

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
MAY 20-21, 2005**

The Fourteenth Assembly of the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is held at Texas Lutheran University, Seguin, Texas, May 20-21, 2005. The theme of the assembly is Living in God's Amazing Grace."

OPENING WORSHIP AND INTRODUCTIONS

May 20, 2005 10:00 a.m.

Texas Lutheran University

Opening worship is led by Kelly Fryer and ARC team with Bishop Ray Tiemann preaching and presiding. After worship, the following introductions are made: ecumenical guests, voting members from New Life SAWC, Dripping Springs, Synod Assembly Planning Team, former Bishops of the synod and their wives, first call, transfer clergy, and interns new to the synod. A video on Renewing Worship is shown, followed by lunch.

PLENARY SESSION 1

May 20, 2005

Texas Lutheran University

The assembly is convened at 2:10 p.m. by Bishop Ray Tiemann with the Order for the Opening of the Synod Assembly.

Bishop Tiemann recognizes members of the head table, synod officers, Mark Helmke, vice president, Gayle Gordon Bouzard, secretary, William Maddox, treasurer, and Ron Stinson, parliamentarian.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Tiemann calls upon Peggy Loomis, chair of the Credentials Committee, to give the report of the committee. At 1:30 p.m. there are 433 voting members of which 145 are Rostered Voting Members and 288 Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certifies that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership are met. In addition, there are 21 non-voting members, 0 ecumenical representatives, and 115 registered visitors for a total of 569 persons registered.

Bishop Tiemann introduces the voting members and Rev. James Bouzard of New Life Lutheran, Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community to the Southwestern Texas Synod. It is moved and second that the Southwestern Texas Synod officially welcome this community at the recommendation of the Synod Council.

VOTED

SA05.5.1

To welcome and seat New Life Lutheran, Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community to this and further assemblies.

ADOPTION OF STANDING RULES AND AGENDA

Mark Helmke, vice president, highlights aspects of the Proposed Standing Rules and the Proposed Agenda.

MOVED, SECONDED

CARRIED

To amend section 13 of the Proposed Standing Rules that the assembly will hear from at least 3 speakers on each side of an issue if there are people standing at the microphone waiting to speak before allowing the question to be called.

VOTED

SA05.5.2

To adopt the Proposed Standing Rules as amended.

VOTED

SA05.5.3

To adopt the Proposed Agenda for the Assembly as written.

ELCA REPORT – KATHRYN LOVE

Kathryn Love gives greetings from the ELCA and thanks the synod for its support. She states that it is a great time to be in the ELCA due to the scriptural hunger that is evident in the U.S. She reports that now is an opportunity to be an evangelizing church in a time of curiosity in Jesus Christ. She states that it is also a challenging time to be the church with various issues facing the church. She discusses the four evangelism strategies of the ELCA.

The Assembly is recessed at 3:15

CROSS TRAILS MINISTRY CORPORATION MEETING

The Cross Trails Ministry Corporation meeting is called to order at 3:16 p.m.

The State of the camp address is given by Deanna Christensen. According to the Foundation report, there was \$150,000 given in donations to Cross Trails Ministry over the past year. The auditors report found that all financial matters were in order and the fiscal year ended in the black.

The budget is presented to the voting members with a motion by the camping board that it be approved. **The voting members of the corporation made up of the voting members of the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly vote to approve the 2005 budget of Cross Trails Ministry.**

Nominees for at-large members to the camping board for a three year term were presented. It is moved and seconded that nominations cease. It is voted that nominations cease. Voting commenced.

Cross Trails Ministry Corporation Meeting was adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

The Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly Session I reconvened at 4:02 p.m.

COMMISSION FOR PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP REPORT

Rev. James Bouzard gives a report of the work of the commission. Rev. Glenn Moehring is recognized for his work with the SAM program and a presentation is made to him honoring that work by Bishop Tiemann. Rev. Sam Radoman is introduced as the new director of the SAM program.

EVANGELISM LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORT

Rev. David Schulte gives the report describing the work of the synod's team. He directs the members of the Assembly and congregations to that which can be done to enact the four strategies of Evangelism, in particular pointing out the resources of the ELCA website on Evangelism.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNCIL

Bishop Tiemann introduces the chair of Reference and Council – Rev. Steve Byrne, St. Mark's, Cuero and the Reference and Council committee – Rev. Lynnae Sorensen (tri-County Cooperative), AIM Mary Lou Geer (Hope, San Antonio), Francis Fisbeck (Zion, Moulton), and Mark Helmke (Synod Council Liaison).

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #1-A FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA

A Synodical Resolution to End Hunger as Core Conviction

Submitted by Rev. Brian Peterson, Rev. Stephen Youngdahl, Rev. Tim Anderson, Rev. Paul Ziese, Rev. James Bouzard, Rev. Elroy Haverlah, and Rev. June Wilkens

WHEREAS 840 million people worldwide are chronically undernourished and 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 per day; and

WHEREAS 30 million people in the United States, including 13 million children, cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet; and

WHEREAS 189 countries, including the United States, have committed to cutting in half extreme hunger by the year 2015 by establishing the Millennium Development Goals; and

WHEREAS advocacy organizations, like Bread for the World and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (FoodFirst), have established that there is a sufficient food supply to feed the earth's population; and

WHEREAS leading economists now argue that ending chronic hunger is an attainable goal for the first time in human history; and

WHEREAS the Holy Scriptures are very clear in numerous passages that God has compassion on the poor (for example, Jeremiah 22:15-16 and Luke 6:20-21) and that it is God's will that the hungry be fed (for example, Psalm 146:5-7 and Matthew 25:34-35); and

WHEREAS the church of Jesus Christ is uniquely equipped by its identity and mission to be the leaven that stirs the peoples and nations of the world to end chronic hunger; therefore be it

RESOLVED that what ending hunger as a "core conviction" means for a congregation is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it

- Engages in local efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development
- Initiates with other congregations, especially with full communion partner congregations, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger in the local community
- Supports advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels
- Contributes generously to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA; and be it further

RESOLVED that what ending hunger as a "core conviction" means for a synod is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it

- Equips congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development on the local level
- Initiates with the leaders of other judicatories, especially with full communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels
- Encourages congregations to contribute generously to the World Hunger Appeal of the ELCA; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod declare ending hunger a core conviction of its ministry and mission.

**MOVED, SECONDED
CARRIED** To close debate.

**VOTED
SA05.5.04** To adopt Resolution 1-A

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #1-B
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A Resolution to End Hunger as Core Conviction

Submitted by Rev. Brian Peterson, Rev. Stephen Youngdahl, Rev. Tim Anderson, Rev. Paul Ziese, Rev. James Bouzard, Rev. Elroy Haverlah, and Rev. June Wilkens

WHEREAS 840 million people worldwide are chronically undernourished and 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 per day; and

WHEREAS 30 million people in the United States, including 13 million children, cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet; and

WHEREAS 189 countries, including the United States, have committed to cutting in half extreme hunger by the year 2015 by establishing the Millennium Development Goals; and

WHEREAS advocacy organizations, like Bread for the World and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (FoodFirst), have established that there is a sufficient food supply to feed the earth's population; and

WHEREAS leading economists now argue that ending chronic hunger is an attainable goal for the first time in human history; and

WHEREAS the Holy Scriptures are very clear in numerous passages that God has compassion on the poor (for example, Jeremiah 22:15-16 and Luke 6:20-21) and that it is God's will that the hungry be fed (for example, Psalm 146:5-7 and Matthew 25:34-35); and

WHEREAS the church of Jesus Christ is uniquely equipped by its identity and mission to be the leaven that stirs the peoples and nations of the world to end chronic hunger; therefore be it

RESOLVED that this synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all of its expressions – congregations, synods, and churchwide – to likewise declare ending hunger a core conviction for this church at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED that what ending hunger as a “core conviction” means for the ELCA churchwide is that as a regular dimension of its ministry and mission it

- Equips congregations in their efforts to feed the hungry and promote community economic development on the local level
- Supports synods in their efforts to end hunger on the state, national, and global levels
- Initiates with the leaders of other church bodies, especially with full communion partners, advocacy of laws and policies to end hunger on the national and global levels
- Instructs the leaders of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal to give leadership to these efforts
- Continues to undertake relief efforts and implement sustainable development in partnership with Lutheran World Relief and in cooperation with other people of faith in situations of extreme hunger; and be it further

RESOLVED that this synod memorialize the ELCA to engage in a process together with the Lutheran World Federation and bring a proposal to the Lutheran World Federation's Eleventh Assembly to declare ending hunger a core conviction of the Lutheran World Federation.

VOTED
SA05.5.05

To adopt Resolution 1-B.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A Resolution to Memorialize the ELCA to Allow Services of Blessing for Same-Gender Relationships

Submitted by **Rev. June Wilkins, Rev. Karl Gronberg, Rev. Barbara Beale, Rev. Kent Bohls, Rev. James Bouzard, Rev. Merrill Carlson, Gayle Gordon Bouzard, Rev. Robert Karli, Rev. Shelley Kronbergs, Rev. Brian Peterson, Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones, Rev. Susan Schnelle, Rev. Sandra Wilcox**

WHEREAS the ELCA Human Sexuality Task Force has characterized the 1993 pastoral statement by the Conference of Bishops to have “pointed the way by treating such decisions as matters of pastoral care,” and

WHEREAS the understanding of the 1993 pastoral statement by the Conference of Bishops varies widely throughout the ELCA; and

WHEREAS the Presiding Bishop Herbert Chilstrom stated on February 16, 1995 that “this statement by the Conference of Bishops is a statement of advice. It is not binding on pastors, nor is it grounds for discipline in our church;” and

WHEREAS the Human Sexuality Task Force said, “With respect to the matter of blessing same-sex couples who have entered into long term monogamous covenants of love and care, the ELCA currently has no legislative policy;” and

WHEREAS the ELCA Human Sexuality Task Force “believes that pastors and congregations can and should be trusted by this church to exercise the wisdom of discretion in their ministry to same-sex couples and their natural and congregational families;” and

WHEREAS the Synod Council of the Southwestern Texas Synod of the ELCA voted to support the specific recommendation of the ELCA Human Sexuality Task Force; be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod memorialize the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following as the policy of this church:

It shall be the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that for the sake of outreach, evangelism, ministry and mission, pastors and congregations may perform services of blessing for same-gender relationships using pastoral discretion.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Reference and Counsel Committee recognizes this as an important issue in Christ's Church and recommends that the Synod Assembly give their attention to this issue. The committee makes no recommendation on adoption or defeat of this resolution.

**MOVED, SECONDED
FAILED**

To amend resolution #2 to read "BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Texas Synod memorialize the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the following as the policy of this church: It shall be the policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that for the sake of outreach, evangelism, ministry and mission, pastors and congregations may bless individuals who are in same-gender relationships using pastoral discretion.

**MOVED, SECONDED
CARRIED**

To close debate.

**VOTED
SA05.5.6**

To defeat resolution 2.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #3
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A Resolution that the Synod Publicly Proclaim its Welcome as a Reconciling in Christ Synod

Submitted by Rev. June Wilkins, Rev. Karl Gronberg, Rev. Barbara Beale, Rev. Kent Bohls, Rev. James Bouzard, Rev. Merrill Carlson, Rev. Norb Firnhaber, Gayle Gordon Bouzard, Rev. Robert Karli, Rev. Shelley Kronbergs, Rev. Brian Peterson, Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones, Rev. Susan Schnelle, Rev. Sandra Wilcox

WHEREAS the 1998 Assembly of the Southwestern Texas Synod passed a resolution to welcome all children of God, regardless of sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS the resolution declared that the synod would make a public proclamation welcoming all people; and

WHEREAS the Southwestern Texas Synod at its 2000 Assembly voted to be a "Reconciling in Christ" synod; and

WHEREAS the recent disagreements in the ELCA over the most recent sexuality study has led to a confusion whether all people are welcome in the congregations of our synod; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod publicly make this proclamation of welcome by including the statement "A Reconciling in Christ Synod" on its letterhead, website, newsletter, and all other publications associated with the Southwestern Texas Synod.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The committee recommends defeat due to questions of practicality, priority and economics. It is recommended that the means of expressing this characteristic of our mission and ministry be left to the Synod Council, Commissions, and Staff.

MOVED, SECONDED

To amend resolution 3 to read as “BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas synod make this proclamation of welcome publicly, and that this Assembly request that the synod council, its commissions, and staff take action to do so prior to the next synod assembly.”

Discussion and vote on the amendment did not take place at this time as recessed was called for dinner.
Session I of the Southwestern Texas Assembly was recessed at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner was held at Hein Dining Hall followed by a presentation by Kelly Fryer at Jackson Auditorium.

PLENARY SESSION II

May 21, 2005

Bishop Tiemann reconvenes the Assembly 8:50 a.m.

Opening Devotions by Kelly Fryer

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Peggy Loomis presented the report. As of 7:45 a.m., May 21, 2005 there were 470 Voting Members of which 166 are rostered Voting Members, 304 are Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certifies that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership are met. In addition there are in attendance 21 non-voting members, 0 ecumenical representatives, and 126 registered visitors, for a total of 617 present.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL

Mark Helmke, vice president, gives the report of the Synod Council. He calls attention to the written report B-1, B-2 found in the Assembly reports. He gives an explanation as to why the Assembly is electing a new treasurer and describes the process for doing so. Mark Helmke place in nomination for treasurer Bill Warncke and Roger Buchhorn. The Assembly votes to close nominations.

TREASURERS REPORT

William Maddox, interim treasurer gives an overview of the treasurer's report as found in B 3-4 of the Assembly Bulletin of Reports. He points out the auditor's report and highlights the financial status of the synod comparing the budget and revised spending plan with income and outgo. He also previews the Synod 2006-2007 budget pointing out that there will be discussion of the proposed budget during the breakout sessions and voting on the budget will take place during the next session of the Assembly.

VOTED

SA05.5.07 That the Synod Assembly approve the auditor's report as recommended by the Synod Council.

William Maddox is presented with a certificate of appreciation for his work as interim treasurer for the past year.

Mark Helmke presents the Compensation Guidelines as found in E 14-21 of the Assembly Bulletin of Reports.

VOTED

SA05.5.08 To accept the Compensation Guidelines for 2005/2006

Carl Teinert gives a report for the Commission for Mission speaking of the joys and the call to mission and described specifically what it means to be congregations in mission.

MOVED, SECONDED

To include resolution 15 in the report of resolutions to be brought to the Assembly floor for a vote.

MOVED, SECONDED

CARRIED

(2/3 vote required)

To close debate.

VOTED
SA05.5.09

To include resolution 15 in the report of resolutions.

MOVED, SECONDED
DEFEATED
Yes- 253, No – 146
(2/3 vote required)

That debate on resolutions be limited to 2 minutes.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNCIL

Debate on the amendment to resolution #3 begins after it having been introduced in Session I.

MOVED, SECONDED
CARRIED

To close debate.

MOVED, SECONDED
CARRIED
Yes – 205, No – 107

To approve the amendment to Resolution #3.

MOVED, SECONDED
CARRIED

To close debate.

VOTED
SA.05.5.10
Yes – 195, No – 213

To defeat Resolution #3 as amended.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #4
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA

A Resolution to Hold Synod Assemblies on a Saturday/Sunday Schedule

Submitted by **Rev. Kay Johnson and Rev. Bonnie Claycomb**

WHEREAS full-time employees, who are often members of later generations, may find it difficult to take a day off in order to attend the assembly when it is held on a Friday/Saturday, and

WHEREAS a Saturday/Sunday schedule for the assembly would provide encouragement and a welcoming spirit for adults of all ages to attend; and

WHEREAS a pastor's absence from his or her church to attend a Synod Assembly once a year would encourage the development of leadership among laity, thus supporting our Lutheran belief in the priesthood of all believers; and

WHEREAS the Youth Steward Program, an apprentice program for Juniors and Seniors in high school who wish to learn more about the inner workings of the Southwestern Texas Synod, would benefit from a Saturday/Sunday schedule, allowing youth to participate without taking a day off from school; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod hold its annual assemblies on a Saturday/Sunday schedule.

THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Synod By-Laws (2.01) express that the planning and scheduling of assemblies be left to the Synod Council. Therefore, the committee recommends a substitute "Resolved" –

"RESOLVED that it is the sense of the 2005 Southwestern Texas Assembly that it would be beneficial for assemblies to be held on Saturday/Sunday schedules and that this desire be sent to the Synod Council for future consideration."

VOTED
SA.05.5.11

To approve Resolution #4.

Bishop Tiemann gives election results for treasurer – Bill Warncke 242, Roger Buchhorn 153. Bishop Tiemann declares Bill Warncke newly elected Southwestern Texas Synod Council Treasurer.

Session II is recessed at 11:00 for breakout sessions and lunch.

Plenary Session III

May 21, 2005

Bishop Tiemann reconvenes the Assembly at 1:32.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Peggy Loomis presents the report. As of 1:15 p.m., May 21, 2005 there were 477 Voting Members of which 168 are rostered Voting Members, 309 are Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certifies that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership are met. In addition there are in attendance 24 non-voting members, 0 ecumenical representatives, and 130 registered visitors, for a total of 631 present.

VOTED

SA05.5.12 That the report of the Credentials Committee be accepted.

Devotions by Kelly Fryer

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP REPORTS

Bishop Tiemann calls the attention of the Assembly to the reports in section C 1-17 of the Assembly Bulletin of Reports. For his report, he describes his trip to Costa Rica with a slide presentation.

Bishop Tiemann introduces the synod staff and reports that Anne Hilbert, Administrative Assistant will be leaving her position as of July 31, 2005. A presentation of appreciation is given to Anne Hilbert.

Bishop Tiemann reports on the Assembly offering total to date being \$12,663.45. He also introduces the new treasurer, Bill Warncke and reports that the 2006 Synod Assembly will be held May 20-21 in Corpus Christ.

2006-2007 Budget

William Maddox, interim treasurer presents the 2006-2007 budget and moves its adoption.

VOTED

SA05.5.13 That the 2006-2007 be adopted.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNCIL (INSERT RES. 5-11)

**MOVED, SECONDED,
CARRIED**

In light of the fact that resolutions #5-11 each have specific recommendations of individual congregations, which are all in areas covered by standing committees of the Synod, it is moved that resolutions #5-11 be considered en bloc.

**MOVED, SECONDED,
CARRIED**

That resolutions #5-11 be referred to the appropriate synod committees as per the recommendations of Reference and Counsel.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #12 FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA

Resolution Regarding the Separation Wall and the Lutheran Church in the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

Submitted by Rev. Ann Helmke, Rev. Laura Holck, Rev. Art Preisinger, Rev. Paul Ziese

WHEREAS The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land has extended an urgent call to the ELCA regarding the continuing construction of the separation wall in Palestine; and

WHEREAS The ELCA Church Council at its meeting April 9-11 in response to this urgent call made the following recommendations:

+To encourage members, congregations, and synods to become aware of the separation wall on the lives of Palestinians as a threat to future hopes for peace and to the ministries of the ELCJHL and other churches; and
+To call for the immediate cessation of construction of the Israeli separation wall and the removal of all existing portions of this wall on Palestinian land; and
+To request the Division for Church in Society to intensify its advocacy to this critical situation, in accord with the Churchwide Strategy for ELCA Engagement in Israel and Palestine; and
+To request that members of the ELCA and synods meeting in assembly respond to the request of the ELCA's companion church in the Holy Land for bold advocacy that calls for construction of the separation wall to cease; and

WHEREAS The fundamental violations of human rights of the Palestinian people, the confiscation and destruction of their land and resources to construct the separation wall, the disruption of the lives of thousands of protected civilians and the annexation of large areas of territory by the separation wall and in particular its devastating humanitarian consequences on the life and dignity of innocent Palestinians now leaves the Palestinian Christian population at only 2% of the total population of the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS The total length and height of the separation wall upon completion will be over four times longer and two times taller than the Berlin Wall, in some cases surrounding entire towns cutting the population off from jobs and income causing unemployment and poverty to soar, and raising significant issues of justice and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS The Holy Land is the birthplace of Jesus and Christianity, and the Palestinian Christians are our sisters and brothers; and

WHEREAS St. Paul wrote to the Early Church, "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Eph. 2:4); therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod uplift and affirm the recommendations of the ELCA Church Council and embrace this urgent call to fervent prayer, teaching of the separation wall and the situation in Palestine to the congregations, congregational leaders, conference leaders, and synodical leaders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that generous giving be encouraged throughout congregations, synods, and the entire ELCA to strengthen and support the vital ministries of the ELCJHL and LWF especially in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and at Augusta Victoria Lutheran Hospital on the Mt. of Olives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members from the Southwestern Texas Synod affirm this synodical resolution and uphold it at the Churchwide Assembly in August; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those present at this assembly commit themselves to boldly speak out as strong advocates about the separation wall and the plight of the Palestinians; to pray daily for the cessation and removal of the separation wall, and the very lives of our sisters and brothers in the Holy Land.

THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of the following substitute resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod uplift and affirm the recommendations of the ELCA Church Council and embrace this urgent call to fervent prayer, teaching of the separation wall and the situation in Palestine to the congregations, congregational leaders, conference leaders, and synodical leaders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that generous giving be encouraged throughout congregations of the Southwestern Texas Synod to strengthen and support the vital ministries of the ELCJHL and LWF especially in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and at Augusta Victoria Lutheran Hospital on the Mt. of Olives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members from the Southwestern Texas Synod be encouraged to affirm this synodical resolution and uphold it at the Churchwide Assembly in August; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those present at this assembly commit themselves to boldly speak out as strong advocates about the separation wall and the plight of the Palestinians; to pray daily for the cessation and removal of the separation wall, and the very lives of our sisters and brothers in the Holy Land.

**MOVED, SECONDED,
CARRIED**

To close debate.

**VOTED
SA05.5.14**

To approve Resolution #12.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #13
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A Resolution regarding Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Immigrants

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Carl Fredrickson, Rev. James Wilken, Rev. C.E. Mahan, Rev. Pedro Casares

WHEREAS Jesus calls those who follow Him to love their neighbors, the hungry, the homeless, and the vulnerable; and

WHEREAS people of faith are called to action doing the things that God wants to get done; and

WHEREAS there are eleven million refugees and twenty-three million displaced people fleeing wars, political and religious persecution, violations of human rights, and hunger; and

WHEREAS the United States continues to face challenges in restoring its capacity to resettle more than 50,000 refugees, which is far below this country's historic annual admission level of well over 100,000; and

WHEREAS many newcomers, especially children and those who have been trafficked to this country for the purpose for forced labor or sexual exploitation, need protection, help and the opportunity to live in dignity; and

WHEREAS refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants face a myriad of burdensome laws, procedures, and unjust practices that contribute to such problems as the "warehousing" of refugees in overseas camps, the detention of asylum seekers in U.S. jails, the lack of legal protections for unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, and the separation of families; and

WHEREAS burdensome laws and procedures and unjust practices undermine our security; and

WHEREAS the congregations and members of the ELCA have a long tradition in refugee resettlement ministry, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the ELCA recommits to being an advocate and justice seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each synod bishop be requested to appoint a task force to give leadership in involving congregations in refugee and immigration justice issues, including education, advocacy, and local service, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task forces relate to the ELCA Division of Church and Society and work closely with and support LIRS and its local partners, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize this resolution to the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly for consideration and action.

THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of the following substitute resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to:

- a. recommit the ELCA to being an advocate and justice seeker in regard to refugee and immigration issues;
- b. request each synod bishop to appoint a task force to give leadership involving congregations in refugee and immigration justice issues, including education, advocacy, and local service; and
- c. request the task forces relate to the ELCA Division of Church and Society and work closely with and support LIRS and its local partners.

VOTED
SA05.5.15

To approve Resolution #13.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #14
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA

A Resolution on Synodically Authorized Ministry

Submitted by **Rev. Norman Beck, David Bowman, Dorothy Bowman, John Dellis (AIM), Rev. Brian Peterson, Gaylan Franke, Gladys Franke, Rev. Robert Karli, Dennis Weise, Verlene Weise**

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has recognized the need for lay persons, under the supervision of the bishop of a synod, to render pastoral services in instances where ordained clergy are not otherwise available, and

WHEREAS the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA has interpreted 7.61.01 of the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to preclude individuals other than ELCA ordained ministers from officiating at marriages, and

WHEREAS synodically authorized ministers preside at the sacraments, preach, teach confirmation and other educational classes, bury the dead, provide pastoral care, visit the sick and other persons in need, and engage in other congregational ministries within the congregation where they are assigned to serve, and

WHEREAS the church's role in marriage is not confined to one service, but includes pastoral contact

through the ministry of the congregation with the individuals seeking marriage prior to the service and also continued ministry and care following the service, and

WHEREAS services that include weddings are a natural extension of the congregation's ministry, touching not only the lives of the couple, but the community as a whole, and

WHEREAS the laws of the state of Texas do not preclude persons who are synodically authorized ministers from officiating at weddings if they were granted this approval by the ELCA, and

WHEREAS at its April 2005 meeting the ELCA Church Council directed the Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to study the question of whether synodically authorized ministers should be able to preside at weddings, bringing a report with a possible recommendation to the Council no later than April 2006, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod, meeting in assembly, memorializes the ELCA to make the necessary amendments to *Policy and Guidelines Related to Synodically Authorized Ministries of Word and Sacrament* and the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to authorize synodically authorized ministers to officiate at the weddings of members of the congregation where they are assigned to serve, subject to the laws of the state in which the community is located.

THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends defeat of the motion because:

- a. It exceeds clearly identified boundaries between ordained and lay under existing guidelines; and
- b. The ELCA Church Council has already mandated a study of this issue to be completed by April 2006.

Implications of Resolution

1. This resolution will have no impact on the budget of the Southwestern Texas Synod.
2. The ELCA Church Council has directed the Division for Ministry, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to study this issue and bring a report and possible recommendation to the spring 2006 meeting of the council. All of these units of the church already exist and are staffed.
3. If the ELCA changes its policy to allow synodically authorized ministers to officiate at weddings of members of the congregation where they are assigned to serve, subject to the laws of the state in which the community is located, a significant road-block to effective ministry will be removed. Many persons question the rationale of the current policy in states where there is no prohibition by civil law. These persons also raise theological questions as to the reasoning behind not allowing synodically authorized ministers to officiate at weddings when they are allowed to preside at the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

VOTED
SA05.5.16

To approve Resolution #14.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #15
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A Resolution Regarding Blessing of a Same Gender Relationship Ceremony

Submitted by Will Krieg, Rodger Johnson and Vickie Hollmig

WHEREAS the historical biblical and confessional teaching and practice of the Christian Church on marriage and sexual ethics is expressed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) official teachings, policies, and documents; and

WHEREAS the Conference of Bishops in October 5-8, 1993, addressed the issue of same-sex unions in accordance with this historic consensus; and

WHEREAS a clear majority of respondents to “Journeying Together Faithfully: Part Two” agree with the Church’s historical consensus; and

WHEREAS this consensus is articulated in “Dissenting Position One” of the Task Force’s Report and Recommendations; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to adopt “Dissenting Position One” from the Task Force report:

1. Affirm and uphold current policy and practices consistent with past understanding of *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, and the social statements of the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church;
2. Admonish individuals, communities, congregations and synods that any discipline that may result in response to actions contrary to those policies be undertaken with all humility in the knowledge that we see through a glass darkly. May we forgive as we wish to be forgiven. Remember the log in our own eye, may Christian charity guide our ways.
3. Beseech individuals, communities, congregations, and synods, who for reasons of conscience will act contrary to the aforementioned policies, to graciously accept and endure the discipline of the church for the sake of peace, secure in the knowledge “that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18)”; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to adopt the following statement as official policy of the ELCA as stated by the Conference of Bishops in 1993:

There is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, [the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America] therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church’s ministry.

THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

The Reference and Counsel Committee and Synod Council declines resolution to be considered.

**MOVED, SECONDED,
CARRIED**

To close debate.

**VOTED
SA.05.5.17
Yes – 191, No – 168**

To approve Resolution #15.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #16
FOR THE 2005 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A Resolution of Gratitude

Submitted by The Committee for Reference and Counsel in response to the report of the Bishop of the Synod

WHEREAS The Mission Statement of the Southwestern Texas Synod reminds us that we are united in Christ, Diverse in People and Called by the Spirit---Equipping the People of God to be Instruments of God’s Love, and

- WHEREAS** The Synod has granted funds from the Mission and Ministry Fund for special ministry projects in cities and towns throughout the territory, and
- WHEREAS** The ELCA Evangelism Strategy objectives of 1) Calling the Church to Prayer; 2) Preparing and Renewing Evangelical Leaders; 3) Teaching Discipleship; and 4) Starting and Renewing Congregations are being implemented by the Evangelism Leadership Team along with congregations and their leaders, and
- WHEREAS** The Lutheran Ministry Center Appeal has resulted in a reduction in the principal of the construction loan, and, thus, in the monthly payments, and
- WHEREAS** The joint ministry of the Mission Presbytery (PCUSA) and the Southwestern Texas Synod, along with the efforts of individual leaders and congregational support, has resulted in the programs begun in the Rio Grande Valley at El Instituto which will aid in developing leaders for the emerging multicultural congregations on our territory, and
- WHEREAS** The Synod leaders and many congregational groups have participated in the study process of the Sexuality Study and have sent recommendations and comments to the ELCA, and
- WHEREAS** The Synod budget for ministry and mission has been under undue financial pressure because of the decline of mission support gifts from our congregations, and
- WHEREAS** Bishop Tiemann has indicated his intention to encourage leadership education opportunities for all rostered persons and also for laity who are leaders in their congregations, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED That the Bishop, the Synod Staff (both lay and clergy), and all the officers of our Synod be commended for their efforts during the past year in overseeing, implementing, and conducting the mission and ministry of Christ's Church on the territory of the Southwestern Texas Synod, in being good stewards of the resources for ministry which have been provided, and for proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in word and deed as they have been among us, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the thanks of the Assembly be given by standing and expressing to them our deep appreciation for their leadership and service.

THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of this resolution.

VOTED
SA.05.5.18

To approve Resolution #16.

CLOSING OF THE ASSEMBLY

Bishop Tiemann presents gifts to visitors and hosting conference representatives.

Closing devotions are presented by ELCA representative, Kathryn Love.

Order for closing of the Assembly litany as found in the Bulletin of reports is given.

The 2005 Synod Assembly of the Southwestern Texas Synod is adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Gordon Bouzard
Secretary of the Southwestern Texas Synod

