

**The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod  
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting  
January 17, 2015**

Present: John Turnquist, Paul Monroe, Evan Moilan, Bishop Mike Rinehart, Eileen Doll, Dylan Murphy, Peter Warmenan, Lura Groen, Brad Fuerst, Robert Rivera, Diane Campbell, David Hollrah

Guests: Beth Hartfiel, and Assistants to the Bishop Blair Lundborg and Pedro Suarez

The Synod Council met at St. Peters Lutheran Church, Bay City, TX. The Council was greeted and welcomed by Pr. Jared Stillions of St. Peter's, who with the Bishop led opening devotions.

The meeting was called to order by Evan Moilan, Vice President of the Council and chair of the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

A financial report was presented by Paul Monroe, Treasurer, and received by Council. See attached. Mr. Monroe announced, to some wonder and much excitement of members, that the Synod had a surplus from last year. Final numbers were not available but the amount was projected to be as much as \$45,000.

The Bishop presented his report, received by Council. See attached. He clarified that Andrea in the Synod office was Communications Director and not the receptionist. Council members took note.

The theme for the next Synod Assembly is to be Evangelism, with particular attention paid to young adults, Latinos and other groups important for our area.

A substantial portion of the Bishop's report was devoted to the invitation for the Synod to participate in a pilot program in which we would pay directly certain amounts now paid by the ELCA through the Synod, which amounts are taken from Synod benevolence contributions to the national church. An example in our case is the salary cost of Pedro Suarez, who is paid by the ELCA from TLGCS remissions to the national church. The end cost to the Synod would be the same and thus, the net revenue effect to the Synod should be zero.

Council received the report of Pedro Suarez, Director of Evangelical Mission. See attached. He reported on new pastor calls to the Synod, emphasizing the bilingual talents of some, and advised Council of progress with new starts and redevelopments.

Council received the report of Blair Lundborg, assistant to the Bishop for leadership.. We have some 15-16 congregations in transition, with ecumenical partner pastors serving in two of them.

Council approved change of status of three pastors. Pastor Groen was approved for On Leave from Call (from the vote for which she abstained), Pastor Sabine Lamar was approved for extension of her status of On Leave from Call, and Pastor Marsha was approved to move to retired status.

Diane Campbell, member of Council, was ordained as an ELCA pastor November 23d, 2014, and accepted a call to All Saints Lutheran Church in Stafford, TX. Council heartily offered its congratulations.

Peggy Hahn's report as Assistant to the Bishop for LEAD was brought to Council by Beth Hartfiel, in the absence of Peggy, who was in El Salvador. Concerns were mentioned for Peggy due to reports of exploding volcanos in the neighborhood, which Peggy has thus far avoided. LEAD continues to develop in the Synod, while offering leadership assistance and guidance to leaders around the country.

MSC, to provide housing allowances to Bp. Rinehart and to Blair Lundborg, and the amounts thereof.

MSC, to approve membership of the Nominations Committee.

MSC, to approve nominations to TLU corporate board.

MSC, to approve appointments to the Mission Endowment Fund.

Discussion ensued about the situation in Danevang. It was the sense of the Council that the disaffiliation of the Danevang congregation needed to be formalized in some manner and Council determined that a call to ELCA General Counsel Phil Harris was appropriate. MSC, to have Executive Committee contact General Counsel of the ELCA to get his recommendation as to an appropriate course for the Synod to take and bring such recommendation and proposed course of action back to Council.

Matt Kindsvatter of Camp Lutherhill joined the meeting at this time. He reported about the current capital campaign, especially as it related to the facility at Zion in Galveston. The campaign had reached contributions of \$625,000 in its goal to establish a retreat center in Galveston. Council received an early version of the Pre-campaign Feasibility and Readiness Study, which should be ready for distribution in Spring 2015.

Paul Monroe advised that the Audit Report for 2014 has been completed, and anticipates that the audit for year ending Jan31, 2015 will be ready before Synod Assembly in April 2015. He also presented a review of the budget and a proposed budget.

Synod staff left the meeting and Council discussed staff salaries and performance. Discussion was also had about the proposed budget, including staff salaries. Paul Monroe advised minor modifications should be made to the budget to make the budget actually balance, to which Council agreed.

MSC, that the proposed budget be adopted by Council and presented to Synod Assembly, as amended.

Staff returned to the meeting in time to consider a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10pm, after which all shared communion.