

TLGC Synod Council Meeting

Minutes

January 23—24, 2009

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Council met at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas, on January 23 and 24, 2009.

In attendance:

Council Members: Erika Canham (January 24), Bishop Mike Rinehart, Arwin Strehlow, Kurt Goedecke (January 24), Rev. Pete Lopez, Rev. Robin McCullough-Bade, Sue Moehring, Arthur Murphy, Rev. Barbara Simmers, Dorothy Menke Smith, Nancy Cook, and Rev. David Tart

Synod Staff and Visitors: Howard Lamont (January 24), Reyna Pereira

Absent: Darrell Reimer, Karee Viergutz

Summary of Actions:

Bishop Mike called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

SC.09.01.01 Minutes of November 2008 SC meeting approved without correction.

SC.09.01.02 Motion that synod staff provide to the Synod Council at its next meeting [April 18] an update on the four priorities (evangelism/outreach; discipleship/spiritual growth; worship; and intergenerational ministry) including team leader, team members, successes and goals. Motion by Robin McCullough-Bade. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.03 Motion that the bishop form a healthy pastor/congregation relations task force that will report back to the Synod Council with guidelines, and a strategy for implementing guidelines in the congregations within our synod. Motion by David Tart. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.04 Parliamentarian—David Hollrah appointed by Bishop Mike as the parliamentarian for the 2009 Synod Assembly.

SC.09.01.05 Motion that the bishop and his staff hire the disaster response coordinator by April 1, 2009. Motion by Arthur Murphy. Motion Passed.

Meeting recessed until Saturday, January 24, 2009. **Bishop Mike called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.**

SC.09.01.06 Motion to issue a call to Pastor Jeremy Shih of the First Taiwanese Church. Motion by Mike Rinehart. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.07 Motion to extend a call to Pastor Don Carlson to serve in a full-time role as Assistant to the Bishop. Motion by Mike Rinehart. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.08 Motion to authorize our bishop to open a New Orleans office on the terms set out in the Bishop's Report of January 2009. Motion by David Tart. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.09 Motion that the Executive Committee present a proposal to the Synod Council at its next meeting [April 2009] for a staff evaluation process for next year. Motion by Robin McCullough-Bade. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.10 Motion to designate \$35,000 of compensation for Don Carlson to housing allowance and \$25,000 of compensation for Mike Rinehart to housing allowance. Motion by Arwin Strehlow. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.11 Motion that we endorse the mutual covenant for ministry among immigrants and refer it to the bishop's office for action. Motion by Arthur Murphy. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.12 Motion that we increase the bishop's salary by \$4000 to \$62,000. Motion by David Tart. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.13 Motion that the board of director nominees of the Mission Endowment Fund be approved. The nominees approved are: Edna Thompsen Term to 1/31/2011; Doug Borchardt Term to 1/31/2012; Kurt Swanson Term to 1/31/2012; Pr. Kathy Cashen Term to 1/31/2012; and Wayne Norden Term to 1/31/2012. Motion by Arwin Strehlow. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.14 Motion to amend the Synod Assembly 2008 minutes to add the entire text of the Book of Faith Resolution and conform the minutes language to reflect the resolution as adopted by the assembly. Motion by Arthur Murphy. Motion passed.

SC.09.01.15 Motion to sell the synod trailer for cash and place the proceeds into the synod disaster fund. Motion by Arthur Murphy. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned with prayer concerns and Holy Communion at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Additional Notes and Information of Meeting:

Bishop Mike called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. on Friday, January 23, 2009. We began with prayer and a hymn.

In addition to business noted above, the positions of Treasurer, Disaster Response Coordinator, and Director for Evangelism and Mission Position were discussed in detail. At approximately 9:00 p.m., the meeting was recessed until the following day.

Bishop Mike called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. on Saturday, January 24, 2009. We began with an informal worship and devotional service.

We discussed the idea of being Fishers of people, and the commandment to follow Jesus.

There is an exciting investment opportunity in the central city of New Orleans, LA., with Steve Bouman, ELCA churchwide director for mission and outreach, and LDR, and other ELCA bodies participating in redevelopment and ministry. Bishop Mike will keep us apprised of developments.

Bishop Mike and Treasurer Arwin Strehlow discussed budget issues and staffing issues.

We noted that we have not been proactive with stewardship in the synod as other synods are. We need to communicate our needs and synod work to the congregations. The new Director of Evangelism and Mission will be half time devoted to stewardship. We need to get the congregations invested in the mission of the synod to increase the stewardship among congregations.

Howard Lamont, Professor at Texas Lutheran University, and a member of Holy Cross, presented a mutual covenant for ministry among immigrants. He has been co-chair of the immigration task force. There is a group of about 12 dedicated persons that have been meeting for 2 years as a task force. First, he noted that we need to talk about the gospel and how the gospel would have us treat the immigrant in our society. There is a diverse community wherever we are in the synod. Lutherans all come from immigrant backgrounds. We forget our own heritage when we look at immigrants today. We should all have two-language sensitivities. German services of years ago are similar to the Spanish services of today. It is what is most comfortable for communities as they evolve.

The Immigration Covenant is designed to have each participating congregation:

1. Appoint a representative or coordinator at each covenant church to work with the synod task group for immigration and the synod leadership on sharing mission and outreach;

2. Study scripture in the covenant congregation;
3. Ensure the distribution of information on immigration issues in the covenant congregation;
4. Emphasize with the pastor and worship planners and leaders the importance of immigrant issues regarding worship planning and communal prayers for the immigrants among us.

The main idea would be a rollout of 10-20 covenant churches at first, and then eventually to every church in the synod. The immigration task force will continue to work with synod staff to contact congregations and get covenants started.

Robin asked that the January minutes should indicate that the current job description used in December 2008 and January 2009 for the Disaster Response Coordinator is what the SC had in mind when we asked the Bishop and staff to hire a disaster response coordinator.

Respectfully Submitted,

Arthur Murphy
Synod Secretary

(Minutes approved April 17, 2009)