

January 18, 2005

Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

MINUTES
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SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Present

The Rev. Albert Ahlstrom
The Rev. James Anderson
Mr. William Anderson
The Rev. Edward Barnett
The Rev. William Baum
Bishop Stephen Bouman
Mr. Bob Buescher, Treasurer
Mr. Alan Chen
Ms. Chris Connell, DM
Ms. Maria del Toro
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann
The Rev. Kathleen Koran
Mr. John Litke, V-President
Ms. Christina Lord-Barry
Dr. Earl Marsan
The Rev. Patt Margolis
The Rev. Fred McElderry
The Rev. Annemarie Noto, PhD
Mr. Patrick O'Brien
Ms. Beverly Small
Ms. Marion Steadman

Mr. John Vercelletto
Ms. Sharon Wilson

Excused

Mr. Carl Blomke
The Rev. James Krauser, Sec'y

Absent

Mr. Leonard Bartkus
Ms. Katie Montano

STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Gary Mills
Ms. Joanne Strunck
The Rev. Robert Wollenburg

AUXILLIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Charlie Kalhorn, Lutheran Men in
Mission
Ms. Delores Gray, Women of the ELCA

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm

II. DEVOTIONS

Ms. Sharon Wilson

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted with minor adjustments.

IV. MINUTES, November 9, 2004, consideration of

The minutes were approved as presented.

V. REPORT OF THE BISHOP

A. Tsunami in Southeast Asia

A prayer service for victims of the tsunami will be held at St. Paul International Lutheran Church in Floral Park on Wednesday January 19 at 7 pm. Bishop Bouman presented the

idea of a church-to-church living letter of compassion with a monetary gift to be presented later in the year by representatives from Metropolitan New York Synod and the Atlantic District. He asked that synod council members ponder this and consider it for our next meeting.

B. *Christian Century*

Two articles written by Bishop Bouman will be published in *Christian Century* in an upcoming issue in "The Living Word" section.

C. Community Organizing Class

Bishop Bouman is currently teaching a six-week class at New York Theological Seminary on community organizing, the public church, and public ministry in the Great Commission. Next year a two-day intensive course will be offered which will include students from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

D. Center for Public Theology

Bishop Bouman distributed a paper giving the background of the Center for Public Theology and a proposal to initiate a conversation around issues of migration. (See **Exhibit A**)

E. Bishop's Christmas Appeal

The first "Bishop's Appeal" of Bishop Bouman's administration was conducted during the Christmas season and rendered close to \$10,000.

F. Mission Support

Congregations are taking seriously the bishop's challenge for mission support. The staff is moving forward with their contact calls to build relationships between the synod and congregations.

G. Ecumenical relationships

1. On Saturday January 29 a Latino deacon will be ordained into the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Her call is to Iglesia Luterana Resurreccion which meets at an Episcopalian church. Bishop Orris Walker of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, will participate in the ordination.
2. Another former deacon, Elena Perez, was recently ordained in Kingston. She serving a ministry we do in cooperation with the Reformed Church, which has pledged \$30,000 to support this ministry.

H. Commission for Evangelical Outreach (CEO)

The ministry of the CEO continues to grow. Bishop Bouman said he would see that

synod council members get a copy of CEO's recently composed mission statement. St. Paul, Liberty was our first *Go! Congregation*. Holy Trinity in Hollis will be our second. Kick off for Holy Trinity is scheduled for January 23.

I. Region 7 Coordinator

The Rev. Dr. Judith Spindt, Region 7 Coordinator, has resigned and a search is underway for a new coordinator. Bishop Bouman asked synod council members to let him know if they have suggestions.

J. Bishop E. Roy Riley will be Churchwide representative at our synod assembly

K. Lutheran Social Services (LSS) project

LSS is looking for space to house young people as an alternative to incarceration. If we could identify church or parsonage space for this it could be a valuable partnership with one of our social service organizations.

L. Former ELCA presiding bishop Dr. H. George Anderson recently married the Rev. Christine Bohr, pastor of St. John's, Lynnbrook. Dr. Anderson has expressed interest in helping out where needed the ministry of MNYS. The Rev. Walter Wangerin, while he does not live on our territory, has also expressed such an interest.

M. Mission Development Board (MDB) Report

Vice-president John Litke

1. MDB is setting up a chart of accounts to provide a full list of income and investments
2. MDB recognizes the need to work closer with Lutheran Services New York Alliance (LSNYA). They are having a meeting with leaders of that group on January 19.
3. There has been some anxiety around the mission development process and the relationship between the MDB and the Commission for Evangelical Outreach. Mr. Litke and CEO representatives are available to talk about this in conference meetings.
4. Pastor Joanne Bond and Ms. Mary Heller have teamed with a pastoral counselor, Toby Tobias, provide counseling on issues of stress and loss when a congregation has closed or is looking to close.
5. After costs are deducted and tithes forwarded to the ELCA, we will have a little over two million dollars available for mission reinvestment from the sale of Redeemer Hicksville and the parsonage of Atonement Staten Island.
6. Two congregations are on the MDB radar screen
 - Hope, Scarsdale. Mr. Litke reviewed the history of the situation at Hope. The mission effort there closed in July of 2004. There was conversation with Grace Scarsdale to relocate there but they declined. The MDB is inclined toward sale of the property. A report will be forthcoming on their considerations.
 - Holy Trinity, Hollis Queens. The MDB has reviewed this situation as

well and it appears that the congregation and school cannot support the maintenance or repair of the building , The school is very important to the community.

N. Appointments

1. Commission for Gay and Lesbian People. There were no objections to the following appointments
 - Chairperson: the Rev. David Parsons
 - Appointment for term ending September 2006: the Rev. Ann Tiemeyer
 - Appointments for term ending September 2007: the Rev. Eduardo Fabian Arias, the Rev. Leo Longan, Mr. John Prosen (Incarnation, Cedarhurst), and Ms. Heloise Gruenberg (Bethlehem, Brooklyn).

2. Mission Development Board. There were no objections to the following appointments.
 - Mission Guidance Team for Christ, Yonkers: Sharon Wilson
 - Mission Planning Team. There were no objections to Bishop Bouman's suggestion of having the Vacancy Management Team and the CEO Taskforce leaders comprise part of the Mission Planning Team. The bishop and one person elected from synod council are also to be included on the team
 - Vacancy Management Team: Pastors Frank Nelson, Brooke Swertfager, Richard Mueller, and Gary Schulz
 - CEO task force leaders: Pastor Barrie Lawless, Deacon Gayle Ruege, and Pastor Richard Hill.
 - Pastor Bill Baum was nominated to fill the synod council position. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed and the secretary was instructed to cast a single ballot.

3. Audit Committee: Ms. Muriel Tillinghast. No objection.

4. Reference and Counsel chair and committee
 - Chair: The Rev. Mandy Derr. No objection.
 - Team: appointments will be forthcoming.

5. Member Worship Committee: The Rev. Richard Michael. No objection

6. Companion Synod Committee: The Rev. Perucy Butiku, the Rev. Carol Fryer, Ms. Delores Gray, Deacon Lynne Hansen, Mr. John Hinsch, Deacon Fran Hoyer, the Rev. John Jurik, the Rev. Jeff Kolbo, and Ms. Marge Wenger. No objection.

Bishop Bouman explained this is a committee to oversee our relationship with the North West Diocese of Tanzania. The staff person relating to this committee is Ms.

Connie Duever. Each of these persons is either from Tanzania or has visited there.

7. The Rev. Paul Hagedorn as Interim Pastor at First/Grace Lutheran Church, Jeffersonville, effective 2/17/05. No objection
8. The Rev. Samuel Cruz, PhD as Interim Pastor to the Latino Community at Trinity Lutheran Church, 46th St., Brooklyn, effective March 1, 2005. No objection
9. The Rev. Robert J. Rodriguez as Interim Pastor at Eltingville Lutheran, effective April 1, 2005. No objection

O. Calls

ACTION (SC05:1/1) RESOLVED that the following calls be approved en bloc:

1. **The Rev. Jerry Gaeta as Interim Pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Levittown, effective November 1, 2004. This call is issued under ELCA continuing resolution 7.44.A96.b.1.5.**
2. **Ms. Nadine Cordes, AiM, as Director of Education at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Avenue J in Brooklyn. This is a non-stipendiary call effective February 1, 2005 and issued under ELCA continuing resolution 7.52.A95.b.12.1.**

ADOPTED

P. Staff reports

The Rev. Robert Wollenburg

- Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP) has begun their capital campaign on our territory. Ten percent of what they raise will go to a sub-fund of the Fund for Leaders in Mission, to benefit MNYS candidates for ministry.
- Mission Support. We have had three “Bishop for Breakfast” meetings, which are open to all rostered persons. Conversations have been very positive. Pastor Wollenburg encouraged participation in future breakfasts.
- Parochial Reports. Pastor Wollenburg addressed a “delinquency report” which was distributed in council members’ packets. It is a listing of those congregations which have not filed a complete 2003 parochial report and/or not filled a 2004 Statement of Intent and/or made no mission support in 2004. (**Exhibit B**).
- Statement of Intent for 2006. Pastor Wollenburg would like them to be returned by the end of the fiscal year (January 31). He encouraged dialogue with congregations if challenge figures seemed to be inappropriate.
- Fundraising. Our current fund raising program for the endowment for Kibeta School in Tanzania is currently at \$400,000 in gifts and pledges. We are looking at raising \$1,000,000. This money will provide a permanent endowment for the school and its teachers and will be self-sustaining once it is set in motion.
- On-line giving to synod is working; Pastor Wollenburg encouraged people to donate in this way
- Pastor Wollenburg also serves as deployed staff with ELCA Foundation to

encourage charitable planned giving. He goes to congregations to discuss wills, bequests, charitable gift annuities, etc. He distributed flier on Donor Advised Fund.

VI. REPORT OF THE TREASURER – Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer

Mr. Buescher reported that we will end the year with a deficit in mission support. He is currently preparing, with the staff, the 2006 budget which must be ready for Synod Council approval by April, to then be presented to the Synod Assembly in May. Prior to the meeting the following components of Mr. Buescher's report were emailed to council members:

- Statement of Revenues and Expenditures 2/1/04-12/31/04 – **Exhibit C**
- Budgeted Operations – Revenue and Expenses 2/1/04-12/31/04 (Details) – **Exhibit D**
- Budgeted Operations – Revenue and Expenses 2/1/04-12/31/04 – **Exhibit E**
- Major Investments – December 31, 2004 – **Exhibit F**
- Balance Sheet as of 10/31/04 – **Exhibit G**

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Constitutions

Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights. Constitution submitted, conflicts.

B. Approval of merger between St. Mark Lutheran Church, Ridge and Hope Lutheran Church, Selden. (**Exhibit H**)

Mr. Litke referred to Exhibit H, "Agreement for the Consolidation (merger) of Saint Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church with Hope Lutheran Church". According to Mr. Brian T. Epstein, the attorney handling the merger, section 13 of the New York State Religious Corporations Law requires that the merger be approved by the Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod. After approval, the merged entity can proceed with the sale of St. Mark's.

ACTION (SC05:1/2): RESOLVED that Synod Council approve the "Agreement for the Consolidation (merger) of Saint Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church with Hope Lutheran Church".

ADOPTED

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Staff housing allowances

Federal tax law permits clergy to deduct a part of their salary for housing allowance.

ACTION (SC05:1/3) RESOLVED that the following staff housing allowances be approved by synod council:

Bishop Stephen Bouman: \$50,000
The Rev. Dr. Gary E. Mills: \$50,820
The Rev. Robert Wollenburg: \$64,200
The Rev. David Anglada: \$25,000

ADOPTED

B. Sexuality Study (Exhibit I)

Bishop Bouman discussed the recently released “Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality” and then asked for Synod Council discussion. He shared his initial reaction and what he has been hearing from other bishops and within the synod. He has also spoken with the *New York Times* and *Gannet Papers*. He said the report is trying to create a solution which enables the ELCA to continue to live together as church when we clearly do not agree on the issue. He emphasized that these are only proposals and that the Task Force will be hearing and evaluating responses from the Conference of Bishops, the Division for Ministry, the Division for Church in Society, as well as synod councils throughout the ELCA. On March 10 MNYS will sponsor a “Listening Post” at Saint Peter’s in Manhattan at which this issue can be addresses and discussed. A conflict resolution team from Eastern Mennonite University will facilitate this. There will be two sessions: one with pastors and the other with all interested persons in the synod. Churchwide voting members will be asked to attend. Anyone who cannot attend will be invited to submit written statements which will be considered. At our next synod council meeting on March 15, we will decide what we would like to forward as the council’s response to the report. Since March 15 is the ELCA deadline for hearing synod council responses, Pastor Gary Mills will call for one-day extension.

Individuals and congregations may also propose resolutions at their synod assemblies, which if passed will be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Bouman expressed hope that we can look at this in the context of the Great Commission. “Can we present a community that does not implode when discussing things upon which it does not agree?”

Please refer to **Exhibit I** for Bishop Bouman’s written response to the report. His response can also be read on the Metropolitan New York Synod website (www.mnys.org)

IX. DEANS REPORT – No report

X. YOUTH REPORT – No Report

XI. AUXILLARY ORGANIZATIONS

A. Lutheran Men in Mission. Mr. Charlie Kalhorn distributed a synopsis of what is happening with LMM (**Exhibit J**)

B. Women of the ELCA. Ms. Delores Gray reported:

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1. A number of scholarships and grants are available through Women of the ELCA. More information on them can be found on their website (www.womenoftheelca.org)
2. Half of their fall convention offering went to pay for a laptop for the new teachers at KEMPS.
3. April 16, 2005: Celebration of Women at The Wartburg.
4. September 1, 2005: Convention at Grace, Yorktown Heights. Theme: Saved to Serve.
5. July 5-10: Women of the ELCA Sixth Triennial Gathering in San Antonio, TX

XII. OTHER

Vice-president Litke asked if anyone was having difficulty downloading Word documents. No one responded that they were.

Next meeting of the Synod Council is on Tuesday, March 15.

Ms. Christine Connell encouraged people to support the 2006 National Youth Gathering in San Antonio. She would like to see MNYS have a better showing than last time.

XIII. CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm with prayer offered by the Rev. Dr. Gary Mills

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Strunck
Administrative Assistant to the Bishop