

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel

The Woodlands, Texas

May 31-June 2, 2007

“Living in God’s Amazing Grace: Thanks Be to God”

Summary of Actions:

SA.07.05.01 to adopt the first report of the Credentials Committee

SA.07.05.02 to adopt the agenda

SA.07.05.03 to adopt the standing rules of order

SA.07.05.04 to grant voice but not vote to Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and Bishop Kevin Kanouse at this assembly.

SA.07.05.05 that Joyful Life Lutheran Church of The Woodlands, Texas, be received into the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod at this assembly and that the pastor and the allotted assembly members be seated and granted full voting privileges.

SA.07.05.06 that two copies of the Minutes of the 2006 Synod Assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which have been certified by the bishop and secretary, be approved as the official protocol of the assembly and be placed in the synod archives.

SA.07.05.07 that the audit report for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2007, by Cederberg Riley Franks and Company be adopted.

SA.07.05.08 to adopt Resolution # 1

SA.07.05.09 to adopt Resolution # 16

SA.07.05.10 to adopt the 2008 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Persons

SA.07.06.01 to adopt Resolution # 14 as amended by Reference and Counsel

SA.07.06.02 that Resolution # 7 be adopted (floor motion)

SA.07.06.03 to vote by anonymous paper ballot

SA.07.06.04 to move the previous question. Resolution # 7 DEFEATED

SA.07.06.05 to adopt Resolutions # 2, 13, and 15.

SA.07.06.06 that Resolution # 5 be adopted (floor motion) ADOPTED by the written ballot

SA.07.06.07 to vote by anonymous paper ballot.

SA.07.06.08 to adopt the 2008 Proposed Budget and the Capital Improvements Budget

SA.07.06.09 to adopt Resolution # 11 with minor wording changes

SA.07.06.10 to adopt Resolution # 12

SA.07.06.11 to adopt Resolution # 3 as revised by the Reference and Counsel Committee

SA.07.06.12 to adopt Resolution # 17 as revised by the Reference and Counsel Committee

LH.07.06.01 to elect persons to the Board of the Lutherhill Ministries Corporation

LH.07.06.02 to accept the 2006 Financial Statements of the Lutherhill Ministries Corporation

The assembly began at 1:00 pm with a Worship Celebration. Bishop Mark Hanson presided. Bishop Paul Blom delivered the Sermon. Jazz Sunday provided the music. Pastor Marcus Otterstad was the assisting minister.

Business Session One:

Bishop Blom called the assembly to order at 2:40 pm. and led the assembly in the opening litany. The bishop made several announcements and introduced and welcomed the following persons to the assembly: Bishop Hanson; Bishop Kevin and Billie Jean Kanouse from NTNL Synod; Kristina Von Bank, MIF; Richard Stadelmann, parliamentarian; Kevin Giesecke and Bruce Maniscalco, audio visual operators; Joey Rose Jester, Augsburg Fortress; Andy and Barbara Hinderlie, missionaries serving in East Africa; Fr. George Bithos, Texas Conference of Churches; and the facilitators.

Credentials Committee Report 1

Darrell Reimer, chair, reported that at 2:49 pm, there were 287 voting members registered, of which 79 were male clergy, 18 were female clergy, 114 male lay members; 76 female lay members. The voting composition of the assembly was 66.20 percent laity and 33.80 percent clergy. There were 62 visitors registered.

Motion: by Darrell Reimer

SA.07.05.01 to accept the Credentials Committee report. Seconded. ADOPTED

Motion: SA.07.05.02 to adopt the agenda for this assembly. Seconded. ADOPTED

Motion: SA.07.05.03 to adopt the standing rules for this assembly. Seconded. ADOPTED

Motion: by David Hollrah, chair of Reference and Counsel

SA.07.05.04 that Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and Bishop Kanouse of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod be granted voice but not vote at this assembly. Seconded. ADOPTED

Motion: by Secretary Akerman

SA.07.05.05 that Joyful Life Lutheran Church of The Woodlands, Texas, be received in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod at this assembly and that the pastor and the allotted assembly members be seated and granted full voting privileges. Seconded. ADOPTED

Secretary Akerman presented a check to Joyful Life Lutheran Church in amount of \$1,740 from the Wahlberg Fund administered by the Synod Endowment Fund.

Motion: by Secretary Akerman

SA.07.05.06 that two copies of the Minutes of the 2006 Synod Assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which have been certified by the bishop and secretary, be approved as the official protocol of the assembly and be placed in the Synod archives. Seconded. ADOPTED

Nominating Ballot for Synod Bishop

Bishop Blom asked Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson to introduce the Nominating Ballot of the Call Process to elect a Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. A gathering song preceded the introduction and a period of prayer preceded the casting of the nominating ballot. (Darrell Reimer presented an updated Credentials Committee report that showed prior to the nominating ballot there were 338 total voting members registered of which 97 were male clergy; 22 were female clergy; 130 were male lay members; and 89 were female lay members making the composition of the assembly 64.79 percent laity and 35.21 percent clergy.) The nominating ballot was cast.

Mission Moment

Pastors Carol Spencer and Bill Bentzinger spoke about the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

First Keynote Address

Bishop Mark Hanson

Nominating Committee Report for Synod Elections

Kathy Patrick, chair, presented the nominees for the following positions;

Synod Council Member-at-Large; Male Clergy; 3 year term

Larry Keene

Eric R. Klimpel

Jeffrey D. Marsh

Kerry Nelson

Erich Schaefer

David Tart

With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Synod Council Member-at-Large, Female Clergy, 3 year term
Robin McCullough Bade
Barbara A. Simmers
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Synod Council Member-at-Large; Male Lay Person; 3 year term
Mark Hanson
Arvin Holland
David Hollrah
Ralph Martin
Clement Ukpe
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Consultation Committee Position 1, Male Lay Person, 6 year term
Jon B. Holmes
James Lehmann
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Consultation Committee Position 2, Female Lay Person, 6 year term
Erma Richter
Connie Fortune – nominated from the floor
With no other nominations presented Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Consultation Committee Position 8, Male Clergy, 6 year term
Gary Morgan-Gohlke
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Consultation Committee Position 9, Female Clergy, 6 year term
Karin Liebster
Sharon G. Kapsch
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Discipline Committee Position 1, Female Lay Person, 6 year term
Judy Biffle
Diane Campbell – nominated from the floor
With no other nomination presented Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Discipline Committee Position 4, Male Clergy, 6 year term
V. George Brookover
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Discipline Committee Position 7, Male Lay Person, 6 year term
Arvin Holland
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Discipline Committee Position 10, Female Clergy, 6 year term
LaMae Higgs
With no nominations from the floor Bishop Blom declared this category closed.

Treasurer, 4 year term – nomination by Synod Council
Arwin Strehlow
Bishop Blom declared this position closed

Secretary, 4 year term – nomination by Synod Council
H. Eldon “Cliff” Akerman
Kathy Haueisen

Bishop Blom declared this position closed.

Report on Houston Lutheran Campus Ministry presented by Pastor Mike Button.

Report of Synod Vice President – Erika Soechting

Report of Treasurer – Arwin Strehlow

Motion: by Arwin Strehlow

SA.07.05.07 that the audit for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2007, by Cederberg Riley Franks and Company be adopted. Seconded. ADOPTED

Reference and Counsel, David Hollrah, chair

Motion: SA.07.05.08 to adopt Resolution #1. Seconded. ADOPTED

RESOLUTION ONE

A Resolution for the Development of an African American/African Descent Outreach Strategy
WHEREAS, the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod affirms the ongoing goal of the ELCA to achieve membership of at least 10 percent people of color and/or primary language other than English; and

WHEREAS, we further affirm the vision of our church to be truly welcoming of all people, regardless of race or ethnicity; and

WHEREAS, we affirm ongoing ministry with people of color and/or primary language other than English;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Office of the Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Synod, Mission Director, Synod Council, and an African Descent Strategy Team, partner together and actively engage in developing and implementing a strategy for ministry to persons of African Descent.

Motion: SA.07.05.09 to adopt Resolution #16. Seconded. ADOPTED

RESOLUTION SIXTEEN

A Resolution on Community of Respect

WHEREAS, religion has often been used divisively to set people against people, nation against nation, and religion against religion; and

WHEREAS, Jesus clearly teaches that religion should not divide people, nations, and cultures but rather should break down the walls of differences and build bridges between people of all nations, religions and cultures; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has affirmed over the years, its commitment to work for peace and justice in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Anti-Defamation League has been a leader in bringing together people of different religions and cultures by creating the inter-religious “Coalition for Mutual Respect” where pulpit and educational exchanges can take place among people of diverse backgrounds in order to learn to know and respect one another; and

WHEREAS, many ELCA congregations, other Christian denominations, and other religious groups in our TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod area have been a part of the Coalition for Mutual Respect’s pulpit and educational exchange over recent years; and

WHEREAS, the well being of our communities depends on religious communities coming together publicly to show solidarity and commitment toward peace and respect: now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod join the Anti-Defamation League’s “Coalition for Mutual Respect” by declaring that this synod is a “Community of Respect”; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the ELCA will encourage each congregation to join in the exchange program offered by ADL in their respective communities

Report of ELCA Churchwide Representative – Bishop Mark Hanson

Motion: by Pastor Liz Stein

SA.07.05.10 to adopt the 2008 Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Persons. Seconded. ADOPTED

Elections Committee Report on Nominating Ballot for Synod Bishop

Bishop Hanson called on Pastor Lawrence Bade to read the results of the Nominating Ballot. The results are: (corrected results)

Number of votes cast 275
Number of illegal votes cast 2
Number of legal votes cast 273
Number of votes needed for
election on this ballot (75%) 205

52 – Mike Button	9 - Lawrence Bade	5 – Don Carlson
30 – Herb Palmer	8 - David Roschke	4 <u>each</u> ; Jason Korthauer; Kerry Nelson; David Tart
22 – Robert G. Moore	8 - John Bolt	3 <u>each</u> ; Tim Christ; Brian Gige; Beth Marie Halvorsen; Ed Peterman; Karen Wilhelm; Marcus Otterstad
16 – Rob W. Moore	8 – Kathy Hauelsen	
15 – Mike Aus	7 – Chuck Kindsvatter	
11 – Mike Rinehart	6 – Robin McCullough Bade	
10 – Liz Stein	5- Cliff Akerman	

1 each: Jim Abbott; Phil Blom; Harvey Bongers; Craig Borchardt; Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl; Roger Digges; Rueben Duran; Lisa Gaye; Deborah Grant; Mark Hanson; Aryln Hausmann; Pat Keen; Steve Kelly; Anton Kern; Sam Koenning; Paul Krupicka; Jon Lee; Kim Little-Brooks; Pete Lopez; Jeffrey Marsh; Tom Minor; Bill Mosley; Brad Otto; Steve Quill; Martin Russell; Jim Shears; Barbara Simmers; Ray Tiemann; Ron Unger; Mark Warpmaeker; Lynn Ziese

The assembly was in recess until 8:00 am Friday morning

Business Session Two: Friday, June 1, 2007

Bishop Blom called the assembly to order at 8:07 am. The Gathering Song, Scripture and Prayer were led by Pastor Bonnie Parker.

Pastor Andrew Hinderlie brought greetings to the assembly.
Congratulations were offered to Pastor Clarence and Helen Oestreich whose 64th Wedding Anniversary is on June 1.

Bishop Kevin Kanouse of the NTNL Synod brought greetings.

Credentials Committee Report by Darrell Reimer, chair

The total of the voting members registered was 354 of which 103 were male clergy; 23 were female clergy; 133 were male lay voting members; and 95 were female voting members. The composition of the voting members was 64.41 percent lay voting members and 35.59 percent clergy voting members. There were 61 visitors registered.

Ballot # 1 for Synod Elections (Ballots to be cast by 9:30 am)

Ballot # 2 for Bishop

Bishop Hanson asked Pastor Lawrence Bade to present the names of those who withdrew from the election. After instructions were given for Ballot 2, there was a period of Scripture and Prayer. The second ballot was cast. The names of the following were on the second ballot:

Mike Button; Mike Aus; Herb Palmer; Robert G. Moore; Liz Stein; Robin McCullough-Bade; Rob W. Moore; Mike Rinehart; Ed Peterman; David Tart; Brian Gige; Karen Wilhelm; Bill Mosley; Kerry Nelson; Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl; Beth Marie Halvorsen; Tom Minor; Barbara Simmers; Phil Blom; Tim Christ; Debra Grant; Jason Korthauer; Ron Unger; Ruben Duran; Lisa Gaye; Pat Keen; Martin Russell.

Mission Moment: “Noisy Offering” for Disaster Preparedness – introduced by Kurt Geodecke

(\$2,721.41 was received)

Report on Synod Mission Interpreters – Pastor Mike Rinehart (brochures distributed)

Keynote # 2 – Bishop Mark Hanson

Reference and Counsel: David Hollrah, chair

Motion:

SA.07.06.01 that Resolution # 14 as amended by Reference and Counsel be adopted. Seconded.

ADOPTED (An addition offered by Bishop Hanson was incorporated by unanimous consent.)

RESOLUTION NUMBER FOURTEEN

A Resolution to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to Update the Social Statement on “Caring for Creation: Vision and Hope”

WHEREAS, God created the COSMOS out of love and commanded us to be stewards of it; and humans have added enough carbon dioxide and other gases to the atmosphere to affect the climate, increase the earth’s temperature. Modify weather patterns and melt glaciers, which could cause the loss of full one-third of plant and animal species and cause more storms, flooding, and rising sea levels that will displace and impoverish hundreds of millions if not billions of humans, thus, failing to fulfill God’s commandments to be good stewards of the earth and harming or destroying much of the flora and fauna which God has created; and

WHEREAS, the Social Statement on *Caring for Creation: Vision and Hope*, adopted by the ELCA in its 1993 churchwide assembly

- Recognized our developing environmental crisis;
- Acknowledged humanity’s separation from God and from the rest of creation as the central cause of the environmental crisis;
- Provided a theological rationale for caring for God’s creation, including a vision of God’s intention for creation and humanity as creation’s caregivers; and
- Expressed hope, calling the ELCA to effective, responsive action for environmental Integrity; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA strives to honor God’s laws but wrote its major statement on environmental policy in 1993, a document which, although it includes limited references to the effect of global warming on creation focuses on the environmental impact of toxic pollution, and approved another less public paper policy in 2003 discussing global warming and actions to prevent it; and

WHEREAS, we believe that it is now time for the ELCA to take an even more proactive stance On how we will fulfill God’s first directive;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod memorialize to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to call for a revision of the social statement *Caring for Creation: Vision and Hope* to develop an expanded statement of environmental policy which

- A. Addresses all if humanity’s impacts on the environment;
- B Encourages individuals and congregations to work with local, regional and national governments to promote sustainable environmental practices and policies;
- C. Encourages individuals and congregations to seek ways to reduce environmental resource consumption by adopting an “*environmental tithe*” which would include reducing energy usage and waste generation (paper, plastics, glass, ink, etc.) by at least 10%;
- D. and since encouragement is often not enough, calls for the ELCA, its offices and its churchwide staff, its schools, organizations and agencies to be *models* for its synods and congregations by:
 1. Working diligently to lessen its/their personal and corporate impacts on on global warming (carbon footprint) by reducing its amount of carbon dioxide and other global warming gases which their actions generate,
 2. Calculating and progressively increasing their energy conversation and consumption, for example, by performing an energy audit, by recycling,

- and by evaluating their procurement policies and their resource-consumption reduction;
3. Incorporating incentives into the Mission Investment Fund that encourage environmentally responsible design, construction and siting of new congregations and rebuilding (in the wake of natural disasters) in ways that is environmentally appropriate;
 4. Modeling environment responsibility at all national assemblies and Gatherings by recycling and conserving energy;
 5. Promoting investment by the ELCA pension funds, benevolent societies and individual members in corporations or organizations which develop alternative energy generation, for example, investments in wind energy or biogas from livestock wastes would especially help Lutheran farming communities and materially affect our need to use fossil fuels.

FURTHERMORE, BE IT IS ALSO RESOLVED that the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod

1. Encourage its individual congregations and members to become more aware of their impact on the environment and to work with our neighbors to enhance rather than degrade God's creation; and
2. Be a model for its congregations by promoting D 1 thru 5 above.

The Reference and Counsel Committee dealt with Resolutions 4-10 by banding 4 and 8 with 4 remaining; to band 5 and 9 with 5 remaining; and to band 6 and 10 with 6 remaining (rationale: similar topics and wording.) The remaining Resolutions 5, 6, and 7 were treated as a group. The Reference and Counsel Committee recommended they not be adopted.

Motion: from the floor. Seconded.

SA.07.06.02 that Resolution # 7 "A Memorial Supporting Changes in the ELCA Policies and Regulations to Affirm Congregational Autonomy Regarding Regular Calls of Rostered Persons in Committed Same-Gender Relationships" be adopted.

Motion: from the floor. Seconded.

SA.07.06.03 to vote by anonymous paper ballot. ADOPTED

Motion: from the floor. Seconded.

SA.07.06.04 to move the previous question. ADOPTED

The votes were cast by written ballot. Resolution # 7 was DEFEATED by a vote of "Yes" 146; "No" 191; "Invalid" 1 and "Abstain" 1.

Motion: by David Hollrah, chair

SA.07.06.05 to adopt Resolutions 2, 13 and 15 (related to Hurricane disasters). Seconded.

Bishop Blom separated the Resolutions for debate and vote.

RESOLUTION NUMBER TWO

A Resolution to Memorialize the ELCA to Change the Policy of Lutheran Disaster Response

WHEREAS, the current policy and/or practices of the Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) does not allow money contributed to LDR to be used for the rebuilding of churches devastated by disaster; and

WHEREAS, that policy forces congregations to hustle and scramble in search of alternative financial assistance for their rebuilding; and

WHEREAS, many contributors to LDR naturally assume that their donations will also be used for the rebuilding of Lutheran churches; and

WHEREAS, current policy and/or practice often leads pastors and congregations to be preoccupied with finding the financial resources to rebuild their structures, diverting time, effort, and money away from the other ministries of the congregations; and

WHEREAS, the current policy and/or practice has caused bewilderment, outrage, and resentment among members of devastated church and has caused a PR blunder for LDR in recently ravaged areas; and

WHEREAS, it is the local congregation which provides hope, compassion, and physical help to its community, and therefore needs immediate support following a disaster

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, meeting Assembly, memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to change its practice and policy immediately in order to free up both current and future donations to Lutheran Disaster Response for us in the rebuilding of church facilities affected by disaster. ADOPTED

RESOLUTION NUMBER THIRTEEN

A Resolution to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to Immediately Create a Roster of Retired Pastors Who Are Willing to Be Called to Serve as Interim

Pastors, or to Provide Pulpit Relief, in Congregations in Disaster-Stricken Areas

WHEREAS, in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the financial, emotional, and spiritual burdens on congregations afflicted by disaster have increased enormously; and

WHEREAS, a number of congregations in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod have been unable to call pastoral staff and to lead them because of the uncertainty of their circumstances in the wake of Hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, the finances of some disaster-stricken congregations have been so devastated that they are unable to adequately compensate their pastors in order that they can continue in their communities where they have been called to serve; and

WHEREAS, the pastoral staffs of other congregations have been severely taxed as a result of their responsibility not merely to lead their own congregations, but to assist in the support and rebuilding of other congregations destroyed – or placed at risk – by the hurricanes and their aftermath; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for an intentional commitment on the part of the national church to provide additional ordained leadership in times of crisis in order to assist those churches in need of pastoral staff and to provide relief to those pastors who have struggled without respite since their disasters

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to request that:

1. the Presiding Bishop promptly undertake to identify and create a list of retired, rostered clergy and chaplains who are willing to serve in disaster-stricken areas as intentional, interim pastoral staff in disaster-stricken communities and congregations that need additional help; and
2. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide resources sufficient to fund the amounts necessary to pay interim and permanent pastoral staff salaries (if local congregations lack the means to do so) in order to permit rostered clergy and chaplains to return to the service of the church in disaster-stricken areas, ADOPTED

RESOLUTION NUMBER FIFTEEN

A Resolution to Develop and ELCA Response Plan to Assist Clergy and Congregations Impacted by Disaster

WHEREAS, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught many valuable lessons to be learned about disaster response; and

WHEREAS, the faith communities of the Gulf Coast areas, the ELCA, and the world responded with great generosity and love; and

WHEREAS, the presence of local pastors and congregations became beacons of hope and visible signs of Christ in the midst of devastation; and

WHEREAS, the local congregations and their church facilities should be spiritual centers in the relief response, and long-term recovery efforts as well as a public witness to the core values of Lutheran communities; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Disaster Response does not allocate money to the financial support of pastors and staff, rebuilding church buildings. Or congregational ministries devastated by disaster; and

WHEREAS, the gap of coverage for and their staff impacted by a disaster is one of the lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as well as other disasters which have hit our country;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, meeting Assembly, memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly to instruct the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit of the ELCA to develop a clear,

immediate, and effective response plan to assist local pastors and congregations in disaster areas.
ADOPTED

Motion: from the floor. Seconded
SA.07.06.06 to adopt Resolution # 5

Motion: from the floor. Seconded
SA.07.06.07 to vote by anonymous written ballot. ADOPTED

After debate the vote was cast by written ballot. Resolution # 5 was ADOPTED by a vote of “Yes” 191;
“No” 144; “Invalid” 1; “Abstain” 0.

RESOLUTION NUMBER FIVE

A Memorial to Encourage Refraining from Discipline

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 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 2007 Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

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 mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationships, 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.

(Note: Resolution Number 6 was not brought to the floor.)

Report of Ballot #2 for Bishop

Bishop Hanson asked Pastor Lawrence Bade to read the results of the second ballot for Bishop.

Number of votes cast	334
Number of illegal votes cast	1
Number of legal votes cast	333
Number of votes needed for Election (75%)	250

The results:

94 Mike Button	2 Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl
50 Mike Aus	2 Beth Marie Halvorsen
47 Herb Palmer	2 Tom Minor
31 Robert G. Moore	2 Barbara Simmers
22 Liz Stein	1 Phil Blom
16 Robin McCullough-Bade	1 Tim Christ
16 Rob W. Moore	1 Debra Grant
16 Mike Rinehart	1 Jason Korthauer
8 Ed Peterman	1 Ron Unger
6 David Tart	0 Ruben Duran
4 Brian Gige	0 Lisa Gaye
4 Karen Wilhelm	0 Pat Keen
3 Bill Mosley	0 Martin Russell
3 Kerry Nelson	

The top eight were on the third ballot.

Recess for lunch

Business Session Three:

The Gathering songs, Scripture, and Prayers were led by members of the LYO

Credentials Committee Report: Darrell Reimer, chair

Total Voting Members registered = 357; of which 104 were male clergy; 24 were female clergy; 134 were male lay voting members; and 95 were female voting members. The composition of the assembly was 65.15 % lay voting members and 35.85 % clergy voting members. There were 62 visitors registered.

Election Committee Report on Synod Ballot #1

Lawrence Bade, chair, gave the following report of results:

Synod Council Member-at-Large Male Clergy, three year term

Votes cast = 315; 1 invalid; votes needed to elect = 158

Larry Keene	31
Eric Klimpel	42
Jeffrey Marsh	49
Kerry Nelson	54
Erich Schaefer	55
David Tart	84

There was no election. Ballot # 2 will contain the names of David Tart and Erich Schaefer.

Synod Council Member-at-Large Female Clergy, three year term

Votes cast = 309; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 155

Robin McCullough-Bade	167
Barbara A. Simmers	142

Bishop Blom declared Robin McCullough-Bade elected.

Synod Council Member-at-Large Male Lay, three year term

Votes cast = 308; 1 invalid; votes needed to elect = 155

Mark Hanson	84
Arvin Holland	30
David Hollrah	92
Ralph Martin	55
Clement Ukpe	47

There was no election. Ballot # 2 will contain the names of David Hollrah and Mark Hanson.

Consultation Committee, Place 1, Male Lay, six year term

Votes cast = 306; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 154

John B. Holmes	162
James Lehman	144

Bishop Blom declared John B. Holmes elected.

Consultation Committee, Place 2, Female Lay, six year term

Votes cast = 297; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 154

Erma Richter	162
Connie Fortune	144

Bishop Blom declared Erma Richter elected.

Consultation Committee, Place 8, Male Clergy, six year term

Votes cast = 300; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 151

Gary Morgan-Gohlke	300
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Bishop Blom declared Gary Morgan-Gohlke elected.

Consultation Committee, Place 9, Female Clergy, six year term

Votes cast = 301; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 151

Sharon Kapsch 124

Karin Liebster 177

Bishop Blom declared Karin Liebster elected.

Discipline Committee, Position 1, Female Lay, six year term

Votes cast = 305; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 153

Judy Biffle 226

Diane Campbell 79

Bishop Blom declared Judy Biffle elected.

Discipline Committee, Position 4, Male Clergy, six year term

Votes cast = 300; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 151

V. George Brookover 300

Bishop Blom declared V. George Brookover elected.

Discipline Committee, Position 7, Male Lay, six year term

Votes cast = 297; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 149

Arvin Holland 297

Bishop Blom declared Arvin Holland elected.

Discipline Committee, Position 10, Female Clergy, six year term

Votes cast = 296; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 149

Lemae Higgs 296

Bishop Blom declared Lemae Higgs elected.

Synod Treasurer, four year term

Votes cast = 301; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 151

Arwin Strehlow 301

Bishop Blom declared Arwin Strehlow elected.

Synod Secretary, four year term

Votes cast = 315; 0 invalid; votes needed to elect = 158

H. Eldon "Cliff" Akerman 161

Kathy Haueisen 154

Bishop Blom declared H. Eldon "Cliff" Akerman elected.

Ballot # 2 for Synod Election was cast.

Synod Staff Report

Bishop Blom; Peggy Contos Hahn, Rob Moore and members of the Management Team presented this report.

Motion: by Secretary Akerman

SA.07.06.09 to adopt the 2008 Proposed Budget and the Capital Improvements Budget. Seconded.

ADOPTED

Election Committee Report of Ballot # 2 Synod Elections:

Lawrence Bade, Chair, gave the following report:

Synod Council, Member-at-Large, Male Clergy, three year term

Votes cast = 319; invalid 0; votes needed to elect = 160

David Tart 186

Erich Schaefer 133

Bishop Blom declared David Tart elected.

Synod Council, Member-at-Large, Male Lay, three year term

Votes cast = 319; invalid 0; votes needed to elect = 160

David Hollrah 163

Mark Hanson 156

Bishop Blom declared David Hollrah elected.

Bishop Candidates Addressed the Assembly (five minutes each)

The order was:

Robin McCullough-Bade, Interim Pastor, Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Baton Rouge, Louisiana;

Robert W. Moore, Assistant to the Bishop/Mission Director, TLGC Synod;

Herbert E. Palmer, Senior Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Bellaire, Texas;

Michael Aus, Senior Pastor, Living Word Lutheran Church, Katy, Texas;

Michael Button, Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, Brenham, Texas;

Michael Rinehart, Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Conroe, Texas;

Robert G. Moore, Senior Pastor, Christ the King Evangelical Lutheran Church, Houston, Texas;

Elizabeth Stein, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership, TLGC Synod.

Bishop Hanson lead the assembly in Scripture and Prayer before Ballot # 3 for Bishop was cast.

Greetings: Carlos Pena, Vice President of ELCA

Mission Moment: Steve Quill for Lutheran Seminary Program of the Southwest.

Lutherhill Ministries Corporation Board Meeting:

The meeting was called to order by President Lauri Tokoi.

Thanks were extended to those completing a term on the Lutherhill Corporation Board of Directors:

Phil Oestrich, Neil Christians; Pr. Beverly Collingsworth; Rozella White, Pr. Erich

Schaefer; Pr. Kevin Meyer; Susan Senti, and Carl Albers.

Motion:

LH.07.06.01 to elect the following to terms on the Lutherhill Corporation Board of Directors:

Melanie Nelson; Pr. Tim Christ; and Pr. David Tart (three year terms)

Brett Carleton and Bill Mintz (two year terms)

JD Dennis Ulak, Linda Morrison, and Carl Albers (one year terms)

Seconded. ADOPTED

Motion:

LH.07.06.02 to accept the 2006 Financial Statements. Seconded. ADOPTED

Evan Moilan, Executive Director, gave a report.

With no further business presented the meeting was adjourned.

A Special Welcome and Expression of Thanks:

Pastor Richard Brunk, US Army Chaplain, serving out of Ft. Hood, and injured in Iraq was introduced to the assembly.

Elections Committee Report on Ballot # 3 for Bishop:

Bishop Hanson asked Lawrence Bade to report.

Number of Votes Cast 346

Number of Illegal votes 0

Number of Legal Votes 346

Number of votes needed to elect 231 (66.3%)

82 Mike Button

80 Mike Aus

49 Mike Rinehart

36 Herbert Palmer

35 Liz Stein

30 Robert G. Moore

24 Rob W. Moore
10 Robin McCullough-Bade

There was no election. Pastors Mike Button, Mike Aus, and Mike Rinehart will have their names on Ballot # 4. Conversations with these three were held in individual rooms from 5:30 until 6:30 pm.

The assembly was recessed until 8:00 am on Saturday morning.

“A Banquet of Blessings” honoring Bishop Blom and the entire Synod Staff was coordinated by the Transition Team (co-chairs: Susan Gallup and “Cliff” Akerman, with team members: Nancy Becker, Pr. Stan Eckermann, Beth Hartfiel; Adrianna Rives and Dorothy Menke Smith)

During the Banquet Bishop Blom acknowledged Ministry Milestones for the following:

Congregation Anniversaries:

25 years: Lamb of God, Houston, Texas; Chinese, Houston, Texas; Christus Victor, League City, Texas; Lutheran Church of the Galilean, LaPlace, Louisiana
50 years: St. Martin, Sugar Land, Texas

New Congregation: Joyful Life, The Woodlands, Texas

Newly Ordained:

David L. Hansen (August 5, 2006); Joseph B. Winston III (November 19, 2006)
Lydia Paterson (January 4, 2007); Steven Cauley (February 18, 2007)

Newly Commissioned Associate in Ministry: Neil Allen Christians (April 14, 2007)

Ordination Anniversaries:

25 years: George Bement; Erbey Gonzalez; David L. Hall; Charles H. Parnell; Elizabeth Stein.
30 years: Kenneth Burke; Paul W. Geisler, Jr.; Herbert E. Palmer; Patrick J. Ryan
35 years: Anton A. Kern, Jr.; Larry G. Henrichs; Thomas J. Minor; Stephen D. Quill; James R. Shears; Ricardo Sinisterra; John P. Willmann; Harvey Chi
40 years: Paul J. Blom; Harvey A. Bongers; James P. Hinkhouse
45 years: Eugene F. Fogt; Philip J. Hefner; Richard M. Kastner; Willie A. Rotter; John W. Onda
50 years: Frederick G. Haman, Jr.
55 years: Myron K. Blackman

AIM Anniversary: 25 years: Constance H. Giraud

Seminary Graduate Assigned to TLGC Synod: Bradley Fuerst (Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary)

Intern serving in TLGC Synod: Brian Christopher Alberti, Our Saviour, College Station, Texas

Business Session # 4 Saturday, June 2

Gathering Songs, Scripture and prayer led by Pr. Ed Wunderlich, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Waller, Texas

Synod Mission Endowment Fund Report:

Pr. David Roschke announced that in the 8 years of existence the Fund has distributed \$165,000 in grants. To date there is \$819,000 towards the one million dollar goal to honor Bishop Blom. A grant of \$8,500 was given to Peace Lutheran Church in Slidell, Louisiana to assist in a new outreach venture.

Credentials Committee Report: Darrell Reimer, chair

At 8:03 am there were a total of 357 voting members registered; of which 104 were male clergy; 24 were female clergy; 134 were male lay voting members; and 95 were female voting members. The composition of the assembly is 64.15% laity and 35.85% clergy. There were 63 visitors registered.

Bishop Hanson led the assembly in a period of Scripture and Prayer in preparation for the casting of Ballot #4 for Bishop. Ballot #4 was cast.

Mission Moment:

Pat Swavely, President of the WELCA of the TLGC Synod brought greetings.

Reference and Counsel: David Hollrah, chair

SA.07.06.10 to adopt with minor wording changes Resolution # 11. Seconded. ADOPTED

RESOLUTION NUMBER ELEVEN

A Resolution to Request that the Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Institute a Mission Partnership Between Churches In the Western Half of the Synod and Congregations Affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

WHEREAS, in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the financial, emotional, and spiritual burdens on congregations afflicted by disaster have placed them under significant strain; and **WHEREAS**, many members of congregations outside the areas affected by the hurricanes are unaware of the continuing plight of the congregations affected by them; and **WHEREAS**, many in the communities affected by the hurricanes feel their needs have been forgotten by the nation, by the church at large, and by their brothers and sisters in Christ; and **WHEREAS**, congregations outside the Eastern half of the Synod are called to reach out in love to their brothers and sisters in other congregations; and **WHEREAS**, God, through the Holy Spirit, has given all of us a new mission field where the Harvest is plenty but the workers are few; now **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod implement a “mission Partnership” in which congregations affected by Hurricanes Rita and Katrina are partnered with congregations in the Western half of the Synod for the purpose of:

1. A shared, and specific, ministry of mutual prayer for one another;
2. Exploring ways in which partnered congregations may undertake joint service or educational projects for the purpose of strengthening their ties of fellowship and Christian love for one another;
3. Reviving apostolic correspondence between them, so that the sharing of good news and ministry successes (and needs) by one will serve to encourage and uplift the other;
4. Supporting, including through financial support, of each other’s mission and ministry Priorities through their emergence from this crisis; and
5. Other activities (such as a program of regular visitation by members of partnered congregations) designed to impress upon hurricane-stricken congregations that they are not alone in their struggles, and that their brothers and sisters in Christ have not forgotten them, but, instead, have heard their plea and intend to answer their cries for help, comfort and consolation.

Motion: David Hollrah, chair

SA.07.06.11 to adopt Resolution # 12. Seconded. ADOPTED

RESOLUTION NUMBER TWELVE

A Resolution to Encourage Our Lutheran Congregations To Undertake a Prayer Pilgrimage to New Orleans

WHEREAS, one aspect of a mature Christian faith is a commitment to continual conversation with God through prayer; and **WHEREAS**, confirmation and faith formation classes emphasize the importance of prayer to the development of a mature faith; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to raise awareness in our faith communities, and particularly among our young people of the significant needs that remain to be met in the greater New Orleans area and in the church of the Bayou Ministerium; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf coast Synod encourage each congregation to encourage its members, and in particularly all confirmands and their families, to undertake a prayer pilgrimage to New Orleans, which would include a visit to sites important to the understanding of the impact of Hurricane Katrina, and a commitment to worship with one of the churches in the Bayou Ministerium.

Motion: David Hollrah, chair

SA.07.06.13 to adopt Resolution # 3 as revised by the Reference and Counsel Committee. Seconded.
ADOPTED

RESOLUTION NUMBER THREE

A Resolution to Memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly
To Change the Policy of the Mission Investment Fund

WHEREAS, congregations directly affected by natural or human-made disasters need to minister to the suffering people in their communities without becoming overly preoccupied with their own financial needs and economic viability; and

WHEREAS, some secular financial institutions such as banks and credit card companies have graciously deferred, postponed and even canceled payments for some disaster-stricken customers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA to work in close collaboration with the synods to assist ELCA congregations impacted by natural disasters. This assistance could include, but not be limited to, appropriate modifications such as a moratorium on loan or rental payments or a reduction in an outstanding loan balance.

Motion: David Hollrah, chair

SA.07.06.14 to adopt Resolution # 17 as revised by the Reference and Counsel Committee. Seconded.
ADOPTED

RESOLUTION NUMBER SEVENTEEN

A Resolution to Focus the Synod Council
On the Establishment of New Starts

WHEREAS, as Christians we are called to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” Matthew 28:19); and

WHEREAS, together the congregations of our synod in our unity are committed to begin and grow new ministries and congregations and transform (restart) existing congregations as a response to the Great Commission; and

WHEREAS, many new congregations, especially but not exclusively in suburban settings, do not begin to grow significantly until they are local in their own initial building; and

WHEREAS, the combined cost of both land and construction of new facilities is beyond the financial ability of most new congregations; and

WHEREAS, many of our transformational (restart) congregations serve in lower economic areas;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Synod Council give priority to establishing structures, means and methods to identify and gather significant financial resources necessary to maintain and extend the ministry of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, permitting the acquisition of land and the construction of new facilities for congregational starts and restarts; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that one strategy to be considered is the establishment of a “New Start/Restart Fund” in each congregation to be available to assist with the costs of purchasing land or facilities for new starts and restarts at specific times for specific ministries.

Elections Committee Report on Ballot # 4 for Bishop

Bishop Hanson asked Lawrence Bade to read the results of Ballot # 4.

Number of votes cast

335

Number of Illegal votes cast	0
Number of Legal votes cast	335
Number of votes needed for election	202 (60%)
121	Michael Button
112	Michael Rinehart
102	Michael Aus

There was no election. Ballot # 5 contained the names of Michael Button and Michael Rinehart.

Question and Answer Period with the two candidates:

Bishop Hanson presided and Bishop Blom read seven questions prepared by the Management Team. Michael Button was first to answer the questions, and he was excused from the assembly room. Michael Rinehart was brought into the assembly room and was asked the same seven questions. Each candidate was give two minutes to respond to each question. After both had completed answering, Bishop Hanson led the assembly in Scripture and Prayer. Ballot # 5 for Bishop was cast.

Mission Moments:

First, Pastor Brian Gigege spoke about the TLGC Synod Men in Mission. Second, Howard LaMont shared about the TLGC Immigration Task Force. Third, a video produced by Pastor John McCullough-Bade on Katrina was shown.

Installation of Persons elected to Synod Positions:

Bishop Blom conducted this installation.

Elections Committee Report on Ballot # 5 for Bishop

Bishop Hanson asked Lawrence Bade, Elections Committee chair, to read the results. Pastor Bade asked in a point of personal privilege to thank the members of the Elections Committee for the quality of work Performed during this assembly.

Number of votes cast:	336
Number of Illegal votes	0
Number of Legal votes cast	336
Number of votes needed for election	169 (simple majority)
117	Michael Button
219	Michael Rinehart

Bishop Hanson declared the Rev. Michael Rinehart elected Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (term six years) beginning September 1, 2007 with Service of Installation on Saturday, September 29, at 1:00 pm at Grace Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas. Grace Church is at Beltway 8 and Westheimer Road in southwest Houston.

Bishop-elect addressed the assembly.

A Final Resolution

One of thanks to all that assisted in the planning and execution of this assembly and especially to Bishop Paul Blom for his 16 years of leadership in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. The Resolution was adopted by generous applause.

Closing of the Assembly:

Bishop Blom led the assembly in the Litany of Closure. Adjournment was at 10:51 am

Respectfully submitted,
 The Rev. H. Eldon "Cliff" Akerman
 Secretary

