

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

May 13-14, 2011
Melville Marriott Hotel, Melville, New York

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2011

PLENARY SESSION I

At 10:04 am Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo led the voting members Metropolitan New York Synod in the order for the Opening of an Assembly to begin the Twentieth Regular Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod at the Melville Marriott in Melville, New York.

Immediately following the order, the first plenary session was called to order. Bishop Rimbo welcomed the voting members, spoke about the work of the assembly, and defined for the assembly the term “voting member” as it applies to the members of the assembly. He then introduced Ms. Sarah Gioe and Pr. Jennifer Guelmami as the hosts for the plenary session.

Bishop Rimbo introduced Pr. Paul Milholland and Ms. Elizabeth Hoffman, co-chairs of the Assembly Planning Committee. Pr. Milholland introduced his committee and gave special thanks to Pr. Gary Mills and Ms. Mary Tennermann for their work in planning the assembly.

Bishop Rimbo introduced Pr. Daniel Peter Penumaka as the assembly chaplain. Pr. Penumaka serves St. Paul’s International Lutheran Church in Floral Park as Pastor and Mission developer for South Asian ministry in Metro New York, serves as convener of the Asian Pastors group and on the Mission Strategy Table.

Report of the Committee on Registration

The Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite gave the registration report.

Clergy	120
Lay Voting Members	180
AiMs	10
Total Voting members	<u>310</u>
Visitors	<u>8</u>
Total Attendance	318

Bishop Rimbo introduced Pr. Diana Austin as the Parliamentarian for the assembly. Pr. Austin has been a Presbyterian pastor for 31 years and serves as the Moderator of the Permanent Judicial Commission in the Presbytery of Long Island and as the Stated Clerk and the Parliamentarian for the Presbytery of New York City.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda for the assembly was adopted as presented. Bishop Rimbo asked those speaking in favor of or against a matter before the assembly to do so at the appropriate microphone and noted that they will be limited to three minutes. Pr. Al Ahlstrom moved to grant nine minutes of speaking time to the representatives from the congregations appealing synod administration and to the representative from the consultation committee. This motion was seconded and adopted by the assembly.

**Metropolitan New York Synod
Agenda/Melville Marriott
Friday, May 13, and Saturday, May 14, 2011**

8:00 Registration

9:30 Orientation for Voting Members
Ms. Maria Del Toro, Pr. Robert Schoepflin, Mr. Robert Buescher

10:00 Opening Worship and Opening of an Assembly
Grand Ballroom

PLENARY SESSION I

HOSTS: Sarah Gioe; Jennifer Guelmami

10:30 Welcome the Voting Members
Bp. Rimbo

10:32 Welcome and Introduction of Assembly Chaplain/Pr. Daniel Peter Penumaka
Bp. Rimbo

10:34 Registration and Attendance Report
Pr. Rosalind Brathwaite

10:36 Introduction of the Parliamentarian/Pr. Diana Austin
Bp. Rimbo

10:37 Adoption of the Agenda
Bp. Rimbo

10:40 Rules and Procedures
Bp. Rimbo

10:45 Report of the Elections Committee and Nomination(s) (SC at-large, lay male; SC lay female; Church Council 2 lay female)
Ms. Christine Connell, DM (Nomination forms due by 12:00 noon)

11:00 Introduction of Chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel
Ms. Renée Wicklund, Esq.

11:05 Introduction of the ELCA Representative (Pr. Barbara Berry-Bailey)
Bp. Rimbo

11:08 Report of the Bishop I
Bp. Rimbo

11:40 ELCA Military Chaplaincy
Pr. Terrence Walsh

11:50 Registration and Attendance Report
Pr. Rosalind Brathwaite

11:52 Announcements
Pr. Paul Milholland

11:55 Prayer

12:00 Pr. Peter
Lunch
Atrium

PLENARY SESSION II

HOSTS: Kathleen Koran; Paul Milholland

1:00 Call to Order
Bp. Rimbo

1:02 Prayer
Pr. Peter

1:05 Bible Study
Dr. Diane Jacobson

1:50 Introduction of Synod Officers and Synod Council
Bp. Rimbo

1:55 Synod Council Report
Ms. Maria Del Toro

2:10 Report of the Treasurer
Mr. Robert Buescher

2:15 Presentation of the Proposed 2011 Revised Budget
Mr. Robert Buescher

2:20 Presentation of 2012 Budget (Discussion and Adoption on Saturday)
Mr. Robert Buescher

2:25 2014 Bishop's Election Process Update
Pr. Robert Schoepflin

2:35 Children, Youth and Family Ministry Report
Mr. Charlie Germain

2:50 ELCA Report
Pr. Barbara Berry-Bailey

3:20 Committee on Congregational Viability
Pr. William Baum

3:30 Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia
Pr. John Puotinen, Vice Pres. For Advancement, Exec. Dir. LTSP
Foundation

3:40 Election(s) Synod Council Members; Candidates for Church Council
Pr. Paul Egensteiner

3:55 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Presentation
Trinity/LES; Trinity/SI; St. Peter's/HS

4:05 Financial Presentation
Ms. Kathleen Schmidt

4:25 Candidacy Committee Report
Pr. Jeffrey Kolbo

4:35 Project Connect Presentation
Pr. Mark Erson; Pr. Jonathan Linman, Ph.D.

4:50 Bible Study
Dr. Diane Jacobson

5:25 Mission Strategy Report
Pr. Jack Horner

5:35 Ecumenical Greetings
Bp. Rimbo

6:05 Announcements
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann

6:10 Prayer
Pr. Peter

6:15 Dinner
Atrium

8:00 Festival Eucharist
St. Peter's Lutheran Church/Huntington Station

Saturday, May 14, 2010

PLENARY SESSION III

HOSTS: Kathy Schmidt; Jennifer Guelmami

7:00 Breakfast
Atrium

7:30 Budget Breakfast
Location TBD

8:00 Morning Prayer
Grand Ballroom

8:20 Call to Order
Bp. Rimbo

8:22 Registration and Attendance
Pr. Rosalind Brathwaite

8:25 Elections Committee Results and Second Ballot (if needed)
Pr. Paul Egensteiner

8:40 Wartburg/Mt. Vernon Report
Pr. Carol Fryer

8:50 Bible Study
Dr. Diane Jacobson

9:25 Report of the Bishop II
Bp. Rimbo

9:55 Environmental Stewardship Committee Report
Ms. Grace Yukich

10:05 Reference and Counsel
Ms. Renée Wicklund

10:35 Synod Domestic Violence Awareness Task Force Report
Ms. Karri Whipple

10:40 Hunger Committee Report
Ms. Karen Nurmi

10:50 Student Christian Center Report/New Paltz
Dcn. Klaus Jonietz, Pr. Tobias Anderson, Pr. Ralph Merante

11:00 Anniversaries and Introduction of Pastors and Deacons new to MNYS
Pr. Kathleen Koran

11:20 Introduction of Deans

11:30	Pr. Kathleen Koran New Website Introduction Ms. Sarah Gioe
11:45	Congregational Appeal Process(es) Bp. Rimbo
12:15	Stewardship and Mission Support Table Pr. Jack Horner
12:25	Adoption of the 2011 Proposed Revised Budget and the 2012 Budget Mr. Robert Buescher
12:35	Announcements Pr. Paul Milholland
12:38	Prayer Pr. Peter
12:40	Lunch Atrium (box lunch)

PLENARY SESSION IV

HOSTS: Jonathan Linman; Bobbi Paulik

1:30	Eucharist Bp. Rimbo
2:25	Tanzania Committee Report Mr. Sheldon Erb
2:30	Romania Committee Report Pr. Leigh Pezet
2:35	Bible Study Dr. Diane Jacobson
3:10	Resolution for Changes in Audit Committee Membership Pr. Robert Schoepflin
3:20	Reference and Counsel Ms. Renée Wicklund
4:00	Closing of an Assembly Bp. Rimbo

Adoption of Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure were adopted.

Nominations Committee Report

Ms. Christine Connell, Nominations Committee chair reported that elections will be held for two seats on the Synod Council, one at-large lay male and one lay female and for one seat on the ELCA Church Council, lay female.

She noted that nomination forms were included in the assembly packets and are also available at the back table. Nomination forms are to be submitted to Dcn. Bobbi Paulik by 11:30am.

After all nominations had been received, nominations for Churchwide Assembly Voting Members were declared closed. Floor nominators were reminded of the deadline for submission of biographical data.

Reference and Counsel Report

Ms. Renee Wicklund, chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel directed the members to the items in their report and introduced the memorial and resolutions received by the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

Consideration of the memorial and resolutions was scheduled to begin in the second plenary session.

- Item A Memorial Calling the Church to Speak Against and Act to Prevent Bullying, Harassment and Related Violence
- Item B Resolution Supporting the Implementation of the Goal Adopted at the 2010 NMYS Assembly to Provide for a Minimum of 10 Percent Representation for Youth and Young Adults on the Synod Council, Synod Committees, Taskforces, Etc., and in Congregations
- Item C Resolution in Support of the Synod Council's Strategic Planning

The Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey, Manager for Companionship for Africa in ELCA Global Mission Unit was introduced and welcomed as the ELCA Representative to the 2011 Synod Assembly.

Report of the Bishop

Bishop Rimbo presented Part One of his Report to the Assembly.

*Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

Thank you for the privilege of serving as bishop of this synod. And thank you for this opportunity to reflect on our life together.

At the outset, I take this opportunity to thank Lois, my spouse, for her unfailing support to me and her immense love for the Church. I ask Lois to stand so you may greet her.

Somehow I have managed to avoid showing a picture of our new granddaughter, Zoe Elizabeth Rimbo, one month old tomorrow, and our nearly-three-year-old grandson, Owen Robert Rimbo. If you would like, I'm sure Lois will share pictures with you!

I want to introduce and thank the staff with whom I am privileged to serve. I ask them to stand and, at the end of the introduction, receive this assembly's thanks.

Pr. Percy Butiku, Assistant to the Bishop for African Descent Ministries

Mr. Branden Dicks, Administrative Assistant

Ms. Sarah Gioe, Director of Communication and Interpretation

Ms. Kim Grate, Administrative Assistant

Pr. Jack Horner, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission

Pr. Jeffrey Kolbo, Candidacy Coordinator

Pr. Kathleen Koran, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations

Pr. Jonathan Linman, Assistant to the Bishop for Formation
Mr. John Litke, Director for Synod Administration
Pr. Gary Mills, Assistant to the Bishop for Global and Multicultural Mission
Deacon Gayle Ruege, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Bishop
Ms. Kathleen Schmidt, Assistant to the Bishop for Finance and Administration

Ms. Mary Tennermann, Administrative Assistant.

I invite the assembly to thank these faithful servants.

Now, let me introduce to you our Synod Council and invite them to stand to be recognized.

Pr. Albert Ahlstrom
Mr. William Anderson
Pr. William Baum, also serving on the Executive Committee
Pr. Rosalind Brathwaite
Ms. Kelsey Brown
Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer
Diaconal Minister Christine Connell
Ms. Maria Del Toro, Vice-President
Deacon Charles Germain
Ms. Barbara Hansen
Mr. F. Eugene Hügel
Ms. Barbara Holm
Pr. Brenda Jack
Ms. Barbara Johnson, also serving on the Executive Committee
Pr. Perry Kirschbaum
Dr. Carlos Lopez
Deacon John Malone
Ms. Minerva Melendez, also serving on the Executive Committee
Pr. Paul Milholland, also serving on the Executive Committee
Pr. Craig Miller
Mr. Brian Reardon
Pr. Kit Robison
Pr. Robert Schoepflin, Secretary
Ms. Janet Siry and
Dr. Grace Yukich

Please join me in offering thanks!

I am also pleased to welcome my friend and colleague, Pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey, representative of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We will learn more about Pastor Berry-Bailey later in the Assembly, but let us welcome her.

As we assemble, we give thanks with the Arkansas/Oklahoma Synod, our domestic companion synod, at the election of their new bishop at their April 29 through May 2 Assembly. Pastor Michael Girlinghouse was elected on the 5th ballot. Pastor Girlinghouse is pastor at University Lutheran Church at the University of Oklahoma and former campus pastor at the University of South Dakota. There are now more Michaels in the Conference of Bishops than Roberts. Just an observation.

As we gather here, the synods of Northwestern Ohio, Southeast Michigan, Southwestern Washington, Sierra Pacific and Northwest Washington are also meeting in assembly.

At the 2009 Synod Assembly I shared with voting members an M R I of our life together in this great synod. M was for missional. R, for relational. And I, for incarnational. In that report I hoped to capture what was happening in our synod and look ahead to what was to come. The little handle, M R I, seemed to resonate with many.

I am not nearly as clever this time, but I do want to talk about those same themes. How is our Metropolitan New York Synod Missional and Relational and Incarnational? Or, put another way, how are we a synod of the church?

I am a preacher. I love words. Sometimes that love and my tendency toward perfectionism prevent me from preparing: I keep waiting till the time is right, the mood is appropriate, the deadline is upon me. I am afraid that the words might be somehow lacking. I am aware that every one of them is important.

I am amazed by words. They are living things. Do you remember when a mouse was just a small rodent and a window was something you opened to let in fresh air? But there are new meanings to those words today. In the church, we use words so often that we assume we understand them.

One old word is of great importance to me as we gather in Assembly, the word “synod.” It’s a mysterious word. We are not quite sure what it means. So it is my task to try to guide your thinking as we gather for this synod assembly. It comes from two words meaning, literally, “with” and “road” – on the road with, on the way together; that’s what a synod is, or at least what it is supposed to be.

I said, I am a preacher. In my report to our Synod, this Assembly, I want to engage the theological dialectic of Law and Gospel, or maybe “Bad News” and “Good News,” as I talk with you about the life of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I suspect you will not like the Law part of that; I don’t either. But our life on this road with one another, on this way together, begs us, first, to name reality and then offer one another a word of Good News for all of us and for the world.

Let me talk with you about Fear and Faith.

We are living in a culture of fear, not only here in our area, but throughout the world. The media promote this culture and as a result we think of ourselves as victims. I know only one way to conquer that pervasive fear: faith.

We face many challenges as the church but I think the biggest is a crisis of faith, a crisis of trust. And that trust is not only in God but in one another.

Many in our congregations think “the synod” wants to sell churches in order to cover operating costs. I do not know how I can say this more strongly: that is simply not the truth. We are not in the business of closing churches to pay bills. But the reality is that there are closings and there will remain properties that come to our synod because of the constitutional provisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of the State of New York. (I never anticipated becoming so familiar with the law, and members of the Synod Council and Executive Committee can attest to the fact that I have a lot more to learn!)

When a congregation is simply not able to maintain its own life, when its property becomes a burden or even a liability, when worship is no longer offered, when there is no chance of calling a pastor – these and a host of other considerations weigh on our decisions. They are not arbitrary, they are not power plays, they are truly and genuinely confronted with fear and hope. How can the larger church wisely use these proceeds to help us continue God’s mission? Our executive committee and our synod council wrestle with these questions mightily because our purpose is to serve the mission of God in the world.

I know the fears that confront you, dear sisters and brothers; they confront me, too. There is among us all a fear of failure, or, rather, of what we wrongly perceive to be failure. There is the fear of loss of control of what was once the center of my family’s or my community’s life. There is the fear that the good days are past, but in reality, when we look at those days in the broad sweep of history, they were probably not all that golden. Is there some way in which we can come to realize that sometimes a congregation has completed its life in the service of God’s Mission, rejoice in that life well lived, cling to the fact that we know and believe that life follows death, and go out singing? Is there some way that we as the church can actually believe and proclaim that Good Friday is not the last word, even for our congregations, but that the Risen Christ remains among us saying “Peace be with you,” especially when we don’t feel that peace of Christ?

Let me talk with you about Scarcity and Abundance.

Since the recent recession began, we have also been living in a culture of scarcity, seeing everything through the lenses of dollars and cents. The difficulty with this vision for Christians is that it places us at the center rather than God.

I am grateful for the leaders of our Synod – our staff, our treasurer, our council – who attend to our finances with the wonderful combination of courage and transparency. They keep me aware of the challenges but they are always attentive to the new opportunities God is presenting for us. I also want to say that I believe we are in a far better place today than we

were three years ago in terms of your awareness of the challenges and opportunities we have before us.

The work of our Stewardship Table, focused on stewardship as an activity of spiritual formation, was a gift to many in our synod last autumn and I anticipate an even larger and stronger participation this fall. We are called to plant; God will give the increase. We are called to edify, to build up; God will provide all we need. We are called to bear witness; God will open ears and hearts. I want us to have the audacity to hope and to stop living in these prisons of fear. When we do that we will find that we have all we need as church in congregations, in this synod, in our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and in the One Church.

Our Synod Council wisely saw the need to build up and has engaged Rita Fuerst Adams of Charitable and Philanthropic Management Counsel of Boston, Massachusetts, to help us create a “culture of philanthropy” in the Metropolitan New York Synod. I would like to invite Rita to stand so you may see her and welcome her. She will be meeting with individuals over these days and I hope you all will be able to at least say hello. God has given us great resources which we are only beginning to find, both within the congregations of our synod and in the public sector. I also expect that as a result of our particular attention to philanthropy in the broader sense, we will increase mission support.

I also hope we will find a strategy for investment of funds from the sale of properties to help with the funding of seminary education, lay leadership training, support to struggling ministries, improvement of properties in congregations that are thriving, opportunities to welcome the stranger into our life together, and so forth. I think we need to look again at how these proceeds are shared among us. There might be ways to use these monies differently.

I also anticipate that many of the ministries carried on by the Churchwide office will need to be carried on at a more local, synodical level. The restructuring of the Churchwide organization is one among many reasons we need to maintain a full and vital staff as more comes to be in our portfolios; it is also one of the many reasons that prompt my daily thanksgiving to God for the people with whom I work most closely.

Our greatest asset as a synod is people, the leaders and members who are our synod. My visits to our conferences and congregations are frankly renewing for me and for the members of the staff; since last Assembly we have participated with you in 6 of these conference visits, another one is coming up next weekend in Eastern Nassau and three more before the end of the calendar year.

I hope that together we can work to re-tool and re-train leaders, both ordained and lay, for mission in this time. I rejoice at the work of our candidacy committee. I thank God for the efforts in our Region 7 of the ELCA to create a strong program of continuing theological education for those who are in their first call and I hope that mentoring programs for new pastors will expand. Pastor Jonathan Linman’s direction to the various aspects of formation in our synod is bearing fruit in people’s lives and in the lives of our congregations. I want to reiterate the importance of two lay leadership training programs carried on very intentionally

in our synod. The diakonia program is intended for lay people who desire more in-depth study and formation than can be offered in customary parish education. That is one program available to everyone. In addition, our synod is gifted with synodically-recognized deacons who are often though not always trained by the diakonia program but continue in an even more rigorous process. Both of these are models for other synods and, indeed, other churches. I am grateful to all those who are involved in this formation, names too numerous to mention, but people who are making significant contributions to the life of the church.

Let me talk with you about Diversity and Unity.

We live in a culture, even here, that says it likes diversity. But we do not act like it. I had a conversation recently with a person who was looking for an ELCA church in Manhattan. I offered two possibilities. The first was rejected because they have a lot of Latinos there. The second was rejected because they let bums sleep on their steps. I mentioned Jesus but there was little interest in him, too.

And lest we point an accusing finger, let's admit that we say "all are welcome" in our congregations, but is that true? Really? All? We are still behaving with a melting-pot-mentality which in fact separates us from those who differ from us. I believe God is calling us to recognize our multi-cultural reality and rejoice in the various gifts and experiences brought to the table. In cooperation with Pastor Gary Mills and Pastor Percy Butiku of our staff, together with the Asian, Latino and Black Pastors Groups, we are striving toward recognizing that, rather than being a melting pot in which all are blended together and lose their identity, we are a great mosaic, the Metropolitan New York Synod. I think we need to focus on multi-cultural rather than ethnic-specific congregations and rejoice in the beautiful variety with which God has graced us.

Let me talk with you about Diminishment and Empowerment.

The trend in many places within our synod and throughout mainline churches is toward decline. I could say that more sweetly, but this is reality. We need to be clear about our active membership, about our worship attendance, about giving trends. And I am thankful for the increasingly good submission of parochial reports. We need to notice whether our membership reflects our neighborhood and note well the demographic trends and changes in our communities. We need to ask if we are able to maintain a budget in many places and what sort of budget it will be. We need to look very closely at the state of our buildings. Through the work of our deans and our synod council, we need to be aware of those congregations that are suffering the most and seek to help them in a proactive, preventive way rather than cleaning up after the final congregational tsunami.

The work of our Mission Strategy Table and of the Committee on Congregational Viability Norms is key to this. We will learn more about these efforts at strengthening our mission from Pr. Jack Horner and Pr. William Baum while we are here together.

Let me talk with you about Illness and Health.

What is the status of our health as a synod? In other words, how is your congregation expressing God's wellness, God's shalom? Are there strong, spiritually healthy, identifiable leaders? Do you work together in a healthy, honest, relational way as pastor and people? Do you know your mission as a congregation? What is your reputation in your community?

And what of our rostered leaders: ordained, synodical deacons, deaconesses, diaconal ministers and associates in ministry? I am keenly aware of your fears, too, dear sisters and brothers, from frequent conversations with you. Let me put it this way: there are high expectations for growth in settings where growth is not going to happen. You are expected to be both traditional and innovative simultaneously. You feel alone all the time, yet efforts to build collegiality go unrecognized. Low morale is rampant among our leaders, lay and ordained. Mobility is limited. An ever-increasing number of our congregations are simply unable to afford a full-time pastor and many are unable to afford even a part-time pastor. Negative congregational dynamics, our changing culture, demographic shifts and an increasing sense of isolation are difficult to navigate.

I want to provide support to you, our leaders; but I want to be very clear: support does not always mean agreement. Our staff is available to congregations and leaders. We do not have all the answers, but we are ready and willing to travel on this road together with you.

The ministry of Pastor Kathleen Koran and our Conference Deans have helped tremendously to make the call process work compassionately and efficiently but we continue to face the challenges of our reality and the need for developing strong mutual ministry committees and healthy congregations is always present.

More than at any other time we need to work at being more accountable to one another. We live in cruciform relationship: we not only have a vertical relationship with God, but also a horizontal relationship and responsibility to one another. And not only as individuals. Our congregations are linked to every other congregation in our Synod, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in our companion synods and in the one great Church throughout the world. We claim to believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church, and I hope and pray that we will continue to live out that belief in our relationships.

Part of that "living-out" is mission support. While we have continued to face decline in mission support to the tune of 12% annually, we still are challenged to help the larger church, to support our pastors and congregations, and to do work together in ways that no congregation can do on its own. You will hear from Assistant to the Bishop Kathy Schmidt and Treasurer Robert Buescher about this aspect of our life later in the assembly; for now, know that I am grateful for the gifts you give for the mission of our Synod and the ELCA. But let me offer you a simple idea: if each member of this Synod Assembly were to sacrifice one cup of designer coffee, tea or hot chocolate a week – oh, let's just say five dollars from St. Arbut's for 52 weeks – if each of us were to make that sacrifice and contribute it to the larger church we would make up for our decline in mission support last year. I'm mathematically

challenged; just ask Kathy Schmidt or my wife Lois. But I figure we would have \$130,000 more. And let's go crazy here: why don't you invite another member of your church to do the same. All of which is to say what members of our staff tell me all the time: Together we can do more.

Think and pray about these opportunities we have as we close this first part of my Report to the Assembly and anticipate the second part later in our time together.

Thank you!

Bishop Rimbo introduced The Rev. Terrence Walsh, US Army Chaplain stationed at Fort Drum, New York, who brought greetings to the assembly from the ELCA Military Chaplaincy and spoke of the work of chaplains and the need for more ELCA chaplains.

Report of the Committee on Registration

The Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite gave the updated registration report.

Clergy	158
Lay Voting Members	216
AiMs	10
Total Voting members	<u>384</u>
Visitors	<u>8</u>
Total Attendance	318

Bishop Rimbo invited Pr. Paul Milholland to the podium for announcements.

Bishop Rimbo invited Pr. Daniel Peter to the podium to close the session with prayer.

The second plenary session of the Twentieth Regular Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod was called to order, by Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo at 1:20 pm.

Bishop Rimbo thanked Mr. Ron Drews and Lutheran Social Services for provided the coffee and refreshments for the second plenary session and asked Pr. Daniel Peter to open the session with prayer.

Bishop Rimbo then introduced Dr. Diane Jacobson, Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN and Director of the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative. Dr. Jacobson led the assembly in a study of the Ten Commandments.

Vice President's Report

Ms. Maria Del Toro, Vice President of the Synod, presented the following report. [A detailed report of the Synod Council's action was included in the Bulletin of Reports.]

BUENAS TARDES.

IT WAS A LITTLE LESS THAN A YEAR AGO THAT I STOOD HERE IN FRONT OF YOU, HAVING THE AUDACITY (OR SHOULD I SAY CHUTSPA) TO CLAIM THAT I KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT LEADERSHIP. WELL, THANKS TO YOU I AM HERE NOW AS THE VICE PRESIDENT. IT HAS BEEN A VERY INTERESTING TEN MONTHS, TO SAY THE LEAST. LITTLE DID I KNOW WHAT I WAS GETTING INTO! THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND PRAYERS.

I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT THE SYNOD COUNCIL HAS WORKED HARD THIS YEAR ON BEHALF OF THE SYNOD. WE MADE SOME DIFFICULT DECISIONS BUT I AM NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU A LITANY OF ALL THE ACTIONS WE HAVE TAKEN; THEY ARE LISTED IN THE SYNOD REPORT YOU RECEIVED. AND I CERTAINLY HOPE YOU TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW IT.

INSTEAD, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU HOW THE COUNCIL MEMBERS, TOGETHER WITH THE SYNOD STAFF, AND WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE BISHOP, HAVE BEGUN TRANSFORMING THE WAY THE COUNCIL FUNCTIONS AS A BODY IN ORDER TO MAKE ITS WORK MORE RELEVANT, AND EFFECTIVE. THE COUNCIL IS THE SYNOD'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND AS SUCH HAS RESPONSIBILITIES STIPULATED IN OUR CONSTITUTION. BUT ALSO, THE SYNOD COUNCIL IS MADE UP OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST; OUR JOB IS NOT ONLY ABOUT GOVERNANCE; IT IS TO CARRY OUT OUR RESPONSIBILITIES ALWAYS SEEKING THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE THROUGH PRAYER AND DEVOTIONS.

AS WE STARTED OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER, THERE WAS CONSENSUS THAT WE NEEDED TO CHANGE THE CULTURE OF THE COUNCIL. THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WAS TO GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER. A SYNOD COUNCIL CULTURE AND PROCESS WORKING GROUP WAS CREATED

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PASTOR JONATHAN LINMAN AND INCLUDED PASTOR ED BARNETT, MS. RENEE WICKLUND, MR. JOHN MALONE AND MYSELF. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR WORK. (ASK THEM TO STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.)

KNOWING THAT SELF-ASSESSMENT IS IMPORTANT FOR BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND IS NEEDED TO DEVELOP TRUST AND TO DISCOVER STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, WE STARTED THE CULTURE PROCESS AT THE COUNCIL RETREAT. WE ASKED EVERYONE TO FILL OUT A PROFILE FORM THAT INCLUDED INFORMATION ABOUT HIS OR HER CHURCH AND BUSINESS EXPERIENCE, EDUCATION, SKILLS, INTERESTS AND TALENTS. WE ASKED ALL THE MEMBERS IF THEY WERE WILLING TO DO MORE THAN THEY WERE CURRENTLY DOING. MORE THAN HALF SAID YES. WE ASKED EVERYONE TO EVALUATE THE COUNCIL AS WELL AS THEIR OWN ROLE IN IT AND TO OFFER IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT. WE SPENT TIME SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES AND GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER.

WE LEARNED THAT THE COUNCIL MEMBERS DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLES, INCLUDING THAT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT. NEW MEMBERS WERE OFTEN CONFUSED AS TO THEIR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES. ALL WANTED TIME TO DISCUSS ISSUES. THEY WANTED BETTER COMMUNICATION REGARDING PAST DECISIONS AND ACTIONS. THEY WANTED OBJECTIVES TO BE ESTABLISHED AT EACH MEETING. THEY FELT THAT MEMBERS SHOULD COME TO MEETINGS PREPARED AND WELL INFORMED IN ORDER TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS. THEY WANTED DEVOTIONS TO BE INTEGRATED INTO THE WHOLE AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL. AND ABOVE ALL, THEY DID NOT WANT TO BE PERCEIVED AS A RUBBER STAMP.

THE PROFILES WERE TURNED INTO A BOOKLET THAT INCLUDES EACH MEMBER'S BIO AND PHOTO (SOME PHOTOS SEEM TO BE CONFIRMATION PHOTOS, AND YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT NEVER MIND!) WE ARE WAITING FOR THE ELECTION OF THE TWO NEW MEMBERS TO COMPLETE THE BOOKLET AND SHARE IT WITH EVERYONE.

THE COUNCIL CULTURE AND PROCESS WORKING GROUP WORKED DILIGENTLY TO DEVELOP BEST PRACTICES FOR THE COUNCIL AND PROVIDES MONTHLY STATUS REPORTS.

THE GROUP HAS NOW SUBMITTED A SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THAT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL IN THE SUMMER. SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE A COVENANT OF CONDUCT FOR ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS; AN EVALUATION FORM TO BE FILLED ANNUALLY; TIPS FOR ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER; LEGAL ISSUES FOR SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS, INCLUDING A CLEAR ARTICULATION OF THEIR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF DEVOTIONS INTO THE AGENDA; RECOMMENDATIONS ON ROLE OF SYNOD STAFF AT SYNOD

COUNCIL MEETINGS; AND SUGGESTIONS FOR RECRUITING NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS, ONCE ACCEPTED BY THE SYNOD COUNCIL, WILL FORM THE BASIS FOR ORIENTATION OF ALL NEW MEMBERS.

I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE AND THANK PASTOR JONATHAN LINMAN, PASTOR ED BARNETT, MS. RENE WICKLUND AND MR. JOHN MALONE FOR THEIR ALL THEIR WORK.

AND WE ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING THE RESULTS OF THE CULTURE PROCESS. I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT WE HAVE A VERY ENGAGED AND ENTHUSIASTIC SYNOD COUNCIL, AN ENERGETIC TEAM WILLING TO TACKLE TOUGH DECISIONS. AS PART OF THE EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNCIL, WE HAD A ONE-HOUR TRAINING ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND COMPETENCE.

AS THE CULTURE CHANGED, SO DID QUESTIONS ABOUT WHERE WE WERE GOING AS A SYNOD. AS WE REVIEWED REPORTS ON THE TEN YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN, THE MANY CONGREGATIONS AT RISK, THE CHANGES IN DEMOGRAPHICS, THE MORE WE WERE ALL CONVINCED THAT WE NEEDED TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE NOW. WE ASKED OURSELVES: WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE SYNOD, WHAT IS OUR VISION? WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE SYNOD? OR, AS SOMEONE ASKED, WHY DOES THE SYNOD EXIST IN THE FIRST PLACE?

CERTAINLY THERE ARE REQUIREMENTS MANDATED BY OUR CONSTITUTION, BUT WHAT IS THE VISION AND MISSION OF THE SYNOD RIGHT HERE IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA? HOW DO WE HAVE A MISSION THAT REFLECTS THE REALITIES CONGREGATIONS IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA FACE DAILY AND YET IS BIBLICALLY AND CONFESSIONALLY FOUNDED? HOW DO WE DEVELOP A PLAN THAT PROVIDES A MISSION AND VISION AND THAT ARTICULATES THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SYNOD FOR THE NEXT DECADE? WHAT BARRIERS WOULD KEEP US FROM THESE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES? HOW CAN WE AFFORD TO DO IT?

IF SUCH A PROCESS WERE TO SUCCEED IT WOULD REQUIRE THAT THE SYNOD COUNCIL COMMIT ITSELF FULLY TO IT. THE PROCESS WOULD BE INITIATED BY THE SYNOD COUNCIL BUT WOULD INCLUDE AS MANY STAKEHOLDERS AS POSSIBLE. AND THE PROCESS WOULD HAVE TO BE INCLUSIVE, TRANSPARENT, METHODICALLY SOUND AND REALISTIC. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PROCESS WOULD NEED TO INCLUDE ALL AND BE EMBRACED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS. AND THE END RESULT COULD NOT BE A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE BISHOP, BUT A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SYNOD, FOR ALL OF US, DEVELOPED BY ALL OF US. IT WOULD NOT BE A FEASIBILITY STUDY BUT A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SYNOD.

IF WE WERE TO DO IT WELL, IT WOULD REQUIRE A LOT OF TIME AND HARD WORK. AND WE WOULD NEED OUTSIDE EXPERTISE TO GUIDE US THROUGH THE PROCESS. AS ONE MEMBER SAID, WE NEED A PLAN, FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION.

ON APRIL 4TH, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED TO THE SYNOD COUNCIL THAT THE COUNCIL COORDINATE AND UNDERTAKE A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE SYNOD AND THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INTERVIEW AND ENGAGE AN OUTSIDE CONSULTING FIRM TO ASSIST THE SYNOD COUNCIL IN THIS PROCESS AND THAT THE COST OF THE OUTSIDE CONSULTANT BE PAID FOR OUT OF THE MISSION PROJECT PORTION OF THE SALE PROCEEDS OF PROPERTIES. MONTHLY REPORTS WOULD BE MADE TO THE SYNOD COUNCIL AND A REPORT WOULD BE MADE TO SYNOD ASSEMBLY IN 2012. THE SYNOD COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED THIS ACTION. WE HAVE ALREADY INITIATED THE PROCESS OF INTERVIEWING OUTSIDE CONSULANTS.

I KNOW THERE IS A RESOLUTION BEFORE YOU REGARDING THE STRATEGIC PLAN. I HOPE YOU WILL SUPPORT IT.

IN CONCLUSION, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE SYNOD COUNCIL FOR THEIR HARD WORK. IT IS A GREAT TEAM. I KNOW I SPEAK FOR THEM WHEN I SAY THAT I HOPE YOU WILL ALL JOIN US AS WE TAKE ON THIS NEW CHALLENGE. WE CANNOT DO IT ALONE. WE NEED YOUR TALENTS, EXPERIENCE, VISION, PRAYERS AND SUPPORT. TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT.

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK BISHOP RIMBO FOR PROVIDING THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP THAT HAS ENCOURAGED THE COUNCIL TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX. THE CULTURE CHANGE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT HIS LEADERSHIP. MUCHAS GRACIAS.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer of the Synod, presented the following report.

Chart #1 (Title)



Chart #2

THREE TOPICS TO COVER

1. 2010 Results and Report of the Independent Auditor
2. The Financial "Health" of the Synod
3. The Adjusted 2011 and the Proposed 2012 Synod Budget

2

It is my pleasure to cover three topics today: The 2010 auditor's report, our financial health, and present the proposed adjusted 2011, and 2012 budgets.

Chart #3

TOPIC #1

2010 Results and the Report of the Independent Auditor

The Major Foci for an Audit is to:

1. Issue "clean" opinion.
2. Confirm the existence and value of the Assets on our books, and
3. Confirm the reported Revenue and Expenses

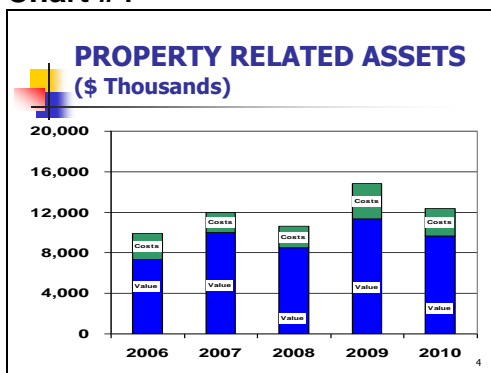
3

There are three major elements that we hope the audit will confirm. One is that our books fairly represent our actions and position. The other elements confirm that our assets exist and are accurately stated, and that the books show that our revenue and expenses are correctly stated.

Again our Auditors have given us a "clean" judgment.

You do have a complete and final copy of their report in your material, and I am not going to read it to you. But I think it is important that I comment on major issues, and not try to make accountants of you all.

Chart #4



First, our assets can be divided into two categories. The first are those related to property. The top of each column is the total assessed value of the properties we own. You can see that we had about \$4 million net acquisitions in 2009 and \$2 ½ million net dispositions in 2010.

[2009:

Sold: St. Peters – Brooklyn parsonage (\$628); /Acq Bethlehem – Brooklyn \$6,450;

Write down: Bethany - Brooklyn (\$1,210) and St. Johns – Bronx (\$400)

NET CHANGE = \$4212

2010:

Sold: St. Paul’s – Richmond Hills (\$1,600); sold Good Shepherd – Bayside Pars (\$650);

Acquired, then sold: Salem (Swedish) – Brooklyn \$2,650,

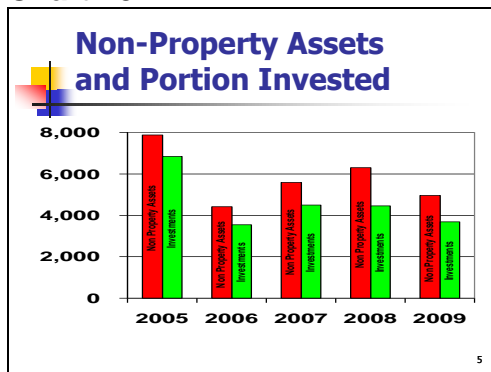
Wrote down: Bethlehem – Brooklyn (\$650);

Acquired: 1st Lutheran – Jeffersonville \$200, and Grace – North Branch \$200

NET CHANGE = (\$2,500)]

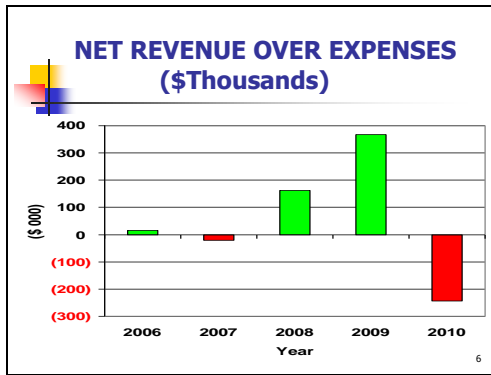
The green section of the columns represents funds we have expended on repairs, maintenance, etc. and will result in net sales that are less than the appraised value.

Chart #5



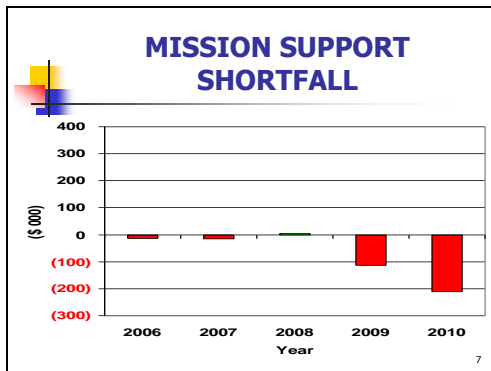
The other portion of our assets is cash, investments, and receivables. That’s the red column. Next to each, in green is the amount we have invested and hence earning income. Our task is to get the green as high up the red as we can.

Chart #6



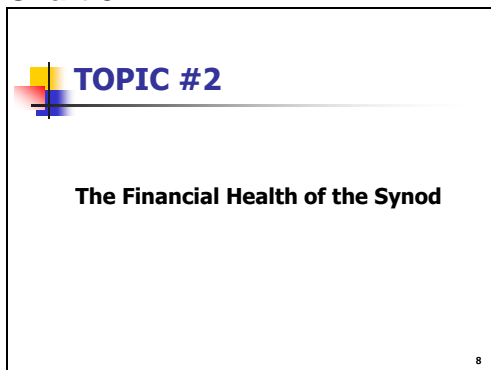
Our net revenue over expenses (otherwise known as net income) for 2010 joins prior years on this chart. We recorded a sizeable shortfall in 2010, \$243 thousand, about 6% over budget. The chart shows the gain in 2008 and 2009 far exceeds our losses in 2010.

Chart #7



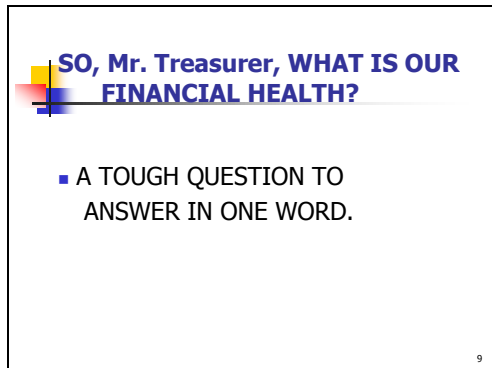
In a small operation with numerous continuing obligations – we could not cut expenses far enough or fast enough to cover the shortfall in Mission Support, which this shows on the same scale as the prior chart, which was \$213 thousand, about 16% of its budget.

Chart 8



So we go to the second Topic

Chart #9

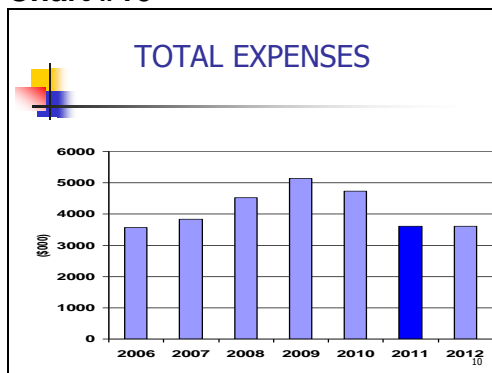


So let's look at our financial health.

Here is the question I get asked often. The answer lies in numerous facets and situations that I hope provide a more firm understanding than any one abstract word I could emit. You deserve to understand more than that.

We support a great array of projects and programs, all of which have great merit, and we have adequate cash at present to support the whole list. You will hear more detail of the areas we support later by Kathy Schmidt

Chart #10



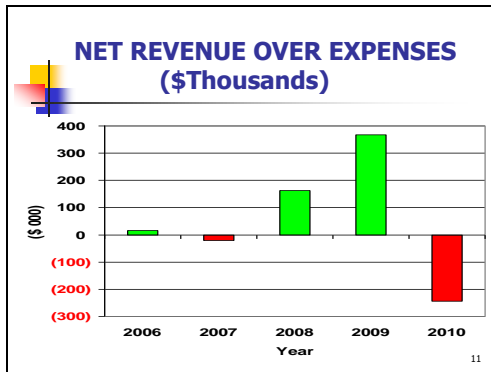
Our spending, which was rising through 2009 has been reduced substantially since that time. Part of that is we no longer attempt to estimate of indeterminate amount it will take to preserve or maintain properties we own. Anything spent in that area is recovered on the sales.

But, the greatest part of the decrease resulted from frugal reviews of the staff of what they plan to have to expend.

Kathy Schmidt is doing a swell job of finding ways to “do it for less”, finding areas for savings, and holding he line on spending

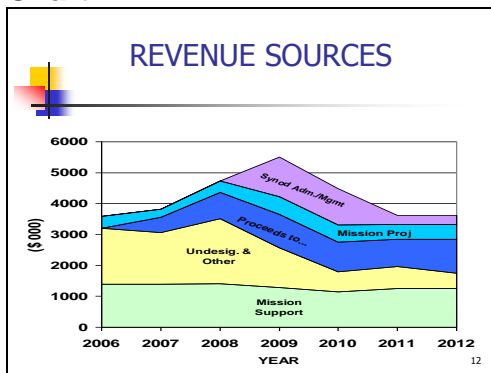
Later you will see in the presentation of the 2011 and 2012 budgets that such frugality continues.

Chart #11



Our net income is manageable. As I mentioned before, even with this past year's larger losses, they do not exceed the gain recorded in the prior two years – as mentioned before this loss is almost entirely explained due to the lowered Mission Support receipts.

Chart #12



With spending more controlled, it is equally important to examine our ability to pay for what we do, now and in the future. This chart is a picture of our history and expectations for 2011 and 2012.

The top of the layers is our total revenue. You will note that in recent years we revenues have decreased; some of which motivates our desire and need to reduce spending.

The shape of the other layers, different sources is very revealing.

The bottom (green layer) is Mission Support. It has slowly gone down.

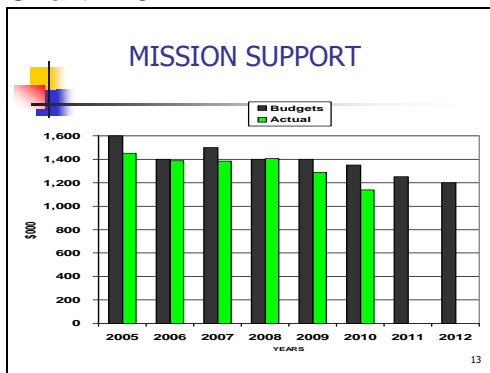
The next layer (in yellow) is Undesignated and other, which had included various grants has fast disappeared. We made up for that by increases in the top three layers.

The darker blue shows an increasing dependence on sales proceeds being used for operations.

The light blue are amounts of proceeds from sales that supports partnership grants and other mission projects, and has not shown much growth in the four years.

The top line, the purple shows how much we have outlaid in support of property we own, and for aid to congregations under synodical administration. It will show a leveling off in 2011 and 2012, as we expect to have fewer properties than before, and more critical analysis of what we are required to spend on congregations under Synodical Administration.

Chart #13

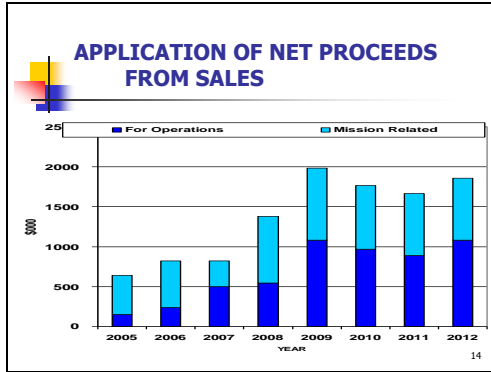


Allow me to put the magnifying glass to our major sources.

One of our large sources of revenue is Mission Support. But there has been a steady drop in dollars, not to mention any adjustment for inflation. The green columns show that the actual drop grows further behind budget.

We can't lower the budget fast enough to keep pace. And to continue on our present course, we must maintain the current level of Mission Support. You have total control over what is transmitted to the Synod, and it is your sole responsibility.

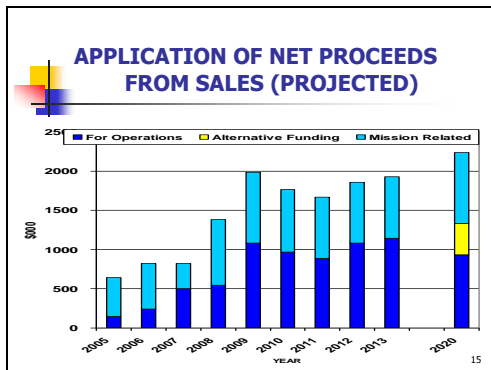
Chart #14



The only other large source of revenue is Net Proceeds from sales, which supported the top three areas of the prior chart. It has been all too easy over many years, long before Bishop Rimbo arrived, that if we found any worthy project, we would simply spend more of the sales proceeds for operations, the dark blue portion of the column.

The light blue sections, the part we use for partnership grants and direct support in mission projects has not expanded much since 2008.

Chart #15



The problem is that this practice is not sustainable.

Right now, we have sufficient funds, due to several recent sales, for continuing our spending habits for several years.

But in the development of our current financial 10 year plan, which you have in your material, says that we must augment our revenue with alternative funding in the latter years in order to plan for break even. You see that little yellow square that shows what we need to have in the year 2010.

We need to work harder to change the mindset that has been embedded in our culture for over a decade.

So, with the immediate status stable, we should consider if we are on the right course.

In my estimation, and shared by the Bishop, the other officers and the Synod Council, it is time to think broadly about a long range strategic plan.

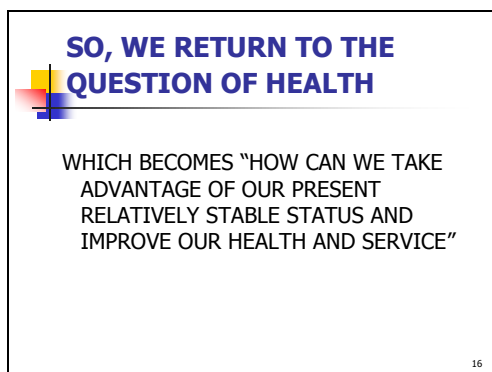
We need to devise guides to what our mission is, not only in broad sweeping terms like God's Work – Our Hands. Rather we need to parse that in clear, specific, and affordable programs and support plans which will let us measure which things we will do and which we should defer or refuse before we blindly commit our assets and efforts.

We have to understand that the virtue of compassion for needs must be balanced with good stewardship. Unfortunately we can not do everything that our hearts would have us do. We will sometimes have to say NO, and do the hard work of measuring uses against a productive strategy.

Everything should be on the table. It may mean that in time the present staff positions must be altered, and that some programs be changed or dropped while others added.

In doing so, I believe we may do fewer right things, but do them well.

Chart 16



So we return to the question of our health. The restatement is “How can we take advantage of our present relatively stable status and improve our health and service”.

Whatever you conclude about our current health can only be improved. And, in fact, the question of our financial health is what we make it.

Chart #17

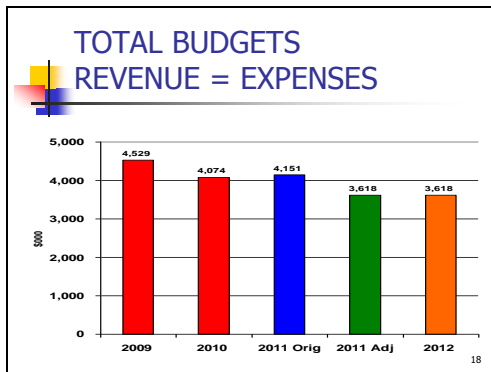
TOPIC #3

- The Adjusted 2011 and
- Proposed 2012 Synod Budget

17

My last of the 3 topics is to present the proposed budgets, which you must consider when brought up to vote tomorrow.

Chart #18



This chart shows the total budgets for two prior years, and the original 2011 budget, its proposed adjustment, and the proposed 2012.

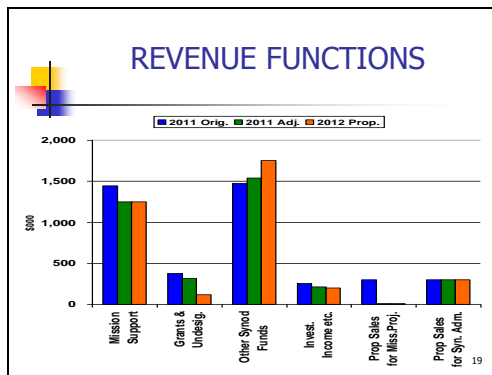
Note that they have been dropping, and for the 2011 proposed budget in green is almost ½ million lower than the original in dark blue the assembly approved a year ago. A small amount is the elimination of unpredictable certain designated revenue that we are forced to send out to the ultimate recipients, and cannot use internally.

Most of the drop was by careful assessment of the staff, in finding ways to do it for less.

A copy of the proposed budgets are included in your material, and break down revenue, and expenses, into various function areas.

I will discuss the revenue and expenses in those areas in the following charts.

Chart #19



This chart follows the breakdown of revenue by functions identical to those your material you have for this meeting. Each is described in that material.

Each set are the three budgets in your copy. The blue is the original approved 2011 budget, the green is the adjustment proposed, and the orange is proposed for 2012.

Starting with the left column set, is Mission Support from our congregations. Given our poor record for 2010, it was dropped from \$1,350,000 to \$1,250,000 for 2011 and 2012

Our grants and bequests expectations have also dropped since we see only a modest probable receipt of a bequest, but reality might change that.

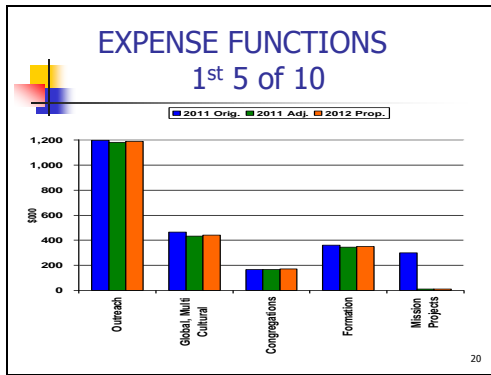
Transfers from other funds is growing, chiefly increases in use of sale proceeds, but essentially all of it is direct grants to congregations, and not to operations.

Other income is small, and varies only based on how much our policy allows spending of investment income.

Mission Projects are now included in Transfers from other funds,

Sales used for Synod owned properties and synodical administration shows a constant amount, which will match expenses, and this revenue item represents the pay back when properties are sold.

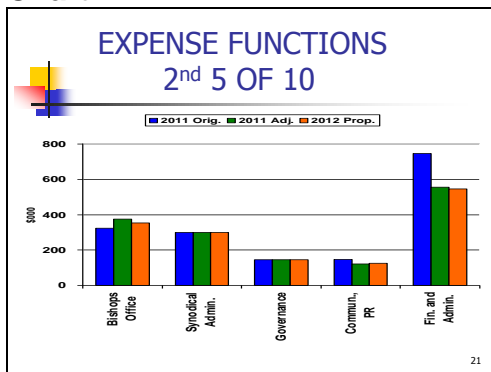
Chart #20



Again breaking down the budget by function, as in your material. You will note little change in every category. Here are the first 5 of the 10 functions.

Mission Projects again disappears after the original budget, since it's now combined into the function of Evangelical Outreach.

Chart #21




The second set of expense functions is displayed here.

The Bishops office now includes the salary of Percy Butiku, added to the staff in 2010.

The next three functions show little change, but the last one is not only large, but worthy of comment. Kathy Schmidt is the staff person responsible for it elements, who not only arranged for the \$40,000 reduction of office lease cost by the reduction of space, but did a fine job in paring down many of the administrative services.

Chart #22



GETTING MORE DETAIL

- YOU MAY PICK UP A COPY OF THE DETAILED VERSION
- THE BUDGET BREAKFAST TOMORROW AT 7:00 AM


22

I realize that I have only given you a quick overview of the budgets. But if you wish more detail here is where to get it.

Line my line budget items that lead to the budgets you have can be picked up at the desk. Each line item has a person associated with it that is responsible for those funds, and performance is reviewed monthly.

At 7:00 am tomorrow, the budget breakfast will be hosted by members of the Financial Management Committee, and Kathy Schmidt and I will be present to discuss anything on the budget you wish, and answer any questions. For those of you who have not attended that meeting in other years, the process is that you go through the food line, fill your plates and cups and go to the meeting place, which will be announced.

Chart 23



RESOLUTIONS TO BE PRESENTED

- APPROVE THE ADJUSTED 2011 BUDGET
- APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2012 BUDGET

23

And tomorrow, you will see on the agenda the time for your vote.

Presentation of Revised 2011 Budget and Proposed 2012 Budget

Mr. Buescher presented the revised 2011 Budget and Proposed 2012 Budget to the assembly. Voting on these is scheduled to take place during the fourth plenary session on Saturday afternoon.

METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD
Revised 2011/Proposed 2012 Budget
Synod Assembly

May 13-14, 2011

		2011 BUDGET		2012 BUDGET
		Adopted (May 2010)	Proposed Revised	Proposed
FUND 1 BUDGET - OPERATIONS				
Function	REVENUE			
10	CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CONGREGATIONS			
	Undesignated Mission Support	1,350,000	1,250,000	1,250,000
	Designated ELCA Projects	50,000	-	-
	Designated MNYS Projects	45,000	-	-
	Total Contributions from Congregations	1,445,000	1,250,000	1,250,000
11	GRANTS, UNDESIG. BEQUESTS, & OTHER CONTRIB.			
	ELCA - Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM)	15,000	15,000	15,000
	Undesignated Gifts and Bequests	220,000	300,000	100,000
	General Operating - Indiv. Gifts (Budget Estimate Only)	140,000	1,000	1,000
	Other Grants and Contributions	1,400	-	-
	Total Grants & Other Contributions	376,400	316,000	116,000
12	TRANSFERS FROM OTHER FUNDS			
	Net Proceeds from Sales - Support of Operations	1,065,000	878,000	1,090,000
	Partnership Grants - (Mission Redevelopment Fund - "MRF")	200,000	475,000	475,000
	Urban Empowerment Fund	50,000	50,000	50,000
	Tanzania Endowment Fund	40,000	56,000	41,390
	Tanzania - Other expenses - MRF	30,000	-	15,000
	Romanian Companion Synod (Wider Church Fund)	80,000	80,000	80,000
	Youth Ministry Fund	10,000	-	-
	Total Transfers from Other Funds			

		1,475,000	1,539,000	1,751,390
14	OTHER INCOME			
	Investment Income	175,000	132,153	120,100
	Mortgage and Loan Interest	5,750	6,600	6,600
	Rental Income - Lutheran Counseling Services	4,475	4,475	4,475
	Assembly	<u>70,000</u>	<u>70,000</u>	<u>70,000</u>
	Total Other Income	255,225	213,228	201,175
16	MISSION PROJECTS	300,000	0	0
	Budget estimate for amount to be transferred from the Mission Redevelopment Fund to cover expenses related to new missions or redevelopments within the synod. For the Revised 2011 and Proposed 2012 budgets, Mission Projects are included in the "Partnership Grants" line under "Transfers from Other Funds."			
17	SYNOD OWNED PROPERTIES/SYNODICAL ADMINISTRATION	300,000	0	0
	Budget estimate for amount to be transferred from the Mission Redevelopment Fund to cover expenses related to properties owned and congregations under synodical administration. (NOTE: The Revised 2011 and Proposed 2012 budget amounts are in the separate Fund 7 budget below).			
	TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS	<u>4,151,625</u>	<u>3,318,228</u>	<u>3,318,565</u>

Function

EXPENSES

25	EVANGELICAL OUTREACH	1,196,457	1,180,232	1,188,192
	ELCA Mission Support (2011 - \$606,250 (48.5%); 2012 - \$612,500 (49.0%)); Partnership Grants (\$475,000), Stewardship and Mission Support Table, Mission Resources Table, Mission Strategy Table, Outreach Committee			
35	GLOBAL AND MULTICULTURAL MISSION	465,735	432,638	442,189
	Companion Synod programs, African Descent Ministries, Ethnic ministries, ELCA Global Mission, and other programs			

45	CONGREGATIONS Development and administration of a proactive ministry to congregations, administration of interim pastorates and mobility, coordination of leadership training events for congregational leaders	166,067	165,755	171,514
55	FORMATION Candidacy process, administration of official roster of ministers, coordination of child, youth and family ministries, education grants (\$169,370), Horizon internships, retreats (Deans, Bishop's, Candidacy, Staff)	361,976	344,455	350,292
65	Mission Projects (Budget Estimate Only) Budget estimate for expenses related to new missions or redevelopments within the synod. This amount has been transferred to Evangelical Outreach (Function 25) in the Revised 2011 and Proposed 2012 budgets.	300,000	0	0
70	BISHOP'S OFFICE Pastoral care and oversight for congregations, pastors and deans, participation in ELCA Conference of Bishops and ELCA wider ministries	323,693	374,754	353,365
75	MANAGEMENT OF SYNOD-OWNED & S.A. PROP (NOTE: The Revised 2011 and Proposed 2012 budget amounts are in the separate Fund 7 budget below)	300,000	0	0
80	SYNOD GOVERNANCE Synod Assembly, Synod Council, Deans, synod committees	143,650	143,628	143,628
90	COMMUNICATIONS, PR AND INTERPRETATION Synod website, weekly e-letter, Lutheran New Yorker, public relations, Mission Interpreter Network	146,678	120,712	124,339
91	FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	747,369	556,054	545,046

Rent, general office services (printing, postage, insurance, telephone, internet, professional services, etc.); work with congregations on clergy compensation and budget issues; track expenses on owned properties and congregations under synodical administration; monitor financial status of congregations receiving partnership grants

TOTAL EXPENSES - FUND 1	(4,151,625)	(3,318,228)	(3,318,565)
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS - FUND 1	4,151,625	3,318,228	3,318,565
NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUND 1	0	0	0

FUND 7 BUDGET - SYNOD-OWNED PROPERTIES & SYNODICAL ADMIN.

<u>Function</u>	REVENUE		
17	Synod Owned Properties - MRF (Budget Est Only)	100,000	100,000
	Synodical Admin Properties - MRF (Budget Est Only)	200,000	200,000
	TOTAL INCOME	300,000	300,000
	EXPENSES		
75	Synod Administration/Owned Properties - TBD	167,725	162,915
	Synod Administration/Owned Properties - Staff	132,275	137,085
	TOTAL EXPENSES - FUND 7	(300,000)	(300,000)
	TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS - FUND 7	300,000	300,000
	NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUND 7	0	0

SUMMARY - FUNDS 1 AND 7			
TOTAL EXPENSES - FUNDS 1 and 7	(4,151,625)	(3,618,228)	(3,618,565)
TOTAL INCOME - FUNDS 1 and 7	4,151,625	3,618,228	3,618,565

NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUNDS 1 and 7

0

0

0

2014 Bishop Election Process Update

Secretary Schoepflin presented the following report of the work of this commission.

COMMISSION TO EXAMINE OUR PROCESS TO ELECT A BISHOP Interim Report to 2011 Synod Assembly

I. THE TASK

Resolution SA2008.05.04 (adopted at 2008 Assembly):

RESOLVED, That the Metropolitan New York Synod establish an *ad hoc* commission on the use of the ecclesiastical ballot as described in the governing documents of the synod for the election of the bishop of the synod; and that

- This commission shall be chaired by the Secretary of the Synod and consist of ten additional members, four of whom shall be clergy and six lay, chosen by the Synod Council,
- This commission survey other synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other church bodies as to their election processes for bishop and present an interim report of their findings to the 2010 Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly;
- This commission lead a synod-wide study process leading to a final report, accompanied by recommended changes, if any, in governing documents to be acted to the 2012 Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly.

II. THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Christine Connell
Mr. Daniel Nigro
Ms. Cassandra Wilson
Pr. Amandus Derr
Pr. Paul Milholland
Pr. Robert Schoepflin

Mr. David Ehlers
Ms. Renee Wicklund
Mr. Daniel Wingard
Pr. Brenda Jack
Pr. Daniel Ward

III. BACKGROUND

Our constitution provides for the election of our bishop by what is known as the “ecclesiastical ballot.”

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating

ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

In 1994, The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in response to questions as to what the term “ecclesiastical ballot” means, defined the election process as follows:

To define an “ecclesiastical ballot” for the election of a bishop in synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as an election process:

- 1. in which on the first ballot the name of any eligible individual may be submitted for nomination by a voting member of the assembly;**
- 2. through which the possibility of election to office exists on any ballot by achievement of the required number of votes cast by voting members of the assembly applicable to a particular ballot;**
- 3. that precludes spoken floor nominations;**
- 4. in which the first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot;**
- 5. in which the first ballot defines the total slate of nominees for possible election on a subsequent ballot, with no additional nominations permitted;**
- 6. that does not preclude, after the reporting of the first ballot, the right of persons nominated to withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot;**
- 7. in which any name appearing on the second ballot may not be subsequently withdrawn;**
- 8. that does not preclude an assembly’s adoption of rules that permit, at a defined point in the election process and for a defined period of time, speeches to the assembly by nominees or their representatives and/or a question-and-answer forum in which the nominee or their representatives participate; and**
- 9. in which the number of names that appear on any ballot subsequent to the second ballot shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of the governing documents (or, if the governing documents are silent, in accordance with the rules adopted by the assembly).**

The ELCA adopted this definition as the procedure for elections at Churchwide Assemblies in a continuing resolution (19.61.A94).

Our Synod has followed this procedure for electing our bishops since its formation, and many members of our Synod who have served as voting members of an assembly at which the election of a bishop was held would argue that the procedure has served us very well. However, the fact that Resolution SA2088.05.04 was brought forward and adopted at our Synod Assembly in 2008, the same assembly in which we elected our present Bishop, demonstrates a desire to examine, and perhaps refine and improve, the process by which a bishop is selected.

Many voices have suggested, since the bishop is the “synod’s pastor” (MNSY Constitution S8.12), that the process followed by a congregation in seeking and selecting an individual for the office of pastor would be an appropriate model to follow in seeking and selecting an individual for the office of pastor of the synod. Others, who have not drawn the analogy to a congregation’s call process, have pointed to the fact that in the case of elections to offices in the synod other than bishop, whether as officer, council member, or commission or committee member, nominees are identified prior to the assembly and information disseminated, so that the most capable and qualified individual may be elected to the particular position, albeit that nominations are still invited and allowed from the floor.

“We are not alone,” to quote a line from a movie of a bygone era. The office of the Secretary of the ELCA indicated that as of February, 2010, eighteen synods had adopted processes for electing a bishop that varied in some way from the standard provision of the model constitution – that is, our section S9.04, which is provided above.

IV. STAGE ONE

In accordance with the directives of Resolution SA 2008:05/04, the Commission sent a survey (list of questions) to the secretary of every synod in the ELCA. Two-thirds of the responding secretaries indicated that their synods have either adopted a modified procedure for electing a bishop, or are in the process of studying this issue, with the intent of developing a modified procedure, with 44% of the respondents indicating that their synod has held at least one election for bishop using a procedure that varies in some fashion from the straight “ecclesiastical ballot.”

It is significant to note that while these synods have modified their procedures, with few exceptions, such modifications deal with the nomination procedure and the methods of disseminating information about nominees, and not the election process itself. In the typical instance, a specified number of nominees for the office of bishop are identified prior to the synod assembly through a carefully prescribed process, and then there are opportunities for voting members of the synod to learn about these individuals, but the actual election at the assembly proceeds in accordance with the provisions of S9.04. In all but 4 cases, although nominees are identified before the assembly, other nominations are authorized on the first ballot at the assembly.

An examination of the process used by the Episcopal Diocese of New York demonstrates that it is essentially similar to what is described above.

V. STAGE TWO

At this point in its work, the strong sense of the Commission is that the process for selecting a bishop in Metropolitan New York, however well it has worked in the past, can be enhanced by following the lead of other synods and bringing some of the nature and procedures of the call process for a congregation pastor to bear on the calling of a pastor for our synod.

Prior to making any recommendation to the Synod Council, the Commission will conduct a survey of the membership and congregations of our synod to get your sense of whether a change is desired and, if so, what process would best for Metropolitan New York.

Questions that need to be considered are:

1. Who will oversee the nomination process (for example, a call committee)?
2. What will be the process for obtaining nominees?
3. When will nominations be made?
4. Who will make nominations?
5. Will there be a limit on the number of nominees presented?
6. How will the number of nominees be reduced before assembly?
7. What happens after nominations are made?
8. What informational materials are obtained from the nominees?
9. What will be the timetable for distribution of materials?
10. What will the processes for meeting nominees prior to the assembly look like?
11. How will campaigning be discouraged or controlled? Should it be?
12. Will there be a synodical profile or study process prior to the election?

The proposed timetable for completing stage two of the commission's task is:

1. Completion of synod-wide survey in June 2011.
2. Recommendations presented to the synod council in September 2011.
3. Dissemination of recommendations, if adopted by synod council, to all congregations and conferences of synod by October 1, 2011.
4. Enabling resolutions for any changes brought to synod assembly in May 2012.

VI. CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

Our constitution provides that the assembly is the synod's "highest legislative authority" (S7.01). Foremost among its various responsibilities in providing for our walking together in ministry is its privilege and responsibility, every six years, of selecting a bishop to be the pastor of our synod. This privilege and responsibility is always approached with joy and with the assurance of the Holy Spirit's guidance. It is in that same joy and Spirit's guidance that we approach this task of evaluating our election process.

The commission trusts in your prayers and anticipates your participation in the task ahead.

With thanks to God for the wisdom and work of each member of the commission.

Pastor Robert Schoepflin
Chair

Children, Youth and Family Ministry

Bishop Rimbo invited Dcn. Charles Germain, Chair of the Children, Youth and Family Ministry Committee, to the podium. Dcn. Germain gave the report of the committee and then presented the *Heart of Ministry Award* to Trinity Lutheran Church, Rocky Point.

Report of ELCA Representative

Pr. Barbara Berry-Bailey gave the first part of her report, asking what if Jesus asked us two questions: “Who do people say YOU are?” and “Who do you say YOU are?”

Committee on Congregational Viability

The Rev. William Baum gave the following report of the work of this committee.

Metropolitan New York Synod Committee for Congregational Viability Norms

Interim Report to the Synod Assembly May 13, 2011

At the May 2010 Synod Assembly, a resolution was presented to establish a Committee for Congregational Viability Norms. Time ran short at the Assembly, so the motion was referred to the Synod Council for consideration.

At its June 8, 2010, meeting the Synod Council adopted the following:

Whereas, the number of Metropolitan New York Synod congregations at-risk or under synod administration is abnormally large and continues to grow, and

Whereas, the bishop in his 2010 Synod Assembly Report envisions the probability that the synod will shrink from 208 to 150 congregations in the next seven to ten years, and

Whereas, there is no strategic plan to manage this phenomenon, and

Whereas, the overall mission of the synod deserves planning that is realistic, therefore be it

Resolved, that a Committee for Congregational Viability Norms be established consisting of:

- . the Bishop (or his appointed representative)
- . the Secretary of the Synod
- . the Treasurer of the Synod
- . a representative of the Conference of Deans, nominated by that body and elected by the Synod Council
- . the Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations
- . two lay members of the Synod Council, elected by the Council
- . and two lay persons (At large) nominated by the Conference of Deans and elected by the Synod Council, and be it

Resolved, that the purpose of this committee is to further the articulation of norms guiding when congregations should be encouraged to close or merge, or when synod administration (MNYS Constitution 13.24) should be invoked, and be it

Resolved, that this committee report quarterly to the Synod Council and annually to the Synod Assembly, and be it

Resolved, that subsequent Synod Assemblies debate and vote on whether to establish these norms as the policy of this synod, and be it further

Resolved, that this committee conclude its work at the Synod Assembly in 2012.

Committee Members

Following extensive consultation with the Conference of Deans, Synod Executive Committee, Synod Council and Synod Staff, the Committee was staffed with the following people:

Robert Buescher, Treasurer of the Synod, Our Redeemer, Seaford

Pastor Robert Schoepflin, Secretary of the Synod, Abiding Presence, Fort Salonga

Pastor Gary Schulz, Conference of Deans' Representative, Holy Trinity, Bellerose

Pastor Kathleen Koran, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations, Emanuel, Pleasantville

Deacon Ingrid Compton, Lay Person at Large, St. Stephen's, Brooklyn

Muriel Davis, Lay Person at Large, Trinity, Middle Village

Dr. Carlos Lopez, Synod Council Lay Person, Advent, Manhattan

Deacon John Malone, Synod Council Lay Person, Holy Trinity, Brooklyn

Pastor William Baum, Bishop's Representative, Committee Chair, Saint Barnabas, Howard Beach

Advisors

Pastor Michael Church, Synod Historian, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania, Cluj

Pastor Jack Horner, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, Emanuel, Pleasantville

Summary of the Committee's Work

The good news is that there are some 70,000 of us Lutherans ministering daily on the territory of our synod. The bad news is that we are hampered in our witness since we are spread too thin and saddled with maintaining aging and outdated buildings. The decline faced across our synod, and most other synods and denominations, is rooted in broad social, demographic and cultural changes outside of our control. Although we have struggled faithfully, indeed, heroically, it is becoming apparent that our former footing for ministry is rapidly shifting. How will God lead us to respond?

What is a viable congregation? Is it people and their pastor gathered around the word and sacraments of Jesus Christ, carrying out the mission of the church in prayer, education and charity? Is it a legal entity, formed by its constitution and the laws of the State of New York, even if it no longer carries out many of the purposes for which it was founded? Is it a parcel of land and a building, no matter the condition and no matter what goes on there, so long as one or two people can still claim it as "their church?"

These are difficult, emotionally and spiritually challenging questions. They can be legally complex. At the request of the Synod Council, our committee has been working through the issues with an eye toward bringing these questions to you, the people of our synod, in an orderly fashion, so that you may decide.

The goal of this committee is to help congregations and the synod as a whole discern God's will, and respond in faith. There is a world of difference between a congregation which dissolves in chaos, confusion and disappointment, and a congregation which concludes its mission with dignity and grace, and provides a legacy which continues its ministry even after its doors have closed.

Each congregation of our synod has been entrusted by God with a mission in a specific time and place. For each congregation, there will come a day when this God given mission has been fulfilled and the congregation's ministry is complete. We rightly experience this completion with pain and sorrow. Yet it is also true there is room for gratitude and peace in Christian service faithfully concluded. And there is joy in planting seeds for tomorrow's growth so that those who come after us may carry on our calling to witness to the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The First Year - Looking Back

The committee met in November, January, March and April. It covered a wide range of readings and presentations including:

- X Pastor Beth Ann Gaede's book **Ending in Hope: A Resource for Closing Congregations**
- X Assistant to the Bishop for Global Ministries, Pastor Gary Mills,' Presentation on the **State of MNYS Congregations**
- X Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations, Pastor Kathleen Koran's, evolving color-coded **Congregation Pastoral Leadership Status Report**, characterizing congregational ability to call a pastor
- X Synod Theologian in Residence and Assistant to the Bishop for Formation, Pastor Jonathan Linman's, essay on the **Fullness of the Gospel Present in Small Settings**
- X Synod Historian, Pastor Michael Church's **Historical Survey of Congregational Decline**
- X Western Nassau Dean, Pastor Albert Triolo's, reflection on **Attending to the Nuance of Language**
- X **The New Yorker** August 2, 2010, article **Letting Go** by Atul Gawande on end of life-hospice care

- X **The Constitution of the Metropolitan New York Synod**
- X The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's **Model Constitution for Congregations**
- X Northwest Queens Dean, Pastor Leo E. Longan's, essay on **Communion by Extension and Lay Presidency**
- X Bronx Dean, Pastor Paul Block's, statistical analysis report **A Way Forward**
- X Deacon Charles Germain's comments on **New Approaches to Renewing the Church**

Based upon discussion of these materials and presentations, the committee generated two extensive summary reports. These were included in the **Interim Report to the Synod Council and Conference of Deans** on March 15, 2011.

Congregation Pastoral Leadership Status Report

This color-coded chart characterizes each congregation's ability to call a pastor. It was developed by Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations, Pastor Kathleen Koran, in consultation with the Conference of Deans. Edited over a period of months, through careful review of available pastoral compensation information, and informed local appraisal, the information continues to be revised. Conference Deans have this report and conversations about it are best directed to them.

A Norm Regarding the Level of Pastoral Presence

Presented below is an articulation of a norm regarding the level of a congregation's pastoral presence. Please bear in mind that it is one norm, and not the only norm, to be articulated. Debate and discussion of this norm is not scheduled for this Assembly. That is work remaining for the future. It is provided now to facilitate informal conversation and give an idea of where the committee is headed.

1. The governing documents of the Metropolitan New York Synod and its congregations envision ministries of word and sacrament served by full-time pastors. The further away from this model a congregation moves, the greater the challenge to its long-term viability.
2. If a congregation can no longer sustain full-time pastoral ministry, it will be encouraged to actively explore options such as merger or consolidation with other area congregations, or to develop fresh strategies for mission, such as may lead to long-term sustainability. Synod staff will assist as invited.
3. If a congregation becomes unable to sustain pastoral ministry, even on a half-time basis, it will be encouraged to seek assistance in considering merger or closing. In the event of merger, synod staff will assist as invited. In the event of closure synod staff will provide appropriate guidance and pastoral care.
4. If a congregation becomes unable to call a pastor the bishop shall inform the Synod Council on the advisability of invoking Chapter 13.24 of the Metropolitan New York Synod Constitution.
5. Section S13.24 of the Synod's Constitution provides:

“If any congregation of this synod has disbanded, or if the members of a congregation agree that it is no longer possible for it to function as such, or if it is the opinion of the Synod Council that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers as to make it impractical for such a congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized or that it is necessary for this synod to protect the congregation's property from waste and deterioration, the Synod Council, itself or through

trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of the congregation to hold, manage and convey the same on behalf of this synod. The congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Assembly.”

6. The Synod Council has a responsibility to act when it becomes impractical for a congregation to fulfill its mission. A significant indicator of this impracticality occurs when a congregation loses the capacity for effective self-governance. A key factor in this loss is the inability to call a pastor.

The Second Year - Looking Ahead

The committee will continue meeting in the months ahead to fulfill its charge “to further the articulation of norms guiding when congregations should be encouraged to close or merge, or when synod administration (MNYS Constitution 13.24) should be invoked,” so that “subsequent Synod Assemblies [may] debate and vote on whether to establish these norms as the policy of this synod.”

It may be advisable to arrange some manner of local conversations around these articulated norms, so that people have an opportunity to engage the proposals prior to Synod Assembly debates and voting.

Concluding Thoughts

Even while focused on narrow questions of congregational viability, the committee has been keenly mindful of a larger question: Where are we headed as a synod? It would help struggling congregations immeasurably if the people of our synod could catch a glimpse of where God may be leading us. What new vision is God calling forth among us as we confess the timeless Gospel of Jesus Christ? To this end, this committee in tandem with others, will bring a resolution before the Assembly supporting and encouraging the Synod Council’s efforts to coordinate and undertake a strategic-planning process with all deliberate speed.

The committee will conclude its work and issue a final report at the Synod Assembly in 2012.

I wish to thank the members of the committee for their faithful diligence and prayerful insights.

Faithfully,
Pastor William Baum
Chair

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

Bishop Rimbo invited The Rev. John Puotinen, Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of LTSP Foundation to address the assembly.

Report of Elections Committee

Ms. Christine Connell reported the following slate of nominees:

Ballot 1

Synod Council – Lay Male – unexpired term ending 2012 (vote for one)

Jonathan Westerlund
Alexander Ross
Christopher Vergara

Synod Council – Lay Female – unexpired term ending 2012 (vote for one)

Bobbi Paulik

Christine Cogna
Sharon Wilson
Phoenix Rivera

ELCA Church Council – Lay Female (vote for one)

Christine Connell
Nicole George
Jonelle Phelps
Mary Heller

Ballots were distributed and assembly members voted.

Bishop Rimbo then invited Ms. Monica Kanopka to the podium to make presentation of Thrivent Challenge grants to Trinity, Lower East Side; Trinity, Staten Island; and St. Peter's, Huntington Station.

Report of Assistant to the Bishop for Finance and Administration

Ms. Kathleen Schmidt presented the following report:

SLIDE 1 [COVER] OUR SYNOD'S FINANCES: LIVING IN GOD'S ABUNDANCE

Thank you, Bishop Rimbo.

SLIDE 2 – [Introduction]

Last year, the theme of my presentation was "Our Synod's Finances: A Partnership in Mission." By providing programmatic detail on how the monies entrusted to our synod are spent, I tried to convey that we are all partners in mission, not just within our own congregations, but within our synod and the wider church - that we are all, as St. Paul says, "One body."

SLIDE 3 – [Introduction, cont.]

As I look back over this last year, I am struck by how much our partnership in mission has grown, by how much our synod has been able to accomplish, and the word that sums it all up for me is "abundance," specifically God's abundance. Given the slow recovery in the economy and the continuing uncertainty and instability in the world, perhaps you are thinking that "abundance" is too strong or too optimistic a word to use in times such as these. You heard our Treasurer say earlier that even though we have reduced expenses substantially in the last two years, we continue to struggle with declining mission support, and difficult decisions must be made as we move forward into the future. Where is God's abundance in that?

Let me reiterate what our bishop said to you this morning, that we need to move away from living in a culture of fear, a culture of scarcity, and instead get back on target by living a life of faith, a life of abundance. After all, if you give in to fear and the myth of scarcity, how can you possibly see that God's abundance is everywhere?

SLIDE 4 – [Our Synod’s Finances: Living in God’s Abundance]

Living a life of faith frees us from obsessing about the past or the future. We are called by God to live in the present. Walter Bruggemann wrote a terrific article 12 years ago called “The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity.” He writes about how God has freed us to live in the present because through Baptism – we are loved into existence by God. And the story of God’s abundance throughout history surely says that our lives will end in God. Therefore, as Christians, because we are confident in our beginning and our end, we are free to live in the here and now, in the present, to live in faith, not fear.

SLIDE 5 - [Our Synod’s Finances: Living in God’s Abundance]

At this point, you’re probably wondering, what does the liturgy of abundance and the myth of scarcity have to do with our synod’s finances?

SLIDE 6 - [Our Synod’s Finances: Living in God’s Abundance]

Well, actually, everything. If we live our lives bound to the myth of scarcity, we will always find ourselves hoarding what we have, living in fear that we don’t have enough, when in fact, God’s abundance is all around us. We’re all guilty of this – how many times have each of us found ourselves mistrustful of financial decisions made by our parish councils or our synod? When spending is viewed from the point of scarcity, even small financial decisions can become elevated to crisis mode, and the result is often an “us versus them” mentality. But when we live our lives in faith, confident of God’s abundance, we are freed to trust one another, and we can joyfully give, without fear, of our time, our talents, and our treasures to God and to one another.

I’m not suggesting that we all ride off into the sunset together singing “Kum-by-ya,” oblivious to where or how our congregation or our synod’s money is spent. Quite the contrary. It’s important for all of us to be involved and to understand the finances, as boring as that may sound to many – OK, maybe all, of you. You see, it’s too easy to just sit back and say that we don’t understand how/where our synod spends its money. And unfortunately, that lack of knowledge is often used as justification to cut or not increase mission support to our synod.

SLIDE 7 – [Listen to the Liturgy of Abundance]

But I’m here to tell you that it’s easy for you to see where the money goes. Just look at the agenda for this, or for that matter, any other Synod Assembly, and you’ll get a snapshot of how the money is spent. Throughout this Assembly you will hear at least eight presentations about the expression of God’s abundance throughout our synod and beyond, through partnership and education grants, grants to the wider church, and the various programs and committees of our synod. It’s your mission support that helps to fund all of this. Listen carefully during these two days and you will be treated to the Liturgy of God’s Abundance.

SLIDE 8 – [The Two Bobs]

I believe I am in a unique position on the synod staff because, although Jesus did say, “No one can serve two masters,” I do serve what I like to call “the two Bobs –“

SLIDE 9 – [B-Bob cartoon]

Meet “B-Bob”

SLIDE 10 – [T-Bob cartoon]

and “T-Bob”

SLIDE 11 – [“Bishop Bob” and “Treasurer Bob” cartoon]

also known as “Bishop Bob” and “Treasurer Bob”

Now, at first glance, serving two Bobs might look to be an impossible task, and yet it’s not, for they complement one another - not in the sense of “Hey, B-Bob, you look mighty fine in that miter,” or “Right back at you, T-Bob - that’s quite some chart you’ve got there,” - but rather in how the work of one helps to edify the work of the other.

SLIDE 12 - [Photo of man giving out money]

One might assume that B-Bob wants to spend money

SLIDE 13 - [Cartoon character running away with the money next to man giving away money]

and T-Bob wants to save money. That’s what conventional wisdom would have us think, right? But the fact is that it’s not a matter of spending or not spending. It’s a matter of working together and being good stewards of the abundance God has given our synod. It’s not always an easy task – for we must choose carefully how best to plant our resources – but the balance between vision and reality is tempered by our being free to live in the present.

SLIDE 14 – [The Two Bobs cartoon]

I’ve found that being in between the two Bobs allows me to not only keep my fingers on the pulse of the numbers themselves, but also to see how the numbers are translated or, better yet, transformed into acts of abundance. As I move into the numbers section of my presentation, I want to challenge all of you to look at these numbers not through the lens of scarcity, but rather to see them through the lens of God’s abundance.

SLIDE 15 – [Presentation Goals]

My presentation is divided into two parts. First, I’ll spend a few minutes updating you on two of the core points from my presentation last year and then I want to walk you through the Grants and Programs area of our budget, which accounts for 45% of our total operating budget.

SLIDE 16 – [Update from 2010 Presentation]

The two areas I want to update you on from last year are:

- Cash Flow Update/Sale of Synod Properties
- Steps Taken to Reduce Operating Expenses

SLIDE 17 – [Cash Flow Update/Sale of Synod Properties]

Last year I reported that our synod was experiencing a cash flow crisis, which necessitated having to delay for a few months the payment of some grants. Ultimately, all outstanding grant payments were made. I also told you that from 2001 through 2009 our synod had spent a total of over \$3.8 million on properties owned or congregations that were currently under synodical administration. As of January 31, 2011 that amount had increased to \$4.8 million, which is the amount you see here. Last year, I also reported that we had cumulative outstanding loans to congregations in the amount of \$1.4 million. That figure has increased to the \$1.6 million shown on the slide. It's clear that these large outflows of cash were one of the major contributing factors to the cash flow crisis that we experienced in 2009.

Fortunately, the real estate market improved a bit last year, and we were able to sell 3 properties during 2010, plus one more in March of this year, so we were able to recover approximately \$2.6 million of the total \$4.8 million that had been paid out for properties owned and congregations under synodical administration. The remaining \$2.2 million will be recovered when the additional properties are sold.

SLIDE 18 – [Sales of Synod Properties in 2010]

This slide shows the properties that were sold during 2010. As you can see, the sale of these three properties provided our synod about \$4,250,000 in cash after the recovery of expenses.

SLIDE 19 – [Sale of Holy Trinity, Hollis – March 2011]

We also closed on the sale of Holy Trinity, Hollis in March of this year. The sales price was \$3,000,000, but because of the \$1.6 million of expenses paid by our synod over the last 11 years, plus \$215,000 in closing costs, the net sales proceeds was about \$1.2 million.

SLIDE 20 – [Distribution of Net Proceeds]

Several years ago, the synod council determined that net sales proceeds from properties owned should be distributed among three funds. The net proceeds of \$5.4 million received from the sale of the four properties discussed above were allocated as follows:

- 60% going to the Mission Redevelopment Fund (\$3,263,261)
- 30% to the Support of Operations Fund (\$1,631,630)
- 10% as a tithe to the wider church (\$543,768)

SLIDE 21 – [Current Cash Flow Status]

While this influx of over \$5 million in cash certainly relieved our cash flow crunch for the time being, as our Treasurer pointed out this morning, we are not yet out of the woods. We continue to have to spend cash on properties owned by our synod, and mission support continues to decline at a rate of 10%-12% a year, which forces us to use more of the proceeds from the sale of properties in order to fund partnership, educational and other grants made by our synod as well as day to day operations. The Financial Management Committee and Synod Council continue to address the challenge of declining income, and as Bob Buescher said earlier, we are working on long-term financial planning.

SLIDE 22 – [Reduction of Operating Expenses]

At last year's Synod Assembly, the budget for 2010 was amended to reflect a planned reduction in both income and expenses of about 12.5%, or just under \$600,000. I am happy to report that not only was the staff able to keep expenses within the revised budgeted amounts, but most of the staff budget areas ended the 2010 fiscal year an average of 10% under budget, or \$385,000.

And when Bob Buescher reviews the proposed revised budget for 2011 with you tomorrow morning, you will see that the staff have made further cuts to their budget areas, totaling \$233,000.

I am very grateful that my colleagues take seriously the responsibility of being good stewards of the financial resources entrusted to us.

SLIDE 23 – [Synod Office Space]

In late 2009, the Synod Council requested that the bishop appoint a 7-person task force to review options for synod office space going forward. The council asked that the task force consider locations other than the Interchurch Center, as well as evaluate the existing office space, with an eye towards reducing the amount of space leased or possibly subletting part of the space.

Because it was not feasible to locate and make ready new office space prior to the expiration of the synod's lease in mid-2010, the decision was made to stay at the Interchurch Center for at least five more years, but to reduce the space we were leasing. So I met with the architect who had drawn up the original plans for the synod office 10 years ago, we come up with a way to reduce our existing office space by 2,000 square feet, or 20% of the original space.

SLIDE 24 – Synod Office Space, cont.

This reduction in space, after subtracting construction/ reconfiguration costs, has resulted in net savings of approximately \$150,000 over the next five years. After approval by the Synod Council, we signed a new five-year lease, effective July 1, 2010, which was the minimum term the Interchurch Center would accept.

The task force will continue to explore other options for synod office space over the next few years, so that when our lease is up in 2015, a decision to either move or stay will have already been made.

SLIDE 25 – [2011 Budget – Grants and Synod Programs]

For the second part of my presentation, I'd like to focus on the portion of our 2011 budget that's dedicated to grants and programs. And although I don't have time to go into great detail about each area, I hope to give you enough of an overview that you can begin to see not only the breadth and depth of the work in which our synod engages, but also the impact our synod has on so many lives. And again, I ask that you look at each of these areas through the lens of God's abundance.

SLIDE 26 – [MNYS 2011 Expense Budget Overview]

Our synod's total operating expense budget for 2011 (assuming you adopt the revised budget tomorrow morning!) is \$3,318,000.

As I did last year, I have broken our synod's budget up into three categories:

- Mission and Ministry – Support and Grants – 45%
- Mission and Ministry – Staffing and Programs – 30%
- Governance, Communication and Finance – Staffing and Support – 25%

SLIDE 27 – [Mission and Ministry – Support and Grants]

I have further broken up the "Mission and Ministry – Support and Grants" budget of approximately \$1,500,000 into six categories.

- ELCA Mission Support (\$606,250 – 18%)
- Partnership Grants (\$475,000 – 14%)
- Companion Synods (\$138,922 – 4%)
- Education Grants (\$130,370 – 4%)
- Synod Events and Committee Work (\$92,820 – 3%)
- Social Ministry Organizations and Other Grants (\$36,200 – 1%)

Let's look at each of these areas in more detail.

SLIDE 28 – [Budgeted Grants to the Wider Church]

As you know, our synod sends on to the ELCA a significant portion of mission support received from our congregations. For the 2011 fiscal year, that portion is 48.5%. We have committed to increasing the amount sent on to the ELCA by ½ a percent per year, and will do so until we reach 50%, which will occur in 2014. For 2011, if we meet our mission support goal of \$1,250,000, that means we will send \$606,250 on to the ELCA.

Think about that – over \$600,000 is being sent to support the ELCA and its worldwide ministries. What an impact our dollars can make! God's abundance is everywhere!

During the course of the year, our synod also makes a number of grants to various social ministry organizations such as Lutheran Medical Center, Lutheran Social Services, Seafarer's, etc. For 2011, that total is expected to be \$24,200.

SLIDE 29 – [Grants that Fund Synod Ministries]

The two primary grant areas that fund synod ministries are Partnership Grants and funding for our companion synods. Our synod has committed \$475,000 in this year's budget to funding partnership grants. \$475,000! That's a lot of money, isn't it? But, without the stories, it's just a number. I want you to listen carefully to the presentation that will be made later this afternoon and you'll hear the story of what Trinity, LES is doing with the partnership grant they've been given, how our synod's money, together with funding from other sources, has enabled them to feed the hungry in a very real way. I wish that we had time for each of our 17 partnership grant recipients to show you how the grants we make are helping them to share God's abundance with others.

We continue to support our companion synods in Tanzania and Romania by supplying teachers and pastors in those countries. For 2011, we've committed \$139,000 to these synods. Tomorrow afternoon I invite you to listen to the liturgy of God's abundance as both the Tanzania and Romania committees make their reports. Our gifts truly do impact people around the world.

SLIDE 30 – [Education grants]

Our synod has committed over \$130,000 to funding four educational institutions and programs. Again, just a number. But there's a story behind each of the four institutions that are recipients of our education grants. You already heard Pr. Phil Krey speak about the work our grant helps to accomplish at the Philadelphia Seminary, and tomorrow morning, you're going to hear about the work our synod is funding at the Student Christian Center at SUNY-New Paltz. Listen to the ways God's abundance is impacting the lives of the students.

SLIDE 31 – [Program Expenses - Events]

Let's take a look at some of the events that are sponsored by our synod each year.

Our synod provides financial resources for many events throughout the year, such as the Bishop's retreat, the Dean's retreat, the Candidacy retreat, and the Ministerium. What you don't see on this slide is the list of retreats and other events that some of our synod staff led for conferences or individual congregations over the last year. Those retreats don't cost the conferences or congregations anything. They are funded by our synod via the staff salaries. This is your mission support at work.

The Urban Leaders Institute, a three-day event held at the end of July every year, focuses on ministry in urban areas receives. ULI receives \$10,000 in funding from our synod. Last year over 125 people attended, a record number. God's abundance is clearly visible in this event.

SLIDE 32 – [Program Expenses – Committees and Ethnic Ministries]

Over \$60,000 is allocated to the work of our committees, tables and ethnic ministries. Each of these has a staff person assigned to them who helps guide their efforts. I already mentioned that you'll hear from the Tanzania and Romania committees during this Assembly, but you will also hear from the Hunger Committee, the Domestic Violence Awareness Task Force, and the Environmental Stewardship Committee. And Pr. Jack Horner, the Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Outreach will be giving presentations on two of his tables, the Mission Strategy Table and the Stewardship and Mission Support Table. If you have any doubts that we are living in the midst of God's abundance, these committee and table reports will easily convince you otherwise.

SLIDE 33 –[Our Synod's Finances: Living in God's Abundance]

In summary, we have committed to spending \$1,500,000 on grants, companion synods, committee, and programs during 2011. And that doesn't count the salaries and benefits for the staff who work with the grant recipients, assist the committees, etc. There's a lot going on in our synod, and when you look at it all through the lens of God's abundance, all you can do is rejoice!

Does this mean that our financial woes are over? Not by a long shot. But because we are living in God's abundance, we are free to live in the present, to do the best with what we have been given, and to trust that God will nourish the seeds that we plant.

While I was working on this presentation, I was reminded of the story of Joshua, where, in Joshua 24, he gathers together all of the tribes of Israel and recites the incredible story of God's abundance, from Abraham and Isaac, to Moses and Aaron and the crossing of the Red Sea, the years of wandering in the wilderness, finally crossing the river Jordan and ending up in Jericho. And he says to the people that they must choose whom they will serve, and he announces to them, "As for me and my house, I will choose the Lord." Joshua makes it clear that this is not an easy choice. Nor is it for us, particularly in a time when we are surrounded by fear and the myth of scarcity, but because our beginning and our end are assured, we have nothing to fear and we are free to live our lives immersed in God's abundance.

And so, in parting, I say to you:

Rejoice in God's abundance!

Live in God's abundance!

Sing the liturgy of God's abundance in our synod!

Report of Candidacy Committee

The Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo, Candidacy Coordinator, presented the following report:

The Candidacy Committee

Candidacy Committee Responsibilities

Persons seeking rostered vocations in the ELCA as ordained pastors, associates in ministry, consecrated deaconesses and diaconal ministers apply for Candidacy through the Candidacy Committee of the synod in which they hold congregational membership. The Synod Candidacy Committee, which acts on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod and the ELCA, is responsible for determining the readiness of persons to enter the candidacy process, for endorsing candidates for a specific roster of this church, and in the approval process, for determining an individual's qualifications and readiness to serve in rostered ministry.

Candidacy Committee Membership

Members of the Candidacy Committee whose terms of office expired in 2010 included, Pastor Martha Jacobi, Ms. Marlene Lund, and Pastor Scott Kershner. New appointments to the Candidacy Committee in 2010 included Pastor Romeo Dabee, Pastor Danielle Miller, and Pastor Jerome Taylor.

Candidacy Committee membership (September 11, 2010 to present) includes: Pastor Fabian Arias, Ms. Carolyn Brown, Pastor Romeo Dabee, Pastor Jeffrey Kolbo (Candidacy Coordinator), Pastor Jonathan Linman (Assistant to the Bishop), Pastor Christopher Mietlowski, Pastor Danielle Miller, Pastor Raymond Ormand, Pastor Daniel Penumaka, Dr. Ralph Peters, Pastor Jerome Taylor, Pastor Jeanne Warfield, Ms. Cassandra Wilson and Pastor Peggy Wuertele (ELCA Representative). Professor Paul Rajashekar, serves as ELCA faculty representative to the committee.

Special thanks are extended to Ms. Mary Tennermann, who assisted with the administrative details of the Candidacy Process in 2010, and to Ms. Louise Litke who conducted initial interviews on behalf of the Candidacy Committee.

Candidacy Committee Meetings

The Metropolitan New York Synod Candidacy Committee met six times in 2009. Meetings were held at the Synod Office on the second Saturday of the month. A Candidacy Retreat was held in October. Members of the Committee traveled to ELCA seminaries for endorsement interviews and other meetings.

Steps in Candidacy

ENTRANCE begins a journey of discernment that explores an individual's potential for rostered ministry and readiness to begin the process of theological study and candidacy in the ELCA. One year of active membership in the ELCA is required prior to entrance. The entrance process requires the completion of an application portfolio that includes: application form, biographical

essay, congregational registration, initial interview, psychological evaluation/career counseling consultation, background check and entrance interview. Normally, a positive entrance decision is required before an applicant is admitted to an ELCA seminary. Those approved for Entrance to Candidacy in 2010 included:

- **Nicholas Sollom**
02/13/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Sollom is a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, New York, NY.
- **Marc Almendarez Stutzel**
02/13/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Almendarez Stutzel is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Long Island City, NY. Mr. Stutzel has received a full-tuition scholarship from the ELCA Fund for Leaders.
- **Emily Scott**
04/10/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Ms. Scott is a member of Trinity Lower East Side Lutheran Parish, New York, NY.
- **Becca Seely**
04/10/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry, Yale Divinity School. Ms. Seely is a member of St. John-St. Matthew-Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, NY.
- **David Hanssen**
04/10/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry, Luther Seminary. Mr. Hanssen is a member of Emanuel Lutheran Church, Pleasantville, NY.
- **Paul Lumpkin**
04/10/2010 Candidate: Diaconal Ministry, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Mr. Lumpkin is a member of King of Kings Lutheran Church, New Windsor, NY.
- **Mark Kiesel**
11/13/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry, Ordained in Another Lutheran Tradition. The Reverend Kiesel is an ordained pastor of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

ENDORSEMENT encourages and affirms those who clearly demonstrate gifts and qualities for a specific form of ministry in the ELCA, as well as identifies areas for growth and development. Before endorsement, a candidate must complete at least two semesters of seminary study, parish fieldwork, and a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. Candidates for endorsement complete an endorsement essay, which is discussed with the Candidacy Committee during an endorsement interview. Only endorsed candidates may participate in an ELCA internship. Candidates approved for Endorsement in 2010 included:

- **Omar Ortiz**
04/10/2010 Endorsed Candidate: Ordained Ministry, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Ortiz is a member of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Bronx, NY.

- **Jonathan Recabarren**
04/10/2010 Endorsed Candidate: Ordained Ministry, The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Recabarren is a member of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, New York, NY.
- **Peter Roy**
11/13/2010 Endorsed Candidate: Ordained Ministry, The Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Gettysburg. Mr. Roy is a member of Dobbs Ferry Lutheran Church, Dobbs Ferry, NY.

APPROVAL comes at the completion of all academic and practical requirements. The approval process includes the preparation of an Approval Essay and participation in the Approval Interview. A positive decision must be made in order to be available for assignment, ordination and first call for service to the whole church. Candidates approved for ordination or admission to the ELCA Roster in 2010 included:

- **Paul Downing**
06/05/2010 Approved for Ordained Ministry: Graduate of Union Theological Seminary, completed ELCA seminary residency requirement at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Downing is a member of The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Flushing, NY.
- **Marc Herbst**
06/05/2010 Approved for Ordained Ministry: Graduate of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry, completed ELCA seminary residency requirement at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. Mr. Herbst is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Plainview, NY.
- **Melissa Lemons**
06/05/2010 Approved for Ordained Ministry: Graduate of Union Theological Seminary, completed ELCA seminary residency requirement at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Ms. Lemons is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church of Manhattan.
- **James Smith**
09/11/2010 Approved for Ordained Ministry: Graduate of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Smith is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Wyandanch.
- **Heidi Lembke**
11/13/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry: Graduate of Union Theological Seminary, completed ELCA seminary residency requirement at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Ms. Lembke is a member of Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan.
- **Rebecca Pollicino**
11/13/2011 Candidate: Ordained Ministry: Graduate of The General Theological Seminary, completed ELCA seminary residency requirement at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Ms. Pollicino is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rockville Centre.
- **George Dietrich**
12/11/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry: Graduate of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Mr. Dietrich is a member of Christ Lutheran Church, Airmont.

- **Norma Malfatti**
12/11/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry: Graduate of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Ms. Malfatti is a member of Third Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rhinebeck.
- **Adam Sornchai**
12/11/2010 Candidate: Ordained Ministry: Graduate of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Mr. Sornchai is a member of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Port Jefferson Station.

New Candidates Encouraged

If you or someone you know would like to explore the possibility of a vocation in the ELCA as an ordained pastor, associate in ministry, diaconal minister or deaconess, the Candidacy Committee would be interested in speaking with you. For information, contact the Reverend Jeffrey Kolbo, Candidacy Coordinator, 631-744-9355 [jkolbo123@verizon.net] or the Reverend Jonathan Linman, Assistant to the Bishop for Formation, at 212-665-0732 [jlinman@mnys.org]

The Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo, Candidacy Committee Chairperson

Bishop Rimbo invited The Rev. Jonathan Linman and The Rev. Mark Erson to the podium to speak about Project Connect.

Bishop Rimbo then invited Dr. Diane Jacobson to the podium to lead the assembly in the second part of her study on the Ten Commandments.

Mission Strategy Report

Pr. Jack Horner, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, presented the following report:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

My work is centered in encouraging and developing leaders and congregations to become missional and evangelizing.

My role as the Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) is to be the bridge between churchwide organization and the synod to provide missional leadership and resources for congregations and leaders. I hope to encourage congregations to become more missional, more evangelical and more generous. I work directly with pastors and lay leaders to help them discern their mission and ministry strategies.

I work closely with the three synodical tables for conversation and action around synodical missional strategy, stewardship and mission support, and developing and organizing resources for new and renewing evangelizing congregations. In addition, I work with the Outreach Committee who supervises and supports ministries receiving partnership support from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the ELCA and/or our synod.

Mission Strategy Table-

- ✘ Strategic Directions- The table has been discussing strategic directions for our synod focusing on:
 1. Leadership- the training, retooling and support of leadership, both lay and rostered.
 2. Reformation of congregational life, discerning purpose, and worship
 3. Renewal involving new ministry starts, redevelopment of congregations, and the reshaping of ministries including new models.

- ✘ Report Accountability Process- Reporting provides the table, pastors, lay leaders, and synod staff with information for planning and evaluation of ministry and mutual accountability in the mission we share. On the whole reporting by pastors has been very poor in the past in our synod. Follow up by staff and volunteers has been limited. The table recommended the following 5 steps to increase timely reporting of the mission support commitment form, parochial report, and rostered leaders report to the bishop.
 1. Early January- Communication from the bishop emphasizing importance of reporting and due dates:
 - 1/31 Mission Support Commitment Form
 - 2/15 Parochial Report and Rostered Leader Report
 2. March- Reporting list given to conference deans at March meeting for follow up.
 3. April- Reporting list posted on website and e letter.
 4. April- Personal follow up by the bishop, staff and Synod Council members emphasizing concern
 5. May- Report on progress at Synod Assembly

- ✘ New Start and Redevelopment opportunities and ongoing conversations- The table has served as the sounding board for a variety of possibilities for new ministries, redevelopments and collaborative ministries. These are often long but helpful processes to ask questions and support the good work being formed throughout our synod.

- ✘ Sponsored Leadership Luncheon- Bishop Rimbo hosted a luncheon to thank pastors of growing congregations with at least 70 in worship and healthy mission support.

Mission Resources Table-

- ✘ Developed new resource material for the new website
- ✘ Developing Regional Missional Training events
- ✘ Developing Mission Renewal Teams
- ✘ Co-hosted the Canon Robin Greenwood visit and events in the winter

Stewardship and Mission Support-

- ✘ Developing Stewardship Emphasis for fall- “Enter into the Joy” for November 13, 2011. Materials will be ready in May.

- ✘ Affirmed the Reporting Accountability Process developed by the Mission Strategy Table. Encourage SC to affirm the process.
- ✘ Developing Mission Support Dinner in fall for pastors, church council presidents and treasurers with the bishop.
- ✘ I have conducted a number of stewardship consultations with pastors and congregations

Outreach Committee-

The Outreach Committee meets regularly to support congregations receiving partnership committee receives and reviews new applications and approves grants, reviews progress in ministry goals and provides for ministry reviews. The members of the Outreach Committee have a passion for ministry on the territory and a deep awareness of the need to best steward our resources for mission.

Your servant in Christ,
Pr. Jack M. Horner

Ecumenical Greetings

The Rev. Dr. David Benke brought greetings from the Atlantic District-LCMS.

The Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk brought greetings from the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

The Rev. Robert Robbins brought greetings from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York.

The second plenary session concluded with announcements by Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann and prayer by The Rev. Daniel Peter.

The Festival Eucharist was held at 7:30pm at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Huntington Station.

Members of the assembly gathered for Morning Prayer at 8:00 am, after which the third plenary session of the Twentieth Regular Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod was called to order, by Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo at 8:30 am.

Bishop Rimbo called for an update of the registration report. Pr. Brathwaite reported that of 8:30 am the attendance was:

Clergy	170
Lay Voting members	235
Associates in Ministry	<u>10</u>
Total Voting Members	415

Election Committee Results of Ballot 1

The Rev. Paul Egensteiner reported the results of the first ballot.

Synod Council – Lay Male – unexpired term ending 2012

Vote for One: 349 ballots cast, 0 invalid - 176 votes needed to elect

Jonathan Westerlund	193	Elected
Alexander Ross	72	
Christopher Vergara	85	

Synod Council – Lay Female – unexpired term ending 2012

Vote for One: 349 ballots cast, 3 invalid – 174 votes needed to elect

Bobbi Paulik	128
Christine Cognetta	48
Sharon Wilson	93
Phoenix Rivera	77

No Election – 2nd ballot

ELCA Church Council – Lay Female

Vote for Two: 349 ballots cast, 1 invalid – 175 votes needed to elect

Christine Connell	259	Elected
Nicole George	156	
Jonelle Phelps	74	
Mary Heller	136	

No Election – 2nd position

ACTION SA2011.05.01

Jonathan Westerlund elected to synod council as Lay Male at Large, 1 year unexpired term

Christine Connell elected ELCA Church Council, Lay Female.
Ballot 2 was distributed and assembly members voted.

Ballot 2

Synod Council – Lay Female – unexpired term ending 2012 (vote for one)

Bobbi Paulik
Sharon Wilson

ELCA Church Council – Lay Female (vote for one)

Nicole George
Mary Heller

Bishop Rimbo spoke to the members of the assembly about the Congregational Appeal Process that would take place later in the session. Since this was the first time the process would be held he also invited the Parliamentarian, Pr. Diana Austin to speak.

Bishop Rimbo then invited Dr. Diane Jacobson to the podium to lead the assembly in the third part of her study on the Ten Commandments.

Report of the Bishop

Bishop Rimbo presented Part Two of his Report to the Assembly.

Let me talk with you about Disconnect and Remembrance.

Since becoming bishop in 2008 I have been striving to build relationships with our congregations and leaders but there is yet a disconnect. You want us to be with you, to be proactive on your behalf, to be attentive to all congregations, all rostered leaders, all institutions and ministries. But there remains an “us-them mentality” within our synod.

Being accountable to one another, we seek to work better together, to share with one another, and to be more responsive to one another. Reporting has improved, and I am thankful. The sense of collegiality I witnessed in the Bishop’s Retreat last November and the Chrism Mass in Holy Week, for example, gives me great joy and hope. An increase in the number of pastors who report faithful continuing education activity, pericope studies, and ecumenical conversations is a sign of our desire to keep connected.

I am also aware of the gratitude of many of you for the presence of our synod staff in your congregations both at times of transition (when you have to put up with us) but more importantly at other times. These remarkable people on our staff have helped you and your congregation think about parish administration; improve the way you maintain your financial records; provide spiritual formation; find ways to tell the story of your congregation in a variety of means; increase the health of your congregation; transform your parish into a center for mission.

Through the efforts of Sarah Gioe we are improving our internal and external communications. I hope you will be among the hundreds of people who visit our new website. I also hope you will sign up to receive our synod's weekly e-newsletter. I have heard from others about the appreciation they have for our straightforward, clear communication from the synod office; you should also know that we appreciate your congregational newsletters that come to us and are read by us. We take seriously the two-way street of communication.

I continue to rejoice in the program of visitations we have been doing and this offers me the opportunity to thank Deacon Gayle Ruege, my executive administrative assistant, for the tremendous work she does in coordinating these visits and maintaining what semblance of sanity I have in general. In the first set of visitations, spanning 18 months, I visited every church building in this synod and was able to meet with many lay and ordained leaders. In this second round, I decided to bring members of our synod staff along and share in the great joy of being with you. As I mentioned earlier, we have completed 6 of these visitations since last Synod Assembly and have 4 more scheduled for the remainder of this calendar year. I invite you to continue sharing in these gatherings. I especially thank the lay leaders who have been so ready to participate in the rich conversations we have had. Anywhere from 80 to 120 persons have been at these potluck events; this simply underscores the fact that the greatest resource we have, apart from Jesus, is Jesus' living Body: you, us, all together walking this way.

Another partnership our synod staff enjoys is our discipline of remembering you in prayer. We gather daily for worship and include agencies, institutions, congregations, schools, rostered leaders, the wider church, our companion synods and our full communion partners in our prayers. This is a tremendously strengthening time for me and our staff and it continues to amaze me that in the rotation of prayer we often intercede for you at times when you particularly are in need of it. I also want to say that the fact that we see posted on your church bulletin boards the cards we send when we are praying for you is deeply gratifying. We are on this road together. The opposite of what is known as "Disconnect" in the church is "Remember-ance." I want to remind you that as we gather in Assembly and in your congregations and in our synod office the center of that gathering is always Jesus Christ who told us "Do this in remembrance of me." You will hear more about this tonight at the Festive Eucharist. For now let me clearly say that holding onto Christ at the center of our life together, disconnect will vanish as we remember the Savior and Lord we share.

Thus I invite you to join us, our synod council, our staff in making a very simple yet rich change in how we speak. It is time for us to stop talking about "The Synod" and speak rather of "Our Synod." Part of this change has been happening already within the Synod Council. Soon after becoming Vice-President, Maria Del Toro initiated efforts to change the culture of the synod council. You heard more about this remarkable transformation-in-the-making when Maria gave her Report of the Vice-President.

In speaking of "connections" I want to highlight, very simply, other events in which I, as your bishop and as a bishop of the entire church, established or renewed connections which continue to strengthen our shared ministry as the Metropolitan New York Synod.

This year our staff has begun to explore stronger connections with our Full Communion Partners, especially the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island and the Episcopal Diocese of New York. I remain an active member of the Council of Churches of the City of New York and give thanks for our shared ministries with them.

Last summer, Lois and I were privileged to participate in the 100th Anniversary of the beginning of Lutheranism in our companion synod, the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. A consultation on evangelical outreach was at the beginning of this jubilee and I was able to offer a brief paper to the gathering of leaders from Tanzania and from all around the world. But the highlight was the worship service with some three thousand people in attendance, sitting on a hillside, at which the Presiding Bishop of the ELCT, Alex Malasusa, preached and the president of Tanzania spoke. Our friendship with this diocese continues to inspire me and our tremendous ministry at Kibeta English Medium Primary School is, quite frankly, a source of pride.

I count it a privilege to serve the wider community and church in a variety of ways, principally because I am your bishop. I could comment at length on each of these, and will gladly speak with you personally while we are here or at other times. For now let me simply list some of these ministries and comment briefly.

A few months ago I visited Long Island Lutheran High School and the newly-founded Long Island Lutheran Day School at St. Paul's, East Northport. These are wonderful ministries which demonstrate the power of sharing between Lutherans.

I am honored to serve on the Board of Lutheran Health Care, Brooklyn, an exemplary ministry of this synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I am also pleased to share with you that I will be representing the synod on the Board of Wagner College beginning this Thursday, assuming they elect me!

My love for liturgy and music has brought me to incredible opportunities. I represent the ELCA on the Consultation on Common Texts, an ecumenical group that, among other things, helps the church explore the richness of the Revised Common Lectionary. I serve on the Board of Lutheran Music Program, the group which directs, most notably, the program for talented high school musicians known as Lutheran Summer Music. I was honored by the invitation to speak on worship and to preach at a wonderful worship conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, this past winter. Lois and I enjoyed a few days at Silver Bay, a program I would strongly recommend to you. In October I will be speaking about Proclamation at the worship conference of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and I will be speaking about Musician-Pastor Teams at our own synod worship conference on October 15. Next summer I will be the guest preacher for two weeks at Montreat, where the Presbyterian Association of Musicians gathers. And in October 2012, I will be presenting to the conference of priests of the Finnish Lutheran Church in Helsinki. I look forward to all of these opportunities.

I am grateful for those who participated in the Bishop's Retreat last November and for all who will join us for the Ministerium on May 25th. These signs of our relationship with one another I take as a ministry of support for our synod.

I also want to say how grateful I am for the community of leaders known as the Conference of Bishops. This group has opened doors for me to lobby for immigration reform in Washington, D. C., engage newly-called and ordained pastors in our Region 7 First Call Theological Education Retreat, and visit our seminaries throughout the country. I cannot articulate what a wonderful group of Christian people the Conference of Bishops is and what a source of strength, especially in tough times. Our partnership with the larger church, most notably with our colleagues in the churchwide expression, is a great gift. Just as your congregation cannot do your ministry alone, so also with synods: we need one another.

Let me talk with you about Vision and Mission.

The Mission Strategy Table is a strong working group led by Pastor Jack Horner. They are seeking to start new congregations throughout our synod in close collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, our Full Communion partners, and local congregations who are passionate about sharing the gospel. Currently there are four congregations under development and another three possibilities that are being discerned.

Our synod has historically been intentional about providing funding for congregations who desire to grow in their mission and ministry through redevelopment. Through partnership grants we encourage evangelical outreach with funds and staff support. The key to success in those endeavors is discerning God's activity in your context and how you can participate in what God wants to do. But these grants also bring the expectation of accountability. We need reporting and signs of growth as a result of this support.

At last year's synod assembly I predicted that by the year 2017 we would have far fewer congregations. Many of you remember that prediction, and I stand by it. Lutherans may have a strong presence in a geographic area, but because of multiple buildings with multiple challenges, over-staffing, ministry demands and limited funds, congregations are simply stretched too thin to be effective. We need to re-shape our Lutheran presence. That might mean making some very difficult decisions with regard to consolidations, mergers, covenant relationships or other forms of cooperative ministry. But again, for this to work, we need to find ways to build trust in one another – congregation to congregation, and congregation to synod, and synod and congregation to churchwide. Let me say it clearly: it is God's mission, not mine, not yours, not the ELCA's – God's. We need to listen very carefully to what God wants us to do.

Reformation is at the heart of our identity. We believe in the power of God to reform our lives and transform our ministry. We need to be increasingly engaged in the reading of Scripture and in deep, profound prayer and worship. When we are engaged in those disciplines we become familiar with the patterns of Easter: life out of death. So this is a good time for me, on behalf of all of you who are Book of Faith congregations, to thank Diane Jacobson, our Bible

Study leader at this Assembly, for her remarkable work as director of the Book of Faith Initiative of the ELCA. I think of famous words attributed to Martin Luther: “The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.” All levels of the church need to be engaged in reading and studying the Scriptures.

Let me put it even more directly. We need Jesus. And in this Assembly, as we gather around Word and Sacrament, Jesus is what we will have.

Thank you, dear sisters and brothers.

*Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia.*

Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo

Report of Reference and Council

Ms. Renee Wicklund, chair of Reference and Council, spoke to the assembly about the difference between a memorial and a resolution.

Ms. Wicklund then presented Item A to the assembly, noting that the Committee on Reference and Council recommends adoption of the memorial.

Item A.

Memorial Calling the Church to Speak Against and Act to Prevent Bullying, Harassment and Related Violence

WHEREAS, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (1 Cor. 12:26); and

WHEREAS, in the *ELCA Social Statement on Education (2007)* we declared, “The ELCA expects communities of learning and teaching to be safe places. We recognize that school safety is an issue for all students, staff, and teachers. Unfortunately, incidents of bullying, intimidation, and other forms of violence are not unusual. We affirm that personal safety and security are essential for optimal teaching and learning”; and

WHEREAS, research indicates children with disabilities or special needs are at a higher risk of being bullied than others (Rigby, K., *New Perspectives on Bullying* (London 2002, Jessica Kingsley Publications)); and has concluded, “Bullying around issues of sexual orientation, non-conforming gender behaviors and dress was the most common form of bullying, second only to issues of appearance (e.g., body size and disability)” (*The National School Climate Survey*, conducted in 2005); and

WHEREAS, in the *ELCA Social Statement on Sexuality: Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) we declared, “Likewise, it will attend to the particular needs of children and the families of those

with actual or perceived differences in sexual orientation or gender identity because they are especially vulnerable to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse”; and

WHEREAS, increased media attention has made us acutely aware of tragic consequences (including youth suicide) if steps are not taken to prevent bullying, harassment, and other related forms of violence; and

WHEREAS, the voice of the church addressing the intersection of race, economic status, age sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical ability is a powerful witness to the healing and life-affirming Gospel promise,

BE IT THEREFORE,

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly encourages new partnerships among our congregations, the synods, the Churchwide Organization, outdoor ministries, campus ministries, Lutheran School Associations, Lutherans Concerned North America, Lutheran Social Service organizations, public schools, counseling centers, and other governmental organizations in order to support and offer preventative programs addressing bullying, harassment, and other related violence especially with higher-risk populations; and

RESOLVED, that these partnerships be encouraged to create or join with existing preventative programs that

- a. utilize positive, inclusive, empowering, and developmentally appropriate materials,
- b. raise participants’ awareness about the issue,
- c. focus on prevention,
- d. seek to change bystander behavior into ally behavior, and
- e. create partnerships between youth and adults; and

RESOLVED, that these partnerships seek funding for these efforts from a combination of existing funds and new funding sources not otherwise accessible individually such as foundation grants, synod and other Lutheran organizational grants (for example Thrivent, Wheat Ridge Ministries, Women of the ELCA, etc.), and private and governmental funding sources, and

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to encourage, support, and publicize new partnerships in ministry that emerge in our church addressing the prevention of bullying, harassment, and related forms of violence.

Submitted by:

Rev. Ann Tiemeyer (Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan)

Rev. Elise Brown (Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan)

Rev. Barbara Lundblad (Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan)

Rev. Jim Sudbrock (Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan)

Rev. Tom Taylor (Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan)

In speaking in favor of the memorial, Rev. Ann Tiemeyer noted that other synods have recently adopted similar memorials. After a series of speakers, the question was called and vote taken.

**ACTION SA2011.05.02
ADOPTED.**

***RESOLVED*, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly encourages new partnerships among our congregations, the synods, the Churchwide Organization, outdoor ministries, campus ministries, Lutheran School Associations, Lutherans Concerned North America, Lutheran Social Service organizations, public schools, counseling centers, and other governmental organizations in order to support and offer preventative programs addressing bullying, harassment, and other related violence especially with higher-risk populations; and**

***RESOLVED*, that these partnerships be encouraged to create or join with existing preventative programs that**

- a. utilize positive, inclusive, empowering, and developmentally appropriate materials,**
- b. raise participants' awareness about the issue,**
- c. focus on prevention,**
- d. seek to change bystander behavior into ally behavior, and**
- e. create partnerships between youth and adults; and**

***RESOLVED*, that these partnerships seek funding for these efforts from a combination of existing funds and new funding sources not otherwise accessible individually such as foundation grants, synod and other Lutheran organizational grants (for example Thrivent, Wheat Ridge Ministries, Women of the ELCA, etc.), and private and governmental funding sources, and**

***RESOLVED*, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to encourage, support, and publicize new partnerships in ministry that emerge in our church addressing the prevention of bullying, harassment, and related forms of violence.**

Ms. Wicklund then presented Item B to the assembly, noting that the Committee on Reference and Council recommends adoption of the resolution.

Item B.

Resolution Supporting the Implementation of the Goal Adopted at the 2010 NMYS Assembly to Provide for a Minimum of 10 Percent Representation for Youth and Young Adults on the Synod Council, Synod Committees, Taskforces, Etc., and in Congregations

WHEREAS, in August 2009, the Churchwide Assembly adopted a change in the model constitution for synods, which change stated,

It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term 'youth' means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term 'young adult' means a voting

member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of elections or appointment for service;

and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan New York Synod adopted these changes to S10:01:01 and S10:01:02 at the Synod Assembly May 14-15, 2010, such that S10:01:01 now provides, “The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the Synod, one youth who shall be not less than sixteen (16) years nor more than eighteen (18) years of age at the time of election or appointment for service, one young adult who shall be between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) at the time of election or appointment for service,...”; and

WHEREAS, youth and young adults are not well represented at the Synod Assembly, on the Synod Council, or on Synod committees, task forces, etc.; and

WHEREAS, youth and young adults (ages 15-29) represent 21% of the US population.

BE IT THEREFORE,

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod establish a taskforce to develop a plan to encourage and seek youth and young-adult participation on Synod Council, and on Synod Committees, taskforces, etc.; and

RESOLVED, that the taskforce will be formed within 120 days and meet within 150 days of the passage of this resolution; and,

RESOLVED, that the deans shall encourage youth and young-adult participation and identify youth and young adults of mature faith in their conferences who would be willing to participate on Synod Council, and on Synod committees, taskforces, etc., and that the deans shall report their activities in this matter to the taskforce for 10% representation; and

RESOLVED, that congregations encourage youth and young-adult participation and identify youth and young adults of mature faith in their congregations and encourage their participation in their own congregations, on Synod Council, and on Synod committees, taskforces, etc., and report their activities in this matter for 10% representation.

Submitted by the Child Youth & Family Ministry Committee of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

Dcn. Charles Germain, maker of the resolution, spoke in favor of adoption. To demonstrate the fact that youth and young adults are under-represented at Synod Assembly, he invited all persons between the ages of 16 and 30 who are voting members of the assembly to stand.

Discussion ensued as to whether deans are equipped to indentify youth and young adults to serve.

In response and amendment was made and seconded to replace the third resolve with this:

Resolved, that the *deans and pastors* shall encourage youth and young-adult participation and identify youth and young adults of mature faith in their conferences who would be willing to participate on Synod Council, and on Synod committees, taskforces, etc., and that the deans shall report their activities in this matter to the taskforce for 10% representation; and

This amendment was adopted. The amended resolution was put to vote and adopted.

ACTION SA2011.05.03

ADOPTED.

***RESOLVED*, that the Metropolitan New York Synod establish a taskforce to develop a plan to encourage and seek youth and young-adult participation on Synod Council, and on Synod Committees, taskforces, etc.; and**

***RESOLVED*, that the taskforce will be formed within 120 days and meet within 150 days of the passage of this resolution; and,**

***RESOLVED*, that the deans shall encourage youth and young-adult participation and identify youth and young adults of mature faith in their conferences who would be willing to participate on Synod Council, and on Synod committees, taskforces, etc., and that the deans shall report their activities in this matter to the taskforce for 10% representation; and**

***RESOLVED*, that congregations encourage youth and young-adult participation and identify youth and young adults of mature faith in their congregations and encourage their participation in their own congregations, on Synod Council, and on Synod committees, taskforces, etc., and report their activities in this matter for 10% representation.**

Ms. Wicklund then presented Item C to the assembly, noting that the Committee on Reference and Council recommends adoption of the resolution.

Item C

Resolution in Support of the Synod Council's Strategic Planning

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan New York Synod has been marked by changes in its population, demographics, participation, and finances over the past decade; and

WHEREAS, a forward-looking strategic plan is crucial to shaping the synod's future to address such changes,

BE IT THEREFORE,

***RESOLVED*, that this Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod supports the Synod Council's efforts to coordinate and undertake a strategic-planning process with all deliberate speed; and**

***RESOLVED*, that this Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod supports the Synod Council's commitment to provide regular updates on the strategic-planning process it undertakes.**

Submitted by:

The Committee on Synod Council Culture and Process
The Committee on Congregational Viability Norms
The Committee on the Election Procedures for Bishop

After discussion of the timing of the formulation of the strategic plan, the following amendment, to add a third resolve, was made and seconded.

Resolved, that the Strategic Plan be presented to the 2012 Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod for adoption.

This amendment was adopted. The amended resolution was put to vote and adopted.

ACTION SA2011.05.04

ADOPTED.

***RESOLVED*, that this Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod supports the Synod Council's efforts to coordinate and undertake a strategic-planning process with all deliberate speed; and**

***RESOLVED*, that this Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod supports the Synod Council's commitment to provide regular updates on the strategic-planning process it undertakes; and**

***RESOLVED*, that the strategic plan be presented to the 2012 Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod for adoption.**

Bishop Rimbo invited Seminarian Karri Whipple to give the report of the Domestic Violence Awareness Task Force.

Bishop Rimbo invited Dcn. Karen Nurmi to present the report of the Synod Hunger Committee.

At this point, Bishop Rimbo exercised his authority as chair of the assembly to amend the agenda of business and move the recognition of anniversaries and the introduction of rostered leaders new to the Synod to the fourth plenary session on Saturday afternoon.

Appeal of Grace Lutheran Church, North Branch

Bishop Rimbo reported to the assembly that it is the responsibility of the synod council to address issues of diminished and/or scattered congregational membership, as well as the protection of property from waste and deterioration. In exercising this responsibility, the synod council imposed synod administration upon Grace Lutheran Church under S13.24 of the Constitution of the Metropolitan New York Synod on January 11, 2011. Under S13.24, Grace has exercised its right to appeal this decision to the synod assembly.

Bishop Rimbo invited Ms. Meta Sorge, President of Grace Lutheran Church to address the assembly. Ms. Sorge requested that the assembly sustain the congregation's appeal from synod administration under S13.24 of the Constitution of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

Bishop Rimbo then invited The Rev. Amandus Derr of the Synod Consultation Committee to speak. Pr. Derr, after noting that this was the first instance of a congregational appeal of synod administration, informed the assembly that after meeting with representatives of Grace and reviewing all of the pertinent issues involved in the matter, it was the recommendation of the Consultation Committee that synod administration be removed and governance of affairs and management of finances be returned to the congregation.

Bishop Rimbo took a moment of personal privilege to announce that he agreed with the recommendation of the Consultation Committee and opened the floor for discussion and questions for Ms. Sorge and Pr. Derr. During the discussion it was noted that a current parochial report for the congregation has been submitted and that the synod has provided approximately \$35,000 in support to Grace.

Bishop Rimbo called for a vote of the assembly members, indicating that a vote in favor of the appeal was a vote to remove synod administration from Grace.

The vote was to sustain the appeal.

**ACTION SA2011.05.05
ADOPTED**

Appeal sustained. Books, records, and ownership of property will be returned to Grace Lutheran Church. Grace Lutheran is to be restored to full membership and synod administration removed.

Appeal of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Bronx

Bishop Rimbo again noted to the assembly that it is the responsibility of the synod council to address issues of diminished and/or scattered congregational membership, as well as the protection of property from waste and deterioration. In exercising this responsibility, the synod council imposed synod administration upon St. Luke's Lutheran Church under S13.24 of the Constitution of the Metropolitan New York Synod on January 11, 2011. Under S13.24, St. Luke's has exercised its right to appeal this decision to the synod assembly..

Bishop Rimbo invited Ms. Evelyn Bartman, President of St. Luke's to address the assembly. Ms. Bartman requested that the assembly sustain the congregation's appeal.

Bishop Rimbo then invited The Rev. Amandus Derr to present the findings of the Consultation Committee with respect to St. Luke's. Pr. Derr reported that after meeting with Ms. Bartman and reviewing all of the pertinent issues involved in the matter, it was the recommendation of the Consultation Committee that the appeal of St. Luke be denied.

Bishop Rimbo noted that he agreed with the recommendation of the Consultation Committee and opened the floor for discussion and questions for Ms. Bartman and Pr. Derr. During this period, it became evident that Ms. Bartman had difficulty in identifying other members and officers of the congregation and even of noting when the last regular worship service was held.

Bishop Rimbo called for a vote of the assembly members, indicating that a vote in favor of the appeal was a vote to remove synod administration from St. Luke's. The vote was to deny the appeal and thus to affirm synod administration of the congregation.

**ACTION SA2011.05.06
ADOPTED**

Appeal is denied. St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Bronx, NY will remain under synod administration under S13.24 of the Constitution of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

Bishop Rimbo announced that due to the time, the report of The Rev. Jack Horner on stewardship and mission support and the vote on the revised 2011 budget and proposed 2012 budget would be moved to the fourth plenary session.

The session was closed after announcements by Pr. Paul Milholland and prayer by Pr. Daniel Peter.

The assembly recessed for lunch.

Members of the assembly gathered for the Holy Eucharist at 1:30 pm, after which the fourth plenary session of the Twentieth Regular Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod was called to order, by Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo at 2:30 pm.

Anniversaries and Rostered Leaders New to Synod

The Rev. Kathleen Koren was invited to the podium to announce anniversaries and present crosses and certificates, and to introduce rostered leaders new to the synod.

Rostered Leaders Anniversary Report

Clergy

Five Years

The Rev. Roldano Auguste
The Rev. Anthony Bateza
The Rev. Brenda Jack
The Rev. Ernst Moss
The Rev. Kit Robison
The Rev. Giovanni Sanchez

Ten Years

The Rev. Paul Block
The Rev. Terri Church
The Rev. Patt Kauffman
The Rev. Ben Stallings
The Rev. Marianne Tomecek
The Rev. Robert Vogl

Fifteen Years

The Rev. Laurie Andersen
The Rev. Mary Chang
The Rev. Michael Church
The Rev. Khader El-Yateem
The Rev. Karen Kuttler
The Rev. Craig Miller
The Rev. Marcia Parkinson-Harrison
The Rev. Audrey Pedersen
The Rev. Kimberly Wilson

Twenty Years

The Rev. Robert Fritch
The Rev. Jack Horner
The Rev. ElizaBeth Nebrasky

Twenty-five Years

The Rev. Patricia Evant
The Rev. James Krauser
The Rev. Philip Trzynka
The Rev. Jeanne Warfield

Thirty Years

The Rev. Stephen Beyer

The Rev. Martha Jacobi
The Rev. Eric Mathsen
The Rev. Frederick McElderry
The Rev. Martin Nale
The Rev. Ray Ormand
The Rev. Mack Smith
The Rev. Thomas E. Taylor

Thirty-five Years

The Rev. James Anderson
The Rev. Jeffrey Kolbo
Bishop Robert Rimbo
The Rev. Henry Wuerz

Forty Years

The Rev. Larry Bailey
The Rev. John Evenson
The Rev. George Lutz
The Rev. Dennis O'Rourke
The Rev. A. William Paulsen
The Rev. Mark Wilhelm

Forty-five Years

The Rev. Serge Castigliano
The Rev. Ivan Gunderman
The Rev. Paul Hagedorn
The Rev. George Matzat
The Rev. William Rusch
The Rev. Peter Swan
The Rev. Walter Wifall

Fifty Years

The Rev. Winston Bone
The Rev. Carl Wayne Leazer
The Rev. Charles Streich

Fifty-five Years

The Rev. Lloyd Berg
The Rev. Carl Weaver

Sixty Years

The Rev. John Damm

Sixty-five Years

The Rev. Robert Bauers
 The Rev. Alvin Messersmith
 The Rev. Pentti Palonen
 The Rev. Paul Reisch

AiMs/Diaconal Ministers**Thirty Years**

Ms. Judith Hinsch, AiM

Forty-five Years

Ms. Linda Fay

Synodical Deacons**Five Years**

Dcn. Barbara Bambina
 Dcn. Richard Ferolito
 Dcn. Karen Nurmi¹
 Dcn. Gary Weiler
 Dcn. Lynne Weiler

Ten Years

Dcn. Hazel Gay
 Dcn. Robert Hering
 Dcn. Claire Mehrhoff
 Dcn. Gayle Ruege
 Dcn. Rory Schoenfeld
 Dcn. Helen Wernlund

Congregation Anniversaries**125 years**

Grace & St. Paul, Manhattan
 Trinity (Flatbush), Brooklyn

100 years

Immanuel, Staten Island
 St. Luke's, Farmingdale

75 years

Resurrection, Mt. Kisco

50 years

Christ, East Northport

Introduction of rostered leaders new to synod*Pastors*

Pr. Linda Bell: St. Luke's, Brooklyn

Pr. Paul Downing: Redeemer, Flushing Heights
P. Jeanine Duncan: All Saints, Jamaica
Pr. John Flack: Christ, Floral Park
Pr. Marc Herbst: Faith, Syosset
Pr. Justin Lathrop: Ascension, Deer Park
Pr. Martin Malzahn: Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education (Columbia)
Pr. Fernando Otero: St. Paul's, Bronx
Pr. Eric Olsen: Good Shepherd, Plainview
Pr. Arthur Petterson: St. Paul's-St. Luke's, Staten Island
Pr. Wesley Poole: Grace, Malverne
Pr. James Rowe: Redeemer, Kingston
Pr. Robert Vogl: Zion, Staten Island

Deacons (newly consecrated)

Dcn. Betty Cole: Resurrection, St. Albans
Dcn. Russell Carey: New Hope, Valley Stream
Dcn. Margaret Lindblom: Grace, Yorktown Heights

AIM

Julie Hagen: Advent, Manhattan

Recognition of Deans

Pr. Kristina Ahlman: Western Suffolk
Pr. Paul Block: Bronx
Pr. Paul Egensteiner: Tappan Zee
Pr. Marva Jenkins: Southeast Queens
Pr. Perry Kirschbaum: Eastern Nassau
Pr. Jeffrey Laustsen: Southwest Nassau
Pr. Barrie Lawless: Manhattan
Pr. Jay Longan: Northwest Queens
Pr. Robert Modr: Peconic
Pr. Ernie Moss: Delaware Hudson
Pr. Dennis O'Rourke: Hudson
Pr. Gary Schulz: Northeast Queens
Pr. Micah Stumme: Southwest Queens
Pr. Gary Squire: Staten Island
Pr. Griffin Thomas: Brooklyn Bridges
Pr. Albert Triolo: Western Nassau
Pr. Norman White: Tappan Zee
Pr. Diane Wildow: Southwest Brooklyn
Pr. Kipp Zimmermann: South Shore Brooklyn

Election Committee Results of Ballot 2

The Rev. Paul Egensteiner reported the results of the second ballot.

Synod Council – Lay Female – unexpired term ending 2012

Vote for One: 273 ballots cast, 0 invalid – 137 votes needed to elect

Bobbi Paulik	176	Elected
Sharon Wilson	85	

ELCA Church Council – Lay Female

Vote for One: 273 ballots cast, 2 invalid – 136 votes needed to elect

Nicole George	170	Elected
Mary Heller	89	

ACTION SA2011.05.07

Bobbi Paulik elected to synod council as Lay Female, 1 year unexpired term.
Nicole George elected ELCA Church Council, Lay Female.

Bishop Rimbo invited The Rev. Jack Horner, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, to report on stewardship and mission strategy.

Budget Resolutions

The revised budget for 2011 and proposed budget for 2012 having been presented to the assembly in an earlier session by Mr. Robert Buescher, Synod Treasurer, the members of the assembly were asked to vote.

ACTION SA2011.05.08

ADOPTED

Adjusted budget of \$3,318,228 for fiscal year 2011 was ratified.

ACTION SA2011.05.09

ADOPTED

Proposed budget of \$3,318,565 for fiscal year 2012 was adopted.

Bishop Rimbo invited Mr. Sheldon Erb to the podium to present the report of the Tanzania Committee.

Bishop Rimbo invited The Rev. Leigh Pezet to the podium to present the report of the Romania Committee.

Bylaw change relating to Audit Committee

Secretary Schoepflin presented the resolution relating to changes in the audit committee.

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly adopt the following bylaws:

S11.05.01: The Audit Committee membership shall consist of five persons appointed by the synod council for three year terms. Two of members shall be members of the synod council. Reappointments may be made for one additional term. The chairperson shall be appointed by the vice president of the synod council. Members of the financial management committee and synod employees shall not be members of this committee.

Election of members of the synod council to the Audit Committee serve the r full three year term beginning on the first day of the month following election, or less if Council membership is terminated. Successors to the original 3 member's terms begin on February 1 of any year, and responsibility begins with the review of the Independent Auditor's Report and Management Letter published for the year just completed.

S11.05.02 The functions of the Audit Committee shall be to:

- a. Recommend to the synod council the appointment of an independent auditor.*
- b. Meet with the independent auditor to discuss the scope and approach of the audit.*
- c. Review and evaluate the reports prepared by the independent auditor particularly with respect to any identified weaknesses in the synod's internal accounting and management controls and any recommendations for improvements in such controls.*
- d. Monitor and report to the synod council the progress of remedial actions that may be an appropriate response to the report of the independent auditor.*
- e. Review the annual financial statements with the independent auditor.*
- f. Conduct periodic inquiry into synod procedures for ensuring expenditures (especially in sensitive areas such as professional fees, compensation, and travel and entertainment) are appropriate in nature and reasonable in amount.*
- g. Provide the synod secretary with minutes of all meetings.*

**ACTION SA2011.05.10
ADOPTED**

The foregoing bylaws relating to the audit committee were adopted.

Bishop Rimbo invited Ms. Renee Wicklund, Chair of Reference and Council to the podium for the final report and recommendation of the committee.

Ms. Wicklund reported that a resolution, A Call to Celebrate and Support Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education of the Metropolitan New York Synod, had been received relating to Lutheran Ministries in High Education, and that this resolution was being referred to the Synod Council for its consideration and action thereon.

Closing of Assembly

Bishop Rimbo expressed final words of appreciation to the Assembly Chaplain, Pr. Daniel Peter, the Assembly Planning Committee, the Reference and Council Committee, the Elections Committee, the Nominating Committee, the members of King of Kings, Melville, who assembled the assembly packets, and to the Assembly Parliamentarian, Pr. Diana Austin.

The assembly concluded with the Order for the Closing of the Assembly with the Installation of Synod Council.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Robert Schoepflin
Secretary, MNYS*