

**The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Minutes of the 28th Synod Assembly
April 16-18, 2015**

The 2015 Synod Assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod was held at the Hilton North Hotel in Houston, Texas.

Thursday, April 16, 2015.

Opening worship began at 1:00.

The 2015 Synod Assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod was called to order by Bishop Mike Rinehart at 2:35pm, who went over the plans for the Assembly. Rebecca McDonald outlined Assembly administrative matters, and introduced Synod staff and LEAD staff. The Bishop introduced Synod Council and conference deans.

A credentials report was presented by Don Hodde. A quorum was present. See attached.

MSC: to adopt the standing rules as proposed.

MSC: to adopt the agenda as proposed.

A nominating committee report and list of nominees was presented to the Assembly by Sue Beall. See agenda for nominees.

The Bishop introduced the keynote speaker, Pr. Rudy Rasmus, UMC, St. John's Houston. Pr. Rasmus gave an inspired speech and received a standing ovation at the conclusion of his talk. One of the salient points he made was to ask "would your church be missed if it disappeared tomorrow?" His presentation was followed by a question and answer session between the Bishop and Pr. Rasmus.

After the keynote, the Bishop introduced Elections Committee Chair Mark England to lead in the first round of balloting. The Assembly agreed to elect all unopposed Synod Council members by acclamation. Elected were Kim Nunez, Diane Campbell, Kami Wagner, and Valerie Lloyd.

The Assembly received a report from David Wangaard for LWR.

The Assembly received a report from Paul Aebischer for Portico.

Kyle Seitzinger was announced as winner of a contested election for Synod Council.

A video Spotlight presented thoughts about Acts of Wisdom.

The Bishop delivered the State of the Synod address.

The Bishop called Sunny Kern to talk about spiritual growth initiatives, particularly emphasizing small group format.

The Assembly recessed for the day.

Friday, April 17, 2015

The Assembly began the day at 8:05am. The Bishop welcomed the attendees and reviewed Thursday's activities and described those for Friday.

Morning prayer was led by Dave Wangaard.

The Bishop introduced Mikka McCracken, the ELCA Churchwide representative for her address. She emphasized consideration of the question "what does the ELCA mean to me?"

Steve Quill presented a brief report about the Mission Endowment Fund. The principal amount of the fund has now grown to \$2.4 million.

Mindy Roll and Brad Fuerst, campus pastors, brought reports of their ministries at Texas A&M, Blinn College, Rice University and the University of Houston. They introduced parents of three of the students they ministered to at their schools, who talked about what campus ministry meant to their children. One of the parents was a Spanish speaking mother who spoke little English and was assisted in translation by her pastor, Adriana Rivas.

A report was presented by Pr. Blair Lundborg, Asst. to the Bishop for Leadership, on the pastoral call process, candidacy for the pastorate and compensation guidelines for pastors and rostered lay leaders.

The Assembly received a report from Thrivent Financial.

Liz Stein presented a report for the Lutheran Seminary of the Southwest.

The Assembly received a report from Pam Dorman for the Mission Investment Fund.

A report was presented by Peggy Hahn on status and progress of LEAD programs in the Synod, programs for coaching, training and providing resources for Christian leaders. She introduced members of the LEAD board.

Brad Otto introduced 5 lay persons, who led a panel discussion about being young adults. They began with introductions of themselves, and their relationship to the Church. Two of the 5 were unchurched. Neither seemed inclined to change that relationship by the end of their presentations, but the whole effort was well done and creative. The Assembly expressed its thanks to the 5 and to Brad Otto.

The meeting recessed at 1:15 for a Lutherhill Board meeting and reconvened again at 1:55.

Sherri Alsguth presented a report about our companion Synod in Peru.

Carolyn Jacobs presented a report about our companion Synod in the Central African Republic.

Don Hodde presented a report of the Credentials Committee, which the Assembly received. . See attached.

After an introduction with a laser light show, unique in the history of Synod Assemblies in this Synod, Paul Monroe presented the Treasurer's report. The Assembly, willing to do anything he asked by that time, duly received it.

Mark England announced the report of the Elections Committee for selection of Voting Members to go to the Churchwide Assembly. Unopposed nominees were elected by acclamation. See attached.

In the contested elections, the following were selected:

William Mintz
Bradley Hooper
Andrew Bell

All nominees for Consultation Committee and Committee on Discipline were unopposed and were elected by acclamation.

Compensation Guidelines for Rostered staff were presented.

The Assembly received a report and viewed a video from Folabi Olagbaju for LIRS, the refugee service.

The Assembly received a report from David Johnson for Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest, who in turn introduced Liz Johnson, also a representative to the Synod from LFSW.

The Assembly received a report from Sam Brannon for Texas Impact.

The Assembly received a report from Kurt Senske, President and CEO of LSSS, who brought a video from upbringing.com

The Assembly received greetings from Bishop Andrew Doyle of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

Jim Abbott, chair of Reference and Counsel, brought forward the only resolution and memorial of the entire session, submitted by Herb Palmer, who explained its rationale and effect. The resolution was adopted by the Assembly. See attached for the text thereof.

Peggy Hahn of LEAD presented the Tune In video and distributed a booklet and journal she had written about cultivating listening skills.

The Assembly recessed for the day.

Saturday, April 18, 2015

Bishop greeted and reconvened the Assembly at 8:15am and reviewed Friday's events and previewed those of Saturday.

Pr. Mark Warpmaeker, director of Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry, led devotions. The Bishop led a prayer for those who travel after news of bad auto accidents that morning in Houston.

A credentials report was presented by Don Hodde and adopted by the Assembly.

The 2015 Compensation Guidelines were brought forward and adopted by the Assembly.

Paul Monroe presented and moved the proposed 2016 budget. The proposed budget was approved

The ELCA pilot project for Synod participation in alternative financing methods for Churchwide and certain Synod ministries was approved by the Assembly.

Brad Otto presented a report about the Acts of Wisdom program.

The Bishop led a prayer for the people of Ethiopia and others who are persecuted.

The Bishop described the 5 Practices program for pastors and worship leaders.

The Bishop mentioned Spotlight Ministries and the availability of materials at the Assembly. He introduced ministry leaders at the Assembly.

Members of the Synod Council for the coming year were installed.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:00pm.