

**The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting
(2015 Retreat, New Orleans)
September 25-26, 2015**

Present: Paul Monroe, Evan Moilan, Bishop Mike Rinehart, Eileen Doll, Kami Wagner, Kyle Seitzinger, Peter Warmenan, Lura Groen, Brad Fuerst, Robert Rivera, Diane Campbell, Kim Nunez, David Hollrah

On Friday evening, September 24, the Synod Council retreat for 2015 was held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in New Orleans, LA. The Saturday session of the retreat shifted to Christ the King Lutheran Church in Kenner, LA. The Council received a cordial welcome on Friday from several members of Bethlehem, who had gathered at the church to extend their greeting. Council warmly thanked them for their hospitality.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Evan Moilan at 7:50pm.

Minutes for the last two Council meetings were approved.

The treasurer in his report advised that the Synod was on target for income and expenses for the year thus far. LEAD was still in a negative financial position, but was preparing to conduct a fundraising campaign this fall. The treasurer briefed Council on plans for Grace Lutheran Houston to do a restart, which will entail transfer of their property to Synod temporarily. It may also require Synod technically borrowing money to be used by Grace. Further discussion at next Council meeting.

The financial report was received.

Blair Lundborg, Assistant to the Bishop, began his report on leadership matters in the Synod. Roster changes for four pastors were approved.

The meeting recessed at 9:45pm.

The Saturday session of the retreat began at approximately 1pm, September 25, 2015. Council was introduced to Pr. Rachel Ringlaben, who led a Spanish language ministry based out of Christ the King, Kenner. Her report was supplemented by Council Member Robert Rivera, who chaired the Synod Latino Mission Table.

Council received a greeting and welcome from Pr. Ron Unger of Christ the King, Kenner.

Blair continued his report with a discussion of the Compensation Guidelines for lay and rostered leaders. He went over the calculation of the Social Security allowance for pastors, who pay their own self-employment Social Security taxes. He presented a revised understanding of the formula for calculating the allowance when determining leader compensation.

MSC: To adopt the revised understanding of the allowance calculation.

Evan distributed a Synod conflict of interest policy, which was reviewed and accepted by Council. Council members and Synod staff were required to sign a copy of the policy and return to the authorities.

Bishop Rinehart presented his report, which began with a discussion of the Synod Leadership Clarity Assessment prepared by Holy Cow Consulting, a previously obscure group from India. Actually they had surveyed Council carefully about perceptions of Synod leadership and the Bishop recommended the Synod continue further work with them.

MSC: That the Council approve a contract with Holy Cow as proposed by them and reviewed by Synod counsel and charge the expenses of such contract to general administrative expense. Such consulting engagement would include their preparation and delivery to Synod of a landscape tool and integration thereof.

(Inquiry was made whether the landscape developed by the tool would be used by the Holy Cows.)

The Bishop's report was gratefully received.

Chris Markert, Director of Evangelical Mission, presented his report.

MSC: That Council approve Umoja, a congregation in Houston, be accepted as an SWAC worshipping in Swahili.

MSC: That the Council authorize Pr. Absolom Nasuwa as leader of such community.

MSC: That Council approve Synodical Administration of Grace Lutheran in Houston for a period of three months.

Report received.

A report was presented by Peggy Hahn, as both Assistant to the Bishop and director of LEAD.

Report received.

David Hollrah led a review of Synod Constitution, articles 1-5.

After all members had successfully been reawakened, Council received a telephone greeting and message from Dr. Carroll, pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran, where the previous day's meeting was held.

Robert Rivera presented a report about the Latino Mission Table.

Report received.

The Bishop led a review of the Synod's insurance coverages

Meeting adjourned.

Council members divided up and attended worship services and adult forums at various New Orleans area congregations on Sunday. There was widespread agreement among members later in the week that the visits had been useful in raising morale in the congregations from the attention by Synod Council and officers and in spreading awareness of the Synod as a group with an interest in them and resources that could be helpful to them.