

Assembly Minutes

Minutes
Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Twenty-first Synod Assembly
April 18-19, 2008 – Rochester, Minnesota

Plenary Session One
Friday, April 18, 2008
10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

ORDER FOR THE OPENING OF AN ASSEMBLY AND WELCOME

The twenty-first Assembly of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order at 10:00 AM by Bishop Harold Usgaard in the Exhibit Hall, Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, Minnesota.

From the worship center at the center of the assembly, Bishop Usgaard invited all those present to rise to participate in the Order for Opening of an Assembly. He led in a litany and declared the assembly to be in session.

While the bishop moved to the podium, the assembly viewed information about hunger and the response of the church to hunger issues. Vice president Shirley Gangstad read from Luke 4 and the bishop's remarks set the stage for the assembly's hunger theme to consider the hungry of the world through worship, Bible study, prayer, workshops and even the meals served at the assembly.

Bishop Usgaard called on Rochester Mayor Ardell Brede to greet the assembly. Mayor Brede welcomed those present to Rochester and complimented the assembly for tackling a difficult issue. He also described the many ways the City of Rochester works to assist the hungry and homeless in the area.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Usgaard introduced the Committee on Credentials: Rev. David Krinke, Lands, Zumbrota-chair; Rev. David Krinke reported a total of 548 participants.

Lay voters	328
Clergy voters	176
AIM voters	3
Total voters	507
Voice without vote	10
Visitors	31
Total assembly	548

ADOPTION OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Bishop Usgaard asked voting members to refer to the agenda as printed on pages 8-9 in the pre-assembly report. He noted that copies of the pre-assembly report were available at the head table in the Exhibit Hall. He noted one change in the agenda as printed: the Report of the Presiding Bishop, ELCA in the first plenary was moved to the third plenary on Saturday.

The bishop invited a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded. Hearing no discussion of the motion, the chair called for a vote.

Moved;
Seconded: to adopt the amended agenda of the assembly.

Assembly Action
SA08.01.01 to approve the agenda of the 2008 Synod Assembly as amended.

The assembly voted using their voting cards. Bishop Usgaard declared the agenda adopted.

ADOPTION OF THE ASSEMBLY RULES AND PROCEDURES

Bishop Usgaard directed voting members' attention to the Assembly Rules and Procedures on pages 12-18 of the Pre-assembly report and highlighted a number of the rules, giving particular attention to the deadlines that help the assembly order its business-the deadline to submit late resolutions was 3:00 PM, Friday, April 18.

Voting members were asked when speaking from the floor to identify themselves by name and congregation. They should use a green card if speaking 'for' the business before the assembly or a red card if speaking 'against' the business before the assembly. He further noted that speeches would be limited to two minutes and if a person has addressed the assembly on the pending motion or resolution may not speak to that pending motion or resolution again unless all others wishing to speak have done so.

The bishop noted that two late resolutions had been received and informed the assembly that it would need to decide if they wanted to suspend the rules to hear those resolutions. He informed the assembly that it was most likely those resolutions would come before the assembly at the afternoon plenary.

Bishop Usgaard recognized Rev. Nancy Solomonson at the microphone. Rev. Solomonson made a motion to suspend the assembly rules to consider the Peace Resolutions. Bishop Usgaard asked if that could wait until the afternoon. Rev. Solomonson agreed and withdrew her motions.

The bishop invited a motion to adopt the rules of the assembly.

Moved;
Seconded: to adopt the rules of the assembly.

The assembly voted using their voting cards. Bishop Usgaard declared the rules adopted.

Assembly Action
SA08.01.02 to adopt the rules of the assembly as printed on page 8-9 of the 2008 Pre-assembly report.

INTRODUCTION OF SYNOD OFFICERS AND PARLIAMENTARIAN

Bishop Usgaard introduced the synod's officers: Vice president Shirley Gangstad, Our Savior, Spring Valley; Secretary BettyAnn Hernke, Urland, Cannon Falls; and Treasurer Mark Bradley, Zumbro, Rochester.

Parliamentarian Ronald Jensen, Bethel, Rochester was also introduced to the assembly.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Bishop Usgaard called upon the synod treasurer, Mark Bradley to present his report to the assembly.

Mr. Bradley informed the assembly that he wanted to talk to them about the year just past, briefly discuss the audit and the year ahead in 2009. He told them it was available in the pre-assembly report beginning on page 92 and the proposed 2009 budget on page 111. He further noted that the proposed 2009 budget would be scheduled for adoption during the final plenary on Saturday afternoon. Proposed changes to the 2009 Proposed Budget need to be submitted by 5:00 PM, Friday, April 18. Budget amendment forms were available at the head table.

He reported that 2007 was a good year and reviewed the revenue and expenses. He also highlighted the generous gifts of more than \$155,000 to flood relief in the synod and the generous gifts to World Hunger and missionary support. The total giving in the synod in 2007 was nearly \$3,000,000.

He reported that expenses were under budget due largely to the synod staff being short one person all year. He reported that the council set aside \$45,000 to support sabbaticals for 2009-2010-2011.

He reported that the audit report from Smith Schafer was unqualified. He noted that those items would be discussed in the hearing – Money and Ministry in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Hearings were scheduled to begin at 11:30 AM.

INTRODUCTIONS

Joy Gonnerman, Maureen Hagen, Kari Hoth and Dan & Sarah Forsgren are the seminary graduates assigned to this synod. The bishop welcomed them to the ministry in the synod. Also introduced were Rebecca Wulff, Good Shepherd, Rochester, the assembly signer and the bishop thanked Robert Tewes, Grace, Albert Lea who led opening worship and will serve as the assembly pianist.

BIBLE STUDY

Bishop Usgaard welcomed the Reverend Peter Rogness, Bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod, who led the assembly in Bible Study.

Ms. Lois Wintersteen from the Hunger Task Force and a member of Bethlehem, Mankato led the assembly in prayer prior to the start of the Bible study. Following prayer, the assembly joined in singing, "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying."

Bishop Rogness led in the study of Isaiah 58: 6-12.

The assembly expressed its appreciation to Bp. Rogness with applause.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Gangstad explained that five hearings would be held to give assembly participants an opportunity to discuss important topics of business in a smaller setting. Those hearings were:

1. **Money and Ministry in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod** presented by Mark Bradley and Larry Iverson.
2. **Bible Book of Faith** initiative presented by Rev. Mark Wilhelm, ELCA Vocation & Education Program Unit.
3. **God's Work, Our Hands – Lutherans changing the world in a million ways** was presented by Andrew Genszler, ELCA Washington Office.
4. **Children, Youth and Family Ministry** presented by the CYFM Task Force shared the time with **Christians and Peace**, moderated by a group of pastors who authored the Christians and Peace resolution.
5. **What does a pastor cost?** This discussion of the salary guidelines and pension/medical costs led by John Petersburg, Synod Council.

The assembly was directed to the five rooms reserved for the hearings in the civic center and was informed that lunch would be served in the auditorium at the conclusion of the hearings.

Rev. Craig Breimhorst was called upon to offer prayer and the assembly sang its response "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying."

The assembly was declared in recess until 1:30 p.m.

Plenary Session Two Friday, April 18, 2008 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The second plenary was called to order at 1:30 PM on Friday, April 18, 2008 by Bishop Harold Usgaard.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Bishop Usgaard called on Rev. David Krinke to bring the credentials report. Rev. David Krinke reported a total of 583 participants.

Lay voters	343
Clergy voters	189
AIM voters	3
Total voters	535
Voice without vote	12
Visitors	36
Total assembly	583

INTRODUCTION

Bishop Usgaard introduced Rev. David Beckmann, President of Bread for the World, to bring a greeting. He is the keynote speaker at the evening meal.

REPORT OF THE SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD BISHOP

Vice president Shirley Gangstad assumed the chair. Ms. Gangstad introduced Bishop Usgaard to present his report to the assembly.

In Memoriam

Bishop Usgaard asked the assembly to rise as he led prayer in memory of three pastors who died during the past year: Rev. Leonard Benson, September 18, 2007; Rev. Harry Peterson, September 19, 2007; and Rev. Charles Haertel, November 20, 2007.

Recognitions-Outgoing Synod Council Members

Bishop Usgaard called on outgoing synod council members to move to the stage. The outgoing council members were presented with a certificate of service and a gift. Those council members completing their terms of service on the synod council were: Rev. James Ahlquist; Rev. Cynthia Fisher-Broin; Rev. Richard Spande; Rev. Scott Olson; John Petersburg; Ann Beatty; Marcia Wolter Blackburn and Rev. Randy Johnson.

Recognitions-Synod Staff

Bishop Usgaard introduced the synod staff: Kathy Bolin, Larry Iverson, Katie Livingood, Miri Mattson, Deborah Norrie, Cheryl Sloan, Rev. Linda Gunderson and Carolyn Goulet.

Carolyn Goulet was welcomed to the stage where she was presented with a gift from the synod in recognition of her 10 years of service on the synod staff.

The staff was acknowledged by the assembly with applause.

In his formal report to the assembly, Bishop Harold Usgaard focused on two questions: What is God doing in Southeastern Minnesota? What does God want to do here? He thanked the assembly for their faithful worship, teaching and giving and outlined the process to develop a new strategic plan. On a personal note he announced his sabbatical July – September 2008.

The assembly received the bishop's report with warm applause.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING PASTORS

Four pastors who retired during the past year were recognized for their ministry: Revs. Gerald Gengenbach, Linda Helberg, Larry Tantow and Clark Cary. Each pastor was presented with a Certificate of Retirement and a retirement pin. Ms. Gangstad also offered short summaries of their ministries.

RECOGNITION OF 50TH AND 55TH ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Ms. Gangstad assisted Bishop Usgaard in presenting certificates to pastors celebrating 50 and 55 year anniversaries of their ordination. Those recognized for 50 years of ordination were Vincent Aaker, G. Neil Christopherson, Stephen Swanson, Ralph Strand and Oradell Nordness. Ms. Gangstad offered short summaries of their ministries.

Those recognized for 55 years of ordination were Revs. Robert Hansen, Robert Harter, Gerhard Nygaard, and Jack Bredfeldt.

The assembly offered their thanks to these pastors with applause and sang In Christ Called to Baptize.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Bishop Usgaard introduced Rev. Curtis Zieske, chair of the Synod Nominating Committee. Rev. Zieske announced that nominations were printed in the pre-assembly report on pages 61-90. He further announced that additional nominations for any of the listed vacancies could be made by completing the nomination form available at the front assembly desk by the stage. The deadline for submitting further nominations was 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 18, 2008. Any additional nominations will be announced at the Third Plenary at 10:15 a.m. on Saturday, April 19th.

Voting members were directed to remove ballots from the packets to insert the following names on the ballot.

- On the front page of the ballot in the left column, the second box read: "Mission Planning & Action Team". Please write in the name **Rev. David Rossow**.
- The following vacancy is unfilled:
The Augsburg College Corporation, either lay or clergy from Minnesota River Conference. This is a 2-year term.
- There are two **Churchwide Assembly Voting Member - Multicultural** categories listed at the end of the ballot. If no nominations are received from the assembly these positions will be appointed by the synod council.

REPORT OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Bishop Usgaard introduced Julia Accola from the Committee on Reference and Counsel. Ms. Accola presented resolution 2008-01.

Resolution 2008-01: Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible Initiative

WHEREAS, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11, NRSV); and

WHEREAS, John the Evangelist wrote, "But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31, NRSV); and

WHEREAS, the Reformers wrote, “We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged.” (Formula of Concord, Epitome); and

WHEREAS, biblical illiteracy threatens the life of the church and the propagation of the Gospel, and regular reading and study of the Scriptures are essential to mature discipleship of Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS, the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America invited synods, congregations, and individuals to engage in the five- year collaborative initiative, Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible (see <http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith>);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod become a Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible synod, with the goal of raising the synod’s congregational and individual engagement with the Bible, yielding greater biblical fluency, so that through believing, we may have and share life in the name of Christ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod – who “as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church” – in coordination with the synod advocate lead this initiative through collaborative programmatic work with congregations of the synod; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all voting members of this synod assembly covenant together to begin a regular practice of Bible study and prayer, gathering with others in their congregation and/or community to speak and hear the Word from one another; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we celebrate and continue to support and strengthen those places where Scripture is already taught and engaged, such as Women of the ELCA Bible studies, camping and campus ministries, congregational councils, Sunday schools and other congregational groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage all congregations to become a “Book of Faith” congregation, which will find expression by:

- exploring new opportunities for engaging the Bible,
- sending members to training events as Bible study leaders,
- including biblical study as an integral part of all meetings and groups, in order to become more fluent in the first language of faith – the language of Scripture – that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word.

Passed and submitted by the Blue Earth River Conference, author Rev. Jay Dahlvang

Bishop Usgaard recognized Rev. Jay Dahlvang, Salem, Albert Lea who was speaking in favor of the resolution. Rev. Dahlvang challenged the synod leaders, the voting members of the assembly, to commit themselves to a deeper understanding of the bible. He noted that one of the visions of this initiative is that the whole church become more fluent in the language of the scriptures.

Rev. Glenn Monson, Our Savior, Austin was recognized and asked a question about line 59-60 it refers to a synod advocate. He asked who this person is.

Bishop Usgaard called on Rev. Linda Gunderson, Assistant to the Bishop, who answered that Rev. Jay Dahlvang is the synod advocate, and it is a volunteer position.

There was no further speaking to the resolution and the bishop called for a vote. The resolution carried.

Assembly Action

SA08.01.03 to adopt Resolution 2008-01: Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible Initiative

Rev. Linda Gunderson was again recognized. She noted that Rev. Mark Wilhelm, Vocation & Education Unit, ELCA was present at the assembly. He is available for conversation with voting members. Bishop Usgaard reminded voting members to stop at the Augsburg Fortress store to receive a free copy of the book, Opening the Book of Faith.

Bishop Usgaard announced that two late resolutions had been received. He called on staff to distribute copies of those resolutions if voters did not have them.

Resolution 2008-02: Advocating for Peace was received after the deadline and was included in the pre-assembly materials. Because it was late, the assembly must decide whether or not to consider the resolution. It takes suspension of the rules to bring the resolution to the floor. Because many people have not had time to read the resolution, he asked that the resolution be read.

Ms. Accola read resolution 2008-02: Advocating for Peace.

Resolution 2008-02: Advocating for Peace

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34) and “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9); and

WHEREAS, Jesus said “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.” (Luke 6:27); and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church is to use its prophetic voice to work for justice and peace following the examples of Jesus and his servants Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., Oscar Romero, and many others known only to God;

WHEREAS, war, violence, and hatred continue in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kenya, Darfur, between Israel and Palestine, and other nations in the world;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2008 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly pray for peace and encourage congregations to do the same; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the synod and congregations pray for and support those serving in the military and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that individuals contact their United States Representatives and Senators to encourage them to work for legislation that encourages justice and peace in our nation and world; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Executive Committee consider a peace and justice theme for the 2009 Synod Assembly. This theme would include workshops and strategies on how to discuss such issues in a polarized church and nation.

Submitted by Pastor Nancy Solomonson, Pastor David Rossow, and the undersigned voting members of the 2008 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly: Rev. Glenn J. Monson, Rev. Jason Bryan-Wagner, Rev. Gary Dreier, Rev. Ann Siverling, Rev. Lissa Kahl, Rev. Clark Cary, Rev. Norman W. Wahl, Rev. David A. Berg, Todd Portinga, Rev. Justin Boeding, Rev. Paul Hauschild, Rev. Susan Wallager, Rev. Fred Rengsdorf, Rev. Peter Reuss, Rev. Pam Aandahl-Solberg, Rev. Kristi Koppel, Rev. Carol A. Solovitz, Rev. Lester Horntvedt, Rev. Kathie Nycklemoe, Rev. Gary Benson, Rev. John B. Heille, Rev. Karen Behling, Rev. Dan Kahl, Rev. SiriAnna Strommen Campbell, Rev. Peter Nycklemoe, Rev. Bradley R. Lindberg, Rev. Marie A. K. Anderson, Rev. John Friedli, Rev. Tom Kolden, Merlin Christenson

Rev Mark Boorsma, chair of the Committee on Reference & Counsel was recognized. Rev. Boorsma reported that the committee recommends that the assembly suspend the rules and consider the resolution.

Bishop Usgaard explained that the assembly rules allow suspension of the rules to consider business not on the assembly’s agenda. It would take a motion from the floor to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering Resolution 2008-02. If the assembly voted to suspend the rules, the resolution could be considered. If the rules were not suspended, the resolution would not be considered.

Moved;

Seconded: to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering Resolution 2008-02: Advocating for Peace.

Rev. David Rossow was recognized speaking in favor of suspending the rules. He has been frustrated by the church, talking about sexuality and morality which are appropriate. But there are other issues that the people of God must address. The church has become apathetic and unconcerned about the rest of the world. We are here talking about the hungry and there is a tie in to talk about peace. It is time for the people of God to lovingly discuss the issue.

Assembly Action

SA08.01.04 to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering Resolution 2008-02: Advocating for Peace.

Rev. Richard Jorgensen, First English, Faribault was recognized speaking in favor of the resolution. He added his voice to Pastor Rossow's comments about being complacent. He noted that Bishop Hanson reminds pastors that in their ordination they are called to strive for justice and peace in all the world. That is also a part of the Affirmation of Baptism rite. Very few pastors get into trouble by not working hard enough for justice and peace. He commented that the resolution is very gentle, not talking about Iraq, but we should start talking about it. No one was at the microphone speaking in opposition to the resolution. Bishop Usgaard recognized Lois Wintersteen, Bethlehem, Mankato who had a comment. She appreciated that it include justice along with peace.

Jack Schlichting, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls was recognized to ask a question. He asked for clarification of the specific outcome desired? Bishop Usgaard called on one of the authors to respond.

Rev. Rossow said the resolution was written to be general. The idea is to have Lutherans with different perspectives to come together for conversation. We are divided but are all God's children. We need to come together in conversation about what peace and justice mean to the world. There was no further speaking to the resolution and the bishop called on the assembly to vote.

Assembly Action

SA08.01.05 to adopt Resolution 2008-02: Advocating for Peace.

Bishop Usgaard asked Ms. Accola to read resolution 2008-03: Health Insurance Cost so all voters would understand what they will be voting on.

Resolution 2008-03: Health Insurance Cost

WHEREAS, health insurance costs have continued to escalate faster than most other costs to congregations; and

WHEREAS, ELCA congregations are tied to the ELCA Board of Pensions' product offering, with few exceptions; and

WHEREAS, cost of that insurance coverage is often \$5,000 to \$9,000 greater than similar coverage often available to congregations via the few exceptions allowed; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Pensions' current system of health insurance is really a prepaid medical expense system, without any incentive for the insured to do a cost/benefit analysis; and

WHEREAS, individuals have access to health insurance products that provide the insured with additional methods to save for their future; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Pensions uses insurance premiums as a means to assist congregations that might need assistance by classifying congregations and having larger congregations pay a higher premium to reduce the cost of health insurance for smaller congregations; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council and synods have an obligation to assist congregations that have a financial need;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the ELCA Church Council request that the Board of Pensions revise their product mix, decoupling the pension participation from the health insurance coverage and add a health savings account product, becoming more competitive with other health insurance packages offered; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Church Council develop a means to assist congregations that have financial needs, and fund that program by some method other than a health insurance premium cost structure based solely upon the size of congregations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod communicate with all other ELCA synods to get their input and ask for their support on this issue; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly direct the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.

Passed and submitted by St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church, Cannon Falls

The assembly was informed that this resolution was submitted after the February 15, 2008 deadline.

Rev. Mark Boorsma, Committee on Reference & Counsel was recognized. Rev. Boorsma reported that the committee was looking for a way to properly direct the conversation on this issue. The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommended because of the complexity of the issues that the assembly not consider the resolution and refer it back to the authors, the Executive committee and ELCA Board of Pensions for further discussion.

Bishop Usgaard explained that the assembly rules allow suspension of the rules to consider business not on the assembly's agenda. It would take a motion from the floor to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering Resolution 2008-03. If the assembly voted to suspend the rules, the resolution could be considered. If the rules were not suspended the resolution would not be considered.

Moved;

Seconded: to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering Resolution 2008-03: Health Insurance Cost.

Jack Schlichting, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls, author of the resolution was recognized. He said the reason he wanted to bring it to the floor was to speak to the issue. His intention was that the issue would be referred to the Executive Committee. But without a vote, that doesn't have to happen. From a parliamentary procedure standpoint, it should be brought to the floor and then referred.

Rev. Michael Mandsager, First English, Faribault speaking against the resolution was recognized. He commented that trying to make decisions on the pension/medical plan at this level is not helpful. Speaking in favor of suspending the rules was Rev. Robert Kleinke, Trinity, Hayfield. He agrees that the Board of Pensions does a good job. But this is about congregations that can't afford to pay premiums. It needs to be discussed and then referred.

Rev. Paul Forde, Fountain and Root Prairie, Fountain, was recognized speaking against suspension of the rules. He questioned the accuracy of some of the facts stated in the resolution. The bishop noted that the question was not pertinent to the discussion of suspending the rules.

Heidi Magnuson, Lands, Zumbrota stated that while she doesn't object to the conversation on the topic, she does object to the resolution because it was late. This issue is handled by the church council and many voters are not on the church council and are not involved in these conversations at the local church. She doesn't have time to talk with council members to get their perspective on the question. If it had been on time, she would have had time to research and been prepared for discussion and voting.

The question was called.

The bishop reminded the assembly that the vote was now to end debate on suspension of the rules. The vote was called and the bishop declared the debate ended.

Rev. Dan Doerring was recognized with a question. He asked if the vote to suspend the rules did not pass, would the resolution be referred to the Executive Committee or is it a dead issue.

The bishop said he would respect the recommendation of the Committee on Reference & Counsel to work with the authors.

Bishop Usgaard called for a vote to suspend the rules by a show of voting cards. The motion to suspend the rules failed.

The bishop further stated that the resolution would be referred back to the author to work with the Executive committee and Board of Pensions. He

also noted that the ELCA Church Council would be receiving a report from the Board of Pensions in November regarding a similar resolution that came out of a synod in Texas. That report will be a part of this conversation.

The bishop asked the lay voting members to ask their pastors if they had done their Health Risk Assessment. When the synod reaches 75% of plan members taking the assessment, all the congregations paying premiums will save 2%. He hopes to exceed the 75% by the end of the assembly. He noted that plan members also receive money for doing the assessment.

Rev. Kristen Schlauderaff was recognized. She noted that she got her husband to have a physical for the first time in 12 years and encouraged plan members to do what it takes to get the assessments done.

Bishop Usgaard recognized Rev. Norman Wahl, Bethel, Rochester. Rev. Wahl said he was confused by the ruling of the chair on the last resolution. He noted that while the committee on Reference & Counsel can recommend that the author work with the Executive Committee and Board of Pensions, when the assembly declines to consider the resolution it dies. The assembly didn't direct anything.

Bishop Usgaard agreed but he said that it will be reported on even though no business of the assembly requires that report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Gangstad reminded the assembly of the 3:00 PM deadline for resolutions; the 5:00 PM deadline for budget changes and the 5:00 PM deadline for additional nominations.

WORKSHOPS

Rev. Clark Cary was welcomed to the stage by Ms. Gangstad. Rev. Cary thanked members of the Hunger Task Force for their commitment to the issues related to hunger and poverty. Rev. Cary called the assembly participants attention to the workshops to be offered:

1. Channel One Food Bank
2. Youth Mission Trips
3. Hunger 101©
4. Food, Agriculture, Health and Hunger: Making the Sustainable Connection
5. Lutheran World Relief: Walking the Jericho Road
6. Bread for the World
7. ELCA Washington Office: Lutherans Speaking for Neighbors
8. ELCA World Hunger
9. Church World Service.

Bishop Usgaard explained the evening meal—Cena—a Colombian themed dinner would be served in the auditorium immediately following the workshops. Rev. David Beckmann, President of Bread for the World will deliver his keynote address following dinner.

He then led the assembly in singing "Gather Us In."

Before dismissing the assembly, Dottie Hammer, Hunger Task Force member and a member of St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls offered prayer.

RECESS

Vice president Shirley Gangstad declared the assembly in recess until Saturday, April 19, 2008 at 8:30 AM.

Saturday, April 19, 2008

MORNING PRAYER

Morning Prayer was led by student members of the Saint Olaf College Student Congregation, Northfield, Minnesota, Peter Schattauer, John Schwehn, Nate Preisinger, Erin Armstrong and Michael Schaner.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Following Morning Prayer, Bishop Usgaard introduced Bishop Peter Rogness, Mark Peterson, President of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota and Rev. Mark Peters from Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota as the panel for discussion of poverty in Minnesota. Each panelist was asked to make a brief statement and then entertained questions from assembly participants.

At the conclusion of the panel discussion, Rev. Edward Nieman, United in Faith Parish, Bricelyn led the assembly in prayer.

SERVANT OF CHRIST AWARD

Mark Peterson was welcomed to the stage to present the LSS Servant of Christ Award to Christ the King Lutheran Church, Mankato. Members of Christ the King were present to receive the award.

Plenary Session Three Saturday, April 19, 2008 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 Noon

Bishop Usgaard called the assembly to order at 10:30 AM.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Usgaard called on Rev. David Krinke to bring the credentials report. Rev. David Krinke reported a total of 602 participants.

Lay voters	352
Clergy voters	193
AIM voters	3
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GREETINGS FROM BISHOP BUITRAGO

Bishop Usgaard read a greeting from Bishop Sigifredo Buitrago of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Rev. Curtis Zieske returned to the stage to deliver the final report of the Nominating Committee.

He announced the nominations by the deadline on Friday. Rev. H. Graciela Jortack was nominated as a Multicultural Voting Member to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Ms. Penny Danner was nominated to the Augsburg College Corporation Board from the Minnesota River Conference. All voting members were asked to write-in these names on their ballots.

Bishop Usgaard announced that voters had until noon to complete their ballots and put them in the ballot boxes.

Bishop Usgaard recognized Rev. Nancy Dreier, Zion, Lake Crystal at the microphone.

Moved;
Seconded: by Rev. Nancy Dreier to cast a unanimous ballot.

Bishop Usgaard asked the assembly three times if there was any objection to casting a unanimous ballot. Hearing no objection, Bishop Usgaard declared the slate of nominees elected to the positions as listed on the ballot.

RECOGNITION OF CLERGY CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION

Bishop Usgaard and Shirley Gangstad welcomed the Reverends James Mikkelson, Austin; Edward Nieman, Bricelyn; C. Neale Thompson, Northfield; and Paul Walker, Rochester to the stage. Each pastor received a certificate and the applause of the assembly in recognition of their years of service to the church. Revs. Philip Peters and Harold (Hal) Deye were unable to attend.

The assembly sang the hymn For the Fruits of All Creation in recognition of these servants.

REPORT OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Bishop Usgaard announced that no additional resolutions were received for consideration by the assembly.

INTRODUCTIONS

Bishop Usgaard introduced Lynette Engelhardt Stott, Director for State Public Policy Advocacy, ELCA who was present at the assembly.

He also introduced Rev. Robert Hoyt, Interim Mission Director for the Southeastern Minnesota Synod in attendance.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Andrew Genszler, Director for the ELCA Washington Office was

welcomed to present the report of Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson.

Mr. Genszler introduced the video of Bishop Hanson and the assembly watched the video and responded with applause. Mr. Genszler's remarks about the synod-churchwide-congregation relationship that is the ELCA was interrupted briefly by a power outage. He continued his remarks in the dim emergency lighting and displayed good humor in the situation.

SCHOLARSHIP AND DEBT RETIREMENT AWARDS

Rev. Sarah Nietz, Minneola, Goodhue chair of the Synod Endowment Committee was introduced. She announced the recipients of the Fund for Leaders in Mission scholarships: Barbara Streed, St. John, Owatonna, affiliated with Luther Seminary; and, Brandon Simonson, United Red Wing, affiliated with Gettysburg Seminary. Each received a \$5000 scholarship.

Four \$1250 awards were given to pastors for retirement of their seminary indebtedness. Revs. David Krinke, Lands, Zumbrota; Ronald Myers, Bethlehem & Deer Creek Valley, Glenville; Karen Pahl, First, Red Wing; and Patrick Patterson, Christ the King, Mankato. Funds for these awards come from interest on the Leadership Endowment and the Walter and Blanche Wahl Scholarship.

Jeanette Bidne, Trinity, Kiester at Luther Seminary received a scholarship of \$1500 from the Wacholtz Seminary Student Rural Scholarship.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER

The bishop announced a DVD would be mailed to each congregation containing the opening worship sermon, the Bible Study, Rev. David Beckman's keynote address, and the panel discussion on poverty. Bishop Usgaard announced that a Tanzanian meal would be served in the Auditorium. He called on Kathy Tanabe, Mount Olive, Rochester to offer prayer before lunch.

RECESS

The bishop declared the assembly in recess until 1:15 p.m.

Saturday, April 19, 2008

1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Bishop Usgaard called the assembly to order at 1:15 PM and called on Bishop Peter Rogness to present the second part of the Bible study. Prior to the start of the Bible study Dottie Hammer, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls offered prayer.

Plenary Session Four

Saturday, April 19, 2008

2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Following Bible study, Bishop Usgaard called the assembly to order at 2:15 p.m..

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Bishop Usgaard called on Rev. David Krinke to bring the credentials report.

Rev. David Krinke reported a total of 602 participants.

Lay voters	352
Clergy voters	193
AIM voters	3
Total voters	548
Voice without vote	13
Visitors	41
Total assembly	602

ADOPTION OF THE 2009 BUDGET

Treasurer Mark Bradley was welcomed to the stage.

Moved;

Seconded: to adopt the 2009 Proposed Budget.

Bishop Usgaard recognized Rev. Glenn Monson, Our Saviors, Austin to make a motion to amend the 2009 Proposed Budget.

Moved;

Seconded: to amend the 2009 Proposed Budget as follows:
Decrease Luther Seminary support by \$10,000;
Decrease support to Church Colleges in Regions 3 & 5 by \$5000; and
Increase Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota by \$15,000.

The bishop noted that the amendment is in order because it has no effect on the bottom line.

Rev. Monson was recognized to speak to his amendment. He pointed out that Luther Seminary has a development office and the support amount to church colleges is insignificant. Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota is dependent on the synods for support and has few outside resources for funding.

Ms. Julia Accola, Good Shepherd, Rochester was recognized speaking in favor of the amendment. Her children were involved in campus ministry which were important in the roles they play in their congregations as adults. College years are when young people struggle with faith issues and it is important to maintain the connection to the faith community.

Intern Brian Krause was recognized speaking against the amendment. He noted that the cost of seminary forces many future pastors to incur thousands of dollars of debt. Cutting support to the seminary sends a signal to those students that the church doesn't support them.

There was no further speaking to the amendment and the bishop called for a vote on the amendment. The show of voting cards was too close and the bishop called for a division of the house.

Assembly Action **yes, 210 – no, 114**
SA08.02.01 **to adopt the amendment to the 2009 proposed Budget to decrease Luther Seminary \$10,000; delete support to church Colleges in Regions 3 & 5; and increase Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota by \$15,000.**

There was no further discussion on the proposed budget and the bishop called for a vote on the motion to approve the budget as amended.

Assembly Action

SA08.02.02 **to adopt the 2009 Proposed Budget of \$2,298,000 as amended.**

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION

Bishop Usgaard and Shirley Gangstad welcomed the Reverends Dennis Frank and Kristen Schlauderaff to the stage. Each pastor received a certificate and the applause of the assembly in recognition of their years of service to the church. Revs. Russell Graef, Marcia Hall and Janet White were unable to attend.

The assembly sang the hymn "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness" in recognition of these servants.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE TO THE FLOODS IN SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA – AN UPDATE

Cynthia Johnson, Disaster Response Coordinator for Lutheran Disaster Response greeted the assembly and brought an update of the response to the 2007 flooding in Southeastern Minnesota. On behalf of the congregations and many residents of the flooded communities, she thanked the synod for their generous response in both money donations and volunteer hours worked.

Bishop Usgaard called on Derek Berg, First Lutheran Church of Highland, Whalan who lives in Rushford. He remembers the huge influx of volunteers from Baptist, Mennonite, Catholic, and Jewish congregations. He wondered where the Lutherans were – and then they came and they haven't left. Their specialty is organizing and managing the situation and they have done it well. The outpouring of love, fellowship, and caring has been a blessing. The volunteers are the hand of God to the world. He expressed a sincere thank you to all who gave money and donated hours. He encouraged people to visit the LDR web site for ideas of how they can continue to help.

RIVER OF GIVING WORLD HUNGER AWARDS

Rev. Clark Cary from the Synod Hunger Task Force announced the River of Giving Awards to congregations practicing continued support of ELCA World Hunger. Hunger Task Force members assisted Rev. Cary in distributing awards to:

Blue Earth River Conference: Ascension, Albert Lea; Shiloh, Elmore and Round Prairie, Glenville;

Cannon River Conference: Faith, Wabasha and St. Luke's, Goodhue;

Minnesota River Conference: St. John, Mapleton and Trinity, New Richland

Root River Conference: Cross of Christ, Houston and Fountain, Fountain; and,

Zumbro River Conference: Hosanna, Rochester and Trinity, Ostrander.

Members of the congregations came forward to accept these awards. They were warmly received with applause by the assembly.

Ms. Gangstad offered a special thank you to Rev. Clark Cary, the Synod Hunger Task Force and Larry Iverson, Assistant to the Bishop for the work they did in bringing the hunger theme to life in the assembly.

THANK YOUS

Ms. Gangstad reminded assembly participants to place name tag holders, voting cards and evaluations in the boxes provided for collection of those items. She noted that many people worked hard to make the assembly run smoothly including:

Tech Crew: Katie Livingood, Rev. Cary Larson, Rev. Vicki Hultine, Vern Hanson of PSAV

Camera Operators: Rev. Jim Ahlquist, Rev. David Berg, Rev. Dan Doering, Rev. John Lohre, Rev. Patrick Patterson, Rev. Reyna Purcell, Dennis Sommers, Bruce Tappe, Tricia Tappe

Special thanks were given to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for their financial support of the workshops; and to Dahl Copiers, Stewartville for providing the copy machine.

Assembly reporters: Rev. Scott Olson, Mary Thron, Barb Anderson and Joanne Hamilton. Ms. Gangstad announced that reports from the assembly would be available on the synod's web site by Saturday at 7:00 p.m.

Photographers: Rev. Peter Soli and Leslie Neist.

Pianist: Bob Tewes

The Synod Assembly Planning Committee: Barb Anderson, Rev. Clark Cary, Wayne Cederberg, Sonja Cook, Carol Gatti, Dorothy Gesme, Joanne Hamilton, Doris Henderson, Melvin Hobbiebrunken, Rev. Joanna Mitchell, Richard Navratil, John Petersburg, Kathy Tanabe and Rev. Paul Thompson and assembly manager, Rev. Paul Baker.

Office staff and registrars: Rev. Jack & Ruth Friedli, Rod & Nina Lee, Bud & Janet Mattson, Rev. Roy & Dorothy Satre, Darlene Vowels, Lyle & Donna Solum, Zanti & Ruth Squillace, Jean Mortenson and Bob & Jean Streyle.

Hospitality: Karen Ortloff and Ann Beatty

Prayer leaders: Lois Wintersteen, Rev. Craig Breimhorst, Dottie Hammer, Rev. Ed Nieman and Kathy Tanabe.

Ms. Gangstad led the assembly in warm applause in thanks to these volunteers.

THE END OF THE ASSEMBLY

From the worship center on the assembly floor, Bishop Usgaard led the assembly in the litany *End of the Assembly* and declared the 2008 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly closed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The bishop then led the assembly in the closing hymn, "To Be Your Presence."

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary

Deborah Norrie, Recorder

Minutes Committee

Larry Iverson

Helen Nelson

2008 Resolutions

Resolution 2008-01: Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible Initiative Taskforce

Passed

1 WHEREAS, the Prophet Isaiah wrote,
2 “So shall my word be that goes
3 out from my mouth; it shall not
4 return to me empty, but it shall
5 accomplish that which I purpose,
6 and succeed in the thing for which
7 I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11, NRSV);
8 and

9 WHEREAS, John the Evangelist
10 wrote, “But these are written so
11 that you may come to believe that
12 Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of
13 God, and that through believing
14 you may have life in his name.”
15 (John 20:31, NRSV); and

16 WHEREAS, the Reformers wrote,
17 “We believe, teach, and confess
18 that the prophetic and apostolic
19 writings of the Old and New
20 Testaments are the only rule and
21 norm according to which all
22 doctrines and teachers alike must
23 be appraised and judged.”
24 (Formula of Concord, Epitome);
25 and

26 WHEREAS, biblical illiteracy
27 threatens the life of the church and
28 the propagation of the Gospel, and
29 regular reading and study of the
30 Scriptures are essential to mature
31 discipleship of Jesus Christ; and

32 WHEREAS, the 2007 Churchwide
33 Assembly of the Evangelical
34 Lutheran Church in America
35 invited synods, congregations, and
36 individuals to engage in the five-
37 year collaborative initiative, Book
38 of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible
39 (see
40 <http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith>);

41 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,
42 that the Southeastern Minnesota
43 Synod become a Book of Faith:
44 Lutherans Read the Bible synod,
45 with the goal of raising the synod’s
46 congregational and individual
47 engagement with the Bible,
48 yielding greater biblical fluency, so
49 that through believing, we may
50 have and share life in the name of
51 Christ; and

52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that
53 the bishop of the Southeastern
54 Minnesota Synod – who “as its
55 pastor, shall be a teacher of the
56 faith of this church and shall
57 provide leadership for the life and
58 witness of this church” – in
59 coordination with the synod
60 advocate lead this initiative
61 through collaborative
62 programmatic work with
63 congregations of the synod; and

64 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,
65 that all voting members of this
66 synod assembly covenant together
67 to begin a regular practice of Bible
68 study and prayer, gathering with
69 others in their congregation and/or
70 community to speak and hear the
71 Word from one another; and

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that
73 we celebrate and continue to
74 support and strengthen those
75 places where Scripture is already
76 taught and engaged, such as
77 Women of the ELCA Bible
78 studies, camping and campus
79 ministries, congregational
80 councils, Sunday schools and
81 other congregational groups; and

82 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that
83 we encourage all congregations to
84 become a “Book of Faith”
85 congregation, which will find
86 expression by:
87 • exploring new
88 opportunities for engaging
89 the Bible,
90 • sending members to
91 training events as Bible
92 study leaders,
93 • including biblical study as
94 an integral part of all
95 meetings and groups, in
96 order to become more
97 fluent in the first language
98 of faith – the language of
99 Scripture – that we might
100 live into our calling as a
101 people renewed, enlivened,
102 empowered, and sent by
103 the Word.

*Passed and submitted by the Blue Earth River
Conference, author Rev. Jay Dahlvang*

*Committee on Reference and Counsel
recommends adding the final four resolved
clauses to clarify specific strategies for
implementing the Book of Faith initiative in the
Southeastern Minnesota Synod.*

Resolution 2008-02: Advocating for Peace

Passed

1 WHEREAS, Jesus said, “I give you a
2 new commandment, that you love
3 one another. Just as I have loved
4 you, you also should love one
5 another” (John 13:34) and
6 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for
7 they will be called children of
8 God” (Matthew 5:9); and

9 WHEREAS, Jesus said “Love your
10 enemies, do good to those who
11 hate you.” (Luke 6:27); and

12 WHEREAS, the Christian Church is to
13 use its prophetic voice to work for
14 justice and peace following the
15 examples of Jesus and his servants
16 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther
17 King, Jr., Oscar Romero, and
18 many others known only to God;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, war, violence, and hatred
21 continue in Iraq, Afghanistan,
22 Kenya, Darfur, between Israel and
23 Palestine, and other nations in the
24 world;

25 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,
26 that the 2008 Southeastern
27 Minnesota Synod Assembly pray
28 for peace and encourage
29 congregations to do the same; and

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that
31 the synod and congregations pray
32 for and support those serving in
33 the military and their families; and

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that
35 individuals contact their United
36 States Representatives and
37 Senators to encourage them to
38 work for legislation that
39 encourages justice and peace in
40 our nation and world; and

41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that
42 the Southeastern Minnesota Synod
43 Executive Committee consider a
44 peace and justice theme for the
45 2009 Synod Assembly. This
46 theme would include workshops
47 and strategies on how to discuss
48 such issues in a polarized church
49 and nation.

*Submitted by Pastor Nancy Solomonson, Pastor David
Rossow, and the undersigned voting members of the
2008 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly:*

*Glenn J. Monson, Rev. Jason Bryan-Wagner, Rev. Gary
Dreier, Rev. Ann Siverling, Rev. Lissa Kahl, Rev. Clark
Cary, Rev. Norman W. Wahl, Rev. David A. Berg, Todd
Portinga, Rev. Justin Boeding, Rev. Paul Hauschild,
Rev. Susan Wallager, Rev. Fred Rengsdorf, Rev. Peter
Rueuss, Rev. Pam Aandahl-Solberg, Rev. Kristi Koppel,
Rev. Carol A. Solovitz, Rev. Lester Horntvedt, Rev. Kathi
Nycklemoe, Rev. Gary Benson, Rev. John B. Heille, Rev.
Karen Behling, Rev. Dan Kahl, Rev. SiriAnna Strommen
Campbell, Rev. Peter Nycklemoe, Rev. Bradley R.
Lindberg, Rev. Marie A. K. Anderson, Rev. John Friedli,
Rev. Tom Kolden, Merlin Christenson*