

TEXAS-LOUISIANA GULF COAST SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING

Date of Meeting: February 4, 2017

Venue: Zion Retreat Center, Galveston

Attendees: Evan Moilan, John Turnquist, Eileen Doll, Pr. Liz Hanley, Pr. Rodwell Thom, Valerie Lloyd, Robert Rivera, Renee Alfaro, Pr. Mark Warpmaeker, Pr. Diane Campbell, Kathy Collins

Absent: Bishop Mike, Pr. Liz

Staff: Pr. Blair, Pr. Chris

Minutes of Meeting

1. Evan called the meeting to order and noted to the attendees that Bishop Mike would not be joining us as he was in Austin working to secure appropriate assisted living facilities for his parents. He also noted that Kami Stone has resigned her position on the Council because she and her husband have moved out of the Synod territory. Evan praised Kami's work with the Council. He also noted that Rebecca McDonald has given notice of her pending departure from the Synod staff to which news there was a collective gasp around the table because of the unanimous certainty that her vibrant personality and her many strong contributions to our work surely will be missed.

2. The agenda and the minutes were approved.

3. Evan told us about the post-Hurricane Ike evolution of Zion Lutheran Church, Galveston, from its 100+ years as a parish to becoming, under the guidance of Lutherhill, the Zion Retreat Center. He praised the vision of the members of Zion Galveston and applauded the addition of this new and vibrant Christian presence on the Island. He told us that Matt Kindsvatter, Lutherhill's Executive Director, would join us later and bring us lunch and give a both a report and a tour.

4. In the Bishop's absence, Evan gave us a report on the current status of the Strategic Planning effort. He noted that the "listening process" both within our congregations and their surrounding communities was completed. He told us that the team had developed a new **Purpose Statement**, to wit, "*The purpose of the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod is to lead: Christ-centered, outwardly focused, faith-growing communities for the sake of the world.*" In partnership with this Purpose Statement, the team developed a series of "core convictions"

as follows: (a) **Spirituality** - We must be intentional about deepening faith and spirituality; (b) **Hospitality** - The church must become radical in hospitality; (c) **Leadership** - Leaders must teach, preach, and lead with boldness; and (d) **Structure** - Church structures must become more adaptive and flexible. There was much discussion about how we deal with these convictions. **Evan noted that Bishop Mike would like each member of the Council to state his/her preference(s) for being members of the teams that will work with each of these convictions. We agreed that would be on the agenda of the next Council meeting.**

5. Evan's report focused on nominations. He noted that, as a body, the Synod Council has never really focused on recruiting new members and that we needed to think about how we would do that. He noted that we needed to appoint a nominating committee because, at the 2017 Synod Assembly, we will be electing a Vice President, Synod Council lay male, Synod Council lay female, Synod Council young adult, and Synod Council youth. At present, both Mark and Renee will run unopposed. Similarly, both the Discipline and Consultation Committees, while rarely used, when required, their work is most import. Both of those committees will have to get current. Rodwell moved to approve the new Nominating Committee, seconded by Kathy, and the Council agreed. That committee is Evan (chair), John, Pr. Diane, Pr. Jen Kindsvatter, Pr. Steve Quill, Pr. Kathy Hauelsen, and Prs. Nancy Andrews and/or Mike Button. Evan also agreed to propose nominees for the Audit Committee either by bringing those names to the next Council meeting or sending them to us electronically.

6. Kathy presented the Treasurer's Report. She reported first that we presently have a \$39,300 surplus. We then addressed the proposed Housing Allowance allocations for Bishop Mike, Pr. Blair, and Pr. Chris. Robert moved, seconded by Diane, that the following allocations be approved: Bishop Mike - \$30,000; Pr. Blair - \$36,000; and Pr. Chris - \$31,000. The Council approved. After discussing the proposed 2017 Spending Plan, we turned to the Synod's banking services. The issue is whether to renegotiate with Wells Fargo, or move our business to Chase. It was the sense of the Council that Kathy and staff should negotiate the best banking arrangement available and to bring that proposed arrangement back to the Council for approval. Mark moved, seconded by Rodwell, that Kathy be added as a signatory on the Mission Investment Fund, replacing Paul Monroe. The Council approved. Diane moved, seconded by Renee, that the 2017 Spending Plan be approved – the Council approved.

7. Mark moved, seconded by Renee, that the Council go into Executive Session – and the Council approved. After our closed discussion was completed, Kathy moved, second by Diane, and approved by the Council, that we should terminate this Executive Session.

8. The Secretary's report focused on two matters. First, it was noted that a package would soon go to every congregation discussing the reasons for updating their local constitutions. Second, we discussed the information coming from the ELCA lawyers concerning the issue of "sanctuary congregations". I emphasized that the concept of a "sanctuary church" had no legal imprimatur. That was not to say "don't do it", but do it only after learning and carefully considering all of the potential consequences, both legal and otherwise.

9. After a bounteous lunch, we were graced with an enthusiastic presentation from Matt Kindsvatter who regaled us not only with what was happening at the Zion Retreat Center but also how Lutherhill's ministries were expanding at the La Grange site and beyond too. Secretary's editorial comment: Praise God for Matt's strong and visionary leadership, which is ably supported by Mark and the other members of Lutherhill's active and energetic staff.

10. Pr. Blair's report contained several items requiring Council action which was taken as follows: (a) Requests for On Leave From Call from Prs. Olsen, Vivroux, and Miller, and from Deacon Elijah – motion to approve by Diane, seconded by Renee – Council approved; (b) the Retirement requests of Prs. Leher and Rieke were approved by the Council after a motion to that effect by Kathy, seconded by Rodwell; (c) Pr. Sandra Barnes was approved as the mission redeveloper at Gethsemane, Chalmette, upon a motion to that effect from Robert, seconded by Kathy. All others in calls for specialized ministries, such as the Bishop's assistants, need to have the calls renewed annually. Following a motion by Rodwell, seconded by Kathy, the council voted to renew those calls for another year.

11. Pr. Chris applauded the Synod's Mission Support Table and reported that the Table had allocated over \$100,000 in grants to eight mission and redevelopments. He thanked Peggy Hahn for all of the help LEAD has provided to Bethlehem, New Orleans, and, as well, told us how excited he was by what was happening at Gethsemane, Chalmette, as redevelopment there has progressed to the point of his recommendation that Pr. Sandra Barnes be called by the Synod to be the redevelopment pastor for a three-year period. See 10(c) above. Among the other exciting mission news was the news of Pr. David Hanson's call to be the regular pastor at Spirit of Joy and word that St. John's Bellville was now the mission partner of Mesa Abierta, Kenner.

12. We then addressed the situation at Danevang Lutheran Church and whether, pursuant to Section 20.31.01c and .02d of the ELCA Constitution and Section S13.31 of the Synod's Constitution, that congregation should be removed from the roster of ELCA congregations. After discussion, Diane

moved, seconded by Kathy, that such roster removal was in order. The Council approved that motion.

Respectfully submitted: C. John Turnquist, Secretary