

**MINUTES OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL, SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
Lutheran Ministry Center – Seguin, Texas  
February 9-11, 2007**

**Members Present:**

Santiago Alanis	Peggy Janssen	Bishop Ray Tiemann
The Rev. Mark Behrendt	The Rev. Robert Kaul	Jodi Vlasak
Lisa Beyer	Alton Luedke	The Rev. Wayne Walther
Margaret Cook	Jim Price	Bill Warncke
Gracie Cooley	Ronald Riske	Deborah Wilson
Mark Helmke	The Rev. William Swantner	Linda Zander
David Houston	Carl Teinert	The Rev. Paul Zwarich

**Advisory Members Present:**

The Rev. Bonnie Claycomb	Donna Shurley
The Rev. Michael Coffey	Karen Stein

**Staff Present:**

The Rev. Lynn Schudy  
Ziese

**Absent:**

The Rev. John Boldt	John Dellis	Jenny Peterson
The Rev. Richard Bremer	The Rev. Joe Garcia	The Rev. James Wilken
Balorie De La Tejera	The Rev. Stephen Kanouse	

**Friday, February 9, 2007:**

The Synod Council meeting was called to order by Vice President Mark Helmke at 7:10 p.m. Opening devotion presented by Bishop Tiemann.

***Roll Call***

The secretary determined that a quorum was present.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.1 To approve the appointment of Gracie Cooley as the Coastal Bend Conference lay representative, replacing Laurie Hartmann.**

***Agenda***

Mr. Helmke presented a Proposed Agenda.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.2 To adopt the proposed agenda.**

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.3 To approve the minutes of the September 8-9, 2006, Synod Council meeting as amended.**

***Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles for Synod Council***

A proposed Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles was presented by a committee comprised of Bishop Tiemann, Pr. Coffey, Pr. Claycomb, Ms. Shurley and Ms. Cook.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.4 To approve the following Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles:**

**Purpose Statement:**

**The purpose of the Southwestern Texas Synod Council is faithfully to lead and support our diverse ministries for service in God's world.**

**Guiding Principles:**

1. **Trust that Jesus is Lord.**
2. **Pray first, last and always.**
3. **Welcome one another, listen respectfully and honor differences.**
4. **Value Lutheran tradition and be open to our transformation.**
5. **Humbly discern God's will and boldly act.**
6. **Lead with the servant love of Christ.**

***Vision Gathering Update***

Bishop Tiemann reported that approximately 170 persons were in attendance at the Vision Gathering event held on November 11, 2006, in Seguin. He has read all information submitted at that event. A discussion was then held about the strengths and weaknesses of the Synod. A group will now be gathered to develop a Purpose Statement and Guiding Principles for the Synod. A report is expected from the ELCA on the Synod Audit they conducted.

***Executive Committee Report***

Mr. Helmke presented the report, including the following:

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.5 That Greg Hilton be appointed to serve on the Lutheran Social Services of the South Board of Directors.**

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.6 That Juan Garcia be appointed to serve on the Board of Directors for the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.**

Mr. Helmke reported on the Mission and Ministry Grants approved by the Executive Committee. The following grants were approved by the Executive Committee in the amounts indicated:

San Lucas, Eagle Pass - \$2,000  
MacArthur Park, San Antonio - \$750  
Holy Cross, Rockport - \$1,690  
Resurrection, Wimberley - \$500  
Holy Ghost, Fredericksburg - \$2,000  
Messiah, Austin - \$2,000  
St. Mark, Cuero - \$1,000  
Prince of Peace, San Antonio - \$1,500  
St. John, San Juan - \$2,000  
Living Word, Buda - \$2,000  
Salem, Port Lavaca - \$1,092  
First, San Marcos - \$1,000  
Good News, San Antonio - \$1,000  
Faith, McDade - \$500  
St. Mark, Adkins - \$1,000

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.7 That the following change to the Continuing Resolution establishing Mission & Ministry Fund be adopted:**

**S15.12.A07** The Mission and Ministry Fund of the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereby established. The purpose of the fund shall be mission and ministry development.

- a) The Fund shall include assets as may be transferred to the Fund from time to time by the Synod Council, including but not limited to proceeds from the sale of properties received by the synod from congregations under the provisions of Chapter 13 of the Synod Constitution, and designated gifts whose purposes are consistent with the purposes of the Fund.
- b) The Fund shall be maintained and reported as an account separate from the other accounts of the Synod.
- c) Responsibility for the administration and management of the Fund is delegated to the Executive Committee and Administration & Finance Committee. The Executive Committee shall propose policies to govern the management and expenditure of the Fund for approval by the Synod Council. The Administration & Finance Committee shall propose policies to govern the investment of the Fund for approval by the Synod Council.
- d) The Synod Council shall report to each Synod Assembly on the activities of the Fund, and shall present a budget reflecting the anticipated total receipts and disbursements for the Fund for approval by the Synod Assembly.

**VOTED  
SC.07.2.8**

**That the following change to the Mission and Ministry Fund Operating Policies, Paragraph 2 under the subheading "DISTRIBUTIONS" be approved:**

2. Distributions from the Fund by the Executive Committee during any fiscal year will be limited to no more than 4% of the average year-end total assets of the Fund for the preceding 5 fiscal years as reflected in the Synod's audited financial statements. Any distribution from the Fund above this limit requires the approval of the Synod Council.

**VOTED  
SC.07.2.9**

**To approve the Guidelines for Display for the 2007 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly as recommended by the Executive Committee as follows:**

ELCA Churchwide policy states that "Display space exists only for Churchwide units." ... "No display or meeting facilities are provided for organizations that have no official relationship to this church." ... "Only the church's publishing house (Augsburg-Fortress) may offer items for sale. No commercial displays or sales booths are permitted." (ELCA Church Council Minutes, July 10-11, 1988, p. 25)

This ELCA policy serves as the model for our synod in the allocation of display space at our assemblies. The following is a list of those

organizations that meet the criteria of the ELCA and synodical policy and therefore qualify to set up displays at assemblies:

1. The Agencies and Institutions related to the Synod as stated
2. Task Forces of the Synod
3. The Commission for Communications
4. The Commission for Congregational Life and its committees
  - a. Stewardship Resource Team
  - b. Worship Resource Team
  - c. Youth Committee
  - d. Women of the ELCA
  - e. Men in Mission
  - f. Hunger Task Force
  - g. Older Adult Ministry Resource Team
  - h. Rural Ministry Advisory Team
  - i. Church in Society
5. The Commission for Mission and its committees
  - a. Ecumenical Ministries
  - b. Global Missions
  - c. Inclusive/Multicultural Ministries
  - d. Mission Partners
  - e. Campus Ministry
  - f. Outreach
6. The Commission for Professional Leadership & its committees
  - a. Candidacy
  - b. Leadership Support
  - c. Invitation to Service
  - d. Parish Ministry Training Program
7. Related Organizations
  - a. Churchwide units
  - b. Region IV – Don Just
  - c. Tri-Synod Archives
  - d. Augsburg Fortress
  - e. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
  - f. Cross Trails Ministry
8. Other related committees or task forces of the Synod.

Organizations approved for display are prohibited from including in their display any material of non-approved organizations. Any organization not specifically listed above must solicit permission to display from the Southwestern Texas Synod Council.

Mr. Helmke presented the request received from Lutherans Concerned/North America for display space at the 2007 Synod Assembly.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.10 To approve the request received from Lutherans Concerned/North America for display space at the 2007 Synod Assembly, contingent upon the space being available.**

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.11 That the Executive Committee be authorized to act upon any subsequent requests for display space received after the date of this meeting in the order such requests are received.**

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.12 To approve the recommendation by the Executive Committee of Proposals for Synod Youth Ministry Coordinator (Exhibit C-4).**

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.13 To adopt the recommendation by the Executive Committee of the following new continuing resolutions:**

**3.01.A07**

**Administration and Finance Committee:**

The Administration and Finance Committee shall be composed of the treasurer and 6 to 8 other members of the Synod Council appointed by the bishop in consultation with the vice president for two-year renewable terms. The chair of the Stewardship Resource Team shall serve as an advisory member of the committee. The committee shall have responsibility for:

- A. preparing and presenting a comprehensive budget to the Synod Council for its consideration and presentation to the Synod Assembly;
- B. monitoring the finances and administrative affairs of the synod, and reporting and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding such matters;
- C. recommending expenditure authorizations for approval by the Synod Council;
- D. such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned or referred to it by the Synod Council.

**3.01.B07**

**Audit Committee:**

The Audit Committee shall be composed of three members appointed by the Administration and Finance Committee and approved by the Synod Council for two-year renewable terms. One member of the Audit Committee shall be a member of the Administration and Finance Committee, who shall serve as the chair of the Audit Committee. The other members of the Audit Committee shall be members of congregations of the synod, other than members of the Synod Council or synod staff, chosen for their expertise in accounting, financial and related matters. The Audit Committee shall assist the Administration and Finance Committee and the Synod Council in fulfilling oversight of the synod's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions. The responsibilities of the Audit Committee shall be specified in a charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Administration and Finance Committee, and approved by the Synod Council.

**3.01.C07**

**Legal, Constitutional and Roster Review Committee:**

The Legal, Constitutional and Roster Review Committee shall be composed of the secretary and 4 to 6 other members of the Synod Council appointed by the bishop in consultation with the vice president for two-year renewable terms. The chair of the Committee of Deans shall serve as an advisory member of the committee. The committee shall have responsibility for:

- A. providing for an annual review of the official rosters of the synod;
- B. reviewing and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding:
  - a. requested or recommended changes to the rosters;
  - b. issuance of letters of call on behalf of the synod;
  - c. proposed amendments to the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions of the synod;
  - d. proposed constitutions or amendments to the constitutions of congregations, conferences, agencies, or institutions of the synod;
- C. monitoring the legal affairs of the synod, and reporting and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding such matters; and
- D. such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned or referred to it by the Synod Council.

### **3.01.D07**

#### **Program and Evaluation Committee:**

The Program and Evaluation Committee shall be composed of the vice president and 6 to 8 other members of the Synod Council appointed by the bishop in consultation with the vice president for two-year renewable terms. The chairs of the synod commissions serve as advisory members of the committee. The committee shall have responsibility for:

- A. monitoring the programs and services of the synod to assure that its purposes, policies, and objectives are being fulfilled, and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding the programs and services of the synod;
- B. reviewing and making recommendations to the Synod Council on existing or proposed synod policies, programs and strategies in light of synod goals and priorities;
- C. providing for ongoing evaluation of the structure of the synod, making recommendations related thereto to the Synod Council; and
- D. such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned or referred to it by the Synod Council.

#### **VOTED**

**SC.07.2.14 To adopt the recommendation by the Executive Committee of the amendment of the existing bylaw as follows for approval by the 2007 Synod Assembly:**

### **4.01.**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** The Executive Committee shall be composed of the elected Synod officers and three other members of the Synod Council elected by the Synod Council. The vice president shall chair this committee. In addition to the other responsibilities assigned to it by the constitution, bylaws or continuing resolutions of the synod, the Executive Committee shall:

- a. administer the directives of the Synod Council;
- b. assist the bishop in providing coordinated, strategic planning for the work of the synod;
- c. recommend persons to fill vacancies in elected positions to be filled by the Synod Council;

- d. provide advice and counsel for the officers and synod staff;  
and
- e. review the work of the officers and synod professional staff.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.15 To repeal the existing Continuing Resolution 3.05.A94.**

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.16 To adopt the recommendation by the Executive Committee of the amendment of the existing bylaw as follows for approval by the 2007 Synod Assembly:**

**2.07.**

- (a) Any resolution, memorial or other main motion not germane to the matter before a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly or on the assembly agenda shall be submitted in writing, supported by the signatures of at least two voting members, to the secretary of their synod no later than 60 days before the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such matters shall be referred as required by the chapter to the Committee on Reference and Counsel or Synod Council, which shall report such matters and their recommendations thereon to the voting members of the Synod Assembly in writing at least 10 days before the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- (b) Any matter not submitted in advance as required by subsection (a) of this bylaw, but submitted at least 7 days before the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly, may be considered or acted on by that meeting of the Synod Assembly only with:
  - (1) the recommendation of the Synod Council;
  - (2) the recommendation of the Committee on Reference and Counsel; or
  - (3) a majority vote of the Synod Assembly.
- (c) Any matter required by this bylaw to be submitted in advance that is not submitted at least 7 days prior to the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly shall only be considered and acted upon by that meeting of the Synod Assembly where there is a substantial need to act on the matter without the opportunity for deliberation as contemplated by this bylaw, as determined by a 2/3 vote of the Synod Assembly.

Bishop Tiemann explained the process for members of the Synod Council visiting area congregations on Sunday, February 11, 2007.

The Synod Council meeting recessed for the evening.

**Saturday, February 10, 2006:**

The Synod Council meeting reconvened at 9:00 a.m. with opening devotions led by Bishop Tiemann.

***Treasurer's Report (Exhibits D1-D4)***

Mr. Warncke presented the Treasurer's Report, including a current financial report. He reported that there is a new line item in the 2008-2009 proposed budget of \$40,000 for Vision Projects, which is to be distributed at the discretion of the Synod Council. Idea is to have funds available that do not fall

under specific line items in the budget. Source for this fund is (1) increase in mission support, (2) other revenue income, and (3) change in funding for Mission and Ministry Grants.

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.17**      **To ratify the selection of Randy Walker & Co. of San Antonio, Texas, to serve as auditors as recommended by the Administration and Finance Committee.**

Mr. Warncke presented a Proposal on Note for St. Martin & St. Rose Catholic Church (Exhibit D-5).

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.18**      **To substitute the recommendation from Administration and Finance Committee with the following: after the payment of \$20,000, that the balance of the indebtedness be forgiven.**

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.19**      **That after the payment of \$20,000, that the balance of the indebtedness be forgiven on the property known as St. Martin and St. Rose Polish National Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas.**

***Office of the Bishop Reports (Exhibit E):***

Bishop Tiemann reported on:

- (1) LMC Offering Appeal;
- (2) The following congregations in the synod have left the ELCA:
  - Trinity, Blanco – joined LCMC, December 10, 2006; and
  - St. Luke, San Antonio – dissolved, December 31, 2006;
- (3) Status of filling Assistant to the Bishop position;
- (4) Decision on Joshua Fite's request for ordination exception.

***Action Items:***

***Roster Changes***

Mr. Helmke presented the items for action by the Synod Council.

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.20**      **To approve On Leave from Call Status for:**  
April Boyden (AIM) for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year beginning 7/16/2007  
Pastor Rodger Erickson for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year beginning 2/1/2007  
Pastor Heide Harris for a 4<sup>th</sup> year: Study Leave for National Counseling Examination & 3000 hours for Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)  
Pastor Paul Muehlbrad for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year beginning 1/1/2007  
Pastor David Schroeder for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year beginning 4/1/2007  
Pastor Dawn Silvius for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year beginning 10/31/2007

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.21**      **To extend a letter of call to Pastor Tom Dietzel as Chaplain for Home Helpers, San Antonio, as of 2/1/2007.**

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.22**      **To approve Disability Status for Pastor Marcia Kline as of 8/16/2006.**

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.23**      **To approve Retired Status for Pastor David Tietz as of 2/1/2007.**

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.24** To approve the constitution for Living Water, Leander.

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.25** To approve changes in the constitution for congregations as follows:  
(a) Lord of Life, Austin – all changes approved;  
(b) Salem, Austin – changes approved with the exception of 8.02d, and that section is referred back to the congregation for further review;  
(c) Abiding Presence, San Antonio – all changes approved;  
(d) Good Shepherd, San Antonio – all changes approved; and  
(e) First, Orange Grove – all changes approved.

***Reports Received as Information***

- Report from Ms. Shurley, Commission for Congregational Life (Exhibit I)

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.26** To approve the appointment of Randall Nicholas (1<sup>st</sup> term, 8/31/2008) and The Rev. Don Taylor (1<sup>st</sup> term; -filling unexpired term, 8/31/2007) to the Commission for Congregational Life.

- Report from Pastor Carol Spencer with the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA (Exhibit G-1)

***Office of the Bishop Reports (continued - Exhibit F):***

Assistant to the Bishop Ziese reported as outlined in her report.

***Report of Commission for Mission***

Pr. Claycomb presented the report (Exhibits J, J-1 & J-2).

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.27** To approve the appointment of Anamae Jung and Yolanda Rodriguez as co-chairs of the Mission Partners Committee and Michelle Schrank as chair of the Global Mission Committee, all for a two year term expiring 8/31/2008.

***Report of Commission for Professional Leadership***

Pr. Coffey presented this report (Exhibits K, K-1 & K-2).

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.28** To approve the appointment of members of the Leadership Support Committee as follows: Tim Bauerkemper (2<sup>nd</sup> term, 8/31/2008); Skip Courter, chair (1<sup>st</sup> term, 8/31/2008); Michael Ensrude (1<sup>st</sup> term, 8/31/2008); Norb Firnhaber (2<sup>nd</sup> term, 8/31/2007); Shelley Kronbergs (1<sup>st</sup> term, 8/31/2008); Ralph Reitmeyer (1<sup>st</sup> term, 8/31/2007); and Dawn Silvius (2<sup>nd</sup> term, 8/31/2007).

**VOTED**  
**SC.07.2.29** To adopt the recommendations by the Leadership Support Committee of the revisions to Compensation Guidelines as outlined in Exhibit K-1 for approval by the 2007 Synod Assembly.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.30 To approve the following resolution by the Leadership Support Committee regarding medical benefits, which was amended as follows:**

**WHEREAS, the rising costs of medical coverage for clergy and lay staff members of our Synod congregations is adversely affecting salaries because salaries are tied to the amount of medical premiums paid by congregations and,**

**WHEREAS, many of the congregations of the Southwestern Texas Synod are considering other routes to providing medical coverage for their pastors and staff,**

**BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Texas Synod Council communicate to the Church Council of the ELCA that the Board of Pensions the need to review the way it funds the cost of medical benefits, and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod Council request that the ELCA Church Council direct the Board of Pensions to research the viability of more options for congregations in the form of "cafeteria" plans, allowing for higher deductibles and optional coverage, and respond to the Synod Council regarding new options.**

***Proposed Budget for 2008-2009***

Mr. Warncke presented the proposed budget for 2008-2009 (Exhibit D-4).

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.31 To recommend the proposed budget for 2008-2009 as outlined in Exhibit D-4 for approval by the 2007 Synod Assembly.**

***Request by Clay People (The Community at Inter-Mission)***

The Synod Council then discussed a request that Clay People be recognized as a synodically authorized worshipping community with an annual review to determine whether such status would remain in effect. This ministry grew out of the campus ministry at Texas Lutheran University, and is an international ecumenical movement. Currently are working with the Methodist Church and Faith Lutheran in Seguin. Are currently scheduled to receive \$5,000 in funding from ELCA, and asking approval to "test the field" to see if ministry viable. Group has its own EIN number, and will have its own Board of clergy and lay persons. Was previously funded through TLU campus ministry, and in order to get above funds, must be recognized as synodically authorized worshipping community.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.32 To approve the recommendation from the Executive Committee that The Community at Inter-Mission be recognized as a synodically authorized worshipping community.**

***2007 Synod Assembly Planning Report***

Pr. Kaul presented the report. Mr. Price presented information on the offering to be taken. Mr. Helmke reminded the Synod Council that it will meet at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, May 18, 2007, and that a reception will be held that evening for early arrivals.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.33 To recommend the Proposed Standing Rules (Exhibit L) for adoption by the 2007 Synod Assembly.**

***Executive Committee Report (continued)***

Mr. Helmke reported that the Executive Committee had received a request from New Beginnings, San Antonio, for the Synod to guarantee a lease for a two year period of time, with an option for a third year, at a rate of \$3,000 per month.

**VOTED**

**SC.07.2.34 To authorize the Executive Committee to act on the request received from New Beginnings, San Antonio, Texas, for the Synod to act as a guarantor on a lease.**

***Reports Received as Information***

- Mr. Helmke reported on actions of the Churchwide Council. That Assembly is to be held in August, and applications for positions to that are due by the end of February. Churchwide Council is working on the health plan and revisions to it. Insurance Alternatives Task Force is looking at options after the devastating hurricanes.
- Report from Ms. Stein on behalf of the Women of the ELCA (Exhibit M).
- Written report from Kurt Senske, CEO of Lutheran Social Services of the South, Inc. received (Exhibit N)
- Written report from St. Luke's Lutheran Health Ministries received (Exhibit O)

After closing devotions lead by Bishop Tiemann, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Zander, Synod Secretary