

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

Date of Meeting: April 1, 2017

Venue: Augustana Lutheran Church, Houston, TX

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

Absent: Pr. Rodwell Thom

Staff: Pr. Blair Lundborg, Deacon Peggy Hahn

Minutes of Meeting

1. Evan called the meeting to order at 9:03a.
2. Bishop Mike led us in a participatory devotion centered on *John 9's* account of the healing of the blind man.
3. Diane moved to approve the agenda, and Kathy seconded that motion. It was approved by the Council.
4. With one change, the minutes of the February meeting were approved. The change was to add to paragraph 7 of those minutes the following: "Kathy presented the 2017 Spending Plan. There was discussion about Mission Support revenue. The Council agree to increase the revenue assumption by \$20,000. The Council approved the Spending Plan as amended."
5. Bishop's Report: A. He praised Evan's tenure as Synod Vice-President, praise that was shared by everyone around the table.

B. He noted that Rebecca was officially gone from the Synod Office, that we had received 100+ applications for her replacement, that he hoped to conduct face-to-face interviews with 2-3 candidates this coming week, and that we could have a decision on her replacement by around April 7th. We were all quite pleased that we had professionals such as Andrea and Loa to pick up the slack in the interim.

C. He noted that Sara Ray has been retained as the contract facilitator for the 2017 Synod Assembly.

D. He led a lively discussion of the current draft strategic plan. For instance, during the discussion of the four “core convictions”, it was the sense of the Council that we need to avoid “top down” goals, that we should engage our congregations as much as possible in the implementation of the convictions. Evan noted that a number of the issues raised by this draft Plan were quite complex, such as “addressing the coming clergy shortage”, while Blair noted that we are not producing the “right kind of pastor” because, for instance, we have a number of parishes in need of pastors who cannot afford a full-time pastor. Mike also noted that the current denominations are based on “Old World” polarity: Lutherans are German and Scandinavian Reformation churches, Episcopalians are English Reformation churches, Presbyterians are Scottish Reformation churches etc. and that we have to learn how to deal with the fact that denominational identity is becoming less relevant in current times.

5. Vice-President’s Report: Evan focused on the nomination process for vacancies on the Synod Council and the Consultation and Disciplinary Committees. He noted that these committees were infrequently used but constitutionally required and that, at present we had only one candidate for these committee vacancies. He also noted that we have an application from Tom Wildrick, St. John’s, Waller, for the position vacated by Kyle’s resignation in 2016 and that the Council has the authority to appoint someone to fill such a vacancy. John moved and Eileen seconded that Tom Wildrick be appointed to fill the current lay male vacancy and that his appointment would mean that he would run unopposed for a full term at the 2017 Synod Assembly. The motion was approved by the Council. Evan also noted that we currently have submissions from two men and that we could have at least one additional lay male vacancy should our Council colleague, Robert Rivera, be elected to succeed Evan as Vice-President. Accordingly, Evan moved and Eileen seconded that the Council approve the nomination of two lay male candidates to fill potential or newly created positions. The Council approved the motion.

6. Secretary’s Report. I noted that two parishes had submitted draft constitutions for approval. I reported that, while I had no problem reviewing such documents, formal synod approval had to await resubmission of what was approved by the congregation. I also furnished, for information only, an ACLU FAQ sheet concerning sanctuary with the caveat/advice that no one should engage in sanctuary activities without first receiving complete advice and counsel as regards the potential consequences of any such action.

7. Treasurer’s Report. A. Kathy led a lively spirited discussion concerning the question whether, in the draft budget for 2018, the Mission Support revenue assumption should be at the level of approved 2017 budget (or \$1,360,000) or at the level in the approved 2017 Spending Plan (\$1,340,000). Liz moved, seconded

by Mark, that the draft 2018 budget include a Mission Support revenue assumption of \$1,360,000. The Council agreed.

B. Kathy presented a letter from McGill, Power, Bell & Associates, who are our proposed auditors.

C. She reported that, except as otherwise noted, the following persons will constitute our Audit Committee: From the Council, Robert Rivera, Mark Warpmaeker, Kathy Collins; from outside the Council, David Hollrah (former Synod Secretary and audit Committee member), Bret Jacobs (CIO at Loyola New Orleans University), Sherry Aksguth (not yet confirmed), and James Godwin (Treasurer at Messiah LC) (not yet confirmed).

D. She reported that a couple of years ago (perhaps 2014) the Synod enjoyed a year-end surplus of \$73,027.11. She recommended that a new restricted account be established in the amount of \$68,000 and that the balance of \$5,027.11 be placed in the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. Mark moved to approve both recommendations, seconded by Robert, and the Council approved.

E. She presented the draft Guidelines for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. There was a consensus among the Council members as to the advisability of such Guidelines. The motion to approve was made by Eileen, seconded by Liz, but it failed because there were a couple of issues that merited further thought. The Executive Committee is charged with reviewing these guidelines and coming back to the Council at its May meeting with further recommendations.

8. Pr. Blair's Report. A. He presented the draft Compensation Guidelines and led a serious discussion concerning the issue of clergy compensation. Liz moved to approve these guidelines for presentation to the Synod Assembly for final approval, and Diane seconded the motion. The Council approved.

B. He presented Pr. Ken Schumann's retirement request. Robert moved that the request be approved, with a second from Eileen. The Council agreed.

9. Peggy's LEAD Report. Peggy's report reminded us that, if we ever needed a "poster child" for the importance/value of a strategic plan, LEAD, which was born out of our current strategic plan, fulfilled that need. She noted that there had been more hits on LEAD's Ten-Minute Toolbox over the past six months than over the entire life of LEAD before then. LEAD is now involved with congregations from five synods other than our synod. She noted that she will make personal visits to the assemblies of four synods (ours, SE Michigan, New England, and North Carolina) and video presentations at four others (SW Texas, SE Minnesota, SE Iowa, and Delaware-Maryland).

9. Pastor Chris' Report. Pr. Chris was in Louisiana, and so his report was presented by Bishop Mike. As regards the pilot project in which we are involved,

he noted that, like the other pilot synods, we are finding that the process is more quick and efficient in getting funding to new missions and redevelopments, less paperwork/bureaucracy, more collegial engagement among mission leaders in the pilot synods, and reimagining training for leaders. In sum, our experience with this project has been quite positive.

10. Diane moved we adjourn, and Kathy seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

C. John Turnquist

Secretary