

**MINUTES  
OF  
THE TEXAS-LOUISIANA  
GULF COAST SYNOD ASSEMBLY  
May 29-31, 2008**

The 2008 annual assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod was held at the Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel and Convention Center.

Thursday, May 29, 2008

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Assembly began with a worship celebration. Bishop Michael Rinehart was the presiding minister. The Rev. Patrick Keen of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, was the preacher. Nancy Simpson, Intern at Grace Lutheran Church of Conroe, Texas, was the assisting minister. People from Hosanna and Grace Lutheran Churches provided the music for the worship celebration. Bishop Rinehart called the assembly to order and led the assembly in the opening litany.

Bishop Rinehart introduced the Synod Staff and the Synod Council to the assembly.

SA08.05.01 The first credentials report was given. 297 total voting members. 93 male clergy, 16 female clergy, 84 male lay voting members, 104 female lay voting members and 42 visitors. There were a total of 339 people at the assembly. [63.30% lay voting members and 37.70% clergy voting members.] On behalf of the Credentials Committee, Darrell Reimer moved to accept the credentials report. Motion carried.

SA08.05.02 Standing Rules for the assembly were presented and adopted.

SA08.05.03 The Agenda for the Assembly was moved by Mandy Faucett and adopted.

SA08.05.04 Tellers, Time Keeper, and Spotter for the Assembly were appointed by Bishop Rinehart.

SA08.05.05 Bishop Rinehart introduced The Rev. Ann M. Svennungsen, President of Texas Lutheran University, who addressed the Assembly to report on Texas Lutheran University, Seguin, Texas.

SA08.05.06 Report of the Nominating Committee to the Assembly [Cf. SA08.05.19] Suzanne Kocurek moved the Committee's nominations and additional nominations were taken from the floor.

SA08.05.07 A motion was made by Laura Bourdo that Meredith Nelson's name be changed from place one to place two on the ballot. Motion failed.

SA08.05.08 Peggy Hahn introduced our visioning process for the Assembly and our visioning leader, The Rev. Roland Martinson. Her thoughts were based on Acts 2:16-21. Five acts of the imagination: Conflict, Pause, Image, Re-patterning, and Interpretation.

SA08.05.09 Bishop Rinehart presented a State of the Synod Report. He has visited in one way or another almost all of the congregations in our Synod. He listened to the people – the church. The following concerns are what he heard:

- Congregations want help with outreach/evangelism
- Congregations want help in the areas of youth and family ministry
- They have many concerns about the call process
- They would like help in areas of stewardship & finance
- Congregations want help with recruiting volunteers effectively

- Congregations want better Communications
- Congregations want help with Spiritual Growth
- They are concerned with worship and music in the church.

Friday, May 30, 2008

SA08.05.10 Morning Prayer by Pastor Joseph E. Summerville, III.

SA08.05.11 Peggy Hahn introduced the second visioning session [Acts 8:29-31] followed by another presentation by The Rev. Roland Martinson.

SA08.05.12 A video presentation – “NOOMA”

SA08.05.13 A presentation concerning one of our companion Synods, the Lutheran Church in the Central African Republic.

SA08.05.14 A video presentation concerning the Lutheran Church in Peru, another of our companion Synods.

SA08.05.15 The book (*program*) “BOOK OF FAITH” was introduced by Marcia Kugler. There will be more resources coming.

SA08.05.16 Reports of Officers and Staff were presented, as was the Audit Report

SA08.05.17 A motion was made by Arwin Strehlow, Synod Treasurer, to accept the Audit Report for 2007. Motion Carried.

SA08.05.18 Credentials Report II. 339 Total voting members. 104 male clergy, 17 female clergy, 96 male lay voting members, 122 female lay voting members, and 50 visitors. A total of 389 people were present at the assembly. [64.31% lay voting members and 35.69% clergy voting members.]

SA08.05.19 Elections – BALLOT #1 was presented and the vote was cast.

SA08.05.20 RESOLUTION #1 – A motion was made to amend provision S20.02.06.b in the bylaws regarding the terms of Mission Endowment Fund directors to remove term limits. The bylaw change will read as follows: “***S.20.02.06.b A full term shall be three (3) years. One-third of the members will appointed or reappointed every year. Terms shall commence on February 1 each year.***”

[A two-thirds (2/3rds) majority was required.] Motion carried.

SA08.05.21 RESOLUTION #2 – It was moved by Marcia Kugler that we become a “Book of Faith” Synod. The motion carried as amended. The Resolution is set out in full below.

Resolution 1  
A Resolution to Become a Book of Faith Synod

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**Whereas**, all the baptized when they affirm their baptism promise "to hear the Word of God" and "to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed";

**Whereas**, all parents and sponsors covenant to place the Holy Scriptures in the hands of their children and nurture them in faith and prayer;

**Whereas**, pastors at their ordination vow to be diligent in their study of the Holy Scriptures;

**Whereas**, the ELCA has begun a *Book of Faith Initiative* inviting everyone to join the conversation, to make a commitment, and to become part of the initiative  
(see <http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith/overview/>)

**Be it resolved**, that we become a *Book of Faith* synod recommitting ourselves to live in and from the Bible in all our meetings, assemblies and events, so that as we regularly and increasingly hear, read, study, share and are engaged by God's Word in the Bible we lead by example in faithful service and holy living;

**Be it further resolved** that the bishop of our synod—who "as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of the church"—in cooperation with the synod advocate and the synod task force lead this initiative personally and through collaborative programmatic work with congregations of the synod;

**Be it further resolved** that we celebrate and continue to support and strengthen those places where Scripture is already taught and engaged, such as lay schools, camping and campus ministries, Sunday School and other congregational and synod groups;

**Be it further resolved** that the synod shall develop tools for leaders to use in their congregations:

- by providing for networking through an online educational resource center where information and materials are shared and reviewed by leaders throughout the synod,
- by developing physical resource centers at several churches throughout the synod where resources can be reviewed.

**Be it further resolved** that the Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod—in order to increase biblical literacy and the Lutheran understanding of scripture and to sustain the momentum of the five year initiative—adopt as a theme for five synod assemblies a chronological study of the Bible in segments over the five years - Pentateuch, Kings, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles.

**Be it further resolved** that we encourage all congregations to become *Book of Faith* congregations, which will find expression by:

- exploring new opportunities for engaging the Bible,
- sending sufficient numbers of members to synod events for training as Bible study leaders,
- including biblical study as an integral part of life in the congregations.

Persons Submitting Resolution: Book of Faith Task Force (the Rev. Mary Lewis, the Rev. Michael Aus, Beverly Davis, Lynette Bartel, AIM, Marcia Kugler, AIM Synod Advocate)

SA08.05.22 Peggy Hahn began an introduction to this part of the visioning process – Acts 10:11-16 – and The Rev. Dr. Roland Martinson led the assembly in another stage of the process.

SA08.05.23 Bishop Rinehart welcomed the Seminary Grads, New Pastors, Interns, and AIM's.

SA08.05.24 Bishop Rinehart recognized the ordination and commissioning anniversaries of Pastors and AIM's.

SA08.05.25 Bishop Rinehart recognized anniversaries of congregations.

SA08.05.26 Greetings were brought to us by video from Dr. Mark Hanson, our presiding Bishop. A churchwide report was given by Pastor Gregory J. Villalon. [There are 10,400 congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.]

SA08.05.27 LUTHERHILL CORPORATION MEETING.

SA08.05.28 Credentials Report III. 339 voting members. 104 male clergy, 17 female clergy, 96 male lay members, 122 female members and 51 visitors. Total attendance at the Assembly, 390. [64.31% lay voting members and 35.69% clergy voting members.]

SA08.05.29 ELECTION REPORT—BALLOT 1.

- Synod Council Member-at-Large, Male Clergy (3 year term)  
The Rev. Pete Lopez, elected
- Synod Council Member-at-Large, Female Clergy (3 year term)  
The Rev. Barbara Simmers, elected
- Synod Council Member-at-Large, Male Lay Person (3 year term)  
Mr. Kurt Goedecke, elected
- Synod Council Member-at-Large, Female Lay Person (3 year term)  
Ms. Sue Moehring, elected
- Synod Council Member-at-Large, Youth  
Ms. Karee Lynn Viergutz, elected
- Synod Council Secretary (4 year term)  
Mr. Arthur Murphy, elected

**2009 CHURCH WIDE ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBER ELECTION:**

Laity Female, place 1; Laity Female, place 2; Laity Male, place 2; Laity Male, place 3; Clergy Male, and Clergy Male or Female needed a runoff election.

- Churchwide Assembly voting member, Laity Female, Place 2  
Ms. Sue Moehring, elected
- Churchwide Assembly voting member, Male Clergy  
The Rev. Robert Moore, elected
- Churchwide Assembly voting member, Female Clergy  
The Rev. Barbara A. Simmers, elected
- Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Person of Color, Laity  
Ms. Ada Norman, elected

The Second Ballot was cast.

SA08.05.30 Video presentation by SETIO.

SA08.05.31 Pastor Scott Cigich of Joyful Life Lutheran Church in the Woodlands thanked the Synod for their support.

SA08.05.32 Report on the Mission Endowment Fund by Mr. Larry Petershagen.

SA08.05.33 A motion was made by Pastor Karin Liebster that the Assembly take up a special offering toward new and more bows and arrows for archery at Lutherhill Camp. The collection is to be taken as

we adjourn for dinner at 5:45 p.m. in baskets that will be available at various places as we leave. Motion carried, as amended.

SA08.05.34 Pastor Fred de Olivera presented the proposed Synod Budget for 2009. Synod Council recommended adoption. Motion carried and the budget was adopted.

SA08.05.35 RESULTS OF THE SECOND BALLOT (Runoff)

- Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Laity Female, Place 1  
Ms. Meredith Nelson, elected
- Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Laity Male, Place 1  
Mr. Kurt Koopman, elected
- Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Laity Male, Place 2  
Mr. Carroll Shaddock, elected
- Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Laity Male, Place 3  
Mr. Stanley W. Sommer, elected
- Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Clergy Female or Male  
The Rev. Chris Markert, elected

SA08.05.36 A motion was made by Kurt Goedecke to adopt the Compensation Guidelines as presented. Motion carried.

SA08.05.37 A video concerning Hurricane Katrina and progress following, by Rev. John McCullough-Bade was shown.

SA08.05.38 The Rev. Patrick Keen presented a report from the Multi-Cultural Ministry Task Force.

SA08.05.39 Erika Canham commented on the draft of the Sexuality Statement. She encouraged congregations to study the draft and give their feedback by October of 2008.

SA08.05.40 The Rev. Dr. Walton Ehrhardt reported on the work of the Synod Disaster Preparedness Task Force.

SA08.05.41 The Rev. John H. Hunsicker reported on the work of the Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest.

SA08.05.42 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans report was presented by Mr. Kurt Goedeke.

Saturday, May 31, 2008

SA08.05.43 Disciple Video Presentation—music by 'Lost and Found'.

SA08.05.44 Immigration Task Force Report was presented by Howard Lamont.

SA08.05.45 Greetings from Oromo Lutheran Church (African), Tamil Church (India), and the Church of the Living God (Chinese) by their pastors.

SA08.05.46 Greetings were brought by the president of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran in America.

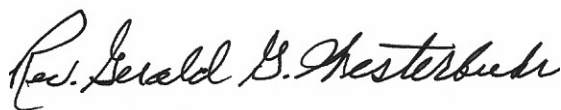
SA08.05.47 The Rev. Brian Gige reported on Lutheran Men in Mission.

SA08.05.48 Ms. Heidi Good reported on the work of Lutherans Concerned.

SA08.05.48 Peggy Hahn introduced the final visioning session. Her thoughts were based on Acts 11:25-26. The Rev. Roland Martinson led this final visioning session.

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod closed with a worship celebration. The Rev. Beth Halvorsen was the presiding minister, The Rev. Pete Lopez was the Assisting Minister, and Bishop Michael Rinehart was the preacher. Musicians for the closing worship celebration came from Celebration Lutheran Church (Cypress), Grace Lutheran Church (Conroe), Prince of Peace and Zion Lutheran Churches (Houston), and Lord of Life Lutheran Church (The Woodlands).

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Gerald G. Westerbuhr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

The Rev. Gerald G. Westerbuhr,  
Acting Secretary