

*MINUTES OF THE
SIXTEENTH REGULAR SYNOD ASSEMBLY OF THE
METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA*

**May 18-19, 2007
St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Huntington Station, New York**

***Living in God's Amazing Grace
Thanks Be to God***

***Friday, May 18, 2007
PLENARY SESSION I***

Following Morning Prayer and the Office for the Opening of an assembly, Bishop Stephen P. Bouman called the assembly to order at 10: 28am.

Bishop Bouman welcomed the assembly and called upon our host pastor the Rev. Frank Nelson who greeted the assembly in the name of the congregation.

Pr. Braithwaite gave the registration report.

She reported that as of 10:10am 359 voting members had registered, and that their names had been entered into the official register.

Clergy	135	38 %
Lay	215	60 %
AiM	<u>9</u>	2 %
Total	359	

The bishop called for the adoption of the registration report. Without objection it was adopted.

Bishop Bouman then made some introductions. Pr. Kenneth Olsen of the ELCA Board of Pensions was acknowledged. Each year a representative of the Board of Pensions is in attendance to answer meet with members of the plan and congregational leaders during the assembly.

Pr. David Anglada and Mr. John Litke of the Synod Staff were introduced as the hosts for the first plenary session.

Adoption of the Rules and Agenda

As the assembly proceeded to the adoption of the rules and agenda, Bishop Bouman welcomed once again parliamentarian, Ms. Dorothy Demarest.

The Rules of the Assembly are Continuing Resolutions of the synod. Ms. Demarest highlighted the provisions addressing the time limit on speakers to motions, the need to submit motions in writing and the deadline for new business to be submitted. She also explained the nature of unanimous consent and motion on the previous question. She gave particular attention the meaning of the motion to “postpone indefinitely” as this motion is a recommendation within the Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

The chair asked if there were any amendments to the rules. Pr. John Jurik [St. Stephen’s, Hicksville], chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, rose to offer a motion to suspend the usual rule of three minutes and limiting debate speeches to two minutes. The motion was seconded and without debate the question was put to a vote

**On the motion to suspend the usual rule
and limit speeches in debate to two minutes Adopted**

Turning to the agenda, the bishop called on Pr. Jurik to offer a motion related to the prepared agenda.

Friday May 18, 2007

- 8:30am Registration Opens
- 10:00am **Plenary Session I**
 - Morning Prayer and Opening of the Assembly
 - Preliminary Business
 - Welcome and Introductions
 - Report of Committee on Registration and Attendance
 - Rules of Procedure
 - Adoption of Agenda
 - Report of Reference & Counsel Procedures
 - Report of Nominations Committee
 - Floor Nominations
 - ELCA Representative
 - Synod Officers
 - Report of the Bishop Part 1
 - Mission Interpretation Moment – Project Connect
 - Announcements
 - Prayer
- 12:00pm Lunch
 - Forums
- 1:00pm **Plenary Session II**
 - Announcements
 - Prayer
 - Report of Synod Council
 - Mission Interpretation Moment – Asian Ministry
 - Report of the Treasurer
 - Auditor’s Report
 - 2008 Budget

Introduction of Synod Staff
 Mission Interpretation Moment – MNYS Immigration Task Force
 Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel
 Mission Interpretation Moment – Commission for Evangelical Outreach
 Report of the ELCA Representative Part 1
 Mission Interpretation Moment – Companion Synod
 North Western Diocese of Tanzania
 Tanzania Endowment
 Elections - First Ballot
 Report of the Bishop Part 2
 Greetings
 Announcements
 Prayer

5:45pm Dinner

7:30pm Festival Eucharist

Saturday May 19, 2007

7:30am Budget Discussion

8:00am Morning Prayer

8:35am **Plenary Session III**

Report of Committee on Registration and Attendance
 Elections – Results of First Ballot [Second Ballot]
 Report of the ELCA Representative Part 2
 Introductions of Pastors New to Synod Roster
 Introductions of Deacons New to Synod Roster
 Introductions of Candidates Approved for Ordained Ministry
 Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel
 Report on Town Hall Meetings
 Mission Interpretation Moment – Zion Lutheran Church, Manhattan
 Greetings
 The Lutheran Magazine
 Consideration of 2008 Budget
 Mission Interpretation Moment – Hunger Committee
 Announcements
 Prayer

12:05pm Lunch
 Forums

1:05pm Eucharist

2:15pm **Plenary Session IV**

Announcements
 Elections - Results of Second Ballot [Third Ballot]
 Mission Interpretation Moment – New Hope, Valley Stream
 Anniversaries
 Report of the Bishop Part 3
 Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel
 Report on the Report of the Bishop
 Report of Committee on Registration and Attendance

Announcements
Adjournment and Closing Order

Pr. Jurik, in order to facilitate the handling of resolutions in the Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, made a motion to designate Item C of the Report of the Reference and Counsel a “special order” consisting of 30 minutes of informal debate to be addressed at the beginning of their report on Saturday morning. There was no discussion.

**On the motion to create a “special order”
for the discussion of Item C in Plenary Session III** **Adopted**

He offered a second motion to make Item D the first order of business in the report of the committee on Friday afternoon.

To make Item D the first item in the report of the committee. **Adopted**

On the adoption of the Agenda as amended. **Adopted**

Continuing the introductions and welcome, the chair introduced Pr. Kathleen Koran [Trinity, Brewster] who was appointed to be the chaplain for the assembly. Pr. Koran indicated that the chapel would be available as a place for prayer for the duration of the assembly and that she would be available throughout the assembly for pastoral conversation and prayer. She requested our prayers for Jessie Ann awaiting a heart transplant.

Ms. Louise Litke, chair of the assembly planning committee, was introduced. The bishop also thanked the people of Christ, East Northport, who assembled the packets.

Ms. Litke acknowledged the assistance of the members of the planning committee Pr. Rosalind Braithwaite, Mrs. Margaret Schuffenhauer, Mr. Walter Schuffenhauer, Pr. Kathleen Koran, Mr. John Litke, Pr. Frank Nelson, Deacon Roberta Paulik, and Pr. Kipp Zimmermann.

Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel – Procedures

Pr. John Jurik was introduced as the chair of Reference and Counsel. Pr. Jurik reviewed the materials in their report and how they would be addressed.

A particular item in their report addressed a resolution on the call process. Pr. James Krauser, Secretary of the Synod and Pr. Diane Loufman of the Synod Staff were called upon to give some background on the call process resolution.

Pr. Krauser told the assembly that it will be asked to do two things, the first would be to adopt a continuing resolution to our governing documents and the second would be to give its endorsement of the policy as presented.

Pr. Loufman highlighted some of the essential features of the proposed policy. She addressed some of the new nomenclature of “transitional ministry”, as well as the terms “oversight pastor,” “discernment pastor,” term-call and “intentional interim” She noted the references in the policy to the financial disclosure required of congregations in the call process.

The policy provides for

- continuous pastoral coverage of congregations in transition
- call committee training
- clarifies the circumstances under which transitional ministers might be available for call.

Nominations and Elections

Mr. James Steipp [Immanuel, Kingston], chair of the elections committee, was called upon to describe the conduct of the election for a replacement voting member (clergy) to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly in Chicago.

Five nominations were submitted in advance of the assembly:

- Pr. Katrina D. Foster [Fordham, Bronx]
- Pr. James A. Klockau [Grace, Malverne]
- Pr. Garry W. Squire [Messiah, Staten Island]
- Pr. Eric Swensson [Holy Trinity, New Rochelle]
- Pr. Diane Wildow [Zion (4th Ave.), Brooklyn]

The chair asked if there were further nomination from the floor.

Pr. Phyllis Haynes [St. Paul's, Narrowsburg] was nominated by Pr. Betsy Diver.

Pr. Marva Jenkins [Epiphany, Laurelton] was nominated by Pr. William Clark.

There being no others, nominations were declared closed.

Bishop Bouman gave a brief introduction of Ms. Lita B. Johnson, who was the ELCA representative to the 2007 synod assembly. He then acknowledged the other officers of the synod: Mr. Hans Vogel, Vice president; the Rev. James G. Krauser, Secretary; and Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer.

Report of the Bishop - Part 1

Dreams of My Granddaughter

1. Silly Love Songs

Have you noticed how a love song can define a decade? Think of the song, "*Tammy's in Love*," and it immediately evokes the perceived innocence of high school romance in the fifties. In the sixties, the era of the "love generation" perhaps Jackie De Shannon's "*What the World Needs Now is Love, Sweet Love*," or the Beatles' "*All You Need is Love*" could serve as emblems of that decade of idealism. The seventies, a more cynical time, could be represented by Steve Stills: "*If You Can't Be With the One You Love, Love the One You're With*." The 80's, the "Me Decade," is well represented by Tina Turner: "*What's Love Got To Do With It?*" The nineties was filled with millennial malarkey on the eve of the 2000s. For me the unbearable Celine Dion song from the movie Titanic, "*My Heart Will Go On*," is a love song for passage into the y2k murky new millennium. Is there a love song for this unfinished decade? That's up to us.

Think about the persistence of love across the decades, across the generations. Think about what we hope for, why we go to church. Think of the love which flowed over decades and centuries to form this moment in your life. When I attend anniversaries of our congregations I think about love made real in the concrete of church buildings, the food-stained undercroft floors, the Sunday School flannel graph boards depicting Jesus stories now in storage, the choir robes and organ music, the ringing bells and stained glass windows. Two Sundays ago at St. Jacobus in Woodside, Queens, a church built by German immigrants, I asked: "what did they dream about one hundred

and forty years ago when a small group of believers gathered for the first worship in a rented hall in Middle Village? Did they dream of you? What do we dream about as we celebrate today? Do we dream about the faithful who will come after us, one hundred forty years from now? If so, what are we doing about it?"

What are we dreaming about as we gather here today, recipients of the great corporate love bequeathed to us in our families, congregations, synod? What will our legacy be? What are your dreams for your grandchildren or the children who touch your life? What do you dream for the next generations? On Palm Sunday I baptized Sophia Grace Bouman and my dreams for the next generations became as concrete and literal as the squalling flesh of my flesh in my arms.

Our culture does not support, as in a former time, the giving of this faith across the generations, the churchgoing of our children and grandchildren. We remember the times of Blue Laws on Sunday, released time from public school for religious instruction. How many of you remember the anniversary day Sunday School parades in Brooklyn and Queens? In a former time the ontological church showed up when the sun rose. We learned Bible and catechism by heart, we knew on our lips and in our heart the language and rhythms of the liturgy and the church year. How will we share our faith in these latter days, and how will the grandchildren of our generation learn to sing the love songs of Jesus? The sharing of the faith, the spiritual legacy of which we are stewards, these are matters of love.

And here is where I need to say a word of admiration for the congregations of our synod. From time to time folks say to me something like: "we like the stories you tell of congregations doing extraordinary things, but don't forget us ordinary, garden variety Lutheran churches either." I don't. I preached or visited about eighty congregations this past year (about what I average each year) and I can tell you this: in our metropolis, in this post modern age, there are no garden variety ministries. Each is unique, heroic, a miracle. You, your leaders and your pastors are faithfully carrying on the mission of the church in the midst of the cultural challenges I have listed, in the midst of increasing economic pressure. But I come away from each visit with something to admire, something for which I give thanks to God. When I visit the focus is not on the difficulties we all face. "Tell me something good about our church!" is what you are looking for. You gladly hear of what the Lord is doing in Tanzania, in our seminaries, across town and around the corner. Thank you for your faithful part in the great love song of Christ's Body in the world.

You cannot have the Great Commission without the Great Commandment.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34,35)

The occasion for giving this new commandment of a legacy of love was the upper room where Jesus showed that love was more than, in the words of one song, more than "Just a Four Letter Word." He got down on his knees and washed the feet of those he loved. He then went out into the night into the "glory" of his love. At the cross Love gave its life for the life of the world. At the empty tomb Love was given new life. The death and resurrection of Jesus is our legacy of love.

2. The Great "Hand-Me-Down" of Love

For the Apostle Paul the legacy of love is a matter of receiving and giving.

"Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries... For what do you have that you did not receive?" (I Cor. 4:1, 7)

"For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (I Cor. 11:23-26)

“For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures....last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me....” (1 Cor. 15:3,4,8)

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:13-16)

We are always receiving and handing down. Discipleship, Bible study, evangelism, stewardship, theological education, church and synod budgets, leadership development, youth and family ministry, immigration outreach and ministry “in the breach,” liturgy, witness, *Diakonia*, all of it is a matter of receiving and giving. The life of the church in Christ is an extended love song with a sense of gratitude to our grandparents and dreams of our grandchildren. In this assembly you will hear from Dan Lehmann, editor of *The Lutheran*. He will tell us about an edition of the magazine, “*The Little Lutheran*,” which is a tool for parents and grandparents to hand down the extended love song of faith to the next generation.

I want to say a word here about a new ministry in our synod called Mission Interpretation. This is a ministry of telling stories. Receiving and handing down means telling of the faith, life and ministries that span broadly across the church. We hand down our faith by sharing our stories. Just as Luke talks about setting down “an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,” we also strive to make our stories known.

Stories like this one from Our Savior’s, Port Washington, Long Island. A family shared a legacy with their congregation in a will. The congregation used this legacy handed down to create ministry. They bought a house down the block from the church and resolved to house homeless refugees from the Katrina floods in New Orleans. They organized an interfaith coalition in the community. This legacy received from the Lord by the Clark family, and handed down by them to the congregation, galvanized a community and provided healing and hope to the most vulnerable. I will never forget processing from the church with Pastor Vogeley and the members and interfaith neighbors of Our Savior’s, marching down the street and into the home for the dedication. Light from a fire truck illumined the way. Neighbors lined the streets. A legacy got legs and the faith was received and handed down on the streets of Port Washington.

3. A Ten Year Fiscal Plan And a Future At Risk

When you make your personal decisions about your use of the resources God has given you what do you dream? In your congregations as you prepare your budgets what love song is on your heart? Who do we see when we decide as a synod how we will make use of the gifts of God’s people, our collective legacy? What drives our life together and its attendant decisions and priorities? Survival or resurrection? Fear or faith? Nightmares of present death and stagnation or dreams of grandchildren and the next generations? Our individual limitations or our collective giftedness? Do we believe that our loaves and fishes are powerful, that they count in the great hand-me-down of faith?

Under the direction of our financial management committee and our treasurer we now have a ten year financial plan. We have a handle on the implications of our decisions. We know that decisions we make - or don’t make - today will resonate ten years from now. If we do this, then that will happen or not happen ten years from now. These are some of the facts of our current fiscal situation as a synod.

- Ø Our mission support has declined steadily the past ten years. In the last three years mission support has dropped an average of \$60k per year which represents an eleven percent drop in that period.
- Ø Five years ago we received over \$500k from the national church in support of shared ministries (salaries for mission pastors, support for ministries with people in poverty, new mission starts) and our synod budgeted about \$75k for these ministries. This past year we

received about \$215k for these ministries and last year spent \$380k of synod resources and were budgeted to spend up to \$400k this year. Our compassion and commitment to the needs of these shared ministries compelled us to try to compensate for the decisions by our national church, and to spend more than we would have.

- Ø The resources the synod uses to make up that difference come from several sources, including sale of closed churches. When a church closes, ten per cent of the resources received go to a direct tithe to the ELCA or other wider ministries. Sixty percent goes to the Mission redevelopment Fund for partnership grants, new starts, investment in our future by providing a growing fund for continuing support. Thirty percent goes to a fund to support the remainder of the operations and attendant programs for which staff is responsible. One example of the fruits of the Mission Reinvestment Fund would be in Valley Stream, where St. Paul's was closed and their members joined with Trinity. Resources from the sale going to the Mission Reinvestment Fund have created a strong ministry, new outreach and great hope for a legacy of mission in the future. It was my pleasure to participate in the dedication of the renewed facilities and ministries, including rapidly growing early childhood programs for the community. Where there were two struggling churches there is now one strong, well resourced and growing congregation, New Hope Lutheran Church in Valley Stream.
- Ø The ten year plan revealed that if we continued to spend assets from closed congregations at the rate projected for these shared ministries we will have burned through them all by the end of ten years.
- Ø To summarize, our largest fiscal challenges: precipitous decline in mission support from our congregations; decline of 50% in the support for shared ministries in the past five years from the ELCA; a spending of our legacy assets for the many missions of our synod, at a rate which would diminish them over the next ten years. Currently mission support only funds about sixty five percent of our budget.

4. A Ten Year Fiscal Plan as Legacy for the Future

This is some of the context for the recent feasibility study for a possible capital campaign, and the town hall meetings which ensued. It is clear that these are fiscal realities we must face together. What place does love play in the hard decisions in front of us? Where do dreams of our grandchildren, the next generation, fit in? How will our synod's ability to help struggling and vulnerable congregations, new ministries, welcoming the stranger, and the many other communal ministries resonate in this harsh reality? Two assemblies ago I shared the over sixty ministries to new immigrants, among the poor, and with struggling churches and said that I would not balance the synod budget on their backs. You applauded. What now? Is our song now "What's love got to do with it?" in a Darwinian ecclesiology of survival of the fittest? Or will our song be "what wondrous love is this..." as we turn to the one who gave his life for our soul?

Here is how we plan to address the issues in front of us. It is a matter of receiving and handing on, of basic trust in the generosity of God and in the power of our life together in His name. If we have the discipline and collective resolve to work on the following things, then we will see our grandchildren, the next generation of the Lutheran community in New York as we leave a legacy of faith for the future.

- Ø We must go back to basics and not look for the quick fix. Basic for Lutheran congregations is mission support and for Lutheran Christians is stewardship, receiving and handing down. This means that we will teach Biblical principles of stewardship to our people: first fruits giving, continual growth in giving, a goal in giving such as a tithe, all motivated by gratitude for God's grace and blessings through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Congregations and their leaders will model that by placing their collective life on the altar through regular corporate mission support to the wider church. For the past two years, each Lent I have met with our pastors in every conference for communal leadership, support and accountability in this. An important part of stewardship is mission interpretation: helping people understand what it is their offerings are funding. What a spiritual blessing it would be if we reversed our plummet in mission support, if we began to grow, even a little. Guilt, fear, resentment, will not get us there. What is called for is corporate love, with an eye to our grandchildren.

- Ø We must control expenses. We are doing that in the synod office. We now have a performance based budget management, with every line item attached to a responsible staff person. We track budget variances. For the past two years we have spent under budget and last year showed a modest operating surplus. We will continue to look for other ways to cut back expenses, including staff.
- Ø We must cease the rate at which we are using the resources of our congregation legacies, and discipline ourselves in spending today what will not be there tomorrow. It is the painful lesson we are learning as we care for the earth and face challenges of unbridled environmental consumption with no thought for our grandchildren. This means that I have agreed with the financial management committee to limit synod mission support grants to \$200k per year. Remember last year was \$384k. More than \$400k was anticipated this year. We received proposals of over \$1.3 million this past year. We all took the hard medicine. The Mission Planning Team conducted training in writing mission proposals, reviewed every proposal and responded to every proposal individually. We sent a spending plan to the synod council of \$230k. Every proposal granted funding will be evaluated according to the goals it has set for its ministry. Every proposal is for one year only and multi year proposals must still apply each year. What we have discovered is that we are much more strategic in our mission grants, and much more mutually accountable in our partnerships. We are helping those we could not fund to find other means of support and partnership. If we can stick to the discipline of \$200k per year for these mission partnership grants, then in ten years we will have built something like a foundation where the interest can help build the annual infrastructure for the next generation of our Lutheran witness.

These will be the ways in which we receive and hand on the love song of our life together to our grandchildren:

- Growth in stewardship and mission support;
- Living frugally within the synod budget and spending plan;
- Restraint in strategic mission grants;
- Growing the parish legacies for the future.

5. A Love Song, At the End of the Day

There is more to be said, but time is moving on. As Yogi Berra said: “it gets late early around here.” The Conference of Deans, the Mission Development Board, the Commission for Evangelical Outreach are all ways in which we are working together to help congregations and ministries strengthen their mission and strategies for the future. The network of mission interpreters is lifting up stories of how God is working through our parishes and connecting us to ministries happening around the globe. The Youth and Family Ministry Task Force and the Immigration Task Force are helping our synod to grow ministry and outreach for the church today with an eye to the future. It is helping us add new voices to the great love song of Christ’s Body on earth.

When I walk the halls cradling my granddaughter, Sophia Grace, in my arms, rocking her gently as I try to put her to sleep, I sing love songs to her. They are songs I sang to my children because they are songs my grandmother and my parents sang to me when they put me to bed, told me stories and heard my prayers. It is a primal act to sing our love to our kin, as deep as Mary and her *Magnificat* sung to her baby. “Now rest beneath night’s shadow,” I sing. “I am Jesus little lamb, ever glad at heart I am...” “Jesus Savior wash away....”

Looking into her drowsy eyes watching me sing, the idea of a legacy, of bequeathing something, seems like a life worth living. As my cousin Walter Bouman was dying he preached for the last time at Trinity Seminary where he taught for many years. He turned to the songs of his own mother and grandmother. In the sermon he said: “When I first returned home from the hospital I prayed each night that God would not let me wake up in this world. But then Anna Madsen sent me an email saying, “Don’t you dare die until I get to Columbus.” When Anna talks even God listens. So I stopped praying that prayer. Instead I have turned to a prayer sung to me as a child in German. “*Breit aus die Fluegel beide, O Jesu meine Freude, and nimm dein Kuechlein ein.*” My

own rough translation is “Spread out both of your wings, Oh Jesus, my Joy, and gather in your little chick.”

And I sing to Sophia Grace the English translation of that song sung to me as a child, a love song which goes:

*“Lord Jesus, who does love me, / Oh, spread your wings above me, / And shield me from alarm,
Though evil would assail me/ Thy mercy will not fail me, / I rest in thy protecting arm.”*

To keep that love song going, that is why we are here today in the name of Jesus.

Stephen Paul Bouman

Following the bishop’s report he assembly rose to sing; *“What Wondrous Love is This.”*

Mission Interpretation Moment – Project Connect

Pr. Katrina Foster [Fordham, Bronx] spoke to how to minister to younger members in addressing their call to baptism. She told the assembly that the average of a seminarian today is 38 and the average age of the pastors of the church is now 58. She reminded members that we need to find ways to encourage young persons to consider ministry as a response to the call to baptism. She asked pastors and other to consider becoming “discernment advocates.” She then described the discernment events held each year.

Following her remarks, Pr. Wollenburg described Pr. Foster’s recent work at Fordham in the area of stewardship. The Rev. Dr. Edward Kruse, the ELCA Director of Stewardship was introduced to present a stewardship award for the remarkable increase in stewardship at Fordham Lutheran Church over the last 12 years.

He thanked the assembly for the generous giving of our congregations for giving to missions. He said that there is an increasing trend in legacies and bequests being received by congregations. He underscored Bishop Bouman’s remarks about the importance of mission interpretation in inspiring people with the Gospel so that they feel better about their church, more interested in being part of their congregation, and their giving goes up as well. He told the assembly that Pr. Foster explained her approach this way, “In order to be a leadership in stewardship, she had to get her own stewardship in order.” He said she that speaks of stewardship as “the giving of time and gifts as discipleship in Jesus Christ. This is where stewardship begins.”

Dr. Kruse presented the Dr. Richard L. Peterman Good Steward Award and a check for \$500.00 to Pr. Foster and Fordham Lutheran Church. Bishop Bouman also presented an award on behalf of our synod.

Pr. Foster gave a brief response thanking Bishop Bouman, Pr. Wollenburg for their leadership, and Pr. Rip Hoffman for teaching her the language of stewardship. She also thanked the congregation and its treasurer, Savita Randhanie, and Orlando Torres, who have given leadership in stewardship in the congregation, in committing themselves to tithing.

Following announcements and prayer by the chaplain, the assembly recessed for lunch at 12.07p.m.

Friday, May 18, 2007
PLENARY SESSION II

The second plenary session was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Bishop Stephen P. Bouman followed by prayer from the chaplain.

Ms. Louise Litke chair of the Assembly Planning Committee and Mr. Tony Aguilar of the Synod Staff were identified as the hosts for the second session.

Report of the Synod Council

Mr. Hans Vogel, vice president of the synod, was called upon to give the report of the synod council.

Observing “We are the synod” he addressed himself to the theme of “Doing the Windows,” meaning that as we live together in partnership our daily calling is to attend to attend to the essential tasks of the life of the church. Raising up leaders, ministry with youth, with the elderly, ministries of healing, partnerships with social ministry organizations such as our nursing homes, the Seafarer’s House, the ELCA mission endowment fund, our companion synod in Tanzania. “To do the synod’s work,” he reminded the assembly, “we need the support of congregations and individuals, from the east end of Long Island to the Catskills.”

Mission Interpretation Moment

Ms. Lily Wu of the Synod Staff gave a brief report on the Asian ministries of the synod. She reported the first Asian Gospel Song Contest was held in the last year.

Treasurer’s Report

Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer of the synod gave his report, which included a review of the auditor’s report.

I am pleased to be with this assembly again, and talk about our financial status and fiscal activity. Overall, our financial condition is healthy – but it is guarded, and unless we act in certain areas, we will not be able to maintain that health. The Bishop has already taken some steps that are salutary, but to remove the dark clouds requires more from the synod staff, AND from you, the owners of the synod. What I am going to describe is sort of like “over-fishing.” We can catch all the fish we want today, but by doing so we can destroy the source for the future. I hope today to help you understand our status, and what is being done, and what needs to be done, to make our long term outlook as bright as it should be.

I plan to discuss this in three areas.

- n 2006 Results and Independent Audit
- n The Newest 10 Year Financial Plan
- n The Proposed 2006 Synod Budget

2006 Results and Independent Audit

First, the Audit for 2006. The complete Report of Independent Certified Public Accountants is printed on pages C-1 to C-23 of the Pre-Assembly Report. You may note that once again we have been given a “clean” opinion as to our books, and they were able to complete their work promptly,

due in large part, to the processes we have in place, and availability of data. There are several significant features that point to our health in 2006.

The good news is that the assets of the synod have remained stable between 2005 and 2006 at roughly \$14 million. The bad news is that the assets are composed of three elements property, investments and cash. We now show more value is related to properties, but at the expense of cash and investment assets. That means that we have fewer assets on which investment income can help us pay our expenses. Remember this thought, since it is one of the “black clouds on our horizon.”

Our total expenses, which were higher than earlier years, have leveled, as shown in the Auditor’s Report for 2005 and 2006. This attests to the fact that we are under tighter cost control. The Annual Operating Deficit has had some annual reductions, even the modest surplus in 2006, but the Auditor’s Report also shows that we have not “paid back” the cumulative deficits of recent years.

So, how would I summarize our financial results of 2006? The best news is that we have continued to generate reliable data on current activity, and much more clearly understand the elements and processes that cause us concern, and identify those that point us to stability and greatness.

The 10 Year Financial Plan

It is clear that one of our trouble spots is the continued decline of Mission Support from the congregations. I would hope that each of you remember that the congregations, which means *you*, **are the synod**. You own the synod, you elect its officers and the Synod Council, you control it, and you are indeed responsible for its existence and stable operation.

I’m sure you appreciate the difficult we have in proposing a budget that will ultimately show a surplus when the Mission Support income is not assured. Further more, the Financial Management Committee has to propose a 2008 budget today, when the results of 2006 are just in, and only a handful of congregational commitments are in our hands even for 2007.

Furthermore, a study made of your parochial reports for past years, shows that congregations have been giving less of their gifts from parishioners to the work of their “child,” the synod. Although, it is not our intent to embarrass any of you, we have published each congregation’s record of submitting parochial reports, and your Mission Giving on pages C-30 to C-35 of the Pre-Assembly Report. Also, on pages C-24 to C-29 are the results you produced in your parochial reports about the percentage of your own income that you pass on to the work of the church at large through the synod. If you are not up to date on submittal of commitments for 2007, or parochial reports for 2006, you can correct that.

Meanwhile, as Mission Support income has declined, other sources of income to the synod are drying up. The ELCA has recognized that it cannot spend what it does not have, and, like the synod has become more discriminate in its spending, and unfortunately, more frugal with gifts or financial support to synods and congregations.

Recalling the drop in Mission Support we receive, you may note that only 5 years ago the total giving through the synod was \$1.6 million, and is now below \$1.4 million, a drop of 13%; and that’s not adjusted for inflation.

We have not lowered our spending fast enough to keep up with declining income. In fact, we have been increasingly funding needs for Partnership Grants and New Starts dramatically. So guess what? If our income is dropping, and our expenses increasing, that’s certainly a recognizable recipe for disaster. We may have been in denial about this for years --each year spending our “seed corn” because we were not aware of it, or we chose to be oblivious to the consequences. How have we kept solvent in the past? Simple, we have regularly tapped the perceived abundance of investment cash to make up the difference.

I should mention here that we have been accused by some as “selling properties to remain solvent.” I think that statement does a disservice to our actions where the synod has tried to maintain the gifts and services it felt were our mandates from our congregations (that’s all of us)

and reacting to our compassions for the needs which led to a rationale that stated simply “as long as we have assets we should spend them.” There was even a warm feeling that we were doing the right thing. But, frankly, we **were** selling assets from our property holdings to remain solvent!

The fact remains that we must now recognize that we are eating our seed corn (that’s a Midwestern analogy that seems appropriate). We must focus on the longer range necessity for existence and growth, and be frugal and selective in what we spend. As to the reduction of grants from ELCA, I would like to say charitably, that we were trying to **make up** for the lower gift level from the ELCA, but their action was not a suggestion that we replace their role. But it did tug on our heartstrings when we continued to see tremendous needs. We have recognized that we have not been doing a great job of trying to make judicious yet compassionate decisions about where the needs are the greatest and affordable. We are leaning to do better.

I should point out that a process for the review of partnership grant requests has been developed over the past two years that addresses that issue, and although it means we have to say “no” to many, we are better stewards of the funds you have entrusted to our care and use. While we have “hidden” our income/spending gap, we have spent limited funds from the sale of properties, a practice that cannot be ever continually expanding. In fact, without some other solutions in place, starting NOW, we will not survive 10 years with current trends.

So, the Bishop and his staff have developed this current 10 year plan, an improvement over the one first issued last year, which faces the problem of Mission Support head on, as the chief financial motor that should drive us. Not that the synod can act as an assessor, but that I help congregations improve their own congregational giving, as well as recognizing its obligations to improve support of the whole Church. The 10 year plan, therefore does not call for a dramatic and rapid increase in Mission Support. In fact, it calls for 2007 to be a year when the dragon of decline is slain, and increases come slowly after that. Our problem is not only restoring decreasing revenue, it’s also reducing expenditures. The plan brings partnership grants and funding of new starts back to 2005 levels. This is, in addition to keeping the other operating activities of the synod at a frugal level, and continually seeking savings in the process.

Here are the salutary results of both modest growth in Mission Support and limiting spending on grants and new starts:

- n We can allow grants to grow modestly, and support investments in new starts at a relatively high level. Both require a high degree of analysis, selectivity and conscientious effort by the Mission Development Board, the Mission Planning Team, and the bishop and his staff, not to diminish the role of the synod Council, who finally must approve each project.
- n We will continue to have a sizeable fund balance in our Mission Redevelopment Fund, which supports the above. AND
- n We will re-grow our investment account and benefit from the increased investment income it will generate.

We will NOT be able to completely exist on Mission Support alone, at least not with the modest growth anticipated, and we will continue to use some internal funds, including proceeds from the sale of properties. This should not be a troublesome thought, since I would define any of the other work of the synod just as important as supporting partnership grants or investing in new starts; all of which may require expending internal funds, including proceeds from sales.

These are the premises of the 10 year plan:

- n **Resolve to make mission support at top priority**
- n **Limit spending from mission development fund and elsewhere**
- n **Help congregations see their responsibility**
- n **Help congregations realize their potential in giving to the wider church and grow financially stronger.**

The Bishop and his staff have already discussed these premises with all of the committees, the Conference of Deans, and with pastors in breakfast and one-on-one meetings.

An analogy to the 10 year plan that comes to mind is that “when you find you are in a hole” the first step is to stop digging. We are doing that, although I hope we are not just using a smaller shovel. The real progress is restoring the chasm to level ground, and we have not seen much of that yet. **Your** determination to increase congregational giving, and to contribute more to the work of the church outside your own congregation, is required.

Proposed 2006 Synod Budget

We are always seeking to make our budget contain all elements of synodical activity, leaving none without identifying responsibility and holding the results to accountability. Making a comprehensive 10 year plan forces us to consider any activity that involves personnel effort, not to mention financial expenditure. The last two areas have not been specifically identified in prior budgets, and you should be aware of their significance, and included in our operating budget.

Properties Under Management is not just a “listing” of situations, but is a major activity effecting much time and effort of several of the synod staff. I fear such work may have been “under your radar” and not fully appreciated. Of the six properties shown as assets on our books, all require security, maintenance, and insurance; some require extensive repairs before they can be considered for sale. Nine other situations are congregations that have ceased operations, or require active consultation, organizational help, and, often, funds advanced to produce the most favorable outcome. Most requires some kind of financial support, but even that is overshadowed by the percentage of time that the Bishop and senior staff, as well as many other pastors and laymen in the synod devote to this area. There are more congregations that require attention by the Bishop and staff which only impact their time to attend to other matters, and may not involve funding.

The Financial Management Committee [FMC] feels this area is NOT a subject for the operating budget, since all of the financial dealings only effect the net value of the properties we own. But it is a monthly subject reviewed by the FMC, and has a budget of its own, which is regularly scrutinized.

New Starts, funded by the Mission Redevelopment Fund, from sales of properties is, however, an area that should be included in the operating budget, just as Partnership Grants have been for several years. Significant funds are utilized in this area. These are truly **investments in the future of the church**, and should be encouraged, nurtured, and often funded until they become self sufficient.

- Mission-Yonkers is currently funded by funds reserved from the sale of Christ-Yonkers years ago.
- Mission-Zion (Manhattan) is supported by the synod, the ELCA, and several other congregations in the synod where the plan is grow the congregation in an area with great promise, and to be come financially viable, and “pay back” much of the money that has been advanced.
- Mission-New Hope (Valley Stream) is a new start rising from the closing of St. Paul’s (Valley Stream) and merging with Trinity (Valley Stream) into the new entity which shows promise.

The others are relatively new, and represent opportunities for the synod to make rational investments in the future of the Church.

New Starts, after going through a process involving several advisory committees, are presented individually to the Synod Council for their consideration. You should be aware of the magnitude of this effort. I would estimate the Mission Development Board spends 70% of its consideration of Properties Under Management, situations that may be involved in congregations where that path is attempting to be avoided, and in consideration of progress of New Starts.

And although the Synod Council reviews and approves, modifies, or rejects any such project and its costs, it presents the last large area of effort that has not been in the operating budget before. You will see that the 2008 budget provision is proposed at \$700,000, and fully supported with income provided by the Mission Redevelopment Fund, as it has been in prior years.

The proposed budget is in the Pre-Assembly report. You will have the opportunity to meet with some of the members of the FMC and me at the Budget meeting.

Essential features of the 2008 Budget

- n Balanced – Projects “0” net income
- n Proposed Mission Support assumes the decline has stopped and growth is not yet evident
- n Expenses grow from \$3,646,000 to \$4,350,000, all \$700,000 of which is new starts

Don't simply think “ho hum” on this first feature. Remember that we are able to do that ONLY because we identify where the funds are coming from, and spending from some sources is not necessarily all that pleasant for our future. The second feature requires effort on your part to help us meet the 10 year plan of holding the line on Mission Support. The third item requires a great deal of continued effort on the part of the synod staff to hold overhead expenses to essentially zero growth: this is in the face of inflationary increases in many expenses that are not within the control of the staff.

You should know from where, and focus on, what amounts our internal funds are being applied to the 2008 proposed budget. Compared to 2006, the use of Mission Redevelopment Funds for New Starts is much lower. Mission Redevelopment Funds for Partnership Grants is down, and the use of sale proceeds for operations is similar. Meanwhile, we have additional unrestricted funds we can safely apply, and Designated Funds continue to be small.

Many of you ask “Where does our synod get its funding and where does the money go? Our funds come from two major sources: Internal Restricted and Designated Funds and from Mission Support. Other funds are not only small but are getting smaller. If congregations cannot stop Mission Support free-fall, more pressure will be on us to look to internal synod funds.

2008 Synod Revenue Sources

51 %	<i>Restricted & Designated Funds</i>	\$ 2,096,343
34 %	<i>Mission Support</i>	\$ 1,400,000
9 %	<i>Other [Interest, Sub-Leases, Fees]</i>	\$ 363,662
3 %	<i>ELCA Grants</i>	\$ 113,000
3 %	<i>Local Grants [LDRNY, Misc. Synod Funds]</i>	\$ 112,400

The largest revenue source breaks down as follows:

2008 Restricted and Designated Funds

33 %	<i>Designated for New Starts</i>	\$ 700,000
26 %	<i>Designated for Operations</i>	\$ 547,000
22 %	<i>Designated for Unrestricted [MNYS Fund]</i>	\$ 465,000
10 %	<i>Designated for Partnership Grants</i>	\$ 206,000
9 %	<i>Temporarily Restricted Funds [Urban Empowerment Fund, etc.]</i>	\$ 179,348

The largest of these is Designated for New Starts. The pleasant thought is that MOST of our internal funds are going to investing in situations that we hope will be our future; while making the most from other Designated and restricted and unrestricted funds.

Here is where our money goes:

2008 Synod Expenditures

43 %	<i>Grants and New Starts</i>	\$ 1,753,344
15 %	<i>ELCA [47% of Mission Support receipts]</i>	\$ 658,000
15 %	<i>Other Congregation Services [Candidacy, Vacancies, Retreats, Partnership Grants]</i>	\$ 611,205
14 %	<i>Outreach [Mission Director, Asian Ministries, Tanzanian Teachers and support]</i>	\$ 112,400
12 %	<i>Synod Wide Services [Grants to Seminary and Higher Education, Youth Ministries, commissions]</i>	\$ 484,713

It is surprising to many, as it first was to me, to focus on the fact that Grants and New Starts is almost half of our spending, and combined with other congregational services represents 53% of

our spending directly going BACK into the congregations. Even though we remit 47% of our Mission Support from you to the ELCA, that represents only 15% of our total expenses.

In conclusion, how is our financial health? We have learned that the situation of spending too much and having declining income is digging a hole, and prevents us from a bright future. We have taken steps to change that. But the jury is still out on our long term resolve to make the hard choices and stop digging, move away from the precipice, and start to fill in the chasm. It is my optimistic hope that we have learned the lessons, and are moving forward with a consistent determination to insure our financial health for years to come.

Robert H. Buescher, Treasurer

Note: The Metro 2006 Auditors Report FINAL 4-17-07 is included as a separate PDF file on this CD-ROM, as are the Charts for Section C, the MS-8 Congregation Partnership Report, MS-9, Mission Support as Percentage of Giving, and the Proposed Budget for 2008.

Following the Treasurer's report, the bishop invited the synod staff to come forward to be introduced to the assembly.

At the conclusion of these introductions Ms. Joanne Strunck was recognized for her years of service to the synod. She is retiring in June.

Mission Interpretation Moment

Pr. David Rommereim [Good Shepherd, Brooklyn] chair of the Immigration Task Force spoke to the synod. His presentation included video interviews with immigrants within our synod.

Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel - Part 1

A Special Order called for a designated period of debate.

Pr. Eric Swensson [Holy Trinity, New Rochelle], raised two points of order regarding the Items in section D of the report. Pr. Swensson said that these resolutions should be ruled out of order as they address matters that are pending before the ELCA and will be voted on in 2009. He also raised an objection because these resolutions come from outside of the synod. The chair ruled the motions in order as we often speak to pending matters and that the resolutions, whatever their origin, were submitted by members of our synod.

Pr. Swensson served notice that he had a substitute amendment for consideration when it would be in order.

Pr Jurik asked permission to omit the reading of the preambles to the resolutions. His request was granted by unanimous consent.

Pr. Jurik began his report by sharing a communication from the conference of bishops.

MESSAGE OF THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

This pastoral message of the Conference of Bishops is offered as we prepare for upcoming Synod Assemblies and the Churchwide Assembly.

We remind this church that the 2005 Churchwide Assembly resolved that the "members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions [of this church] be urged to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ" (CA05.05.17).

This church is engaged in a careful study of issues related to human sexuality with the intention of adopting a social statement at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. We urge the members of this church to engage fully and faithfully in the study process as part of our "living together faithfully" during this time.

We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us and have confidence in the constitutional process that orders our conversation as we engage together in moral deliberation at Synod Assemblies and the Churchwide Assembly.

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits itself to faithful leadership as, together, we seek the mind of Christ on these matters.

March 6, 2007

Next Pr. Jurik read each of the resolutions (omitting the preambles) in Item D.
Explaining the rationale for the committee's recommendations

D.1 A Memorial to Respond to the Decision of the Discipline Hearing Committee

Submitted by the Commission for Gay and Lesbian People, et. al.

Whereas, The 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urged every part of the ELCA to “concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ”; and

Whereas, The discipline hearing committee constituted to consider charges against Pr. Bradley E. Schmeling suggested that synod assemblies memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to request that the Committee on Appeals reconsider and revise the document *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* and that the appropriate churchwide unit reconsider and revise the document *Vision and Expectations* and the policy on reinstatement to the rosters of this church (Decision of the Discipline Hearing Committee, p. 13); and

Whereas, If permitted to decide the case only under the standards in chapters 7 and 20 of the ELCA Constitution, the discipline hearing committee “would find almost unanimously that Pastor Schmeling is not engaged in conduct that is incompatible with the ministerial office, and would find with near unanimity that no discipline of any sort should be imposed against him” (Decision of the Discipline Hearing Committee, p. 12); and

Whereas, The documents known as *Definitions and Guidelines*¹ may be amended by the Committee on Appeals, subject to approval by the Church Council, while the documents known as *Vision and Expectations*,² as well as the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church,³ may be amended by the Vocation and Education unit, with review by the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council; and

Whereas, The Churchwide Assembly, as the highest legislative authority of the ELCA, can “request or direct” that the steps be taken for the development by the Committee on Appeals and adoption by the Church Council of an amendment to *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*; and for the development by the

¹ See provisions 20.71.11. and 20.71.12. of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

² See provisions 7.31.11., 7.31.13., 7.51.03.b., and 16.12.C05.d.2).

³ See provisions 7.31.15., 7.52.13, and 16.12.C05.d.2).

appropriate churchwide unit, review by the Conference of Bishops, and adoption by the Church Council of an amendment to *Vision and Expectations* (ELCA Church Council, Minutes of April 9-11, 2006, p. 90, explanation by Secretary Almen): now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

RESOLVED, That the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly direct the Committee on Appeals to develop an amendment to the documents known as Definitions and Guidelines that removes provisions precluding “practicing homosexual persons” from the rosters of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the documents known as Vision and Expectations that removes provisions requiring persons who are “homosexual in their self-understanding” to “abstain from homosexual sexual relationships”; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church that permits the reinstatement, without the usual requirement of five consecutive years without call, of persons who have resigned or been removed from the rosters solely because they are in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Churchwide Assembly direct the Church Council to take the actions necessary to amend Definitions and Guidelines, Vision and Expectations, and the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church in conformity with the amendments developed (pursuant to the preceding directions) by the Committee on Appeals and Vocation and Education unit.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends adoption of this resolution.

Additional Sponsors

Congregation Council, Christ Lutheran Church, NYC, Congregation Council, Grace & St. Paul’s, W. 71st St., Parish Council, St. Peter’s, Lexington Ave (Pastor Carol E. A. Fryer voting “no”), Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, West 65th at Central Park West, Church Council, Trinity Lower East Side Lutheran Parish, Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, West 100th Street
Pr. Eduardo Fabian Arias, Pr. William Baum, Pr. J. Elise Brown, Pr. Michael Church, Pr. Amandus Derr, Pr. Martin Hauser, Pr. Tarja Koskela, Pr. Daryl Kozak, Pr. J. Barrie Lawless, Pr. Leo E. Longan, Jr., Pr. Richard Miller, Pr. Heidi Neumark, Pr. Clint Padgitt, Pr. Bill Paulsen, Pr. David C. Parsons, Pr. Ib Pihlblad, Pr. Robert Rimbo, Ms. Dorothy Scholz - Associate in Ministry, Pr. James Sudbrock, Pr. Brooke Swertfager, Pr. Ann Tiemeyer, Pr. Thomas Taylor, Pr. Griffin Thomas, Pr. Philip Trzynka, Pr. Frederick Weidmann,

D.2 A Memorial to Encourage Refraining from Discipline

Submitted by the Commission for Gay and Lesbian People, et. al.

Whereas, There is currently no consensus in this church regarding the rostered service of persons in committed same-gender relationships (Report of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, p. 5); and

Whereas, The 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urged every part of the ELCA to “concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ”: now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

RESOLVED, that in order to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, synods, synodical bishops, and the Presiding Bishop of this church are encouraged to refrain from disciplining those who – in good conscience and for the sake of outreach, ministry, and commitment to continuing dialogue – call, approve, ordain, commission, or consecrate otherwise-qualified candidates for rostered service who are in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship; and be it further

RESOLVED, that synods, synodical bishops, and the Presiding Bishop of this church are encouraged to refrain from disciplining those rostered leaders in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship who have been thus called, approved, ordained, commissioned, or consecrated.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends against the adoption of this resolution.

Additional Sponsors

Congregation Council, Grace & St. Paul’s, W. 71st St.; Parish Council, St. Peter’s, Lexington Ave (Pastor Carol E. A. Fryer voting "no"); Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, West 65th at Central Park West; Church Council, Trinity Lower East Side Lutheran Parish; Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, West 100th Street

Pr. Eduardo Fabian Arias, Pr. J. Elise Brown, Pr. Michael Church, Pr. Amandus Derr, Pr. Martin Hauser, Pr. Tarja Koskela, Pr. Daryl Kozak, Pr. J. Barrie Lawless, Pr. Leo E. Longan, Jr., Pr. Richard Miller, Pr. Heidi Neumark, Pr. Clint Padgitt, Pr. David C. Parsons, Pr. Bill Paulsen, Pr. Ib Pihlblad, Pr. Robert Rimbo, Dorothy Scholz - Associate in Ministry, Pr. James Sudbrock, Pr. Brooke Swertfager, Pr. Thomas Taylor, Pr. Ann Tiemeyer, Pr. Griffin Thomas, Pr. Philip Trzynka, Pr. Frederick Weidmann

D. 3 A Memorial to Endorse Restraint

Submitted by the Commission for Gay and Lesbian People, et. al.

Whereas, There is currently no consensus in this church regarding the rostered service of persons in committed same-gender relationships (Report of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, p. 5); and

Whereas, The ELCA policy documents *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* and *Vision and Expectations* are separate from the ELCA Constitution and pertain to rostered service in the ELCA; and

Whereas, The 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly urged every part of the ELCA to “concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ”: now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA endorses and calls for restraint in the application of provisions relating to the rostered service of persons who, in policies separate from the ELCA Constitution, are referred to as “practicing homosexuals” or as “homosexual in their self-understanding.”

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends the assembly postpone indefinitely this resolution.

Additional Sponsors

Congregation Council, Grace & St. Paul’s, W. 71st St.; Parish Council, St. Peter’s, Lexington Ave (Pastor Carol E. A. Fryer voting “no”); Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, West 65th at Central Park West; Church Council, Trinity Lower East Side Lutheran Parish; Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan, West 100th Street

Pr. Eduardo Fabian Arias, Pr. J. Elise Brown, Pr. Michael Church, Pr. Amandus Derr, Pr. Martin Hauser, Pr. Tarja Koskela, Pr. Daryl Kozak, Pr. J. Barrie Lawless, Pr. Leo E. Longan, Jr., Pr. Richard Miller, Pr. Heidi Neumark, Pr. Clint Padgitt, Pr. David C. Parsons, Pr. Bill Paulsen, Pr. Ib Pihlblad, Pr. Robert Rimbo, Dorothy Scholz - Associate in Ministry, Pr. James Sudbrock, Pr. Brooke Swertfager, Pr. Thomas Taylor, Pr. Ann Tiemeyer, Pr. Griffin Thomas, Pr. Philip Trzynka, Pr. Frederick Weidmann

Pr. David Parsons [St. John-St. Matthew-Emanuel, Brooklyn], addressed Item D.1 explaining its rationale. He said that these actions are “too late for many. It is time.”

Pr. Eric Swensson [Holy Trinity, New Rochelle], advised that we should not pass any resolution on this subject until 2009 when the ELCA Social Statement process is completed. This issue was not primarily what is the right or wrong policy, but sticking with the process and waiting until 2009.

Pr. Richard Miller [retired] spoke in favor of moving forward. He told of his gay roommate in seminary, and the church’s loss at not being able to have him as a pastor.

Pr. John McKenzie, [Advent, Elmont; St. James, Stewart Manor] spoke in opposition to the resolutions. He said that Pastor Schmeling was removed because was being held accountable to the code of conduct he agreed to, but violated and brought public scandal to the office of pastor.

Pr. James Krauser [St. Paul’s, Port Jefferson Station] said that for the sake of clarity in stating the position of the MNYS, the assembly should only adopt one of the proposed resolutions.

Mr. George Frost [St. Paul’s, New City] said that these resolutions, “put the cart before the horse.” He urged, in the words of the Conference of Bishops, that we “seek the mind of Christ.”

Ms. Jennifer Graves [Trinity (100th St.), Manhattan] spoke in support of the resolutions.

Mr. Russell Brown [Epiphany, Laurelton] spoke against the resolutions because the scriptures speak clearly to homosexuality.

Pr. Ann Tiemeier [Koinonia NYC] spoke in favor of all three resolutions in Item D saying that we should offer all three to the Churchwide Assembly as they discern ways [for us] to live together faithfully.

Pr. Stephen Hultgren [Fordham University] spoke against all three. He read from *Vision and Expectations* and said that we are being asked to reject the biblical understanding of human relationships that this church affirms, replacing it with human wisdom that is at the base of human sinfulness.

Ms Antje Katcher [Incarnation, Bridgehampton] spoke for the resolutions comparing the current debate with the admission of women to ministry.

Pr. William Wiecher [Redeemer, New Paltz] said he opposed all three resolutions. He described them as “an attempt to make an end run around the majority of those who voted at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly not to change the policy.” He counseled that we should not try to manipulate the process but “sit quietly and wait and trust in the Lord.”

Pr. Heidi Neumark [Trinity (100th St.), Manhattan] supported these resolutions. She told of youth in a shelter who were thrown out of their homes because of sexuality issues. “They are watching and waiting,” she said, “to see if God’s tender compassion will reign, through us, on them and all who sit in the shadows.”

Pr. William Baum [St. Barnabas, Howard Beach] said that he did not support Items 2 and 3 because our synod has already expressed its opinion on the substance of those resolutions. But he urged the adoption of D.1 as it has arisen out of the regular constitutional function of our disciplinary process.

Pr. Michael Church [Trinity, Long Island City] spoke for the resolutions and said simply dismissing interpretive differences among Lutherans as un-biblical or un-confessional was inaccurate and does a disservice to honest dialogue.

Pr. Wiecher [Redeemer, New Paltz] offered a motion amend the rule and end the informal discussion under the special order and return to the regular order. Second.

On the motion to (2/3 required).

Defeated

Pr. James Thomas [St. Paul’s, Bronx] reminded the assembly that for 400 years Christians used scripture to support slavery. He said he rose to speak to this issue because it is an issue of justice.

Pr. Ernie Mossel [Christ, Newburgh] that the church is not ready for what is proposed in the resolutions. He is mindful of the statement of the Conference of Bishops. He

expressed concern that we would change Vision and Expectations when we don't know what will be put in the Social Statement.

Mr. Jeremy Posadas [Trinity (100th St), Manhattan] invoked the 2005 recommendation calling for us to "find ways to live together in the midst of our disagreements" and former Presiding Bishop Chilstrom's assessment that the policy was wrong and was adopted out of fear in an uncertain time in the life of the church. He urged adoption of all three saying the "time is now."

Ms. Theresa Auletta [Ascension, Deer Park] urged postponement of all three motions. She said this is a difficult issue and not everyone is prepared make a decision at this time. She said, "we shouldn't vote for something which we know will divide Christ's church."

The bishop noted that the time for debate was coming to a close and he would recognize two more speakers.

Mr. Mark Hill [Our Savior's Atonement, Manhattan] spoke in support of the motions. He said that he has "seen homosexual clergy in action and [has] seen the Holy Spirit in their actions."

Pr. Paul Block [Transfiguration, Bronx] affirmed the dialogue which has taken place in our synod. He felt it was productive and was a good, honest discussion that people in our synod should be aware of.

At the end of the special order the bishop invited to take a brief break before resuming,

When the assembly came to order following the break, Pr. Eric Swensson offered the following motion:

Resolution to Wait for the 2009 Social Statement

Whereas, The ELCA concluded an exhausting four-year study and debate over ordination of non-celibate homosexual persons at its 2005 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando by declining to change current policies; and

Whereas, The continuing conflict over this matter is divisive and distracting from the mission of the ELCA; and

Whereas, The Task Force on Sexuality is scheduled to present a Social Statement on sexuality to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly; and

Whereas, The disciplinary case of Pr. Bradley Schmeling in the Southeaster Synod has been used as a pretext for reopening this question; and

Whereas, The Schmeling disciplinary committee heard no evidence supporting the current guidelines and exceeded its authority by improperly recommending that this year's synod assemblies seek to overturn the decisions made at Orlando; therefore be it

Committee on Appeals and adoption by the Church Council of an amendment to *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*; and for the development by the appropriate churchwide unit, review by the Conference of Bishops, and adoption by the Church Council of an amendment to *Vision and Expectations* (ELCA Church Council, Minutes of April 9-11, 2006, p. 90, explanation by Secretary Almen): now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly submit the following memorial for consideration by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

RESOLVED, That the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly direct the Committee on Appeals to develop an amendment to the documents known as Definitions and Guidelines that removes provisions precluding “practicing homosexual persons” from the rosters of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the documents known as Vision and Expectations that removes provisions requiring persons who are “homosexual in their self-understanding” to “abstain from homosexual sexual relationships”; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church that permits the reinstatement, without the usual requirement of five consecutive years without call, of persons who have resigned or been removed from the rosters solely because they are in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Churchwide Assembly direct the Church Council to take the actions necessary to amend Definitions and Guidelines, Vision and Expectations, and the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church in conformity with the amendments developed (pursuant to the preceding directions) by the Committee on Appeals and Vocation and Education unit.

On the adoption of Item D.2

Defeated

The committee recommended that Item D.3. be postponed indefinitely. That motion was put before the assembly.

On the Motion to postpone indefinitely Item D.3

**Adopted
208/149**

Mission Interpretation Moment

Pr. David Anglada reminded the members of the assembly of the Natural Church Growth characteristics we learned about last year. Pr. Daniel Ward [St. John’s, Poughkeepsie] and Pr. Barry Lawless [Our Savior’s Atonement, Manhattan], discussed their experience using the Natural Church Growth principles in their congregations.

Address of the ELCA Representative

Ms. Johnson began that this year marks 20 years of Synod Assemblies. She remarked that she had never seen such serious serpentine voting. She invited questions to be submitted for her second appearance later in the assembly.

She gave her report in the form of a “Top 10” list of the best things about the churchwide organization.

10. We get to see and shape the big picture.
9. We are able to bring different experiences together.
8. We want to strengthen all congregations.
7. We can encourage each other to become what we are called to be.
6. We can move resources from areas of abundance to areas of need.
5. Nationwide choices touch our children’s future.
4. We can make better decisions about things that affect us and others.
3. We can learn from each other.
2. We can make a greater impact on the world together.
1. We can better carry out God’s mission together.

Following her report the assembly stood to sing “*The Right Hand of God.*”

Mission Interpretation Moment

Ms. Constance Duever and Ms. Bethany Hinsch recounted our work and activities with our companion synod the Northwestern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Ms. Hinsch described many of her experiences as one of our missionary teachers in the KEMPS school.

In connection with the Mission Interpretation Moment, Pr. Robert Wollenburg gave a report on the Tanzanian Endowment Fund. He reminded the assembly of the purpose of this fund which is to support educational ministry in our companion diocese in Tanzania. It was established as a permanent fund and it is constructed so will sustain itself even as it is used each year. The fund is now at \$745,505. This is excellent progress, but we only have one more year to go. Our goal is to have this endowment fully funded by the 2008 assembly. The offering at the Friday evening Eucharist of the assembly is designated to the Tanzanian endowment.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the bishop announced that Ms. Lund’s greeting from the Lutheran Schools Association would be postponed until Saturday.

Elections – First Ballot

Biographical information on all candidates had been distributed to the assembly. Mr. James Steipp, chair of the elections committee, gave instructions for the conduct of the first ballot. After ballots were collected the bishop declared balloting closed.

Bishop’s Report – Part 2

In his second report, the bishop gave the following address.

Dreams of My Grandfather

I am Lutheran and I am pro immigrant. Abraham, a wandering Aramean was my grandfather in the faith. His wife, Sarah, is my grandmother.

“A wandering Aramean was my father...he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number. When the Egyptians treated us harshly we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and he brought us out with a mighty hand and brought us into this place and gave us a land flowing with mild and honey.” (Deuteronomy 26:5-8)

An economic migrant, a desert nomad leads his family toward a land of promise. *“Now the Lord said to Abram, “go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”* (Genesis 12:1) And so begins the great trek for new life, survival, redemption. He will also find danger, enough that he plans to pass his wife off as his sister. It is a trek repeated in the heat of the Sonoran desert, in boats from Africa running ashore in southern Europe, in the hulls of boats from Fujian province to the shores of Long Island. On that trek are many neighbors here in Huntington Station, sleeping outside and finding shelter at Gloria Dei and other places of haven in the neighborhood.

Along the trek Abram finds hope, welcome, signs from God. At each place of hope and refreshment he builds an altar and calls on the name of God. He named these places of remembrance of God’s grace on his journey with names like Shechem and Bethel. *“Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem ...Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said: “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to him.”* (Genesis 12:6,7)

Shechem, Bethel today looks like a cot in the undercroft at Gloria Dei; it looks like faithful people organizing in Brewster, fighting their own municipality for the privilege of taking in and welcoming the stranger with bed and meal; it looks like the “amigos en pie” immigrant ministry of Trinity 100th Street; it looks like those organized in Amagansett on the east end of Long Island, listening to the stories of those economic migrants roused out of their homes in the middle of the night, mothers incarcerated still in their pajamas; it looks like our congregations in Brooklyn involved in the sanctuary movement and offering hospitality and safety to vulnerable families. Bethel and Shechem look like each of the over fifty immigrant congregations of our synod. Bethel. Shechem. A trail of altars. A wandering Aramean is our grandfather in the faith. We are Lutheran and we are pro-immigrant.

My grandfather was a wandering Aramaean. “I found us,” said our daughter Rachel after a visit to Ellis Island and reading our family name on the museum’s wall. “We find us,” as we read of Abram’s migration, the beginning of our family journey. The altars at which we worship on the Lord’s Day are our Shechem and Bethel, places of refreshment and hope. “We find us” in each of our new neighbors. *“The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”* (Leviticus 19:33-34)

Maybe that’s where we start as we dig into this issue as a Great Commission Synod committed to Gospel ministry to “all nations,” committed to being “healers of the breach, restorers of streets to live in.” The issues are complex. But Lutherans have a two handed God. In the kingdom of the left hand there are many proposals for comprehensive immigration reform and we struggle with others of good will with a humility that we could be wrong about this or that approach, that what we actually can achieve may fall short of the best possible outcome. In the kingdom of the left hand, as we look at comprehensive immigration reform, we enter the fray with a few guiding principles:

- We want security but not at the expense of people’s rights; harsh and punitive treatment is beneath the dignity of the grandchildren of Abram.
- We believe in family values and want immigration reform that keeps families together, protects and reunites them, not busts them apart. (Particularly troubling is the trial balloon for immigration reform from the White House in March proposing major reduction in family based immigration).

- We want to end the marginalization of the undocumented, huddling in the shadows, barely surviving in fear, including many in our Lutheran churches.
- We want a path toward permanence, living full and open lives, to those who contribute to our country's economy and society.

We can agree on these principles and disagree on this or that policy in the kingdom of the left hand. Not so, in the kingdom of the right. Red and blue state people sit together in our pews and hear the God of the Bible call us to welcome the stranger, care for the neighbor, without equivocation or apology. Compassion, solidarity and generosity of spirit come naturally to grandchildren of a wandering Aramean. You can't love God and not love those God embraces. The one who washes our windows, drives the taxi, cares for many of our children, cuts the lawn and washes the dishes-including some of you here at this assembly, is a wandering Aramean.

Let me create, for a moment, a picture of solidarity with the dreams of our grandparents, the Immigrant then: and the Neighbor and Stranger now.

To be a stranger in a strange land is to be on the gangplank between worlds, at the threshold:

- It is a time of choice (will I go to church or not?)
- It is a time of looking backward and idealizing the past, the home country (at least we got three square meals a day from Pharaoh; singing and praying in our heart language)
- It is a time of looking forward with a mix of fear and excitement
- It is a time to watch your step, to be busy, distracted

This threshold is the global mission field of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

Our grandparent linked to the new neighbors today...Imagine the Dreams of:

1. ***New Roots***. Jefferson said, "You declared independence when you got on the boat." We are uprooted and being planted.
2. ***An End to the Ordeal of Passage***. I will never again look at the day laborers who line the streets of Mamaroneck, Mount Kisco, Farmingville, or Jackson Heights or those who pick the east end harvest in the same way since being in Agua Prieto, Mexico, just south of the Arizona border in the Sonoran desert. In a church basement I met the people inspiring such fear, hate, who risk their lives to cross the border, who are hunted down like animals and who too often die in the desert. Mostly they are desperately poor, trying to save the lives of their children or feed their parents. They are Ruth and her mother-in-law seeking food in the land of Moab; Joseph's brothers crossing the border into Egypt in search of survival in famine. The biggest step, where maybe the ordeal of passage is ended, is to step inside the place where others worship. Shechem, Bethel? Or a continuation of the ordeal?
3. ***Being No Longer Strangers***. That is why some of our undercrofts smell of kimchi, rice and beans, curried goat. It is to end being a stranger, to seek eyes that do not stare but behold. Imagine the stranger transformed as brother, sister, at the passing of the peace in your congregation. It could have gone either way when Joseph's brothers stood before him seeking relief from famine back home. These illegal aliens did not recognize their brother, the one they had sold into slavery. "Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother." (Genesis 45:4)
4. ***Ending Past Bad Situations***. My grandfather could not feed his family as a farmer on the North Sea coast and he could not afford to pay the taxes. At a liturgy for East Africans at Holy Trinity, Hollis, people from Congo mourned the loss of hundreds of thousands, including family members at a memorial service. Our Lutheran forbearers were tenant farmers no longer needed; cannon fodder for wars they didn't believe in; many, like Walter and Paul Jensen's father, jumped ship in Brooklyn harbor for a better life and hope for their kin.
5. ***Receiving a Welcome and Experiencing Hospitality***. Sometimes entering a strange church looks like a football huddle. You know something important is going on but all you see are their backsides. Think of how much of life's behavior stems from the fear of being shamed. Will I be welcomed and then dropped? My accent is broken. The church must help people

learn one another's ways, drop our private languages, make our welcome a great expectation that the stranger comes bearing immense gifts.

6. ***Bodily Security.*** The explanation of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer takes us to "the needs and wants of the body." The churches of Huntington, Brewster and many others, have taken a vivid census of the people living around their island church fortresses. Have we taken such a vivid census as we re-root in our own communities? When you and I go out in the world we carry symbolic tokens of the body's sustenance: credit cards, identification, etc. Many of our new neighbors come without them. Liturgical reform begins here. How do we eat at this table if others do not eat, or eat alone?
7. ***Connected Lives.*** When he got off the boat my grandfather was connected to very few people. Gustavus Adolphus in Manhattan thrived when the pastor and church leaders met Swedish immigrants at the dock. In a former parish I served, every Sunday after church Korean immigrant members would meet with those who helped their children attend our Lutheran parochial school, those who helped them learn English, those who helped with jobs, apartments and legal issues. The church is the Bethel and Shechem where our grandparents began to live connected lives.
8. ***Finding a Path Through Mazeways.*** It was in the church where our grandparents were able to make a stand, find their first apartments and jobs, cut through red tape, get along in society. I dream of every congregation of our synod being a place which helps new neighbors cut a path through the impossible thickets of life in America. Immigration lawyers, learning English, finding a case manager, an advocate for housing or health. Early childhood programs, summer Bible school, Sunday School, confirmation class, youth group can be places where the stranger finds allies in raising children in a new land.
9. ***Being Treated With Dignity.*** It begins with respect, an honored name. In the middle of Justice Thurgood Marshall's career a Black person in the South was never called Mr. or Mrs. The stranger is anonymous, an object of charity. I remember a group of deaf and mute undocumented young people were held in virtual slavery in a Jackson Heights apartment. They were sent on the subways to sell things and were beaten if they did not meet the quota. These exploited brothers and sisters were called "*los muditos*," the silent ones. "*Los muditos*" can describe those whose humanity never registers with us. How will the church regard the over ten million economic migrants who are without documents? If they are regarded as criminals it is an easy path toward dehumanizing the stranger. Would you roust your grandmother out of bed in the middle of the night into the street in her pajamas before taking her to a detention facility?
10. ***Finding Meaning.*** Here is where economic migrants join the cultural migrants in this post modern world. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus we have a story that can explain the world, in a world hungry for a narrative. Martin Marty has said that before one can know faith, hope and love, one must know finitude, contingency, transience. Scripture is the witness to a real world of every spiritual seeker and migrant on life's journey. The Bible faces squarely finitude (the last horizon of death), contingency (the unfairness of why some suffer so much and others seem to get a pass), and transience (the uprootedness of so much of our living, central to the immigrant experience.) Our churches can be guides for every traveler seeking meaning for their journey and destination. Every church is a preview of coming attractions, witness to the One who really "has the whole world in His hands."
11. ***Being Part of Mission.*** Everyone has gifts to give. Everyone longs for a noble vision to direct her life. From the acolyte to the singer in the choir, all God's children want to make a difference. "You shall be called healers of the breach, restorers of streets to live in."
12. ***Beauty.*** Southwest Brooklyn is the motherhouse of Nordic Lutheranism in New York City and is in the midst of a bold mission strategy process today. It was the church which accompanied the immigrants as they made a stand in the new world. Brooklyn is known as the "borough of churches" and as you drive along the Gowanus Expressway the sky is pierced by their steeples erupting from the working class streets. They wanted touches of beauty in this new land. Their world was grey, drab but they wanted more. The world is too full of

grief not to have art, music, liturgy, space for prayer and spiritual reflection. In these houses of worship the truth of Psalm 90 took form and they were even able to bear death.

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations...from everlasting to everlasting you are God...for all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh...the days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong...even their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away...Turn, Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days...Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and prosper for us the work of our hands-O prosper the work of our hands!”

The spiritual hunger of a people longing for and creating a home was answered by Bethel and Shechem: the spires of Brooklyn.

I would like to suggest a simple dream that I have for the mission of our synod and its churches, schools and institutions of ministry and mercy. The church which turns its face - becomes the face of Jesus toward the poor, the stranger, all without the Gospel - is always a church being renewed and reformed. The power of such renewal is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

I am a grandson of Abraham a wandering Aramean, of Hermann Jansen Bouman of the North Sea, immigrants all. And I acknowledge my sisters and brothers of African descent whose grandparents came in forced migration via the middle passage. All of us in our history, strangers in a strange land. We are the Metropolitan New York Synod. We are Lutheran and we are pro immigrant.

Stephen Paul Bouman

Greetings from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

The Rev. Dr. Philip Krey, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia brought a greeting. He thanked they synod for our support and the students who have been sent to the seminary from our synod. He described their work as a seminary in mission for the church in mission. He announced an endowment on human rights which will be connected to the United Nations. He noted that two new faculty appointments bring professors from Bangalore and Cairo to expand the diversity of the Philadelphia experience.

Pr. Glenn Miller of the seminary reported on the progress of its capital campaign. The four year campaign has a goal \$20,000,000. Now they are at \$15,600,000. Over \$1 has come from the people of the Metropolitan New York Synod. He told the assembly that they are two-thirds of the way toward their goal of \$1.5 million dollars from our synod and that there has been a \$100,000 challenge grant given by a member of the synod.

The session closed with prayer by the chaplain at 5:38 p.m.

A service of Holy Communion was celebrated on Friday evening, Bishop Bouman presiding. The sermon was given by Pr. Yvette Schock of St. Michael's in Amagansett. ELCA Representative, Ms. Lita Johnson served as the assisting minister. Mr. Pedro D'Aquino of St. Luke's, Manhattan, was the organist.

Saturday, May 19, 2007
PLENARY SESSION III

Bishop Stephen P. Bouman called the assembly at 8.45 a.m. following the office of Morning Prayer led by Chaplain Koran.

The bishop called for the morning registration report.

Pr. Brathwaite reported that as of 8:20am there were 423 registered voting members for the assembly.

Clergy	164	39 %
AiM	10	2 %
Lay	<u>249</u>	59 %
Total	423	

She also reported that 20 persons had registered as visitors.

A motion to accept the report and enter the names of the additional names in the register was adopted.

Elections – Report of the First Ballot

Mr. Steipp reported the results of the first ballot.

Total ballots cast	289	<i>Katrina D. Foster</i>	132
Valid ballots	285	Phyllis Haynes	21
Invalid ballots	4	<i>Marva Jenkins</i>	56
Needed to elect	143	<i>James A. Klockau</i>	36
		Garry W. Squire	20
		Eric Swensson	12
		Diane Wildow	8

There was no election. Members were instructed that pastors Katrina D. Foster, Marva Jenkins and James A. Klockau would be the candidates who would proceed to the second ballot. Members were asked to cast their ballots at this time. When all appeared to have voted, the chair declared balloting closed.

Throughout the assembly, the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* was used for our worship. The bishop acknowledged and thanked the members of the committee who led introductory workshops for the hymnal in our synod. Some 715 persons attended these workshops. Leading these workshops were: Pr. Fabian Arias [Zion, Manhattan], Pr. Edward Barnett [St. Peter's, Baldwin], Cantor Rick Erickson [Holy Trinity (CPW), Manhattan], Pr. Frank Nelson [St. Peter's, Huntington Station], Deacon Meg Fielding [Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre], Pr. Cathy Rosenholz [St. Jacobus, Woodside] and Pr. Gerard Gaeta.

Mission Interpretation Moment

Deacon Charles Germain [Trinity, Brewster] introduced a report on Children, Family and Youth ministries. With him were synod youth who had participated in the Servant to Servant exchange with youth of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (our companion synod). Ms. Sarah Clausen, a member of the Children, Family and Youth committee, reported on the “Dreamcatching” activities that have taken place in the last year, including a “Youth and Family Professional Development Intensive” co-sponsored by Koinonia. The committee has identified three focus areas for their work: 1.) Baptismal Identity; 2.) Connectivity; and 3.) Equipping.

Ms. Clausen also described the “Heart of Ministry Award” to recognize excellent and unique congregation programs in the area of children’s, youth or family ministry. She invited nominations for this award which will be announced on Reformation Day. She concluded her remarks with a brief review of the “Synod to Synod Servant Event Exchange.” Mr. Jonathan Westerlund, a member of the Synod Council and President of the LYO Board gave a brief description of his participation in the “Synod to Synod” youth program, which will “Go Global” as he and four other youth from the synod travel to Tanzania in the summer of 2007.

Greetings from Lutheran Schools Association

Ms. Marlene Lund of the Lutheran Schools Association gave greetings and a brief report on Lutheran Schools in our synod. Her theme was “Is it a Lost Cause?” She reported that we are in a time when many schools are at risk. She stressed the needs that Lutheran schools address and benefits that they can bring to communities. LSA serves to facilitate the strengthening and development of leaders in the schools and the local congregations for the mission, program and finances of our Lutheran schools.

Report of the ELCA Representative Part 2

Members of the assembly had been invited to submit questions to Ms. Johnson. None were submitted, so in the interest of our agenda she limited her second report to a video presentation from our Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

After the video, Bishop Bouman reminded the assembly that Bishop Hanson is not only the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, he is also serving as President of the Lutheran World Federation.

100th anniversary of Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education and new staff member is being brought on to renew this agency.

Bishop Bouman announced that on June 6, 2007 six members of the synod will be traveling to a new companion synod in Transylvania, the Lutheran Church in Romania. The delegation will be led by Pr. Richard Michael [Trinity, Staten Island].

The bishop acknowledged those pastors new to our roster this year.

Pastor David Meyers

Pastor Darryl Kozak

Pastor Kit Robison

Pastor Remo Madsen

St. David’s, Massapequa

Redeemer-St. John’s, Brooklyn

First, Jeffersonville; Grace, North Branch

Good Shepherd, Levittown

Pastor Anthony Bateza	Grace, Uniondale
Pastor Samuel Cruz	Trinity, Brooklyn
Pastor Tobias Anderson	Good Shepherd, Pearl River
Pastor Giovanni Sanchez	Espiritu Santo, Brooklyn
Pastor Haiko Behrens	Ascension, Franklin Square

Those present came forward to be acknowledged by the assembly. It was announced that Pr. Kozak had become ill and had departed from the assembly.

Deacon Margaret Fielding [Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre], chairperson of the Diaconate Council, reported on those who were newly rostered in our synodical diaconate.

Deacon John Prosen	St. John's-by-the-Sea, Long Beach
Deacon Jo Anne Rasmussen	St. Paul's, East Northport
Deacon Socorro Valenzuela	Trinity, Brooklyn
Deacon Louise Walters	St. Michael's, Amagansett

Elections - Report of the Second Ballot

The bishop then called for the report of the second ballot. Mr. Steipp reported the results:

Total ballots cast	265	Katrina D. Foster	151**
Valid ballots	257	Marva Jenkins	61
Invalid ballots	8	James A. Klockau	36
Needed to elect	129		

On the basis of the report Bishop Bouman declared Pr. Katrina D. Foster elected to the position of voting member of the churchwide assembly.

Elected: Pr. Katrina Foster to 2008 Churchwide Assembly SA2007.05.02.

Report of the Candidacy Committee

Pr. Jeffery Kolbo [Trinity, Rocky Point] chair of the synod Candidacy Committee reported that there are some 50 persons under the care of the committee in various stages of preparation for ministry in the ELCA.

The following candidates were given approval for ordination in the previous year:

- Ernst MossI from Redeemer, New Paltz [LTSP]
Called to Christ, Newburgh
- Tobias Anderson from Christ, Woodstock [LTSG]
Called to Good Shepherd, Pearl River
- Andrena Ingram from Transfiguration, Bronx [LTSP]
Called to St. Michael's, Philadelphia
- Giovanni Sanchez from Espiritu Santo, Brooklyn [LTSP]
Called to Espiritu Santo, Brooklyn
- William Hodgetts, III from Trinity, Long Island City [LTSP]
Assigned to Upstate NY Synod
- Amy Kenzel from St. John's, Lindenhurst [LSTC]
Assigned to Southeast Michigan Synod
- Donna Olsen from Ascension, Deer Park [General]
Assigned to Northeastern Minnesota Synod
- Christopher Wogaman from Our Savior's Atonement, Manhattan [Yale]

Assigned to Metropolitan New York Synod

He also reported that the Rev. Samuel Cruz was approved for transfer to the ELCA roster from the Reformed Church in America. Pr. Cruz serves Trinity 46th St., Brooklyn.

Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel Part 2

Under the rule previously adopted, Item C was called up as a “Special Order” for an informal discussion of 30 minutes.

Pr. Jurik read the Continuing Resolution and the accompanying resolution of endorsement.

S6.03.A.5.A07

To assist the synod in its consultative role in the call process for rostered ministers, a policy on the Transition and Call Process shall be presented to the synod assembly for its endorsement and shall continue in force until amended by the assembly. Exceptions to the policy for exigent circumstances may be granted by a two-thirds vote of the synod council upon the recommendation of the bishop of the synod. This policy will be reviewed at least every five years.

RESOLVED, that the MNYS Assembly adopt proposed Continuing Resolution S6.03.A.5.07.; and

RESOLVED, that the MNYS Assembly endorse the Transition and Call Process Policy.

Ms. Naomi Frost [Redeemer-St. John’s, Brooklyn], a member of the committee, spoke about the creation of the policy and its purpose. She noted that her congregation had been through a call process three times in the last decade. She asked the members to support this policy as it addresses the needs of congregations within available options while being fair to rostered leaders.

Pr. Marianne Tomecek [Christ, Freeport] asked several questions about the policy

Q: Who will give transitional training, what will this consist of.

A: [Pr. Loufman] Much of the focus for basic transition falls to deans; this will be included in the retreat; additional opportunities will be afforded those who will be identified for this ministry.

Q: How would adjustments to transitional ministry assignments be handled?

A: [Pr. Loufman] The process aims at facilitating consultation between the congregational leadership and synod staff to address such needs as they arise.

Q: Is the grief process in the congregation for pastors who have left factored into congregation training and the resources provided. ?

A [Pr. Loufman] Yes. Pr. Eggers [St. Andrew’s, Yorktown Heights] identified himself as serving as an Intentional Interim and has done so for a number of congregations. He spoke of his work as an interim and the appreciation of the congregations he has worked with for the opportunity to have this kind of structured transition.

Pr. Edward Barnett [St. Peter's, Baldwin], a member of the committee, also spoke to the benefit and need for this policy document, particularly the need for the synod as a whole to have ownership of the policy.

Pr. Perucy Butiku [Holy Trinity, Hollis] raised a concern not addressed in the policy, namely, care for pastors coming from other countries in both the call process and in their initial service. She identified this as a need for an additional aspect of training that needs to be provided.

Mr. Kurt Langjahr [Gloria Dei, New Hyde Park], spoke in support of the policy especially of its provision for training call committees and reassuring congregations that the synod will be attentive to their needs.

Pr. Lyn Mehl [St. Paul's, E. Northport] raised concerns about the application of the co-terminous resignations of assistants and deacons. She identified this as a source of conflict in her congregation in the past. She sought assurance that staff clergy may be retained (or succeed to senior pastor) after the senior pastor resigns. Pr. Krauser [a committee member] said that the committee recognized that there was not a strong consensus regarding a prohibition on "succession" and so it is not strictly prohibited, but that persons may re-candidate for call in the same congregation.

Pr. Paul Block [Transfiguration, Bronx] spoke in support of the policy document because it offers an opportunity for us to have a policy which is clear to all. He also expressed concern that we find ways to increase the opportunity for smaller, economically challenged churches to interview multiple candidates rather than only "first call" candidates under a one-at-a-time rule.

Pr. Martha Jacobi [specialized ministry] raised concern regarding the required resignations in the case of co-pastors and also the impact when married couple pastors serve in the same locations. Pr. Krauser responded that such a circumstance had not been specifically considered, but that the option to re-candidate would still hold in such situations. Pr. Jacobi asked that the needs married pastors serving together or as co-pastors would be reviewed.

Deacon Meg Fielding [Holy Trinity, Rockville Centre] addressed role and call of deacons and how the Diaconal Council is reviewing guidelines the role of deacons in transitions. She noted that it is expected that there would be a review of the needs of the congregation and the duties and call of the deacon(s) at the time of a new pastorate.

Pr. Brenda Smith [New Hope, Jamaica] expressed concern that in some communities the term "oversight" used in connection with transitional pastoral leadership might have a negative connotation.

Pr. Paul Milholland [St. John's, Lindenhurst] asked if this policy would be in conflict with that described by Deacon Fielding. Pr. Krauser said that the policy recognizes that there will be some on-going needs that continue during a transition which will necessitate

persons (whether ordained ministers or deacons) continuing to serve for a time. He said that the policy notes that the effective dates of resignations are a matter to be negotiated between the congregation leadership

Pr. Gary Mehl [St. Luke's, Woodhaven] offered a motion to refer the policy back for further clarification of issues raised in the discussion. Second.

Motion: To refer the policy back to the committee.

Ms. Emma Porter [New Hope, Jamaica] supported the motion for referral, expressing concern that further study of the impact of resignations on the medical benefits of staff rostered persons was needed.

Deacon Florence Poeschke [St. Jacobus, Woodside] expressed concern that the policy did not address the synodical deacons. If they have to renegotiate or seek a new call, what procedures are in place to assist them?

Pr. Albert Triolo [Ascension, Deer Park] spoke against referral saying that the policy had enough room to address the various concerns raised.

Ms. Christine Connell, DM [Synod Council] (a member of the committee) also was against referral. She said the policy will give "communicative power" to the congregations.

The bishop relinquished the chair to the parliamentarian to address the motion to refer.

Bishop Bouman asked the members to defeat the motion to refer. "The call process," he said, "is part of the ministry of the Bishop." He noted "it is not an exact science" and often pastoral discretion is called for. Most of the questions can be addressed by that discretion. "But," he said, "basic principles are important." He urged the members to put these basic principles in place.

Following his comments, Ms. Demarest declared that under the Special Order the time for debate had expired, and that the assembly would proceed to the vote on the motion to refer.

On the Mehl motion to refer

Defeated

Pr. Martha Jacobi made a motion to extend debate so that she could make an amendment. Second. The motion was put to a vote.

Motion: To extend debate.

On the Jacobi motion to extend debate (2/3 needed)

Defeated

On the adoption of the resolutions in Item C *en bloc*

**Adopted
SA2007.05.03.**

S6.03.A.5.A07

To assist the synod in its consultative role in the call process for rostered ministers, a policy on the Transition and Call Process shall be presented to the synod assembly for its endorsement and shall continue in force until amended by the assembly. Exceptions to the policy for exigent circumstances may be granted by a two-thirds vote of the synod council upon the recommendation of the bishop of the synod. This policy will be reviewed at least every five years.

**RESOLVED, that the MNYS Assembly adopt proposed Continuing Resolution
S6.03.A.5.07. [SA2007.05.03.(a)]; and**

**RESOLVED, that the MNYS Assembly endorse the Transition and Call Process
Policy. [SA2007.05.03.(b)]**

Pr. Jurik then presented Item A, the revision of bylaw S7.01.03.C.

A Bylaw revision

Submitted by Mr. John Litke

Whereas, The Report of the Committee on the Report of the Bishop (S7.01.03C) has not provided substantive items of action or recommendation to the Synod Assembly in many years; and,

Whereas, The provision appears to provide a means for the Bishop to individually propose motions to the Assembly that is otherwise already available to the Bishop as a member of the rostered leadership of the synod through the normal process for receiving motions; and

Whereas, The agenda of synod assemblies could be simplified by removal of a mandatory but historically often unnecessary item, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That S7.01.03.C be amended by striking the word “shall” and inserting the word “may” in its place.

S7.01.03. c. *The Report of the Bishop to each regular Synod Assembly shall may be referred to a Committee on Report of the Bishop which shall study the same, make appropriate comment thereon, and present to the Synod Assembly the recommendations of the bishop together with any additional relevant recommendations of its own that it deems desirable.*

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends adoption of this resolution.

Pr. James Krauser [St. Paul’s, Port Jefferson Station] rose to amend the proposed change by striking bylaw S7.01.03.c. in its entirety. He said these duties, if necessary, could be handled by the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

There was no debate on the secondary amendment.

On the Krauser amendment to Item A

Adopted

B.2 Elimination of the Stigma of HIV/AIDS

Submitted by St. Paul's Lutheran Church (Parkchester), Bronx, NY

Whereas, The stigma of HIV/AIDS creates a barrier to medical and social services due to the consequences—particularly in some smaller communities—of being identified as a person living with HIV/AIDS; and

Whereas, The barriers will exist as long as the stigma of having HIV/AIDS exists; and

Whereas, the stigma of HIV/AIDS also creates a barrier to sound public policy decisions about prevention education and services. As long as there is blame placed on those who become infected, scientific evidence, particularly about preventing the spread of the virus, will be overshadowed by misinformation; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the ELCA to urge its members to work toward the elimination of the stigma surrounding the issue of HIV/AIDS through the following:

- Acknowledgement that the stigmatization of anyone due to disease, and particularly due to HIV/AIDS, creates impediments to seeking treatment and care for the disease and education about the disease, resulting in detrimental effects on individuals, the church and society at large.
- Reiteration that the teachings of Jesus Christ are clear in stating that sickness and disease are not the result of sin in the human family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urges all worshiping communities, missions, parishes, synods, seminaries and educational institutions, boards and commissions to:

- Educate their constituent members about HIV/AIDS with a goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating the stigma associated with the disease.
- Educate their local, state and federal elected officials and representatives about HIV/AIDS with the goal of helping create knowledgeable, compassionate, and sensitive public policy in educational, support services, and medical treatment institutions. These institutions should provide services to those with HIV/AIDS in a manner which reduces the stigma associated with the disease.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends adoption of this resolution.

B.3 Media Campaign for HIV/AIDS Awareness

Submitted by St. Paul's Lutheran Church (Parkchester), Bronx, NY

Whereas, HIV/AIDS has been at pandemic levels for over two decades; and

Whereas, The year 2005 marked the grim milestone of 1,000,000 people in the United States alone living with HIV (and 40,000,000 worldwide); and

Whereas, Ignorance about the subject continues to have a negative impact on the delivery of pastoral and educational services to those infected and affected by HIV, despite a variety of educational resources; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize that ELCA Churchwide Assembly to direct the Communications Office of the national church to engage in collaborative activities to raise awareness about the issues surrounding HIV disease through the use of a media campaign directed at members of this church as well as the broader population.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends adoption of this resolution.

Pr. James Thomas [St. Paul's, Bronx] addressed his resolutions.

Pr. Cathy Rosenholz [St. Jacobus, Woodside] spoke in support of the resolutions, noting that the following day was the day of the AIDS walk in New York and asked the assembly for their public prayer for the walkers at the next day's worship services.

Pr. Robert Splittgerber [St. John's-by-the-Sea, Long Beach] moved to amend the second part of the first resolve in Item B.2. by striking it and replacing it with new wording:

- Reiteration that ~~the teachings of Jesus Christ are clear in stating that sickness and disease are not the result of sin in the human family;~~ and be it further
- Reiteration that the example in John 9:3 of Jesus denying a man was born blind due to his or his parents' sin serves as a caution against making the judgment that a person's illness is punishment for his or someone else's sin; and be it further

Pr. Splittgerber noted that since there were occasions when illness is sometimes a direct consequence of sin, the original text was too sweeping a statement. He argued that the new language was more specific biblically and accurate theologically.

Bishop Bouman asked Ms. Demarest to lead us through this amendment.

Ms. Demarest said that under our rule we would first decide whether to proceed with this amendment substitute new language.

On the motion to proceed with the Splittgerber substitute **Adopted**

- **Reiteration that the example in John 9:3 of Jesus denying a man was born blind due to his or his parents' sin serves as a caution against making the judgment that a person's illness is punishment for his or someone else's sin; and be it further**

Pr. Anthony Stephens [Our Saviour, Croton-on-Hudson] rose to offer another amendment (on the original text). The chair said it would have to wait until the current matter was disposed of.

Pr. Rose Ann Foege [Ascension, Glendale] remarked on her previous life experience working with HIV patients in the medical field. She said that this resolution addressed the spiritual suffering she saw in many.

Seeing no one seeking recognition on the amendment, Ms. Demarest put the question to a vote.

On the Splittgerber amendment

Adopted

Pr. David Parsons [St. John-St. Matthew-Emanuel, Brooklyn] moved the previous question.

On the motion to close debate.

Adopted

On Item B *en bloc*

Adopted

[B.1]

SA2007.05.05.

Whereas, New York City remains the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S;
and

Whereas, More than 100,000 New Yorkers are living with HIV, but thousands don't know they're infected; and

Whereas, New York City has the highest AIDS case rate in the country, with more AIDS cases than Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, and Washington DC combined;
and

Whereas, HIV is the 3rd leading cause of death below age 65 in New York City; and

Whereas, HIV is also the health problem with the largest racial disparity; 80% of new AIDS diagnoses and deaths are among African Americans and Hispanics; and

Whereas, Prevention, testing, and treatment programs are being expanded, but more must be done; be it

RESOLVED, That the Metropolitan New York Synod, through already established appropriate committee (s), focus on mechanisms for increasing HIV/AIDS awareness in the church, reducing the effects of stigmatization by HIV/AIDS and continuing the process of identifying those whom we are called to serve but may overlook; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Synod, through appropriate committee (s) begin a process of identifying and cataloguing the availability of HIV/AIDS ministries and resources at all levels of the church, utilizing the resources of other organizations, including but not limited to the Lutheran AIDS Network, and the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition.

[B.2 (as amended)]

SA2007.05.06.

Whereas, The stigma of HIV/AIDS creates a barrier to medical and social services due to the consequences—particularly in some smaller communities—of being identified as a person living with HIV/AIDS; and

Whereas, The barriers will exist as long as the stigma of having HIV/AIDS exists; and

Whereas, The stigma of HIV/AIDS also creates a barrier to sound public policy decisions about prevention education and services. As long as there is blame placed on those who become infected, scientific evidence, particularly about preventing the spread of the virus, will be overshadowed by misinformation; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the ELCA to urge its members to work toward the elimination of the stigma surrounding the issue of HIV/AIDS through the following:

- **Acknowledgement that the stigmatization of anyone due to disease, and particularly due to HIV/AIDS, creates impediments to seeking treatment and care for the disease and education about the disease, resulting in detrimental effects on individuals, the church and society at large.**
- **Reiteration that the example in John 9:3 of Jesus denying a man was born blind due to his or his parents' sin serves as a caution against making the judgment that a person's illness is punishment for his or someone else's sin; and be it further**

RESOLVED, That the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America urges all worshipping communities, missions, parishes, synods, seminaries and educational institutions, boards and commissions to:

- **Educate their constituent members about HIV/AIDS with a goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating the stigma associated with the disease.**
- **Educate their local, state and federal elected officials and representatives about HIV/AIDS with the goal of helping create knowledgeable, compassionate, and sensitive public policy in educational, support services, and medical treatment institutions. These institutions should provide services to those with HIV/AIDS in a manner which reduces the stigma associated with the disease.**

B. 3

SA2007.05.07.¹

Whereas, HIV/AIDS has been at pandemic levels for over two decades; and.

Whereas, The year 2005 marked the grim milestone of 1,000,000 people in the United States alone living with HIV (and 40,000,000 worldwide); and

Whereas, Ignorance about the subject continues to have a negative impact on the delivery of pastoral and educational services to those infected and affected by HIV, despite a variety of educational resources; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize that ELCA Churchwide Assembly to direct the Communications Office of the national

¹ Subsequent to the assembly the Metropolitan New York Synod Council adopted the following resolution to more efficiently transmit the request embodied in SA2007.05.07. to the appropriate office in the churchwide organization.

Whereas, We have been informed by the Office of the ELCA Secretary that Resolution SA2007.05.07 "Regarding A Media Campaign for HIV/AIDS Awareness" passed at our recent assembly is more properly routed to the Communications Office through the ELCA Church Council; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That the Metropolitan New York Synod Council ask the ELCA Church Council to direct the Communications Office of the national church to engage in collaborative activities to raise awareness about the issues surrounding HIV disease through the use of a media campaign directed at members of this church as well as the broader population.

church to engage in collaborative activities to raise awareness about the issues surrounding HIV disease through the use of a media campaign directed at members of this church as well as the broader population.

That concluded the business of Reference and Counsel Pr. Jurik thanked the assembly for their attention.

The chair asked unanimous consent to defer the Town Hall report to the afternoon session.

Mission Interpretation Moment

Mr. Gabriel Maioli gave a detailed report on the renewal project at Zion, Manhattan including the construction of a new sanctuary financed through the building of an apartment building on the site. The presentation included slides of the designs for the new building and worship space.

Lutheran Services New York Alliance

Greetings and remarks were given by Mr. Ron Drews, chair of Lutheran Services NY Alliance. Mr. Drews reviewed the member organizations participating in the Alliance and its mission and vision statements. As a relatively new organization he described this time as a period of discernment. He highlighted the establishment of a new CPE program under the LSNYA umbrella.

The Lutheran

Mr. Dan Lehmann, editor of *The Lutheran* magazine, was unable to be present because of a surgery. Bishop Bouman highlighted the new piece for *The Lutheran* and that is “The Little Lutheran,” a special item written by grandparents. He invited the assembly to check it out. Samples of were distributed in the members’ packets.

Synodical Budget for Fiscal Year 2008

Mr. Buescher, our treasurer, was invited lead the assembly in the consideration of the budget for 2008. He moved the adoption of the budget \$4,350,409 for 2008 as presented by the Synod Council.

Mr. Kurt Langjahr [Gloria Dei, New Hyde Park] rose to express his concern regarding the sale of properties and also commented on the cost of the current location of the synod offices.

Pr. Jonathan Hopkins [New Hope, Valley Stream] moved the previous question. The motion was approved and the motion on the budget was put to a vote.

On the motion to approve a budget of \$4,350,409 for F.Y. 2008.

**Adopted
SA2007.05.06**

Mission Interpretation Moment

In introducing the report the bishop noted the retirement of Pr. Martin Fergus will be retiring from his position in the Political Science Department at Fordham University and moving from the synod and has served us for many years in social action and in the area of Hunger.

Pr. Fergus thanked his committee for their commitment and follow through. Members of the committee reported on the impact of a memorial resolution from 2005 To Make Ending Hunger a Core Conviction of the ELCA and the allocation of contributions to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal to various program areas.

The session recessed at 12:00noon.

PLENARY SESSION IV

After the lunch break, the assembly celebrated a Eucharist. Pr. Koran, Assembly Chaplain, presided. Bishop Bouman gave the sermon. Ms. Silvia Strang was the assisting minister and Mr. Pedro D'Aquino was the cantor.

The final plenary session began at 2:15 p.m.

Bishop Bouman reviewed the remaining items on the agenda before introducing Pr. Robert Wollenburg to give the report on the Town Hall meetings postponed in the morning session.

Town Hall Meeting Presentation

Pr. Robert Wollenburg introduced Ms. Sarah Gioe, who was the chief note-taker at the Town Hall meetings and who wrote the final report. She reviewed the basic themes which emerged from the comments made by both clergy and laypeople at the 42 meetings held across the synod.

People are seeking to renew a struggling church.

People are looking for leadership from the synod office.

People want more communication and connection.

A copy of the full report is in the appendix to the minutes.

Mission Interpretation Moment

Pr. Jonathan Hopkins and members of New Hope, Valley Stream described to the assembly the merging of two congregations and the revitalization of ministry in Valley Stream. With Pr. Hopkins were members Bob Schurman, Jack Eng, Martha Oast, and Jane Graham.

Recognition of Anniversaries

Pr. Mills presented the names of this year's honorees. Those present were invited to stand.

Five Years

The Rev. Percy Butiku
The Rev. Scott Kershner
The Rev. J. Barrie Lawless
The Rev. Eric Olsen
The Rev. David Parsons
The Rev. Belen Gonzalez y Perez
The Rev. Michael Thomas
The Rev. Frederic Weidmann
The Rev. Patti Welch

Ten Years

The Rev. Doris Cirillo
The Rev. Cathy Rosenholtz

Fifteen Years

The Rev. William Baum
The Rev. Elizabeth Diver
The Rev. Sharon Israel

Twenty Years

The Rev. Dianne Loufman
The Rev. Ulf Lunow
The Rev. John McKenzie
The Rev. William Peacock
The Rev. I. Daniel Peter Penumaka
The Rev. Terrence Walsh

Twenty-five Years

The Rev. Gail Burwa

The Rev. Kenneth Jetto
The Rev. Claudia Raggie
The Rev. David Rommereim
The Rev. Peter Rustico

Thirty Years

The Rev. Albert Martin
The Rev. William Munz
The Rev. Paul Nordeen
The Rev. Leigh Pezet
The Rev. Dario Santamaria
The Rev. Dennis Walker
The Rev. Mark Wilhelm

Thirty-five Years

The Rev. Richard Michael
The Rev. F. Robert Modr
The Rev. William Preuss
The Rev. Robert Rodriguez

Forty Years

The Rev. Robert Gahagan
The Rev. Thomas Hammond
The Rev. Robert Johnson

The Rev. Gary Mehl
The Rev. Robert Mursch

Forty-five Years

The Rev. Albert Ahlstrom
The Rev. Robert Brueckner
The Rev. Clement Lee
The Rev. Richard Miller
The Rev. Robert Neuhaus

Fifty Years

The Rev. Henry Brau
The Rev. Kenneth Fahlman
The Rev. Gerald Gundersen
The Rev. Dale Hansen
The Rev. Henry Schriever
The Rev. Jack Stouffer
The Rev. Jack Traugott

Fifty-five Years

The Rev. Glenn Stone

Sixty Years

The Rev. John Taylor

The only 50 year honoree present, Pr. Jack Traugott, thanked the assembly for their recognition and for the opportunity to serve.

The anniversaries of those serving on other rosters of the synod were then recognized.

Associates in Ministry

Ten Years

Ms. Laurie Miller

Twenty Years

Mr. Edward Basche
Ms. Christine Hauge
Deacon Donna Nekarda
Ms. Karin Syrdahl
Sr. Cecilia Wilson

Twenty-five Years

Mr. Richard Erickson

Thirty Years

Mr. Horace Beasley

Synodical Deacons

Five Years

Deacon William Bello

Ten Years

Deacon Desna E. Clements
Deacon Rebecca Dahlstrom
Deacon Frances Hoyer

Report of the Bishop Part 3

Bishop Bouman invited three members of the synod staff to share a description of their roles on behalf of the synod with the assembly.

Pr. David Anglada discussed his work with the Commission for Evangelical Outreach.

Pr. Dianne Loufman described her work with congregations in transition under the theme: "Time in the Wilderness."

Pr. Gary Mills expressed his passion as an “out and proud Lutheran” for the very human institution of the Church. He focused on our spiritual home the ELCA which he described as calling us to a mutual ministry of love and respect.

Registration report final

Pr. Brathwaite reported that as of 3:30pm there were 439 voting members registered:

Clergy	168	38 %
AiM	10	2 %
Lay	<u>261</u>	60 %
Total	439	

In addition to the voting members, she reported that 20 visitors had registered for the assembly.

The chair ordered without objection that all written reports be attached to the minutes as an appendix.

The assembly adjourned following the order for the closing of an assembly at 3:45pm.