

The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Minutes of the 28th Synod Assembly
May 19-21, 2016

The 2016 Synod Assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod was held at the Hilton North Hotel in Houston, Texas.

Thursday, May 19, 2016.

Opening worship began at 1:00.

The 2016 Synod Assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod was called to order by Vice President Evan Moilan at 2:15pm, who went over the plans for the Assembly, and then introduced Synod staff and LEAD staff. The Bishop introduced Synod Council and conference deans.

A credentials report was presented and adopted by the Assembly. 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 Eileen Doll. No nominations were made from the floor. See agenda for nominees.

Blair Lundborg, Asst. to the Bishop, presented the Campus pastors, Mindy Roll and Janelle Hooper, who offered a video of Campus Ministry. Blair also introduced Jay Alanis of the Lutheran Seminary Program of the Southwest (LSPS). Famous quote from Jay: "If you are not living on the edge, you are taking up too much room."

Ballots were distributed for the first vote for new Synod Council members.

Evan called on the Bishop to present the State of the Synod report. The bishop spoke about the mission we were called to do and how the Synod helped to enable our service. He also introduced Jane Triplett, who spoke about strategic planning.

The Bishop introduced Dr. John Nunes, Keynote Speaker. Although late in the day, the keynote was indeed the key note of the day. The day closed with a solo performance by Monique Nunes, John's wife. In her own fashion, she too struck some key notes.

May 20, 2016

Opening devotion led by Marcia Kifer. Marcia introduced "warm fuzzies" to the Assembly, who found that by giving away warm fuzzies to each other you could meet people you would otherwise have never met or known.

The Bishop reviewed yesterday's activities and described today's.

Rebecca McDonald outlined the logistics for activities today and tomorrow, including the Service Projects later in the day.

Credentials report presented and adopted. See attached.

Pastor Mark England presented election results. See attached.

Bishop described function of LIVE ON, formerly known as the Mission Endowment Fund. Chairman Steve Quill took the stage to describe the activities of LIVE ON, which would for the present focus on legacy giving. He introduced Liz Johnson, who described the effects and benefits of legacy giving. Members were asked to encourage legacy gifts in their congregations.

The Bishop introduced Peggy Hahn, director of LEAD, who called forward the LEAD team. After introducing her team, Peggy presented the LEAD report, detailing many of their services. User fees now account for 69% of their income and only 14% is from Synod subsidies. LEAD now has activities or supporters in much of the United States.

Evan Moilan presented the Treasurer's report. See attached financials.

Evan also presented the auditor's preliminary report from the Synod's outside auditors, McGill, Power, Bell and Associates, showing no problem. The auditor's report was adopted.

The proposed budget for 2017 was presented.

The Assembly recessed for the Lutherhill corporation meeting.

The meeting was led by Matt Kindsvatter, director of the camp and member of the Lutherhill board. Activities for the year had been more diverse than ever in keeping with their motto "A place for all people." Matt introduced members of the Lutherhill staff and then called on Jeff Brady, president.

Brady reported on activities in detail and presented financial highlights. He also introduced the new development director, Pr. Mark Warpmaeker, who was enthusiastically received by the Assembly. Brady recognized all the board members and advised that three were up for re-election: Ed Spaulding, Mike Button and Melissa Minieri. All were re-elected and Brady turned the floor back over to Matt.

Matt announced that the Zion Retreat Center in Galveston would open in fall 2016. He thanked construction people and the chief architect and invited Curtis Bradbury, Zion program director, to the podium. He in turn described proposed services and opportunities that will be available in the Center.

Matt invited Jeff Roach to the podium, who gave details about coming activities in the camp at LaGrange. New facilities were glowingly described.

The Lutherhill meeting adjourned and the Synod Assembly automatically came back into session.

In the only Synod Council runoff election, Valerie Lloyd was elected to the youth member post.

After a break, the Assembly resumed with a cookie face challenge. Members found cookies on their tables and were exhorted to balance a cookie on their foreheads in order to avoid having it captured. Frantic efforts on the part of many ensued, but others disdained the frivolity. After the pandemonium had quieted, members learned that there was an unequal distribution of resources; some tables had a full box of cookies and others had but one or two. The game illustrated the imbalance of food distribution in the world. Members and congregations were urged to understand complexities of hunger and encourage participation in hunger benefit programs.

Rozella White took the podium to describe efforts of the World Hunger program.

The Bishop then led a discussion about our companion synods, beginning with a report about work with the Central African Republic Synod. A presentation was facilitated by Alan Kethan, Phil Fenton and Emmanuel Jackson.

Next was a report about work in Peru, led by Don Hoddie and April Ruen, who explained what the Synod was doing in Peru. Their presentation concluded with a prayer for continued fruitful work in Peru.

The Bishop called on Rozella White again for a report about ELCA activities. Rozella showed a video that was narrated by Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. Further information may be found at VisitELCS.org/future.

The Bishop introduced Blair Lundborg for a leadership report. He explained his work with congregations and pastors involved in the call process. After his report, Blair called on Pr. Tracy Brashears Schultz to explain changes in the proposed compensation guidelines.

The Bishop called on Chris Markert as the new Mission Catalyst (formerly Director for Evangelical Mission) to explain how the Synod started new missions and also revitalized suffering congregations.

The Assembly recessed to go to the various service projects members had volunteered for.

May 21, 2016

Opening devotion led by Pr. Emmanuel Jackson.

Meeting called to order by Bishop. A credentials report was received and adopted by the Assembly. See attached.

The proposed Compensation Guidelines were approved and adopted by the Assembly.

The proposed budget for 2017 was adopted by the Assembly.

The Assembly viewed the Acts of Wisdom video.

The Bishop introduced Pam Dorman of the Mission Investment Fund, who offered a video about activities of the Fund. She summarized investments of the Fund nationally and in the Synod, where there are currently 17 loans for a total of \$13.972m.

Blair Lundborg recognized newly ordained pastors, pastors newly called to this Synod, pastors entering retirement and Pastor Robert Moore, who has been called to a new ministry of the ELCA in Germany. Blair sadly listed the names of those who had died over the past year, and then read names of AiMs and pastors celebrating milestones in their ministries. Finally, he recognized seminary students who have received financial aid from the Synod via LIVE ON.

The Bishop called forward Carlos Pena and wife. Carlos has served as Vice President of the ELCA for 13 years, without compensation. They are members of 1st Lutheran in Galveston, Carlos was given special recognition by the Assembly for his work for the Church, and was presented with a small token of appreciation.

Rebecca McDonald made a few last minute announcements and advised that next year's Assembly would be at the same location, on May 18-20, 2017.

Dr. Nunes was invited to lead the Assembly in a conversation about service projects from the previous day and other matters. Brilliant.

After Closing Worship the Assembly was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

David Hollrah