

SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Present

The Rev. Albert Ahlstrom  
Mr. William Anderson  
The Rev. Edward Barnett  
The Rev. William Baum  
Bishop Stephen P. Bouman  
Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer  
Mr. Alan Chen  
Ms. Christine Connell, DM  
Ms. Maria del Toro  
Mr. Gerald Erikson  
Dcn Charles Germain  
Mr. Gene Hiigel  
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann  
The Rev. Perry Kirschbaum  
The Rev. Kathleen Koran  
The Rev. James Krauser  
Dr. Earl Marsan

The Rev. Fred McElderry  
Ms. Minerva Melendez  
The Rev. Annemarie Noto, PhD  
The Rev. Robert Schoepflin, Esq.  
Ms. Beverly Small  
Mr. Hans Vogel, Vice-president  
Ms. Renee Wicklund, Esq.

Excused

Mr. Patrick O'Brien  
Mr. Jonathan Westerlund

Absent

Ms. Hope Card

STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Gary Mills  
Ms. Joanne Strunck

AUXILIARY REPRESENTATIVES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Vogel called the meeting to order at 5:08pm.

II. DEVOTIONS

The Rev. Fred McElderry

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as distributed

IV. MINUTES, September 19, 2006 and October 24, 2006, consideration of

Where "Metro New York Synod" is used it should be the full name of the synod  
"Metropolitan New York Synod."

The minutes were approved as amended.

V. REPORT OF THE BISHOP

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

1. Epiphany Lutheran Church, Hempstead.

The first part of Bishop Bouman's report dealt with the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting held at Epiphany Lutheran Church, Hempstead, which was for the purpose of voting on the recommendation that Pastor Oberkehr's call be terminated. Those at Epiphany's meeting voted to table the recommendation. Bishop Bouman read the letter which he sent in response to that meeting (**Exhibit A**). Another meeting of the congregation, which had been called by Pastor Oberkehr several weeks ago, will be held on November 15. The question of the consultation report will be on the agenda, as well as election of a new council.

2. ELCA Church Council meeting

The bishop reported on news from the recent ELCA Church Council meeting. A Declaration on the Condemnation of the Anabaptists" was adopted. It paid particular attention to apologies for persecutions.

Church Council also adopted a statement on the "filioque controversy" consistent with the Lutheran World Federation position on confessing the Nicene Creed without the phrase in appropriate settings.

*[In Christian theology the **filioque clause** or **filioque controversy** (filioque meaning "and [from] the son" in Latin) is a heavily disputed part of the Nicene Creed, that forms a divisive difference in particular between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions. In the Orthodox tradition, the line in question reads "We believe in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds from the Father", while in the Catholic tradition it reads "We believe in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds from the Father and the Son". It is most often referred to as simply "filioque" or "the filioque."]*

3. MNYS Ethics Dialogue

Pastor William Baum was called upon to report on the formation of a steering committee to implement the theological dialogue in matters of Christian ethics called for in synod assembly resolution

SA2006.06.05. Pastor Baum reported that a seminar series of six sessions is planned in the winter January - March at the Lutheran Theological Center at General Seminary in Manhattan. The format will include essays and conversation. This material will further be featured at a meeting of the ministerium on March 26. Pastor Baum read an open invitation for the submission of essays, which was published in the synod eletter. Registration for the dialogue is open until January 15<sup>th</sup>. People can attend to audit or to participate more fully.

During a second phase of this dialog, sessions will be scheduled in various parts of the synod.

Synod council took no exception to the bishop's appointment of the following steering committee: the Rev. William Baum, Chair; the Rev. Stephen Hultgren, the principle author of the resolution; the Rev. Dr. Gary Mills; the Rev. Amandus Derr; the Rev. James Krauser, The Rev. Ashley Hall, and Mr. John Litke.

4. Lutheran Medical Center (LMC)

Bishop Bouman is now serving as trustee on the board of LMC. LMC is exploring how it may restructure its board to embrace philanthropic considerations while keeping the ELCA as owner/operator, or possibly expanding this responsibility to include the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and our ecumenical partners.

5. Wagner College

In January Bishop Bouman will lead a group of students from Wagner College on an Interfaith Mission to the Holy Land. This trip is being conducted in cooperation with the Board of Rabbis in New York, Lutheran World Federation, and Bishop Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land and Jordan. Bishop Bouman will miss the Bishops' Academy because of this trip but recognizes it as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with Wagner.

6. Bishop Bouman concluded his report with an accounting of his activities this past month, lifting up the wonder of our synod and the many diverse, thriving, and spirit-filled ministries we are privileged to have. They included congregation anniversary celebrations, ordinations, the first Hispanic Assembly, the Commission for

Evangelical Outreach (CEO) Summit, pastors' ordination anniversaries, a memorial service, preaching at the convention of our Episcopal sisters and brothers on Long Island, and the decommissioning of one of our growing Latino churches for a time while they build new space..

B. Mission Development Board – no report

C. Appointments

1. Mr. Dave Ehlers (St. John Lindenhurst) to the MNYS Commission for Gay and Lesbian People, effective immediately to serve a three year term.
2. Archives Advisory Committee
  - a. Mr. Jack Martz (Trinity, Staten Island) to a 3 year term ending at the end of 2009
  - b. The Rev. Glenn C. Stone, term extended through 2008
  - c. Mr. Alan Hoffman, term extended through 2008
  - d. Mr. Erik Sorensen, term extended through 2009
3. Deacon Meg Fielding, as chair of the Diaconal Council, effective April 9, 2006.
4. The Rev. Kathleen Koran, as temporary replacement for Ms. Maria del Toro on the Personnel Committee to conduct staff reviews.

Synod council received Bishop Bouman's appointments with no objection.

VI. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Mr. Robert Buescher

- A. Financial reports. Mr. Buescher briefly reviewed the financial reports which were emailed to synod council members. He noted again that the mission support trend continues to be down. Cash income at this moment is good.
1. Operating Budget Performance (**Exhibit B**)
  2. Balance Sheet – All Funds (**Exhibit C**)
  3. Mission support reports (**Exhibit D**)
  4. Summary of Significant Items (**Exhibit E**)

B. Ten Year Plan

Mr. Buescher presented a Ten Year Plan report which included two handouts:

1. Long Term Budget Estimates (**Exhibit F**)

2. Power Point presentation of Metropolitan New York Synod 2006  
Ten Year Plan (**Exhibit G**)

The chief concern indicated in his presentation is a decline in financial support on various levels. He noted that our pay scales are far from lavish. Staff clergy are on level with parish pastors; lay staff would often make more in the private sector for comparable work. We held the line on these costs to maintain our support to a variety of ministries that extend from year to year. Though we have money in the bank, there are insufficient undesignated funds to sustain these needs indefinitely.

He emphasized the danger of continuing to down-spend the assets from the sale of buildings, and the necessity of building up our mission support. It will be necessary to limit our grants and build up our principle so we can operate from interest.

The Ten Year Plan challenges presented by Mr. Buescher include:

- Resolve to make mission support a top priority
- Limit spending from Mission Redevelopment Fund and elsewhere
- Help congregations see their responsibility
- Help congregations realize their potential in giving to the wider church and growing stronger financially.

Discussion followed regarding the Ten Year Plan, reasons for the low mission support, and ways to make better connections with our congregations. The question arose as to whether we introduce the concept of an “assessment” for congregations as the Episcopal Church does. Bishop Bouman sees in all these challenges an opportunity to discover our values and strengthen our relationships.

Concluding his report Mr. Buescher offered the following motion

**ACTION (SC06/11:1): RESOLVED that the synod council accept the Ten Year Plan report; that it commend the bishop for his vision and leadership in its preparation; that it authorize the Financial Management Committee to use it in preparation of the 2008 budget draft; and that the synod council do its part as council members and as members of local congregations toward the goals outlined.**

**ADOPTED**

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Constitutions

Pr. Krauser noted the work of Dobbs Ferry Lutheran Church in the complete

revision of their constitution.

#### B. Holy Trinity Hollis

Bishop Bouman reported communications supporting financial commitments to the ministry at Holy Trinity, Hollis from

- Dr. Everett Flannigan, Director, African American/Black Outreach and for Leadership in the ELCA (**Exhibit H**) and
- The Rev. Julius Carroll, Director for African American/Black Ministries Multicultural Ministries – ELCA (**Exhibit I**)

Pastor Mills reported the formation of two working groups to help the congregation in its emergence from synodical administration.

- Benchmark Committee, which would establish benchmarks for the process. The bishop recommended the Rev. James Krauser, Ms. Constance Duever, and Judge Dan Joy to serve on this committee.
- Management Contract Committee, which would help Holy Trinity develop a constitution, help with leadership growth in the congregation and school, and draft a management agreement between the synod and the leaders of the congregation until synodical administration was over. The bishop recommended Mr. William Anderson, Mr. Robert Buescher, Mr. John Litke, and the Rev. Percy Butiku to serve on this committee.

No approval from the synod council was necessary for these appointments.

#### C. Report on Executive Committee decision on 2007 Compensation Guidelines

At the September synod council meeting authority was granted to the Executive Committee to review the 2007 Compensation Guidelines presented by the Compensation Guidelines Committee. They passed the following resolution:

**ACTION (EC06:10/1) RESOLVED that although the government Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) figure this year is 4.5%, given the significant increase in ELCA benefit costs the Executive Committee recommends that the minimum cost of living adjustment in the recommended 2007 Compensation Guidelines be changed from 4.5% to 3.5%.**

**ADOPTED**

### VIII. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Trexler Grants

There were two applicants for a Trexler grant this year; one did not fit into the qualifications for the grant, so the full amount to be dispersed, \$1500, went to one candidate.

**ACTION (SC06:11/2 )      RESOLVED that synod council approve the following Trexler Grant:**

**Wilson, Kim Rev.  
Bethlehem, Baldwin**

**Kim Wilson is applying for support for her project for her D. Min thesis at the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health, NYU/Hebrew Union College. Her topic addresses the spirituality of adoption, particularly concerning special needs children. Total to dispersed: \$1,500.00**

**ADOPTED**

IX. DEANS REPORT

No Report

X. YOUTH REPORT

No Report

XI. AUXILLIARY ORGANIZATIONS

A. Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM)

Pastor Gary Mills reported for Judge Dan Joy. The ELCA Council will act on LMM's incorporation papers at its November meeting. This will clear the way for LMM to move a step forward in the process of becoming a self-sustaining corporate body in close relationship with the ELCA. Also, LLM has five Master Builder Bibles for men to deliver, without charge, to any congregation with men willing to lead a Bible study group as the start of a men's ministry in their congregation. Interested persons, please call Judge Joy.

XII. OTHER

Pastor Ed Barnett asked a question on the genesis of missions. The bishop described how it has happened and what is also now evolving. Some is national, some is through our mission planning team. On a follow-up about Suffolk County, two Hispanic missions are in progress at Amagansett and Deer Park. The goal is to have conferences play major role in initiating these plantings.

XIII. CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT

Prayer requests were made upon the deaths of Pastor William Gentz and Pastor James Guenther's mother and; and for Pastor Fred McElderry's father who has been diagnosed with cancer.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne P. Strunck  
Administrative Assistant to the Bishop