

SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Present

The Rev. Albert Ahlstrom
The Rev. William Baum
Bishop Stephen P. Bouman
Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer
Ms. Christine Connell, DM
Ms. Maria del Toro
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann
The Rev. Kathleen Koran
Mr. John Litke, Vice President
Dr. Earl Marsan
The Rev. Annemarie Noto, PhD
Mr. Patrick O'Brien
Ms. Beverly Small
Ms. Marion Steadman
Ms. Sharon Wilson

Absent

The Rev. James Anderson
Mr. William Anderson
The Rev. Edward Barnett
Mr. Leonard Bartkus
Mr. Carl Blomke
Mr. Alan Chen
The Rev. James Krauser

Ms. Christina Lord-Barry
The Rev. Fred McElderry
Mr. John Vercelletto
Mr. Jonathan Westerlund

NEWLY ELECTED

Present

Ms. Hope Card
Mr. Gerald Erikson
Mr. Gene Hügel
The Rev. Perry Kirschbaum
Ms. Minerva Melendez
Mr. Hans Vogel
Ms. Renee Wicklund

Absent

Dcn Charles Germain
The Rev. Robert Schoepflin

STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Gary Mills
Ms. Joanne Strunck

AUXILIARY REPRESENTATIVES

Judge Daniel Joy, Lutheran Men in Mission
Ms. Delores Gray, Women of the ELCA

(Outgoing members of synod council had voice but no vote)

- I. CALL TO ORDER Vice President Litke
- II. DEVOTIONS Bishop Stephen P. Bouman
- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved with minor modifications

- IV. MINUTES, May 9, 2006, consideration of

The minutes were accepted as submitted, with one adjustment – to correct the spelling of Ms. Delores Gray's first name.

V. REPORT OF THE BISHOP

A. Comments on issues of the wider church, synod, congregations, and the public arena

The bishop made his comments during the orientation of synod council preceding the business meeting.

B. Mission Development Board (MDB)

1. New Hope, Valley Stream. (**Exhibit A**)

Bishop Bouman gave a brief history of St. Paul and Trinity Lutheran Churches in Valley Stream and how they became one congregation called New Hope. (The merger is not yet official.) There is \$400,000 disparity between the amount of money the synod originally promised to them and the amount they need. MDB proposes that the synod loan them the \$400,000, but Valley Stream has requested that consideration be postponed until the September synod council meeting. Exhibit A includes the original proposal, a second proposal, and the MDB proposal.

C. Reports on Congregations

1. Epiphany, Hempstead.

Bishop Bouman gave a brief review of the conflict and the consultation process at Epiphany. The Consultation Committee reviewing the situation is composed of Mr. James Paul, Esq, the Rev. Betsy Diver, and the Rev. David Rommereim.

2. St. John's Bronx.

The bishop gave a brief review of the ongoing conflict at St. John's. More recently, the congregation installed a pastor who is not rostered with the ELCA. The bishop has requested nullification of the installation. Synod administration has already been imposed but St. John's has not complied with requests to turn over the books and the keys. A law suit to enforce synod administration will be filed in about 2 weeks. Bishop Bouman cautioned synod council not to comment on this case but to refer inquiries to the Office of the Bishop. Bishop Bouman recalled the important historic significance of this congregation and the importance of its ministry in the Bronx.

3. Ascension, Glendale.

Mr. Litke reported that Ascension has been in dispute for a long time and is a candidate for synodical administration. He reviewed the pending appeal and said that a special synod council meeting may be scheduled to discuss this situation. Documents will be sent by overnight mail to synod council members prior to this

meeting and can not be shared with anyone. Synod Council was asked to hold September 6 open for this special meeting .

4. Merger of St. Mark, Ridge and Hope, Selden. The bishop reviewed the demise of St. Mark's and its merger with Hope Selden, which is now complete.

D. Calls

ACTION (SC006:7/1) RESOLVED that the following two calls be approved by synod council

1. **The Rev. Carol Fryer to serve as Vice-Pastor (associate) at Saint Peter's Lutheran Church for a period of two years, effective September 1, 2006**
2. **The Rev. Elena Perez to serve as Synod Latino Missioner, effective September 1, 2006, for a period of one year.**

ADOPTED

E. Town Hall Meetings (**Exhibit B**)

Town Hall meetings have been planned in response to ACTION (SC06:1/1) from the January synod council meeting, which called on the synod to "devise and implement a program to improve its communication and relationship with its congregations..." as a prerequisite to a future capital campaign. These meetings are being set up by Ms. Sarah Gioe and will be conducted by Pastor Bob Wollenburg. Bishop Bouman asked synod council members to encourage people to attend. The agenda is on the MNYS website.

F. Staff reports

VI. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Mr. Robert Buescher

Mr. Buescher drew council's attention to the documents they received by email, including a Summary of Significant Items (**Exhibit C**), Balance Sheet – All Funds (**Exhibit D**), Operating Fund Summary Final (**Exhibit E**) and mission support documents (**Exhibit F**). Mission support continues to lag.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Resolutions for synodical administration

1. Good Shepherd Bayside. Mr. Litke reported that Good Shepherd passed a resolution to be placed under synodical administration while in the process of

closing. See **Exhibit G** for the full resolution.

ACTION (SC06:7/2) RESOLVED that the Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod shall apply synodical administration over Good Shepherd and shall take charge and control of the property of Good Shepherd to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod and shall administer synodical administration to Good Shepherd and its members.

ADOPTED (Yes 18; No 0)

2. St. Luke, Brooklyn. Mr. Litke reported that St. Luke's owes its pastor over \$100,000. The present conditions there have deteriorated to the point they can not sustain themselves. See **Exhibit H** for the full resolution.

ACTION (SC06:7/3): RESOLVED that the Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod shall apply synodical administration to St. Luke's and shall take charge and control of the property of St. Luke's to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod and shall administer synodical administration to St. Luke's and its members

ADOPTED (Yes 19; No 0)

ACTION (SC06:7/4): RESOLVED that St. Luke's and the Synod shall form a Joint Planning Team to develop and mutually agree, by September 30, 2006 upon a plan for the resolution of the difficulties at St. Luke's, and be it

RESOLVED that the Office of the Bishop be authorized to appoint persons to represent the Synod on the Joint Planning Team and be it

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee of the Synod Council be empowered to take any and all steps between Synod Council meetings relating to this process of and for synod administration.

ADOPTED (Yes 19; No 0)

3. St. Paul, Richmond Hill.

Mr. Litke reported that this is a weak and vulnerable congregation eager to be rid of its property burdens and open to a merger with St. John's, Richmond Hill; but the synod wants to make sure that whatever happens is done in a strategic way that benefits the whole church. Synodical administration will give the congregation the space to make its own decisions. See **Exhibit I** for the full resolution.

ACTION (SC06:7/5): RESOLVED, that the Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod shall apply synodical administration over St. Paul's and shall take charge and control of the property of St. Paul's to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod and shall administer synodical administration to St Paul's and its members.

ADOPTED (Yes 19; No 0)

B. Holy Trinity, Hollis (**Exhibit J**).

Bishop Bouman reviewed the history of Holy Trinity and its current situation. Synodical administration was imposed a number of years ago. There has been unremitting financial pressure at the same time as the ministry and school have tried valiantly to become solvent. The community has worked hard with limited resources and keeping the school going has been a very passionate commitment for many. We have had two blue ribbon committees seeking solutions and have spent about one million dollars so far in this effort. **Exhibit J** includes three documents: a proposal from Holy Trinity for continuation, a report of the Mission Development Board, and a resolution for action. Mr. Buescher reviewed the financial situation and reported that the Mission Development Board did not feel hopeful that the situation could be turned around in the viable future. The Executive Committee forwarded the following resolution:

ACTION (SC06:7/6): RESOLVED that the Synod Council decline the proposal for continued operation, and move expeditiously, in good order, to cease operation of the Holy Trinity School no later than the end of the first trimester of the 2006-2007 school year; and be it further

RESOLVED that the synod begin the process of disposing of the property at the Hollis location and explore possibilities for the congregation's continued Word and Sacrament functions elsewhere.

There was considerable discussion, particularly around the relocation of the Swahili ministry, the possible relocation of the school, and the timing of the closing and its impact on families. The bishop pointed out that the Swahili community comes from throughout the five boroughs and could be relocated. Other schools in the general area were mentioned that might accommodate the approximately 100 students that have enrolled for the fall. Concern was expressed that adequate support be given to ease the transition for students, parents and staff. Bishop Bouman reviewed the process of reaching this agonizing decision, saying we love the ministry but have to look at the stark facts. We have to think about all of our other shared ministries and the limited resources the synod has to keep them all alive.

The following amendment was offered, to be placed between the two resolves:

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council ask the Bishop to convey the synod's sorrow at the necessity of this decision; provide whatever support may be possible to help families adjust; and express the synod's gratitude for the faithful Christian ministry of the Holy Trinity School;

M/S/P

Final resolution:

ACTION (SC06:7/6): RESOLVED that the Synod Council decline the proposal for continued operation, and move expeditiously, in good order, to cease operation of the Holy Trinity School no later than the end of the first trimester of the 2006-2007 school year; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council ask the Bishop to convey the synod's sorrow at the necessity of this decision; provide whatever support may be possible to help families adjust; and express the synod's gratitude for the faithful Christian ministry of the Holy Trinity School;

RESOLVED that the synod begin the process of disposing of the property at the Hollis location and explore possibilities for the congregation's continued Word and Sacrament functions elsewhere.

ADOPTED (Yes 18; No 0)

C. Partnership Grant recommendations. The source of money for all requests is the Mission Reinvestment Fund.

a. The Rev. Elena Perez (Kingston Latino Ministry) - \$13,775.

The bishop explained that the ministry Pastor Perez was leading in Kingston has been suspended. This request is part of the agreement to help Pastor Perez in the transition.

ACTION (SC06:7/7): RESOLVED that synod council approve the payment of \$13,775 as severance from Pastor Elena Perez's ministry in Kingston.

ADOPTED

b. The Rev. Elena Perez (Latino Missioner) - \$13, 775

ACTION (SC06:7/8): RESOLVED that the synod approve the payment of \$13,775 to support the ministry that Pastor Perez will conduct as missioner for the entire synod for one year, effective September 1, 2006.

ADOPTED

c. Iglesia Luterana Resurreccion - \$12,000

ACTION (SC06:7/9): RESOLVED that the synod council approve the payment of \$12,000 for interim housing for the Rev. Emilce Alguera for the remainder of 2006.

ADOPTED

The bishop explained that Pastor Alguera's husband was detained when he returned to his native country for a family emergency, and she is struggling to get by without his income.

- d. Latino Diakonia Program - \$5,550

ACTION (SC06:7/10): RESOLVED that the synod council approve the payment of \$5,550 for the Latino Diakonia Program.

ADOPTED

Bob Buescher explained that this would normally be part of the budget but did not make it into this year's budget. The Mission Development Board approved paying it for this year.

- e. Christ Lutheran Church in Freeport, Long Island, Latino ministry - \$5,000

ACTION (SC06:7/11): RESOLVED that the synod council approve the payment of \$5,000 to the Latino ministry at Christ/Cristo Lutheran Church in Freeport, Long Island for one year.

ADOPTED

Bishop Bouman explained that for many years the Latino ministry at Christ/Cristo was supported by the synod. They went independent on January 1, 2003, but recently several things have happened to put them into financial difficulty. This \$5,000 is intended to stabilize them. It is their desire to be financially independent from the synod.

- f. Trinity Lutheran Church, 100th Street, Manhattan, Latino ministry - \$5,000

ACTION (SC06:7/12): RESOLVED that synod council approve the payment of \$5,000 to the Latino ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church, 100th Street in Manhattan.

ADOPTED

Bishop Bouman explained that this money is for ministry called "Amigo en Pie", which is a ministry for and by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender homeless immigrants, some of whom are undocumented. It provides shelter every day all year, and also assists with legal advice, housing, and employment. The ministry lost some of its funding so this is a way to help them keep the program alive.

D. Housing Allowance

a. The Rev. Robert Wollenburg

ACTION (SC06:7/13): RESOLVED that synod council approve the change in 2006 housing allowance for the Rev. Robert Wollenburg from \$85,000 to \$74,000, effective January 1, 2006

ADOPTED

b. Ms. Mary Leake, AiM

ACTION (SC06:7/14) RESOLVED that synod council approve the 2006 housing allowance of \$15,000 for Ms. Mary Leake, AiM, effective January 1, 2006.

ADOPTED

Bishop Bouman explained that Ms. Leake, who serves as Director of Education at Holy Trinity School in Hollis, Queens, is an associate in ministry who was “grandfathered” onto the roster in 1988 with the formation of the ELCA. These AiMs are entitled to a housing allowance.

VIII. DEANS REPORT – no report

IX. YOUTH REPORT

The youth representative was not present, but Pastor Kathleen Koran reported briefly on the youth gathering in Texas and lifted up how wonderful it was. 15,000 people were present the first week and 8,000 of them were adults. The total number for both weeks was 26,000. They raised over one million dollars for the ELCA Hunger Appeal.

X. AUXILLARY ORGANIZATIONS

Women of the ELCA: Ms. Delores Gray reported on the events of WELCA and distributed their summer newsletter. She reminded synod council that some of the members have received anti-racism training and will be in contact with the bishop’s office about this.

XI. OTHER

Mr. Litke announced that the next regularly scheduled meeting will be on September 19. There is the possibility of a special meeting being called on September 6, as well, to address the appeal from Ascension Lutheran Church in Glendale. A majority needs to be present at the September 6 meeting.

Mr. Litke asked synod council to be prayerfully considering appropriate persons to serve on the Executive Committee; elections will be held at the September 19th meeting. The function of the Executive Committee is to advise the Office of the Bishop. The four officers automatically serve and four additional members of synod council are elected each September to serve a one year term.

XII. CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 3:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne P. Strunck
Administrative Assistant to the Bishop