

**The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod  
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting  
April 21, 2012**

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Council met at Messiah Lutheran Church in Cypress, Texas, on April 21, 2012.

In attendance:

Council Members: Evan Moilan; Bishop Mike Rinehart; Stephanie Wehring; John Turnquist; Don Hodde; Paul Monroe; Pastor Barb Simmers; Grace Banks; Pastor Brad Otto; Dudley Piland; and Arthur Murphy.

Synod Staff: Pastor Don Carlson; Pastor Pedro Suárez; and Assistant to the Bishop Peggy Hahn.

Absent: Gregory Goedecke; Pastor Sue Beall; Diane Campbell; Pastor Bradley Fuerst; and Corey Heidt.

Guests: none.

Evan Moilan called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. on Saturday, April 21, 2012.

Introductions. Pastor Brad Otto at Messiah Lutheran Church in Cypress welcomed us. He discussed Messiah's history, ministries, and growth. Evan thanked Pastor Otto for his and Messiah's hospitality in hosting the SC's meeting.

Devotion. Evan led the SC in a prayer and devotion centered on malaria and the Lutheran campaign to end malaria in Africa.

**SC.12.04.01** Motion to receive minutes, as corrected, of SC meeting of January, 2012, SC.12.01, by John Turnquist. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.02** Financial report presented by Paul Monroe. Motion to receive financial report for first quarter of 2012 by Dudley Piland. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.03** Charlie Dean Appeal to SC. Evan described the appeal process to SC when congregations discipline members and those members appeal the decision to SC. Evan described Dean's request that Evan recuse himself, and Evan's agreement to avoid an issue, even though Evan's attendance at Advent's hearing did not raise a conflict of interest. Evan noted that he turned the review over to a subcommittee to read and review all written communications, the audio recording of the disciplinary hearing at Advent, and all other evidence submitted by the parties involved in the appeal. The subcommittee was charged to provide the pertinent facts and processes of the appeal to the members of the SC for them to make a decision on the appeal. The entire record on appeal was also made available to every member of the SC. Evan yielded the chair to Arthur Murphy for SC's hearing of the Charlie Dean appeal. Arthur introduced the subcommittee's work and process. John Turnquist reviewed with the SC the pertinent facts of the Dean appeal of Advent church council's

decision, and the standard of review for SC regarding the facts and disciplinary process at Advent. Discussion followed. Motion that the SC deny the appeal of Charlie Dean and affirm the decision of Advent Lutheran Church. Motion by Paul Monroe. Motion passes unanimously. The chair was yielded back to Evan Moilan, who held a moment of prayer for Mr. Dean and Advent Lutheran Church.

Morning Break.

**SC.12.04.04** Request by Pastor Liz Stein to move into retirement. She has been under call to the SC for interim ministry. Motion to move Pastor Stein to the retired roster. Motion by John Turnquist. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.05** Review of SALM roster by Pastor Don Carlson. Renewals are approved by Bishop Mike. Don notes the many SALM's that are in the TEEM ministry process leading toward ordination. Discussion about getting all SALM's into TEEM ministry, or some other continuing education for SALM's. Motion to receive report on SALM roster. Motion by Dudley Piland. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.06** Motion to recommend that all SALM's move into the TEEM program or other program that leads to rostered service by March 1, 2013, and if they choose not to, then SC recommends that their contracts not be renewed, and that the Bishop notify all SALM's and the presidents of their congregations by letter of this SC recommendation. Motion by Pastor Barb Simmers. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.07** Personnel policy draft for the synod office. Discussion about comprehensive nature of a personnel policy as opposed to writing in basic or "common sense" rules of conduct for employment. Discussion of notice of expected job performance to employees and freedom to hire and fire in employment at will and religious contexts. Motion to strike the words "a formal or" and insert the word "an" in section 1.2 of the personnel policy handbook. Motion by Brad Otto. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.08** Motion to adopt the personnel policy handbook, as amended. Motion by Executive Committee. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.09** Motion to recommend 2011 Churchwide suggested changes, and other amendments to the Synod Constitution and Bylaws to the May 2012 Synod Assembly, with the exception of changes to the ministeriums in Chapter 12, in order to discuss them further and decide those issues later in the day. Motion by Dudley Piland. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.10** Discussion of new Synod Strategic Plan for presentation to the May 2012 Synod Assembly. Discussion of presentation to Assembly, funding, and implementation in the first year with the goal of making the synod "look different" in only one year.

SC.12.04

Break for Lunch at 11:50 a.m. Mealtime prayer by Pastor Brad Otto.

**SC.12.04.11** Nominating Committee discussion.

**SC.12.04.12** Pastor Don Carlson's report. New calls recently issued are discussed. The 2013 Compensation Guidelines are discussed. Discussion of On Leave From Call Roster. Motion to extend on leave from call status for Karen Wilhelm; Lydia Paterson; Sharon Burns; Kiho Song; Bill Bentzinger; Paul Bohot; David Tart; James Echols; and Anne Hall. Motion by Paul Monroe. Motion passes.

**SC.12.04.13** Pastor Pedro Suarez's report. Two new mission starts at Agape in Cleveland, and at Nueva Vida in Pearland. Dennis Shaw is being encouraged to get into the TEEM program at Agape in Cleveland. Nueva Vida is being led by Manuel Morales. First worship service will be held tomorrow. Another possible start is in Freeport, Texas.

Pastor Suarez also discusses the redevelopment of St. James in Houston. Pastors Aura Suarez and Ray LeBlanc are making great strides at St. James. Pastor Suarez discusses the current state of the mission tables, and needs additional time to discuss with Bishop Mike how they should be restarted as a part of the new synod strategic plan.

**SC.12.04.14** Peggy Hahn's report. See written report for more information. Three main items, including the One Million Book project at the 2012 Youth Gathering; a new social media project for parents/grandparents and Confirmation resources through John Roberto; and a virtual tour of the synod trip to our companion synod in the Central African Republic.

Afternoon Break.

**SC.12.04.15** Bishop Mike's Report. Strategic Plan review. The main focus that resulted from all of the focus groups in the synod is to "help congregations grow." How does the synod help your congregation grow? Through the call process? As a resource? How does the synod become an A-1 resource for congregations, as opposed to Rick Warren, Rob Bell, or Augsburg Fortress? To be an effective resource, four things have to happen:

1. Key Result Area 1: We will reimagine and streamline synod structures to match our priorities for mission and ministry.
2. Key Result Area 2: We will help congregations become better known in their communities.
3. Key Result Area 3: We will establish a new, separately funded, Partnership for Ministry Excellence.
4. Key Result Area 4: We will start at least one new worshipping community each year.

**SC.12.04.16** Motion to recommend changes to the May 2012 Synod Assembly on the subject of the organization of sectors and ministeriums in Chapter 12 of the Synod Constitution and Bylaws. Motion by John Turnquist. Motion passes.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. for prayers and Holy Communion in the sanctuary of Messiah Lutheran Church. Motion to adjourn. Motion by Dudley Piland. Motion passes.

Next SC Meeting: Thursday, May 10 @ 7 PM—Lakewood United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas.

Respectfully Submitted,

Arthur Murphy  
TLGC Synod Secretary