

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
MAY 19-20, 2007**

The Sixteenth Assembly of the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was held at the Inn of the Hills, Kerrville, Texas, May 19-20, 2007. The theme of the assembly was *Living in God's Amazing Grace: Thanks be to God!*

**OPENING WORSHIP
May 19, 2007, 9:00 a.m.
Inn of the Hills**

A temple talk was presented prior to the opening worship by Jim Price regarding the assembly offering to be received in support of campus ministry. Opening worship was led by the Hill Country Conference assembly worship team with Bishop Ray Tiemann presiding, and The Rev. Lou Flessner, Campus Pastor at Texas State University, preaching.

**PLENARY SESSION I
May 19, 2007
Inn of the Hills**

The assembly was convened at 10:40 a.m. by Bishop Ray Tiemann with the Order for the Opening of the Synod Assembly.

Bishop Tiemann recognized synod officers, Mark Helmke, vice president, Linda Zander, secretary, Bill Warncke, treasurer, Bryan Hicks, parliamentarian, Sue Rothmeyer, ELCA representative, and Janet Fries, administrative assistant to the bishop. The Rev. Bob Kaul, chair of the planning team sent greetings from the Hill Country Conference. Gene Smith, Mayor of Kerrville, shared words of greeting from the City of Kerrville. Bishop Tiemann read letters of greeting from Rev. Dr. Don Campbell of Mission Presbytery, and from Bishop Gary Lillibridge of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Tiemann introduced Edie Scheffel, chair of the Credentials Committee. As of 10:16 a.m., May 19, 2007, there were 421 voting members, of which 127 were Rostered Voting Members and 294 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 3 non-voting members and 67 registered visitors for a total of 491 persons registered.

Mark Helmke introduced the voting members and The Rev. Greg Gaskamp of Living Water, Leander, and welcomed them to the Southwestern Texas Synod. It was recommended by the Synod Council that the Southwestern Texas Synod officially welcome this congregation into the synod.

VOTED

SA07.5.01 To accept Living Water, Leander, into the Southwestern Texas Synod and to welcome and seat the voting members.

SYNOD CONSTITUTION BYLAW 2.07 (Section 2A.1)

Mark Helmke presented recommended changes to the Synod Constitution Bylaw 2.07 as approved by the Synod Council.

VOTED

SA07.5.02 To amend the Synod Constitution Bylaw 2.07 as follows:

Bylaw 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.

ADOPTION OF STANDING RULES AND AGENDA

Mark Helmke, vice president, presented the Proposed Standing Rules and the Addendum to the 2007 Standing Rules (Section 1D), along with the Proposed Agenda (Section 1B) and moved for adoption of same.

VOTED

SA07.5.03 To adopt the Proposed Standing Rules and the Addendum to the 2007 Standing Rules.

VOTED

SA07.5.04 To adopt the Proposed Agenda for the Assembly.

REPORT OF SYNOD COUNCIL

Mark Helmke introduced Bill Warncke, treasurer, who presented the 2008-2009 Budget (Section 2C- Replacement). Further discussion will be held in the break-out session after lunch.

ELCA REPORT: Sue Rothmeyer

Sue Rothmeyer, the ELCA's Director for Campus Ministry, presented greetings from the ELCA and thanks to the synod for its support of campus ministry. She commended the assembly for accepting the challenge to collect \$100,000 to celebrate 100 years of campus ministry. She thanked the synod

for its mission support to the churchwide organization in 2006, and expressed gratitude for the synod's commitment to a 55% share of its budget to go to the whole church – which amount was exceeded by that estimate by 2.3%. This represented a \$34,000 increase in mission support from 2005 to 2006. Overall, mission support revenue for the churchwide organization increased in 37 synods and 4 regions. She then presented a video of Bishop Hanson offering his thanks for the mission support. She then informed the assembly that Bishop Hanson has announced that each of the 65 synods will be sent a one-time \$10,000 grant from the churchwide organization to be used for "evangelical outreach." Total contributions to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal in 2006 reached \$20.1 million, of which a record \$19.1 million was for the general World Hunger Appeal as compared to \$17 million one year ago. ELCA members in 2006 contributed \$5.1 million in disaster response receipts and an additional \$3.4 million was received in federal grants for hurricane relief, for a total of \$8.5 million.

Lee Schnelle of the Environmental Task Force gave a brief presentation on energy saving light bulbs. A lay female voting member from each congregation was presented with an energy saving light bulb to begin this campaign.

After announcements by Bishop Tiemann, Plenary Session I was recessed until 2:30 p.m., with Breakout Sessions to begin after lunch at 1:20 p.m. in the following locations:

Budget & Finance – Executive Two
Compensation Guidelines: Their Use and Revision – Bluebonnet One
Conversation with Churchwide Representative – Angora South
ELCA Study on Sexuality: What It Is and How to Use It – Angora North
Peace Not Walls: Synod Action, Our Involvement – Bluebonnet Two
Synod Website: New Look, New Content – Executive One

PLENARY SESSION II

The assembly convened at 2:30 p.m. with a call to order by Bishop Tiemann.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Edie Scheffel, chair of the Credentials Committee reported that as of 2:30 p.m., May 19, 2007, there were 458 voting members, of which 149 were Rostered Voting Members and 309 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 4 non-voting members and 73 registered visitors for a total of 535 persons registered.

The Rev. Paul Collinson-Streng, Campus Pastor at The University of Texas, lead the assembly in devotions. Music was provided by T. J. Bazzoon.

The Rev. Dr. Ray Pickett, Assistant Professor of New Testament at the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, lead the assembly in Bible study.

Bishop Tiemann reported to the assembly on the Synod Visioning Process. Mark Helmke presented the following enabling resolution from the Synod Council:

WHEREAS the Southwestern Texas Synod has been in a visioning process since February, 2006, which has included a Synod Council retreat, a synodical Vision Gathering, a synodical ministry audit performed by ELCA churchwide personnel, all of which was accompanied by much prayer, study and reflection by the synod's leaders and people throughout the synod; and

- WHEREAS** several groups have worked with the bishop in analyzing and interpreting the data which has been collected from members across the synod; and
- WHEREAS** there has been much prayer and a strong spirit of discernment working toward a clear focus for the synod's ministry; and
- WHEREAS** Bishop Ray Tiemann has presented the 2007 Synod Assembly with a clear ministry focus for the synod for 2007-2012 around the theme ***Forming Faithfulness – in Leaders, with Congregations, among Partners;*** therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** that the Southwestern Texas Synod, in assembly, affirm the synodical ministry focus ***"Forming Faithfulness – in Leaders, with Congregations, among Partners,"*** as set forth by Bishop Tiemann; and be it further
- RESOLVED** that the Synod Council be directed to create specific work groups to further define and clarify synodical goals in each area of the synodical ministry focus; and be it further
- RESOLVED** that the Synod Council be directed to provide an update on specific projects in furtherance of the synodical ministry focus that will enhance the ministry of the synod to the 2008 Synod Assembly; and be it further
- RESOLVED** that the Synod Council be directed to consider any structural changes that may grow out of this process and to present recommendations on such changes to a future synod assembly as soon as reasonably possible.

VOTED

SA07.5.05 To adopt the Enabling Resolution from Synod Council.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Bishop Tiemann introduced the chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, The Rev. Karl Biermann (Grace, Bandera). The members of the committee were also introduced: The Rev. Mariola Berquist (St. John, Boerne), Richard Convery (St. Paul, Cave Creek), Susan Irvin (St. James, Llano) and Mark Helmke (Synod Council Liaison).

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #1
FOR THE 2007 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

<p><u>A resolution to terminate Board of Pensions coverage to LCMC members</u> Submitted by: John Dellis, Associate in Ministry, St. Peter's Lutheran, Goliad and Rev. Bob Karli, First English Lutheran, Austin</p>

- WHEREAS** the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a churchwide unit of this church, providing retirement, health and related benefits and services to enhance the well-being of those who serve through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other faith-based organizations; and
- WHEREAS** the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions took action at its February 25-27, 2005 meeting to approve amendments to the retirement, medical/dental, survivor and disability plans that expand the definition of an eligible employer to include

ecumenical partner congregations and former ELCA congregations that leave the denomination on or after January 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS these amendments were approved by the ELCA Church Council at its April 8-11, 2005 meeting; and

WHEREAS several congregations in the Southwestern Texas Synod and in other synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have terminated their relationship with their former synods and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS many of these congregations have chosen to affiliate with a new Lutheran denomination, Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ; and

WHEREAS these former ELCA congregations who have taken action to terminate their relationship with the ELCA on or after January 1, 2005 may at this time continue to participate in the ELCA Board of Pensions; and

WHEREAS Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ "has an excellent insurance program via Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota" and "has a first rate pension program administered by Edward Jones Investments" (<http://www.lcmc.net/CYO2.pdf>, retrieved March 7, 2007); and

WHEREAS participants in the ELCA Board of Pensions pension plan are fully vested, meaning that they retain control and ownership of their pension account, even if they are later no longer affiliated with the ELCA; and

WHEREAS the Board of Pensions has a reciprocity agreement with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ to enable the transfer of retirement account balances between each organization; and

WHEREAS by taking this action to terminate their relationship with the ELCA, these congregations have stated their intentions to no longer participate in the mission and ministry of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS it is inappropriate for congregations and their staffs that no longer support the mission and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and have taken direct action to separate themselves from the mission and ministry of this church to continue participating in the benefits program of the ELCA Board of Pensions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod, meeting in assembly, call on the Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reverse its decision to expand the definition of an eligible employer to include former ELCA congregations that have left the denomination on or after January 1, 2005; and be it further

RESOLVED that, by adopting this resolution, the synod assembly directs the Synod Council of the Southwestern Texas Synod to submit this resolution to the executive committee of the ELCA Church Council for referral to the Board of Pensions with a request to consider and implement this resolution.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends defeat for two reasons:

- 1) The Board of Trustees of the Board of Pensions (BOP) apparently decided at its February 25-27, 2005, meeting that the strength of BOP benefits and services is enhanced by having as many members as possible participating in those benefits and services. The BOP is strengthened only at the cost of administrative overhead, as it administers and does not provide retirement, health and related benefits and services (see line 2, first RESOLVED). Local congregations bear many member participation costs.
- 2) Reversing the definition of an eligible employer (first RESOLVED) could – in the case of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) specifically – counter the conciliatory spirit and intent of RESOLUTION #2 passed at the May 2006 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorializing the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to seek a Full Communion relationship with the LCMC denomination. Reversing the definition of an eligible employer also could counter conciliatory efforts in other relationships generally.

VOTED

SA07.5.06 Resolution #1 was defeated.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2
FOR THE 2007 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

**A Resolution for a Memorial to respond to the Decision
of the Discipline Hearing Committee**

**Submitted by: Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones, Living Word Lutheran, Buda and
Deborah Wilson, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran, Austin**

WHEREAS the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urged every part of the ELCA to "concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ"; and

WHEREAS the discipline hearing committee constituted to consider charges against Pastor Bradley E. Schmeling suggested that synod assemblies memorialize the 200y Churchwide Assembly to request that the Committee on Appeals reconsider and revise the document *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* and that the appropriate churchwide unit reconsider and revise the document *Vision and Expectations* and the policy on reinstatement to the rosters of the church (Decision of the Discipline Hearing Committee, P. 13); and

WHEREAS if permitted to decide the case only under the standards in chapters 7 and 20 of the ELCA Constitution, the discipline hearing committee: would find almost unanimously that Pastor Schmeling is not engaged in conduct that is incompatible with the ministerial office, and would find with near unanimity that no discipline of any sort should be imposed against him" (Decision of the Discipline Hearing Committee, p. 12); and

WHEREAS the documents known as *Definitions and Guidelines*¹ may be amended by the Committee on Appeals, subject to approval by the Church Council, while the documents known as *Vision and Expectations*,² as well as the policies on

¹ See Provisions 20.71.11 and 20.71.12 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

² See Provisions 7.31.11, 7.31.13, 7.51.03.b, and 16.12.C05.d.2.

reinstatement to the rosters of this church,³ may be amended by the Vocation and Education unit, with review by the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council; and

WHEREAS the Churchwide Assembly, as the highest legislative authority of the ELCA, can "request or direct" that the steps be taken for the development by the Committee on Appeals and adoption by the Church Council of an amendment to *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*; and for the development by the appropriate churchwide unit, review by the Conference of Bishops, and adoption by the Church Council of an amendment to *Vision and Expectations* (ELCA Church Council, Minutes of April 9-11, 2006, p. 90, explanation by Secretary Almen): now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that this Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly: and be it further

RESOLVED that the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly direct the Committee on Appeals to develop an amendment to the documents known as *Definitions and Guidelines* that removes provisions precluding "practicing homosexual persons" from the rosters of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED that this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the documents known as *Vision and Expectations* that removes provisions requiring persons who are "homosexual in their self-understanding" to "abstain from homosexual sexual relationships"; and be it further

RESOLVED that this Churchwide Assembly direct the Church Council to take the actions necessary to amend *Definitions and Guidelines*, *Vision and Expectations*, and the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church in conformity with the amendments developed (pursuant to the preceding directions) by the Committee on Appeals and Vocation and Education unit.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that proposed resolutions 2, 3 and 4 be considered as one, since they appear to share a common intent. That intent appears to be – ultimately – to reverse the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly decision to uphold current clergy sexual conduct standards. Additionally, the time spent debating Proposed Resolutions 2, 3 and 4 separately – which would most likely repeat the standard arguments on both sides of the human sexuality debate heard over the years – would unnecessarily reduce the amount of time devoted to other Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly business.

The committee recommends defeat for Proposed Resolutions 2, 3 and 4 on procedural and missional grounds:

- 1) Procedurally, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly possesses the ultimate ELCA church authority, and its voting members' decision in 2005 to uphold current clergy sexual conduct standards should not be overturned without more conclusive insights gained from scientific inquiry and prayerful discernment on the "mind of Christ on these matters" (*Message of the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, March 6, 2007).

³ See Provisions 7.31.15, 7.52.13, and 16.12.C05.d.2.

The members of the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly upheld current clergy sexual conduct standards by defeating, in a vote of 490-503, Recommendation Three of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, which "recommends that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America continue under the standards regarding sexual conduct for rostered leaders as set forth in *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, but that, as a pastoral response to the deep divisions among us, *this church may choose to refrain from disciplining those who* in good conscience, and for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, call or approve **partnered gay or lesbian candidates** [underlining and boldface for emphasis by the Reference and Counsel Committee] whom they believe to be otherwise in compliance with *Vision and Expectations* and to refrain from disciplining those rostered people so approved and called" (*Report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality*, p. 7).

- 2) Missionally, the committee believes that repeating the standard arguments on both sides of the human sexuality debate heard through the years in reference to Proposed Resolutions 2, 3 and 4 will deprive this church of valuable time and energy for mission, especially since scientific knowledge on human sexuality is still incomplete. The ELCA is awaiting the adoption of a social statement on human sexuality at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly and the ELCA Conference of Bishops urged the "members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions [of this church] . . . to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements . . . as, together, we seek the mind of Christ on these matters" (*Message of the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, March 6, 2007).

Requests for Removal from *En Bloc* were timely received at 2:20 p.m. and subsequently had signatures verified for voting members as to Resolutions 2, 3 and 4, so they will be voted upon separately.

ORDER OF THE DAY

Plenary Session II recessed at 4:30 p.m.

CROSS TRAILS MINISTRY CORPORATION MEETING

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

Bishop Tiemann reminded the assembly of the banquet to begin at 7:00 p.m. with a program by Campus Ministry.

PLENARY SESSION III

May 20, 2007

Inn of the Hills

Opens at 8:30 a.m. with worship – Bishop Tiemann, presiding/preaching and The Rev. Sylvia De La Garza, assisting. Music was provided by T. J. Bazzoon.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Edie Scheffel, chair of the Credentials Committee reported that as of 8:45 a.m., May 20, 2007, there were 461 voting members, of which 152 were Rostered Voting Members and 309 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 4 non-voting members, 1 ecumenical guest and 74 registered visitors for a total of 540 persons registered.

The Rev. Dr. Ray Pickett, Assistant Professor of New Testament at the Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, lead the assembly in Bible study.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTIONS

Former Southwestern Texas Synod Bishop Art Rode and his wife, Dorothy.

NEW TO THE SYNOD INTRODUCTIONS (first call, transfers and interns) May 1, 2006, to April 30, 2007

Newly Ordained Clergy:

The Rev. Joshua Fite (St. Paul, New Braunfels)

The Rev. Alicia Tibbals (Trinity, Kingsville)

New to Synod:

April Boyden [AIM – On Leave (Transfers)]

The Rev. Paul Collinson-Streng (University of Texas at Austin)

The Rev. David (Mike) Couchman (Zion-Mission Valley, Victoria)

The Rev. Peter Harrington (Grace, Sinton)

Theological Education in Emerging Ministries – TEEM:

Scott Hoffman (St. James, Harper)

Interns:

Edward Abel (Martin Luther, Giddings)

Richard Kidd (First English, Victoria)

Jordan Miller (First English, Austin)

Matthew Pooch (Camino Real Christian Fellowship, San Antonio)

Christi Pursey (St. Mark's, Cuero)

Jared Stillions (Trinity, Victoria)

Bishop Tiemann offered thanks to Thrivent for contributing \$3,000 to help cover assembly expenses.

A presentation on the Mission Investment Fund was given by The Rev. Bill Bentzinger.

The Rev. Walter Ehrhardt presented information and a video presentation regarding the Katrina Relief projects.

REPORT OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL (Section 2A)

Mark Helmke, vice president, gave the report of the Synod Council.

Mr. Helmke presented recommended changes to the Synod Constitution Bylaw 4.01 as approved by the Synod Council.

VOTED

SA07.5.07 To amend the Synod Constitution Bylaw 4.01 as follows:

Bylaw 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.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bill Warncke, treasurer, gave an overview of the Treasurer's Report as found in Section 2B of the Assembly Bulletin of Reports. The Auditor's Report is found at Section 2B-1. The Synod Council recommends adoption of the Auditor's Report.

VOTED

SA07.5.08 To approve the Auditor's Report as found at Section 2B-1.

Mr. Warncke reviewed the Present Balance Sheet/Statement of Activity for 2006-2007 as found in Section 2B.2, as well as the Analysis of 2006-2007 Fiscal Year as found in Section 2B.3. Further presentation was made of the Mission Support Comparison as found in Section 2D.1.

Mr. Warncke then presented the Compensation Guidelines for 2007-2008 as found in Section 5D.1. The Synod Council recommends adoption of these guidelines.

VOTED

SA07.5.09 To approve the Compensation Guidelines for 2007-2008 as found at Section 5D.1.

COMMISSION FOR MISSION REPORT

The Rev. Greg Gaskamp presented a report and video for the commission.

LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION REPORT

Charlie Schwarz presented a progress report on the two swings being built during the assembly.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Rev. Biermann presented the following:

MOVED/SECONDED

CARRIED

That written ballots be used for Resolutions #2, #3 and #4.

ORDER OF THE DAY

Bishop Tiemann introduced The Rev. Dr. Wayne Menking, Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest, who presented a report from the seminary.

Bishop Tiemann announced the results of the written ballot for Resolution #2.

VOTED
SA07.5.10 To defeat Resolution #2.
(124 Yes; 251 No; 2 Abstain)

Recess of Plenary Session III at noon.

PLENARY SESSION IV

The assembly convened at 1:15 p.m. with a call to order by Bishop Tiemann.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Edie Scheffel, chair of the Credentials Committee reported that as of 1:00 p.m., May 20, 2007, there were 461 voting members, of which 152 were Rostered Voting Members and 309 were Lay Voting Members. The Credentials Committee certified that all constitutional requirements regarding composition of the voting membership were met. In addition, there were 4 non-voting members, 1 ecumenical guest and 75 registered visitors for a total of 541 persons registered.

The Rev. Paul Collinson-Streng, Campus Pastor at The University of Texas, lead the assembly in devotions. Music was provided by T. J. Bazzoon.

Bishop Tiemann reported that the assembly offering at this time totaled \$86,842.51.

COMMISSION FOR PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Rev. Mike Coffey presented the report for the commission as found in Section 5D.

2008-2009 BUDGET (Section 2C-Replacement)

The budget was previously presented on May 19, 2007, and was presented for adoption by the assembly as recommended by the Synod Council.

VOTED
SA07.5.11 To adopt the 2008-2009 Budget as it appears in the Treasurer's Report of the Assembly Bulletin of Reports.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Rev. Biermann presented the following:

PROPOSED RESOLUTION #3 FOR THE 2007 SYNOD ASSEMBLY SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA

<p><u>A memorial to endorse restraint concerning discipline</u> Submitted by: Rev. Magdalene Holm-Roesler, Holy Cross Lutheran and Rev. Charles Holm-Roesler, Good Shepherd, Bastrop</p>
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WHEREAS there is currently no consensus in this church regarding the rostered service of persons in committed same gender relationships (Report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, p. 5), and

WHEREAS the ELCA policy documents *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* and *Vision and Expectations* are separate from the ELCA Constitution and pertain to rostered service in the ELCA; and

WHEREAS the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urged every part of the ELCA to "concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that this Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly; and be further

RESOLVED that the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA endorses and calls for restraint in the application of provisions relating to the rostered service of persons who, in policies separate from the ELCA Constitution, are referred to as "practicing homosexuals" or as "homosexual in their self-understanding."

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

See committee's response to Resolution #2.

MOVED/SECONDED

CARRIED

To close debate.

Voting on Resolution #3 was conducted by written ballot.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Rev. Biermann presented the following:

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #4
FOR THE 2007 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A resolution to refrain from discipline

**Submitted by: Rev. Karl Gronberg, Gethsemane, Austin
and Rev. Kent Bohls, Gethsemane, Austin**

WHEREAS there is currently no consensus in this church regarding the rostered service of persons in committed same gender relationships (Report of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, p. 5), and

WHEREAS the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urged every part of the ELCA to "concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that this Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly; and be further

RESOLVED that in order to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, synods, synodical bishops, and the Presiding Bishop of this church are encouraged to refrain from disciplining those who – in good conscience and for the sake of outreach, ministry, and commitment to continuing dialogue – call, approve, ordain, commission, or consecrate otherwise-qualified candidates for rostered service who are in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship; and be it further

RESOLVED that synods, synodical bishops, and the Presiding Bishop of this church are encouraged to refrain from disciplining those rostered leaders in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship who have been thus called, approved, ordained, commissioned, or consecrated.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

See committee's response to Resolution #2.

Voting on Resolution #4 was conducted by written ballot.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Rev. Biermann presented the following:

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #5
FOR THE 2007 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

A memorial to Request a Study for Creating a Non-Geographical Synod

**Submitted by: Rev. Jeffery Carpenter, St. John Lutheran, Boerne
and Rev. Casey Zesch, Bethany Lutheran, Fredericksburg**

WHEREAS we recognize the continued lack of agreement within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the issues of same-sex blessings and ordination of non-celibate homosexuals; and

WHEREAS the 2005 Churchwide Assembly called on the members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions of the ELCA "to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ." (CA05.05.17); and

WHEREAS the ELCA organizes itself in geographical synods for the sake of mission and ministry; and

WHEREAS the unity of the church is not based upon the absence of conflict but rather upon the gift that God gives through our oneness in Jesus Christ in spite of our differences; and

WHEREAS the mission and ministry of the ELCA is undermined by continuous debate, the departure of congregations from the ELCA, and the withholding of mission support, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Texas Synod in Assembly in Kerrville, Texas, memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly in 2007, to authorize creation of a Task Force to be appointed by the Church Council, to carefully and prayerfully study the possibilities of providing for non-geographical synods in the ELCA to accommodate differences in belief, practice, and emphasis on issues related to homosexuality, while promoting our work together to accomplish God's Call for the Mission of the Church; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Task Force report the results of its study and any recommendations for further action to the Church Council, and that the Church Council report its recommendations to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

Due to the missed 60-day deadline and the lack of time for due consideration, the Reference and Counsel Committee declines to take action on Proposed Resolution #5.

The Reference and Counsel Committee recognizes the importance for church unity of the issues raised in Proposed Resolution #5. The Reference and Counsel Committee invites the sponsors of Proposed Resolution #5 to explain their rationale to the Assembly as permitted by a majority vote of the Assembly (per Standing Rule 10.c.2c.).

**MOVED/SECONDED
DEFEATED To bring Resolution #5 to the floor of the Assembly.**

Bishop Tiemann announced the results of the written ballots for Resolutions #3 and #4.

**VOTED
SA07.5.12 To defeat Resolution #3.
(121 Yes; 226 No)**

**VOTED
SA07.5.13 To defeat Resolution #4.
(116 Yes; 220 No)**

ASSEMBLY OFFERING

The Rev. Jamie Bouzard moved to address the issue of the assembly offering with one more effort in order to reach our goal of \$100,000.

**MOVED/SECONDED
CARRIED To address the assembly offering with one more effort.**

Rev. Bouzard moved that the facilitators be instructed to gather this special offering effort within the next one-half hour.

**MOVED/SECONDED
CARRIED That the facilitators gather this special offering effort
within the next one-half hour.**

INTRODUCTION OF SYNOD STAFF

Bishop Tiemann introduced and thanked the Synod Staff for their work on the assembly.

COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Rev. Biermann presented the following:

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION #6
FOR THE 2007 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA**

**A Resolution of Thanksgiving
Submitted by Reference and Counsel Committee**

WHEREAS we are "Immersed in God's Amazing Grace: Thanks be to God!" and the 2007 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly has provided opportunities for spiritual renewal, joyful worship, uplifting fellowship, Bible study, celebration of 100 years of Lutheran Campus Ministry 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 Hill Country Conference, the synod officers, the facilitators, the worship leaders, the prayer team, the ELCA representative Sue Rothmeyer, Bible study leader Rev. Dr. Ray Pickett, preacher and Campus Pastor Rev. Lou Flessner, devotion leader and Campus Pastor Rev. Paul Collinson-Streng, Lutheran Campus Ministry musicians, the nominations committee, elections committee, credentials committee, those who proposed and debated resolutions, the Inn of the Hills staff, and last, but not least, Bishop Ray Tiemann and 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 Assembly, express their gratitude and thanksgiving with boisterous applause and a standing ovation.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of this resolution.

VOTED

SA07.5.14 To adopt Resolution #6.

INTRODUCTION OF ASSEMBLY PLANNING TEAM

The Rev. Bob Kaul, Chair of the Assembly Planning Team, introduced and thanked the following persons for their work on the assembly:

The Rev. Dick Bremer – Food & Beverages
The Rev. Danielle Casey – Worship
Mike & Sharon Childers - Registration
Erick Christensen – Hospitality
The Rev. Mike Ensrude – Displays & Program
Harvey Hengst – Decorations
Al & Dorcella Sunday – Publicity
The Rev. Mark Ward – Technology

Thanks were also offered to the following persons for providing support to the assembly:

Coral Adema & Mary Amburn – First Aid Station
Barbara Peterman – Prayer Room
Suzette Price (and others) – Synod Offering

After the following announcements by Bishop Tiemann, the assembly was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

- Encouraged to take papers received back to congregations for sharing
- The 2008 Assembly will be held May 31-June 1 at Texas Lutheran University with the Austin Conference serving as host

- An additional \$9,330.19 was collected toward the assembly offering.

The Order for Closing of Assembly was followed as found in Section 1E.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Zander
Synod Secretary