among other things (§II.A.)

*provide clear and reliable information to ELCA members
be balanced in terms of its care for all parties in the conflict,
be shaped by a commitment to listen and learn from companions and from
both those with whom participants agree and those with whom they
disagree,
take responsibility for careful consideration of the political and humanitarian
implications of our theology, and
reflect zero tolerance for anti-Jewish and/or anti-Muslim sentiments or
actions; and*

WHEREAS the Strategy seeks among its outcomes (§II.B)
*a better understanding among ELCA leaders and members, along with their
legislators, about the situation in Israel and Palestine,
a deepening of mutual understanding between Jews and Lutherans and
Muslims and Lutherans through dialogue and shared action,
the enrichment of ELCA strategy for engagement in the Holy Land through
these relationships, and
increased cooperation and collaboration between the ELCA and Jewish
groups in the U.S.-and with groups within Israel—that seek peace with
justice in Israel and Palestine; and*

WHEREAS the church’s calling to cultivate a culture of peace involves a process of informed moral deliberation that seeks “the powerful vision of difference in unity..., call[ing] us to engage differences, not to ignore or fear them ... [and] to strengthen [our] own particular communities in ways that promote respect and appreciation for people in other communities” (ELCA Social Statement on Peace, §5A); and

WHEREAS the war of words in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict includes both intentional and negligent misrepresentations of the history of the region and of Arab, Israeli and Palestinian actions and policies; and

WHEREAS our moral deliberation must take adequate account of a region with a long, complex history, for which different parties have widely disparate narratives and interpretations, and with multiple conflicts including those between the Israelis and Palestinians, between different Palestinian factions, and between nations in the region; and

WHEREAS the quest for peace between Palestinians and Israelis has recently been complicated by the increasing regional influence of Iran, which has avowed a strategic goal of annihilating Israel and has supported militias with the same intent; and

WHEREAS the ELCA has been and remains committed to accompanying our Palestinian Lutheran brothers and sisters in their suffering and in their striving for Palestinian political autonomy and recognition in a viable, contiguous state; and

WHEREAS the ELCA in its 1994 Declaration to the Jewish People expressed the “urgent desire to live out our faith in Jesus Christ with love and respect for the Jewish people,” whose corporate identity and self-expression is intimately tied to the State of Israel; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reaffirm this church's commitment to peace-making in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict through implementation of its Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine to the fullest extent possible, and in so doing to:

1. embody a multilateral solidarity with the State of Israel and the Palestinian people as the primary communities involved and with all those with whom we find common cause for peace, justice and dignity; and
2. acknowledge the State of Israel as a legitimate political self-expression of the Jewish people, as well as the urgency of national sovereignty as a political self-expression of the Palestinian people; and
3. educate and equip members, congregations, synods, personnel and affiliated agencies of the ELCA for advocacy on behalf of all parties to the conflict who seek peace; and
4. resist preferential identification with any party in the conflict that may inhibit our roles as witnesses for peace and facilitators of reconciliation; and
5. renounce the use of language and materials that caricature or over-simplify the conflict, dehumanize Arabs, Israelis, or Palestinians or challenge the political legitimacy of their respective national movements, and counsel our strategy partners against such use; and
6. encourage and empower ELCA members, congregations, synods, personnel and affiliated agencies to become more familiar with and engaged with both Israeli and Palestinian schools, humanitarian organizations and co-existence projects.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee recommends **APPROVAL** with the editorial changes noted.

VOTED

SA09.5.09 To amend Resolution #6 by striking Item #2 in the Resolved section and then renumbering the remaining numbered paragraphs.

VOTED

SA09.5.10 To defeat an amendment to Resolution #6 with a change to original Item #3 (which becomes Item #2 with renumbering in SA09.5.09) of the Resolved section by adding "and deplore the use of violence for aggression by any party or entity."

Upon motion made and seconded, the Assembly voted on an amendment to Resolution #6 which would add "through non-violent action" to the end of original Item #3 (which becomes Item #2 with renumbering in SA09.5.09) of the Resolved section. With the vote being too close to call, written ballots were distributed for the proposed amendment.

After announcements by Bishop Tiemann, Plenary Session II was recessed to allow attendance at an "Assembly Without Walls" session or a breakout session. A banquet begins at 6:30 p.m.

**PLENARY SESSION III
May 17, 2009
McAllen Convention Center
Exhibit Hall A**

An open forum was held on the human sexuality studies prior to the beginning of Plenary Session III from 7:30-8:30 a.m.

The assembly convened at 8:45 a.m. with a call to order and opening prayer by Bishop Tiemann.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Lois Eichman, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that as of 8:15 a.m., May 17, 2009, there were 371 voting members, of whom 118 were Rostered Voting Members and 253 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 8 non-voting members, no ecumenical guests and 69 registered visitors for a total of 448 persons registered.

Pr. Eric Petty led the assembly in the "Book of Faith" Bible Study #3.

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Gayle Gordon Bouzard, Chair of the Elections Committee, presented the following results of the election for Synod Treasurer: Heidi Franzen – 226; Christopher Gold – 139.

Motion to amend the agenda to move the Order of the Day for the Cross Trails Ministry Corporation meeting from 10:15 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

VOTED

SA09.5.11 To amend the agenda by moving the Order of the Day to 1:45 p.m.

Bishop Tiemann announced the results of the written ballot for Resolution #6, new Item #2 of the Resolved section.

VOTED

**SA09.5.12 To amend Resolution #6, Item #2, by adding "through non-violent action" to the end.
(199 For; 128 Against)**

VOTED

SA09.5.13 To adopt Resolution #6 as amended in SA09.5.09 and SA09.5.12.

**RESOLUTION #2
FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD**

A resolution regarding the Separation Wall on the United States-Mexico Border

**Submitted by: The Rev. Laura Holck, St. Mark, Adkins
and The Rev. Carolyn Schneider, Texas Lutheran University**

WHEREAS the separation wall in the West Bank demonstrates the social, economic and environmental devastation that results with the construction of a restrictive barrier; and

WHEREAS the communities in the Southwestern Texas Synod are directly affected by the construction of the border separation wall, and

WHEREAS the ELCA's La Frontera Ministries provides the church a presence in the communities affected by the border separation wall, and

WHEREAS the ELCA's Peace Not Walls campaign for addressing issues of the separation wall between Israel and Palestine provides a model for engaging in the issues arising from the US-Mexico border wall, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly encourage member congregations to commit themselves to PRAY, LEARN AND ACT for peace and justice in the US/Texas-Mexico border communities, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Synod congregations be encouraged to be generous in their support of La Frontera Ministries.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee recommends **APPROVAL** with the editorial changes noted.

VOTED

SA09.5.14 To close debate.

VOTED

SA09.5.15 To adopt Resolution #2 with the changes as recommended by Reference and Counsel.

**RESOLUTION #3
FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD**

A resolution Super Majority Resolution for Synod Assemblies
Submitted by: Chuck Knudson and Gail Krueger
St. Paul Lutheran, New Braunfels

WHEREAS the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted "to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church;" and

WHEREAS the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee ~~Constitutional and Legal Committee~~ of the ELCA Church Council recommended that "any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption;" and

WHEREAS the ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to delete this provision and is recommending rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which would require only a simple majority vote to change ELCA standards to allow

pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationships;
and

WHEREAS a two-thirds majority vote is usually required for major decisions including the adoption of an ELCA social statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws; and

WHEREAS a decision to change church teaching and policy to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationships holds the potential to be very divisive in ELCA synods and congregations and to cause both membership and financial losses for synods and congregations; and

WHEREAS the ELCA is seeking ways to make decisions on a consensus basis rather than by close votes; and

WHEREAS a super majority vote — such as a two-thirds majority vote — would require an overwhelming majority of Churchwide Assembly voting members to make such a significant change to church teaching and practice; and

WHEREAS the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will adopt its rules for the assembly and could set a two-thirds majority vote for adoption of any changes to standards for pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to add the following provision to the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly ~~procedure for the assembly~~: “Any action to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church’s current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption.”

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee recommends **APPROVAL** with the editorial changes noted.

VOTED

SA09.5.16 To close debate.

VOTED

SA09.5.17 To adopt Resolution #3 with the changes as recommended by Reference and Counsel.

**RESOLUTION #4
FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD**

**A resolution Rejecting Proposed Social Statement
and Affirming Current Teaching Documents on Sexuality**
Submitted by: Chuck Knudson and Gail Krueger
St. Paul Lutheran, New Braunfels

WHEREAS the 2009 ELCA Church wide Assembly will consider the adoption of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* as a possible Social Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS “Social statements and other resources on social concerns build on the rich legacy of the church bodies that united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As a confessional church with an historical sense, this church continues to look to the social statements of The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America for guidance, while it develops its own social statements and further deliberates on social concerns” (*Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns*); and

WHEREAS the Lutheran Confessions state: “We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone” (*Book of Concord, Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule & Norm*); and

WHEREAS the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: “This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” (*ELCA Constitution, 2.03*); and

WHEREAS in addition to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, the current teaching of the ELCA on human sexuality is guided by the ELCA Messages *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* (1996) and *Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (2001); and by the social statements of the ELCA’s predecessor churches: *Sex, Marriage, and Family - A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America* (1970); *Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1980); and *Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1982); and

WHEREAS the adoption of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* as a Social Statement of the ELCA would replace the ELCA Message *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* and the predecessor church statements with a document that is less helpful than its predecessor documents and distances the ELCA from Scripture and from the rich legacy of the church bodies that united to form the ELCA; ~~and therefore be it~~

RESOLVED

WHEREAS ~~that the 2009~~ Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly thanks ~~the members of~~ the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; ~~therefore be it~~ ~~and be it further~~

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reject *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* as a proposed Social Statement for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

to affirm the teaching of the ELCA Messages *Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* (1996) and *Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (2001); and be it further

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to express the ELCA's intention to continue to rely on the social statements of its predecessor churches — *Sex, Marriage, and Family - A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America* (1970); *Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1980); and *Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage - A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church* (1982) — as historical documents expressing faithful Christian teaching on human sexuality.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee was unable to reach a consensus on the substance of this memorial. It therefore reports the proposed memorial, with the editorial changes noted above, to the Synod Assembly for its consideration **WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION**.

VOTED

SA09.5.18 To use written ballots for Resolution #4.

VOTED

SA09.5.19 To close debate.

Written ballots were distributed for Resolution #4.

**RESOLUTION #5
FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD**

**A Resolution Rejecting Recommendations on Ministry Policy
and Affirming Current ELCA Policy**

**Submitted by: Chuck Knudson and Gail Krueger
St. Paul Lutheran, New Braunfels**

WHEREAS the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted “to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church;” and

WHEREAS the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider recommendations from the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

WHEREAS the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* asks the ELCA to change its teaching and policy to affirm the possibility of same-sex sexual relationships for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

WHEREAS the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: “This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life” (*ELCA Constitution, 2.03*); and

WHEREAS many ELCA members and most Christian churches - including most churches in the Lutheran World Federation - believe that Scripture is clear in its teaching about marriage and homosexual behavior; and

WHEREAS a synodical or congregational option on ministry standards would represent a real change in the teaching of our church forcing even those synods and congregations that do not agree with this change implicitly to accept the notion that Scripture is not clear in its teaching about marriage or about homosexual behavior; and

WHEREAS the interdependent relationship between the churchwide, synod, and congregational expressions of the ELCA requires one Office of Ministry, one roster of pastors, and one set of expectations for pastors and other rostered leaders throughout the ELCA; and

WHEREAS the ELCA currently expresses its expectations of pastors and other rostered leaders through documents called *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* which have served the ELCA well for most of its history; and ~~therefore be it~~

RESOLVED

WHEREAS ~~that the 2009~~ Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly thanks the members of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; therefore be it and ~~be it further~~

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reject the proposals in the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED that the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reaffirm the ELCA’s current standards for pastors and other rostered leaders as expressed in *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee was unable to reach a consensus on the substance of this memorial. It therefore reports the proposed memorial, with the editorial changes noted above, to the Synod Assembly for its consideration **WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION**.

Motion was made and seconded to use written ballots for Resolution #5.

VOTED

SA09.5.20 To close debate.

VOTED
SA09.5.21 **To use written ballots for Resolution #5.**

VOTED
SA09.5.22 **To close debate.**

Written ballots were distributed for Resolution #5.

Bishop Tiemann announced the results of the written ballot for Resolution #4.

VOTED
SA09.5.23 **To defeat Resolution #4.**
(166 Yes; 182 No)

RESOLUTION #7
FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD

A resolution requesting the formation of a commission to study and develop plans for
The formation of a New Lutheran Church from within the ELCA.
Submitted by: The Rev. Henry Schulte and The Rev. Jeffery Carpenter
St. John, Boerne

WHEREAS the Recommendation of the Task Force on Human Sexuality for The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has provided recommendations for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, meeting in August, 2009, to decide upon the issue of this church's possible recognition and blessing of same gender unions for persons who identify themselves as Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual or Trans-Gendered, (Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies (RRMP), Page 14, Line 579) and,

WHEREAS the Task Force recommendation provides for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, meeting in August, 2009, to vote on the issue of ordination/rostering of person who identify themselves as being Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual or Trans-Gendered and who are "in or contemplate being in lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships" (RRMP, Page 15, line 638) living in "publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships" (Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual and Transgendered) "to serve as rostered (Ordained Pastors & Commission Lay Leaders) leaders of this church", and,

WHEREAS the first two resolves (RRMP, Page 15, Lines 621 & 624) that the members of The ELCA respect the "bound conscience" of those with whom we disagree and to allow Synods and Congregations to decide upon the ordination and commissioning of openly Gay, Lesbians, Bi-Sexual and Transgendered persons living in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous relationships, including those "who are in or contemplate being in lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships" in the future (*Page 15, Line 638* "RRMP") which would provide for local option on a synod and congregation basis, and,

WHEREAS such a local option proposal recommends in essence a *De Facto* separation of this church by synod and congregation and thus sets the precedent for this

same procedure to be used for all issues in the church where there is continuing disagreement, and,

WHEREAS the Task Force has stated that there is no hope for a consensus on these issues that divide us and that by referring this to local option elections in Synods and congregations the likelihood is that this church will simply continue the division and the exhausting, divisive debate in every synod assembly every year, diverting the focus of synods and congregations away from Christ's Mission and keeping the focus on this issue which cannot be **RESOLVED** by consensus, and,

WHEREAS our previous church bodies had statements on the subject of homosexuality which described homosexual behavior as: "contrary to God's intent", "we see no scriptural rationale for revising the church's traditional teaching that homosexual erotic behavior violates God's intent," (ALC – 1980) and, "Scientific research has not been able to provide conclusive evidence regarding the causes of homosexuality. Nevertheless, homosexuality is viewed Biblically as a departure from the heterosexual structure of God's creation." (LCA – 1975) and,

WHEREAS while many in this church have accepted persons into their community of faith who may be aware of their different sexual orientations, now find it most difficult to move from what they see as 'accepting persons' to approving and endorsing a non-normative life style, and,

WHEREAS the church has always set standards for the public office of Word and Sacrament Ministry and should continue the right to do so for the sake of the church and not simply for the sake of the individual seeking ordination, and,

WHEREAS no further conclusive evidence regarding the causes of homosexuality have been universally accepted and the scriptures have not changed, and,

WHEREAS The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was formed as a result of a Study Commission for the sake of the kingdom of God and the mission of Jesus Christ as three distinct church bodies were merged into one body, so now may it be necessary for the ELCA to take the step beyond the Task Force's recommendation for *De Facto* separation to providing for sanctified, orderly cooperation for organizational division, and,

WHEREAS should Recommendations #1 & 2 be approved by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August, 2009, there most likely will be a division in the ELCA as congregations align with Church bodies that hold to their traditional scriptural and theological perspective, therefore be it

RESOLVED that The Southwestern Texas Synod of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America accept the reality of this church not being able to come to a consensus on the issue of the blessing of same gender unions or the ordination/rostering of same gender persons as proposed in Recommendations # 1 and # 2, and be it further

RESOLVED that The Southwestern Texas Synod, meeting in Assembly, for the sake of the well being of congregations within the synod and this church, memorialize The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Assembly in

Minneapolis, August 17-23, 2009, to authorize the Presiding Bishop of The ELCA to appoint a Commission composed of ELCA Church Officials and key individuals who do not agree with rostering of same gender persons living in, or who hope to live in, a lifelong, monogamous, same gender relationship, to study and bring a proposal for the development of a New Lutheran Church from within The ELCA, that would allow conscience bound individuals and congregations of The ELCA to affiliate with a New Lutheran church body that aligns with their conscience bound understanding of Scripture, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Study Commission develop ways for The ELCA and The New Lutheran Church to cooperate in Global Mission, Social Ministries, Outdoor Ministries, Pensions and every possible area where bounded consciences permit, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Study Commission report and bring a recommendation for The Formation of a New Lutheran Church to The 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee offers the following substitute for the resolution originally proposed:

WHEREAS the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality has provided recommendations for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, meeting in August, 2009, to decide upon the issue of this church's possible recognition of life-long, monogamous, same gender relationships (Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies, Page 14, Lines 579-81); and,

WHEREAS the Task Force recommendation provides for the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, meeting in August, 2009, contingent upon prior approval of the Task Force's first three recommendations, to vote on eliminating the prohibition of rostered service by members who are in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, and developing appropriate guidelines by which congregations and synods that choose to do so could hold people in such relationships publicly accountable, and to permit such persons to be on the rosters of this church; (Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policy, Page 15, Lines 632-40); and,

WHEREAS the Task Force's fourth recommendation (Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policy, Page 15, Lines 620-30) calls for members of the ELCA to respect the "bound conscience" of those with whom we disagree, and to allow individual synods and congregations that choose to do so to permit the ordination and commissioning of persons living in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous relationships, including those who are in or contemplate being in lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships in the future (Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policy, Page 15, Lines 632-40); and,

WHEREAS such a local option proposal recommends in essence a de facto separation of this church by synod and congregation; and,

WHEREAS the Task Force has stated that it does not expect a consensus in the near future on these issues that divide us (Report and Recommendation on

Ministry Policy, Page 2, Line 54-75); and the likelihood is that this church will simply continue the division and the debate, diverting the focus of synods and congregations away from Christ's Mission; and,

WHEREAS the church has always set standards for the public office of Word and Sacrament Ministry and should continue to do so; and,

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was formed as a result of a Study Commission for the sake of the kingdom of God and the mission of Jesus Christ as three distinct church bodies were merged into one body, so now may it be advisable for the ELCA to take the step beyond the Task Force's recommendation to providing for sanctified, orderly cooperation for organizational division; and,

WHEREAS should Recommendations 1 & 2 be approved by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August, 2009, there most likely will be a division in the ELCA as congregations align with church bodies that hold to their traditional scriptural and theological perspective; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod, meeting in Assembly, for the sake of the well being of congregations within the synod and this church, memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Assembly n Minneapolis, August 17-23, 2009,

1. to direct the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA to appoint a Commission composed of ELCA church officials and key individuals who do not agree with rostering of same gender persons living in, or who hope to live in, a lifelong, monogamous, same gender relationship;
2. that this Commission study and bring a proposal for the development of a New Lutheran Church from within the ELCA, that would allow conscience bound individuals and congregations of the ELCA to affiliate with a New Lutheran church body that aligns with their conscience-bound understanding of Scripture;
3. that the Study Commission develop ways for the ELCA and the New Lutheran Church to cooperate in Global Mission, Social Ministries, Outdoor Ministries, Pensions and every possible area where bound consciences permit; and
4. that the Study Commission report and bring a recommendation for the formation of a New Lutheran Church to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

The Committee was unable to reach a consensus on the substance of this memorial. It therefore reports the substitute above to the Synod Assembly for its consideration **WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION.**

VOTED

SA09.5.24 To use written ballots for Resolution #7.

VOTED

SA09.5.25 To close debate.

Written ballots were distributed for Resolution #7.

Bishop Tiemann announced the results of the written ballot for Resolution #5.

VOTED
SA09.5.26 To approve Resolution #5.
(193 Yes; 157 No)

After announcements by Bishop Tiemann, Plenary Session III was recessed at 10:45 a.m. Worship to begin at 11:00 in the Ballroom.

WORSHIP
May 17, 2009, 11:00 a.m.
McAllen Convention Center
Ballroom

Worship was led by the Rio Grande Valley Conference assembly worship team with The Rev. Dr. Jay Alaniz, LSPS presiding, David Swartling, assisting and Bishop Ray Tiemann, preaching.

PLENARY SESSION IV
May 17, 2009
McAllen Convention Center
Exhibit Hall A

The assembly convened at 1:20 p.m. with a call to order and opening prayer by Bishop Tiemann.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Lois Eichman, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that as of 1:15 p.m., May 17, 2009, there were 371 voting members, of whom 118 were Rostered Voting Members and 253 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 8 non-voting members, no ecumenical guests and 69 registered visitors for a total of 448 persons registered.

Pr. Jennifer Fuhr led the assembly in the "Book of Faith" Bible Study #4.

The Rev. Gary Goodson presented remarks to the Assembly regarding care for returning veterans.

ORDER OF THE DAY

Plenary Session IV recessed at 1:45 p.m.

CROSS TRAILS MINISTRY CORPORATION MEETING

The Cross Trails Ministry Corporation held its corporation meeting (see separate minutes of that organization).

Plenary Session IV resumed at 2:40 p.m.

The Assembly viewed advertisements as developed by the ELCA.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Warncke presented an overview of the Treasurer's Report as found on Page 16 of the Report of Synod Council. He offered further explanation for the Revised Spending Plan for 2009-2010 as outlined in Column F (and further explained on Pages 17-19).

2010-2011 BUDGET

The budget was previously presented on May 16, 2009, and Mr. Teinert presented for adoption by the Assembly as recommended by the Synod Council.

VOTED

SA09.5.27 To adopt the 2010-2011 Budget as it appears on Page 16 of Synod Council Report.

2009/2010 CLERGY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

These guidelines were previously presented on May 16, 2009, and Mr. Teinert presented for adoption by the Assembly as recommended by the Synod Council.

VOTED

SA09.5.28 To adopt the 2009/2010 Clergy Compensation Guidelines as they appear on Pages 31-40 and in Exhibit D of Synod Council Report.

Bishop Tiemann announced the results of the written ballot for Resolution #7.

VOTED

**SA09.5.29 To defeat Resolution #7.
(144 Yes; 215 No)**

RESOLUTION #8

Resolution #8 was previously declined by the Synod Council for presentment to the Assembly as it was received a few days prior to the Assembly. The Reference and Counsel Committee also declined to recommend this resolution for consideration by the Assembly.

VOTED

SA09.5.30 To defeat the motion to bring Resolution #8 before the Assembly.

RESOLUTION #10

Resolution #10 was received a few days prior to the Assembly.

VOTED

SA09.5.31 To defeat the motion to bring Resolution #10 before the Assembly.

RESOLUTION #9 FOR THE 2009 SYNOD ASSEMBLY SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD

**A resolution of Thanksgiving
Submitted by: Reference and Counsel Committee**

WHEREAS we are gathered under the theme "United in Ministry - God's Work - Our Hands," and the 2009 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly has provided

opportunities for spiritual renewal, joyful worship, uplifting fellowship, Bible study, visits to local ministries, and prayerful discussion of important matters for our participation in God's mission in the world, and

WHEREAS many people have put in countless hours and much hard work to make this assembly possible, especially the synod assembly planning team from the Rio Grande Valley Conference chaired by Jan Demro and Patti Larson, the synod officers, the facilitators, the worship leaders, the prayer team, the ELCA representative David Swartling, Bible study leaders, preachers Dr. Jay Alanis and Bishop Ray Tiemann, elections committee, credentials committee, those who proposed and debated resolutions, the McAllen Convention Center staff, and last, but not least, the synod staff members who did so much for this event and for ministry throughout the year, and

WHEREAS it is fitting and proper to thank God for the faithful service rendered by our sisters and brothers in Christ for the common good of our church and synod, as well as the spreading of the gospel, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the people of the Southwestern Texas Synod, gathered here in the 2009 Synod Assembly, express their gratitude and thanksgiving with boisterous applause and a standing ovation.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee recommends **APPROVAL**.

VOTED

SA09.5.32 To approve Resolution #9.

Bishop Tiemann thanked the Reference and Counsel Committee for their work before and during the Assembly.

COMMISSION FOR PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP REPORT

The Rev. Mike Coffey presented a report for the commission.

YOUTH COORDINATORS' REPORT

Heather Hanson presented a report.

COMMISSION FOR MISSION REPORT

The Rev. Bonnie Claycomb presented a report for the commission.

Jan Demro reported that the assembly offering at this time totaled \$70,272.67.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Tiemann presented a report.

Pr. Lori Ruge-Jones led the assembly in the "Book of Faith" Bible Study #5.

INTRODUCTION OF SYNOD STAFF

Bishop Tiemann introduced and thanked the Synod Staff for their work on the assembly. Special thanks were offered to Carrie Blank for twenty years of service to the Synod.

INTRODUCTION OF ASSEMBLY PLANNING TEAM

Jan Demro and Patti Larson, Co-Chairs of the Assembly Planning Team, introduced and thanked the following persons for their work on the Assembly:

Linda Nicholas and Zach Courter, Co-Chairs - Hospitality
Virginia Norquest, Chair; Pr. Sylvia De La Garza, Pr. Alma Morales, Dr. Vivian Munn –
Worship and Music
Alice Johnson and Kathy Bush, Co-Chairs – Food and Beverage
Eleanor Reinhold – Support and Care, Prayer Room and First Aid Station
Wanda Greenhill – Decorations
Cathy Graham and Lois Eichman, Co-Chairs – Publicity
Bud Seward – Technology
Tom Pearson and Rev. Steve Herzberg – Assembly Without Walls

Bishop Tiemann announced that a summary of events/actions from the Assembly would be on the Synod website.

Bishop Tiemann announced that the 2010 Synod Assembly will be held May 1-2 in New Braunfels, Texas.

Following the Order for Closing of the Assembly, the assembly was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Zander
Synod Secretary