

Minutes
Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Twenty-second Synod Assembly
May 1-2, 2009 – Rochester, Minnesota



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly opened worship in the Exhibit Hall, Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, Minnesota. Worship began at 8:30 AM, led by Rev. Norman Wahl, Rev. Anjanette Rist, Kari Solak and musicians from Bethel Lutheran Church, Rochester, Minnesota. Bishop Harold Usgaard preached and presided at Holy Communion.

Plenary Session One
Friday, May 1, 2009
10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

*ORDER FOR THE OPENING OF AN ASSEMBLY AND
WELCOME*

Bishop Harold Usgaard led the assembly in the Opening of the Assembly. He welcomed assembly participants and made brief announcements about public health concerns and safety precautions being taken in light of the H1N1 flu outbreak.

Rochester Mayor Ardell Brede was introduced to bring a greeting to the assembly. He presented a gift to the assembly of a numbered copy of an original drawing of the Rochester Peace Plaza.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Bishop Usgaard introduced the Committee on Credentials. The chair, Rev. Ronald Myers, Bethlehem & Deer Creek Valley, Glenville; Rev. Carol Sinykin, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls; Ward Ask, Grace, Waseca; Marty Branum, Chatfield, Chatfield; and Jeff Setterlund, Bethel, Rochester.

Rev. Ronald Myers delivered the report of the Committee on Credentials:

Lay voters	327
Clergy voters	148
AIM voters	4
Total voters	479
Voice	5
Visitors	30
Total assembly	514

ADOPTION OF THE ASSEMBLY RULES

Bishop Usgaard introduced the rules of the assembly as printed in the pre-assembly report. He highlighted the change to the rules in limiting the number of speakers to three in favor and three opposed.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the rules as printed.

Voted

SA09.05.01 to adopt the rules of the assembly as printed in the pre-assembly report.

ADOPTION OF THE ASSEMBLY AGENDA

The proposed agenda was presented by the bishop.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the rules as printed.

Voted

SA09.05.02 to adopt the agenda as printed in the pre-assembly report.

ADOPTION OF BYLAW CHANGES

Bishop Usgaard called on BettyAnn Hernke, Synod Secretary to present bylaw changes recommended by the synod council.

Ms. Hernke made a motion to adopt bylaw S7.21.04 to allow voting members from

Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities. The motion was seconded.
There was no speaking to the motion.

Voted

SA09.05.03 to adopt bylaw S7.21.04
A Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community, authorized by the synod council, may elect two lay members of the worshipping community who shall serve as voting members.

Ms. Hernke offered a motion to adopt bylaw S7.21.05 to give voting privileges to the Synodically Authorized Lay Minister serving the worshipping community.

Voted

SA09.05.04 to adopt bylaw S7.21.05
A Synodically Authorized Lay Minister serving a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community shall be a voting member.

Ms. Hernke called the assembly's attention to page 29 in the pre-assembly report. She noted that several required provisions in the synod's constitution were revised by action of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

She further informed the assembly that the Synod Council revised continuing resolution S11.06C08 at the council meeting November 21, 2008. This continuing resolution relates to the rules for submitting resolutions to the synod assembly.

Ms. Hernke made a motion to adopt a change to bylaw S12.01.05 as recommended by the synod council and printed in the pre-assembly report. The motion was seconded.

Voted

SA09.05.05 to adopt the revised bylaw
S11.15.05 Each conference shall elect a dean, a secretary, and other officers as necessary who shall serve no more than two full two-year terms consecutively. If the dean is a rostered person, then

~~the secretary shall be a layperson. If the secretary is rostered, then the dean shall be a layperson. The terms of the dean and the secretary shall coincide.~~
Either lay or clergy may be elected to these positions.

Ms. Hernke made a motion to adopt a change to bylaw S11.14.05 as recommended by the synod council and printed in the pre-assembly report. The motion was seconded.

Voted

SA09.05.06 to adopt the revised bylaw
S11.14.05 Distribution of Income

a. Restricted income shall be distributed according to the wishes of the donor.
b. Unrestricted assets from the fund shall be distributed annually and at such other times as deemed necessary or feasible to accomplish the following purposes of enhancing the mission:

1. ~~Minimum of 20 percent~~ For outreach into the community and synod, including, but not limited to, new ministry starts and congregational revitalization.
2. ~~Minimum of 20 percent~~ For missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in this continent and worldwide, including, but not limited to, companion synods of Colombia and Tanzania.
3. ~~c. Minimum of 20 percent~~ For professional leadership to include rostered personnel continuing education, sabbaticals, professional church workers' continuing education, lay school of theology and seminary debt retirement.
4. ~~d. Up to 40 percent for any one or all of the above designated areas in any proportion as determined by the committee,~~

For causes and programs which at the discretion of the committee are consistent with the fund purpose of enhancing the mission outreach of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Programs for support shall be recommended by the committee and approved by the synod council according to committee guidelines.

- c. Disbursement of income from the fund need not occur annually in the event causes and programs have not been approved by the committee sufficient to utilize total income available, or if in the judgment of the committee total annual disbursement of income is not recommended.

INTRODUCTIONS

Bishop Usgaard introduced the synod's officers: Vice president Shirley Gangstad; Secretary BettyAnn Hernke and Treasurer, Mark Bradley. He also introduced Ronald Jensen, Bethel, Rochester who served as assembly parliamentarian.

BIBLE STUDY

The Reverend Stephen Bouman, Executive Director of Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was introduced by Bishop Usgaard. Rev. Bouman was warmly welcomed by the assembly to present the first Bible study on Matthew 9: 18-26.

SERVANT OF CHRIST AWARD

Richard Andersen, Director of Congregational Relations, Lutheran Social Service Minnesota was introduced to the assembly. Mr. Andersen presented the Servant of Christ Award to Rushford Lutheran Church, Rushford to honor them for the work they did during the flood crisis in Rushford.

RIVER OF GIVING AWARDS

The following congregations were recognized by the synod's World Hunger Task Force for their exceptional giving to ELCA World Hunger: Grace, Albert Lea; Redeemer, Alden; Bethel, Northfield; United, Red Wing; Urland, Cannon Falls; Zion, Lake Crystal; Grace, Mankato; Christ, Preston; Bethlehem, Lanesboro; Our Savior, Austin and Our Saviors, Rochester.

REPORT OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Bishop Usgaard recognized the Committee on Reference and Counsel: Julia Accola, Good Shepherd, Rochester; Rev. Mark Boorsma, Ascension, Albert Lea, chair; Mary Deters, Trinity, Spring Grove; John Petersburg, Trinity, Owatonna; and Rev. Kathy Fullarton, Good Shepherd, Wells.

John Petersburg, Committee on Reference & Counsel presented **Resolution 2009-01: Thanksgiving and Encouragement for Hunger Response.**

WHEREAS, the scripture says, "Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.'" (Deuteronomy 15:10-11); and

WHEREAS, the congregations of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod during 2008 under the theme, "A Synod at Table with the Hungry", contributed \$625,346 to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, local food shelves, and numerous other hunger-related charitable organizations as together we sought to reach the \$1,000,000 challenge; and

WHEREAS, hunger and poverty related issues continue to be pressing needs during these challenging economic times;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that individuals and congregations be thanked and commended for their generous offering of gifts toward hunger-related programs during this

year of our special emphasis, "A Synod at Table with the Hungry"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that individuals and congregations be encouraged to continue their efforts through on-going contributions during this year to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and the appeals of other hunger related organizations seeking to reach beyond our 2008 goal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that increased efforts be made to educate and to develop advocacy participation through the work of Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota and in support of "A Minnesota Without Poverty" movement. Submitted by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Hunger Task Force, Rev. Clark Cary, Chair Resolution

The motion was seconded. Rev. Clark Cary was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. He noted the response of the synod to ELCA World Hunger and noted that hunger and poverty related issues are still before us.

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

Voted

SA09.05.07 to adopt Resolution 2009-01: Thanksgiving and Encouragement for Hunger Response

Mr. Petersburg presented **Resolution 2009-02: Taking Root – Hunger Causes/Hunger Hopes.**

WHEREAS, the Scripture says, "Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry." Psalm 146: 5-7; and,

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod traditionally has generously responded to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, which addresses both domestic and global hunger; and

WHEREAS, during 2008 under the theme, "A Synod at Table with the Hungry," \$431,753 was contributed (includes individuals, congregations and synod) toward the ELCA World Hunger Appeal; and

WHEREAS, hunger will end when, and only when, the human family changes the way it understands hunger and poverty and defines it as both unacceptable and solvable; and

WHEREAS, ongoing education for all age levels and increased advocacy are important for eliminating hunger and poverty; and

WHEREAS, Taking Root: Hunger Causes/Hunger Hopes, a new educational curriculum with materials for grades 3-6, junior high (7-9), and senior high (10-12) is now available through the ELCA;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, those congregational education committees be encouraged to order the free Taking Root introductory packet and free sample kits for each grade level from Augsburg Fortress Publishers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that congregations of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod be encouraged to include Taking Root: Hunger Causes/Hunger Hopes curriculum as part of their youth educational materials.

Submitted by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Hunger Task Force, Rev. Clark Cary, Chair

Speaking to the resolution, Rev. Edward Nieman, Bricelyn noted how the local congregation can use the curriculum. He urged congregations to use these materials.

Sherri French, St. Paul, Pine Island noted that this is a way to address an issue of hunger locally and globally. It is a way for our hands to do God's work.

Larry Iverson called attention to the piece in the voting member packets about the Taking Root program.

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

Voted

**SA09.05.08 to adopt Resolution 2009-02:
Taking Root – Hunger Causes/Hunger
Hopes**

Mr. Petersburg presented **Resolution 2009-04: Clergy & Staff Benefit Options.**

WHEREAS having pastors and lay staff is paramount for churches to accomplish their mission and since salary and benefits for those staff members are a significant cost for churches; and

WHEREAS providing an appropriate wage and benefit package is important for all congregations, and since this package should provide retirement, health, disability and survivor benefits; and

WHEREAS a Health Savings Account (HSA) together with catastrophic health insurance may allow clergy to expand their own savings for retirement; and

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Board of Pensions hired Hewitt Associates to evaluate the benefit package offered.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod ask the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Board of Pensions to continue to investigate rates and coverage to provide cost effective benefits;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod ask the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Board of Pensions to investigate offering a Health Savings Account, and investigate how the deductible portion of a Health Savings Account is paid.

Submitted by the congregational council of St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church, Cannon Falls, Minn. Author, Jack Schlichting, Vice President.

There was no speaking to the resolution and the bishop called for the assembly to vote.

Voted

**SA09.05.08 to adopt Resolution 2009-04:
Clergy & Staff Benefit Options**

Mr. Petersburg presented **Resolution 2009-06: Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines.**

WHEREAS, the Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team has reviewed the Compensation and Benefits Guidelines document;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2009 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly adopt the revised document, 2010 Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines for Pastors, Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers, and lay professionals serving in congregations in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA. Proposed document follows. Submitted by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod's Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team, Ms. Karen Ortloff, Chair.

Bishop Usgaard introduced Rev. Dr. Eric Finsand, Lay & Clergy Leadership Development Team of the Synod Council to speak to the resolution. Rev. Finsand reported that in evaluating compensation guidelines for neighboring synods, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod is setting a humble standard in the synods of Region 3 and Region 5. The team struggled with how to address the inequity of starting salaries.

In an effort to correct the disparity the 2010 proposed guidelines offers a step up in the first call salary. Years 1-8 have been stepped up with later service years being frozen. The increases are to be spread over 2010 and 2011.

Rev. John Carrier, Winona, made a motion to amend the guidelines to increase the first call salary to \$30,700 in 2010 and not spread it over two years. The motion was seconded.

Rev. Carrier noted that \$100.00 a month seems a small amount and given the great amount of seminary debt it is the right thing to do.

Rev. Michael Lockerby, Holden & Dale, Kenyon noted the seminarians have been poorly paid and for the sake of the younger pastors we not take two years to reach parity.

Rev. Norman Wahl inquired how the grid would be adjusted. Rev. Finsand noted that years 1-8 would have to be adjusted.

The bishop noted that the amendment did not include year's 1-8. Rev. Carrier consented to that addition to the proposed amendment. The person who seconded the motion also consented with the change.

There was no further speaking to the amendment. The bishop called for the vote.

Voted

SA09.05.09 to amend the attached salary grid for ordained clergy to Resolution 2009-06: Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines by increasing the beginning salary for first call pastors to \$30,700 and adjust lines 1-8 accordingly.

There was no further speaking to the amended resolution and the bishop called for the vote.

Voted

SA09.05.10 to adopt Resolution 2009-06: Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines as amended.

Mr. Petersburg announced **Resolution 2009-13: Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota Mission Fund** was received late. The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommended that the assembly consider the resolution and Mr. Petersburg made a motion to suspend the rules to consider Resolution 2009-13.

Voted

SA09.05.11 to suspend the rules to consider a late resolution 2009-13: Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota Mission Fund.

Mr. Peterson presented the resolution.

WHEREAS Lutheran Campus Ministry is a crucial ministry of the ELCA, providing mission

outreach to young adult students on campuses across our land, a large portion of them unchurched or dechurched ; and

WHEREAS Lutheran Campus Ministry develops critically needed leaders for church and society; and

WHEREAS Lutheran Campus Ministry provides Word and Sacrament ministry, representing all our congregations, on college and university campuses across our land; and

WHEREAS Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota is blessed with a staffed (campus pastor/minister) presence at each of the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State University system schools; and

WHEREAS the six Minnesota synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, despite providing generous support for Lutheran Campus Ministry in Minnesota, are not sustaining the level of funding necessary to maintain and grow these ministries as they have in the past; and

WHEREAS Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota is working to structure itself to invite and receive additional funds to supplement the support received through synodically-budgeted giving; and

WHEREAS Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota is seeking to establish a Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota Mission Fund as a vehicle for inviting and receiving such supplemental gifts from individuals, congregations, auxiliaries, endowment funds and other ELCA gifting sources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod approve establishment of a Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota Mission Fund; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod welcome and promote, in collaboration with Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota, this Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota Mission Fund within the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Submitted by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, Shirley Gangstad, Vice President

Rev. Paul Baker, retired, Rochester was recognized to speak to the resolution. As a member of the Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota Board he introduced Tom VandenBosch, the Development Director of Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota.

Mr. VandenBosch thanked the synod for the continuing financial support to campus ministry but noted that the support is not sufficient to support the campus ministry program. A Thrivent grant was received to support his development work.

Rev. Patrick Patterson, Christ the King, Mankato, a board member of the Mankato Campus Ministry, spoke in favor of the resolution. He noted that major cuts have been made which has eliminated the administration of LCMM.

Julia Accola, Good Shepherd, Rochester spoke in favor of the resolution. She related a story of her son who had dropped out of the church. Campus ministry brought him back to the church. Campus ministry is a vital part of the church's ministry.

Rev. John Carrier rose to speak against the resolution. He says he hates fundraising -- but he'll do it.

There was no further speaking to the resolution and Bishop Usgaard called for the vote on the resolution.

Voted

**SA09.05.12 to adopt Resolution 2009-13:
Lutheran Campus Ministry of
Minnesota Mission Fund.**

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Vice president Gangstad assumed the chair and introduced the Synod Nominating Committee: Ben Ekern, Highland Prairie, Peterson – chair; Rev. Elise Erickson, St. John, Elkton; Rev. Joel Erickson, Grace, Mankato; Rev. Sarah Nietz, Minneola, Goodhue; and, Rev. Curtis Zieske, Trinity, Albert Lea.

Ben Ekern was called on to deliver the report of the nominating committee. He directed the assembly voters to write in the

following name on their ballot: Rev. Leah Cook McDowell for the Committee on Discipline.

Mr. Ekern noted the following vacancies on the ballot:

- one vacancy on the Augsburg College Corporation Board for a lay or clergy from Cannon River Conference.
- one vacancy on the Augsburg College Corporation Board for a lay or clergy from Zumbro River Conference.
- one vacancy on the Committee on Consultation for a clergy person from Minnesota River Conference.
- one vacancy on the Committee on Consultation for a lay person from Minnesota River Conference.
- one vacancy on the Committee on Discipline for a lay person from Minnesota River Conference.

Mr. Ekern announced that unfilled vacancies will be filled by appointment of the Synod Council. He also announced the nomination deadline at 3:00 PM Friday, May 1st.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Rev. Jay Dahlvang was introduced to the assembly. Rev. Dahlvang serves as the chair of the synod's Book of Faith Initiative Task Force. Isaiah 55: 1-11 was the focus of his Dwelling in the Word. He then led the assembly in singing *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil*.

LUNCH AND RECESS

Ms. Gangstad announced lunch would be served in the Auditorium and declared the assembly in recess until 1:30 PM.

Plenary Session Two Friday, May 1, 2009 1:30 PM – 5:15 PM

The 2nd plenary was called to order at 1:30. Bishop Usgaard welcomed Stanley Noffsinger, General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren, Elgin, IL to bring a word of *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Rev. Ronald Myers delivered the report of the Committee on Credentials:

Lay voters	338
Clergy voters	172
AIM voters	4
Total voters	514
Voice	6
Visitors	32
Total assembly	552

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Bishop Usgaard called on the synod's treasurer, Mark Bradley to present his report to the assembly.

Mr. Bradley commented on year end 2008 income and expenses; noted the unrealized losses in Thrivent and ELCA Foundation investments; noted the unqualified opinion of the audit done by Smith Schafer & Associates; and introduced the budget proposal for 2010.

Mr. Bradley announced the deadline for budget amendments at 5:00 PM, Friday, May 1st.

Rev. Karen Hanson, Chaplain, Red Wing questioned the amount of money in special funds, namely the Mission Development money. Why wasn't it spent?

Bishop Usgaard explained that the money referred to is designated for Mission Development. He reminded the assembly that the synodically authorized worshipping communities would be receiving funds in 2009.

Jonathan Heimer, Christ, Faribault asked if there is money in the budget to support seminary students.

Bishop Usgaard responded that scholarship awards and first call debt retirement grants are part of the assembly agenda. Those awards are not budget funds but endowment interest funds.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Sharon Barnes, St. Olaf, Austin, a member of the synod's Book of Faith Initiative Task Force was introduced to the assembly. Exodus 3: 1-15 was the focus of her Dwelling in the Word. The assembly sang *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil*.

REPORT OF THE SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD BISHOP

Shirley Gangstad introduced Bishop Usgaard to present his report to the assembly.

Bishop Usgaard began his report by remembering the pastor's in the synod that died in the last year.

- Rev. Gary D. Peterson, Red Wing died July 11, 2008
- Rev. Ernest M. Johnson, Blooming Prairie died August 20, 2008
- Rev. Donald Schoeppler, Freeborn died January 15, 2009
- Rev. Clifford R. Paulsen, Fairmont died April 26, 2009.

The bishop then introduced the synod staff: Rev. Linda Gunderson, Rev. Peter Reuss, Larry Iverson, Deborah Ann Norrie, Katie Livingood, Cheryse Sloan, Kari Maclver, Kathy Bolin and Miri Mattson.

The bishop introduced the video produced by the ELCA reporting on the bishop's trip to Israel and Palestine. After the video he added some personal thoughts about what he learned on the trip. He thanked the synod for enabling him and Lynette to experience this trip. He thanked the synod for inviting him to tell his story. He thanked the synod for the hope brought to a hurting world.

Ms. Gangstad recessed the assembly until 3:05 PM.

Following the break, Ms. Gangstad introduced the Mosaic video: Augusta Victoria Hospital – *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. She reminded the assembly that the assembly offering would be sent to the Augusta Victoria Hospital, Jerusalem.

Bishop Usgaard welcomed Rev. Stephen Bouman back to the stage to present the Report of the Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A video greeting from Presiding Bishop Hanson was played for the assembly.

Rev. Bouman shared his ideas about mission. He commented that all mission is local – where we live. But we have lost the ability to tell the faith story. He encouraged people to read Acts 18 & 19 and reminded the assembly that the early church was messy. Paul didn't have an outreach manual. He had to use his passion and do by teaching.

He shared the amount of wealth held by congregations and noted, "God isn't holding out on us."

He thanked the synod for the service of Julia Accola on the Church in Society Board, Larry Iverson who serves on the Nominating Committee, and Rev. Glenn Nycklemoe who has served on the Discipline Committee.

Rev. Bouman presented the top ten list of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. The ELCA is refocused on congregations
2. Book of Faith initiative; it's a pretty good book – have a look
3. Bishop's visits to the middle east – a way to talk about connections; we are a gifted church – all the connections around the world, and around the block
4. How do we welcome the stranger? We should have no fear to welcome the stranger.
5. Lutheran Disaster Response
6. Missional church movement
7. Full communion with the Methodist church; the real work will be the connections made locally
8. God's work. Our hands. Centered on the cross.
9. Malaria and AIDS initiative, we are a global church
10. Mission support – the corporate sign of our relationship and responsibility to each other.

He further commented that the font and the table are the centers of our ministry. We

baptize our babies but we don't leave it at that. We raise them in the church.

THE LUTHERAN

Bishop Usgaard introduced Amber Leberman, a member of *The Lutheran* staff to bring a greeting to the assembly. Ms. Leberman piggybacked on Rev. Bouman's comments on how we connect with each other, the synod, the Churchwide expression and globally. We are good at connecting in the tried and true ways. But we are also good at embracing new ways of connecting. For news of the synod, we turn to the synod's web site. To find about the ELCA, we turn to *The Lutheran* web site which holds thirteen years of archives and thousands of study guides available to subscribers. She also noted *The Little Lutheran* and *The Little Christian* both have web sites.

GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS. ART CONTEST

Bishop Usgaard announced an art contest for all members of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. He invited submissions of artwork representing "God's work. Our hands." Entries should display everyday things in the shape of the cross, demonstrating how God's work is carried out. The Executive Committee will name a contest task force to choose the winner. Submissions may be used for the synod Christmas card and other print materials.

REPORT OF REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

John Petersburg presented **Resolution 2009-03: Environmental Stewardship**

WHEREAS, the ELCA adopted the "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice" Social Statement at the Churchwide Assembly in 1993 to address the church's understanding of God's call to us to care for the earth; and,

WHEREAS, the ELCA has created materials to guide congregations, schools, and other groups in conducting environmental audits; and,

WHEREAS, the knowledge and understanding of the impact of our individual and congregational uses of natural resources is

documented (for example, The Millennium 18 Ecosystem Assessment); and,

WHEREAS, Scripture shows God's love for creation and mandates humans to serve and keep the earth; and,

WHEREAS, a Green Team can be a catalyst for transformation in a congregation; and,

WHEREAS, there is a relationship between global injustice and the degradation of nature. Our Companion Synods in the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Colombia and the Central Diocese in Tanzania struggle from the imbalance of the use and exploitation of the world's natural resources,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod live out more fully the "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice" Social Statement actions; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each congregation of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA conduct the ELCA's Environmental Audit; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that congregations of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA study caring for creation issues in Sunday School and Bible Studies, to learn more about our call to be God's stewards of the earth; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA establish a committee or task force to address environmental issues in the synod and congregations; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a goal be set for the year 2011 for 75% of all products used by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA office and its congregations be environmentally conscious. This goal would include attention to the use of fairly traded products.

Submitted by the congregational council of Bethel Lutheran Church, Rochester, Minn., authored and approved by the "BIGG Idea" team (Bethel Individuals Going Green)A similar resolution was passed by the Blue Earth River Conference Assembly.

Bishop Usgaard recognized Rev. Anjanette Rist, Bethel, Rochester, member of BIGG, to speak to the resolution. Rev. Rist commented that intentionality is key to stewardship. When given a gift it is best to care for it so it will last for years. This resolution is to stir us to care for God's gift to us.

There was no further speaking to the resolution and the bishop called for the vote on the resolution.

Voted

SA09.05.13 to adopt Resolution 2009-03: Environmental Stewardship

Mr. Petersburg, presented **Resolution 2009-05: Teaching Intelligent Design.**

WHEREAS Scientism and good science are two different things; Nancy Pearcey and Chuck Colson have written a book called, How Now Shall We Live. Scientism has its roots in Darwinism. Tufts University professor Daniel Dennett writes that Darwinism, rightly understood, is a "universal acid" that dissolves away all traditional moral, metaphysical, and religious beliefs. For if humans have evolved by a material, purposeless process, then there is no basis for believing in a God who created us and revealed moral truths, or imposing those moral views in any area of life. Dennett is using a common tactic using science as a weapon to shoot down religious faith. The standard assumption is that science is objective knowledge, while religion is an expression of subjective need. Religion, therefore, must subordinate its claims about the world to whatever science decrees.

Scientism assumes that science is the controlling reality about life, so anything that can be validated scientifically ought to be done. Other things are subjective fantasy-like love, beauty, good, evil, conscience, ethics.

So science, which originally simply meant the study of the natural world, has in this view been conflated with scientific naturalism, a philosophy that the natural world is all that exists.

Bishop Usgaard took advantage of this time to introduce Rev. Margaret (Peg) Chemberlin, Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of Churches. She is also president-elect of the National Council of Churches and has recently been named to the President's Faith-Based Advisory Council.

RECOGNITION OF RETIREMENTS

Bishop Usgaard and Ms. Gangstad recognized the retirements of several pastors: Rev. David Hernes and Rev. Michael Dobbins were present to receive their retirement certificates and pins.

Rev. Hernes retired from East Freeborn, Albert Lea , July 1, 2008.

Rev. Dobbins retires from Vasa, Welch, July 1, 2009.

There were other pastors not present recognized:

Rev. Philip Lewison, St. Peter, New Richland and St. Peter, Otisco, November 1, 2008

Rev. Dennis Pettyjohn, St. John, Owatonna, March 1, 2008

Rev. Richard Salge, St. John, Mapleton, November 1, 2008

Rev. Richard Hegal, First, Blooming Prairie, September 1, 2008

Bishop Usgaard led the congregation in singing *A Mighty Fortress is our God*.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Rev. Sarah Nietz, chair of the Synod Endowment Committee was introduced to make the scholarship awards. Rev. Nietz offered comments about using our hands to do God's work in the world. One of the ways the church does this is to train its pastoral leaders.

Fund for Leaders scholarship awards: Kevin Hackney, Kristen Dumke, Beth Krolak.

First Call Debt Retirement grants: Rev. Carrie Hoth McElfresh, Community, Geneva; Rev. Daniel Forsgren, 1st English, Cannon Falls; Rev. Joy Gonnerman, Wangen Prairie, Cannon Falls; Rev. Karna Hagen, Gloria Dei, Rochester; and, Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner, People of Hope, Rochester.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ben Ekern reported that two additional nominations were received:

Augsburg College – Cannon River slot – Rev. Joanna Mitchell, Our Savior, Faribault.

Committee on Consultation – Minnesota River clergy slot – Rev. David Danner,

Shirley Gangstad recognized Lilah Aas, First, Albert Lea and Blue Earth River Dean. Ms. Aas made a motion to cast a unanimous ballot for those nominated. There was a second and no objection. The bishop directed the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot.

Ms. Gangstad thanked the voting members serving on the Elections Committee: Rev. Krista Stokke, First, Glenville; Rev. Dan Forsgren, 1st English, Cannon Falls; Sandra Gilderhus, Our Savior, Owatonna ; Allan Bieber, People of Hope, Rochester; and, Linda Garrison, Central, Winona.

WELCOME TO REJOICE!, NORTHFIELD

Bishop Usgaard moved to the worship center where he was joined by Rev. Daniel Clites, pastor of Rejoice!, Northfield. The bishop announced that the constitution of Rejoice! Lutheran Church, Northfield was approved by the Synod Council in February 2009. That action formally made Rejoice! a congregation of the Southeastern Minnesota synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He invited the assembly to stand and participate in the laying on hands as a sign of welcome to the newest congregation in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Rev. Darren Paulson, First, Lake City, a member of the synod's Book of Faith Initiative Task Force was introduced to the assembly. Jeremiah 1: 4-19 was the focus of his Dwelling in the Word. The assembly sang *Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil*.

RECESS

Ms. Gangstad announced the third plenary would begin at 6:30 PM. The assembly was declared in recess at 5:20 PM.

**Plenary Session Three
Friday, May 1, 2009
6:30 – 8:30 PM**

Bishop Harold Usgaard called the assembly to order at 6:30 PM. He called on BettyAnn Hernke to bring a motion to the assembly.

Secretary Hernke made a motion that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly go into a quasi committee of the whole for 90 minutes; 10 minutes to be spent in small group conversation; 20 minutes spent in large group conversation on the proposed social statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust; and 60 minutes spent in large group conversation on the Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies. The motion was seconded.

Fred Knudsen, Our Savior, Owatonna raised a point of order to ask if the time can be reduced. The bishop noted that a motion would be in order if the sense of the quasi-committee of whole was to recess early.

The question was called.

Voted

SA09.05.16 that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly go into a quasi committee of the whole for 90 minutes; 10 minutes to be spent in small group conversation; 20 minutes spent in large group conversation on the proposed social statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust; and 60 minutes spent in large group conversation on the Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies.

The bishop declared the assembly acting as a quasi committee of the whole. The assembly entered into small group discussions and general debate.

The time for the quasi committee of the whole expired at 8:00 PM. The bishop thanked the assembly for being the church during the evening. The bishop closed the plenary with prayer and led the assembly in singing *We All Are One in Mission*.

No report was issued to the assembly from the quasi committee of the whole.

The assembly was recessed until 8:30 AM, Saturday, May 2, 2009.

Morning Prayer was offered in the Exhibit Hall, Mayo Civic Center beginning at 8:30 AM led by Rev. David Vasquez, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa.

Following morning prayer Bishop Usgaard recognized Marion (Nick) Nikoley, St. John, Owatonna who was attending his 55th synod assembly or predecessor district convention. The assembly congratulated him with warm applause.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Bishop Usgaard introduced Dr. Glen Stassen, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California to deliver the keynote address -- *Just Peacemaking: The new Paradigm for Ethics of Peace and War*.

Dr. Stassen taught that the debate between pacifism and just war is important but insufficient. We need a new paradigm with preemptive practices of peacemaking, so we can also focus on the practices that prevent war.

It is not enough to be debating whether to support war, we've got to be debating support for the practices that make for peace.

Just peacemaking generates constructive actions that avoid war. Just peacemaking generates constructive actions that reduce terrorism.

Dr. Stassen outlined 10 practices that work to prevent many wars:

1. Nonviolent direct action. The East German Lutheran churches were instrumental in bringing about the fall of the East German government through nonviolent direct action.
2. Independent initiatives
3. Cooperative Conflict resolution.
4. Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice; seek repentance and forgiveness.
5. Human rights, religious liberty, and democracy.
6. Economic development that is sustainable and just.
7. Work with cooperative forces in the international system.
8. Support the United Nations and international organizations.
9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade.
10. Support grassroots peacemaker groups.

Just peacemaking says it's not enough to be debating whether to support war; we've got to focus on the practices that make for peace. Just peacemaking is not about war vs pacifism; it is about preventing war. Just peacemaking practices free us from being scared. With just peacemaking we can be followers of Jesus.

At the conclusion of his address, there was a brief time for question from the assembly.

Roger Sween, United, Red Wing asked how we do a better job of acting in a loving way? Peacemaking is more than just political, but at work in our personal lives, too.

Dr. Stassen encouraged congregations and families use the practices of peacemaking in resolving disagreements.

Jonathan Heimer, Christ, Faribault asked if a defensive war was alright?

According to Dr. Stassen just peacemaking doesn't answer that question. It only deals with avoiding war.

Rev. Karna Hagen, Gloria Dei, Rochester asked about grassroots organizations and weapons reduction which caught her attention.

One issue that she is concerned about is the drug war in Mexico. She wonders if peacemaking groups address that issue.

Dr. Stassen commented that he didn't know a lot about that issue and recommended www.peace-action.org for more information about this aspect.

Rev. John Lohre, St. Paul, Pine Island about stewardship of resources.

Dr. Stassen noted that economic development that is sustainable and just is the key. Those who see economic conditions and /or human rights falling well below their expectations then turn violent.

Bishop Usgaard thanked Dr. Stassen and the assembly thanked him with warm applause.

WORKSHOPS

Bishop Usgaard introduced Rev. David Rossow, Christ, Byron. Rev. Rossow authored the 2008 Resolution that called for an assembly on peace and justice and was responsible for lining up the workshop leaders. Bishop Usgaard called attention to the list of workshops being offered to the assembly:

1. Just War Theology-what does this mean? Jack Nelson Pallmeyer, Ballroom 1
2. How do we live with our differences? Karen Ortloff, McDonnell B
3. Caring for military personnel and their families. Chaplain Mark Thompson and Rev. Jack Nordgaard, Mayo A
4. Islam—People of the Book was cancelled due to the illness of Dr. Charles Amjad-Ali
5. Jews—People of the Book. Dr. Karla Suomka, Luther College, Legion B
6. ELCA Social Statement on Peace. Rev. Stephen Bouman, Elliott A
7. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. Tara Mulder, Elliott B
8. Lutheran World Relief. Daniel Lee, Mayo B
9. Historic Peace churches. Stanley Noffsinger, McDonnell A

10. Peacemaking in my church. Dr. Stassen,
Ballroom 2

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Josh Enderson, a seminary student and a member of the synod's Book of Faith Initiative Task Force was introduced to the assembly. John 8: 31-36 was the focus of his Dwelling in the Word. The assembly sang *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil*.

RECESS

Vice president Shirley Gangstad dismissed the assembly to attend workshops and announced lunch would be served after the second session of workshops. The assembly was declared in recess until 1:30 PM.

**Plenary Session Four
Saturday May 2, 2009
1:30 – 4:00**

The fourth plenary was called to order at 1:30 PM, May 2, 2009 by Bishop Harold Usgaard.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Rev. Ronald Myers delivered the report of the Committee on Credentials:

Lay voters	362
Clergy voters	184
AIM voters	5
Total voters	551
Voice	8
Visitors	36
Total assembly	595

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

John Petersburg was called on to present Resolution, **2009-10: A Memorial Rejecting Proposed Social Statement and Affirming Current Teaching Documents on Sexuality.**

WHEREAS, the 2009 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Churchwide

Assembly will consider the adoption of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust as a possible Social Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America; and

WHEREAS, "Social statements and other resources on social concerns build on the rich legacy of the church bodies that united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As a confessional church with an historical sense, this church continues to look to the social statements of The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America for guidance, while it develops its own social statements and further deliberates on social concerns" (Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns); and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Confessions state: "We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone" (Book of Concord, Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule & Norm); and

WHEREAS, the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America states: "This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life" (ELCA Constitution, 2.03); and

WHEREAS, in addition to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, the current teaching of the ELCA on human sexuality is guided by the ELCA Messages Sexuality: Some Common Convictions (1996) and Commercial Sexual Exploitation (2001); and by the social statements of the ELCA's predecessor churches: Sex, Marriage, and Family -A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America (1970); Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior -A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church (1980); and Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church (1982); and

WHEREAS, the adoption of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust as a Social Statement of the ELCA Would replace the ELCA Message Sexuality: Some Common Convictions and the predecessor church statements with a document that some consider less helpful than its predecessor documents and distances the ELCA from Scripture and from the rich legacy of the church bodies that united to form the ELCA;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly thank the members of Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reject Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust as a proposed Social Statement for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to affirm the teaching of the ELCA Messages Sexuality: Some Common Convictions (1996) and Commercial Sexual Exploitation (2001); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to express the ELCA's intention to continue to rely on the social statements of its predecessor churches — Sex, Marriage, and Family -A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America (1970); Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior -A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church (1980); and Teachings and Practice on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage -A Social Statement of The American Lutheran Church (1982) — as historical documents expressing faithful Christian teaching on human sexuality. Submitted by Rev. Daniel D. Baker and the undersigned voting members of the 2009 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly: Rev. Daniel D. Baker, Rev. John F. Holt, Paul Overgaard, Jan Overgaard, Linda Kraushaar, Steven Kraushaar, Rev. Chris Fiske, Rev. Julie

Fiske, Art Ludtke, Donna Ludtke, Rev. Richard Steffen, Rev. Jim Peterson

Rev. Daniel Baker, First, Albert Lea was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. He talked of reading the historical documents referred to in the resolution. He believes the historical documents are clear. He believes the proposed statement is confusing. He believes relationships don't begin with trust, but trust comes out of building the relationship. God ordered the relationship between a man and a woman at Creation. Rev. Baker stated the proposed statement is inferior that does not do justice to the tradition of our church.

Rev. Richard Jorgensen, First English, Faribault was recognized to speak against the resolution. He stated that one of the hallmarks of the proposed statement is that Bible believing Lutheran Christians are not going to be in agreement. This allows for the church to avoid winners and losers but lets us live together. To adopt this resolution is to honor that in our church.

Jack Schlichting, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls, was recognized to speak in favor of this resolution. The St. Ansgar Lutheran Church Council passed this resolution. As a lay person he turns to his pastor for his moral guidance. He doesn't want a lot of latitude for his pastoral leader. He wants the moral guidance and anchor of the church in his life. This document does not provide that moral guidance and anchor.

Rev. Joy Gonnerman, Wangen Prairie, Cannon Falls rose to speak against the resolution. There are other things talked about in the statement than homosexuality. It talks about the bigger issues in human relationships. The statement speaks to those caught in abusive or unhealthy marriages in a way the old statements do not.

Rev. Jack Miller, St. Matthew, Granger, spoke in favor of the resolution. He finds it painful to be speaking in favor of this resolution. By not admitting the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 19: 4-6 where Jesus describes marriage as between a man and a woman the

social statement is in error. The commandment against adultery is clear that sexual expression should only be in marriage. He believes we would break with the long history of stating that homosexuality is sinful if this social statement is adopted.

Rev. Judy Gustafson, Grace, Nerstrand was recognized to speak against the resolution. She stated in the old days we used leeches to treat deep bruises; we used an alcohol drip to slow contractions in premature labor. But we don't do that now because we know better. We have learned that this is not a good way to treat people. To rely on a 40 year old document would be a step backward.

The limit on the number of speeches was reached and Bishop Usgaard called on the Elections Committee to count voting cards. The vote was called for and the tellers counted votes.

Vote Yes-119; No-270

SA09.05.17

**Failed to adopt Resolution 2009-10:
Memorial Rejecting Proposed Social Statement
and Affirming Current Teaching Documents on
Sexuality**

Bishop Usgaard recognized Julia Accola, Good Shepherd, Rochester and a member of the Program Committee of the ELCA Church in Society Board. She noted that she was not speaking for Good Shepherd or the Church in Society Board. She expressed her thanks for the respectful discussion held thus far on the proposed social statement. The program committee she serves on is the group that works on all social statements for the church. This statement is an emotionally charged issue. It is not a perfect document. It is an imperfect document written by imperfect people. Developing a social statement is at least a six year process. The peace social statement that we were asked to study prior to this assembly was passed by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly. In 2007 the education social statement was passed by the Churchwide assembly. In 2011

the assembly will be asked to consider a study on genetics and faith. She encouraged congregations to study this statement and be prepared to respond to the drafts. It is expected the 2013 assembly will consider a statement on criminal justice. She hopes congregations will have discussions on these statements.

John Petersburg presented Resolution **2009-11: A Memorial Rejecting the Proposals in the Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality.**

WHEREAS, as Lutherans "We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone"[1], and

WHEREAS, many passages in Scripture both speak, and have been consistently throughout history heard to speak, in a plain and unambiguous voice concerning marriage and the exercise of human sexuality, and

WHEREAS, the Scriptures teach very positively of God's design for marriage as reflected in the words of our Lord Jesus, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh" (Matt. 19:4-6a 28 RSV); and

WHEREAS, a majority of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) members, and most Christian churches -including most in the Lutheran World Federation – believe that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman; and

WHEREAS, the erotic expression of sexuality is understood by some to be taught and celebrated in Scripture as being rightly ordered to be exercised within the bounds of marriage; and

WHEREAS, Scripture is understood by some to prohibit any other expression of

sexually erotic activity outside the bounds of marriage; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider the Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality which Asks the ELCA to change its teaching and policy to affirm the possibility of same-sex sexual relationships, for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, a synodical or congregational option on ministry standards would represent a real change in the teaching of our church that would be seen by some as forcing even those synods and congregations that do not agree with this change implicitly to accept the notion that Scripture is not clear in its teaching about marriage or about homosexual behavior; and

WHEREAS, the interdependent relationship between the churchwide, synod, and congregation expressions of the ELCA requires one Office of Ministry, one roster of pastors, and one set of expectations for pastors and other rostered leaders throughout the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA currently expresses its expectations of pastors and other rostered leaders through documents called Vision and Expectations[2] and Definitions Guidelines for Discipline which are intended to maintain harmony with Scripture and its interpretation throughout history;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly thank the members of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reject the proposals in the Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm the ELCA's current

standards for pastors and other rostered leaders as expressed in Vision and Expectations and Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline. [1] Formula of Concord, The Epitome, 1. – The Book of Concord, Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Fortress Press. [2] Especially pertinent are the lines: "Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships."

Submitted by Rev. Daniel D. Baker and the undersigned voting members of the 2009 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly: Rev. Daniel D. Baker, Rev. John F. Holt, Paul Overgaard, Jan Overgaard, Linda Kraushaar, Steven Kraushaar, Rev. Chris Fiske, Rev. Julie Fiske, Art Ludtke, Donna Ludtke, Rev. Richard Steffen, Rev. Jim Peterson

Rev. Daniel Baker was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. He referred to the fourth recommendation on the local options. This would bring a number of problems with it. He asked to recognize the dissenting voices. A local option would tie those in disagreement with something they don't believe. Those who are conscience bound against it will not be welcomed anymore. What is to prevent a local option on other issues such as polygamy? How does this affect relationships with our ecumenical partners? How will it affect our relationships with Lutherans around the world? He suggested there might be liability issues with discrimination that could lead to law suits.

Rev. John Carrier, Winona Campus Ministry, rose to speak in opposition to the resolution. He noted that he and people who share his feelings about this issue have been in the minority but have never felt unwelcomed. He questioned Rev. Baker's idea that people in disagreement would be unwelcome. Nor are we

tarred with a brush of agreement. Our church is bigger than that.

The bishop cautioned the assembly to not use debate time to engage in personal debate.

Rev. Norman Wahl, Bethel, Rochester rose to speak in favor of the resolution. He is reluctant to be opposed to the recommendations. He comes from a church that has gays and lesbians who are active in the church. But he is afraid that the people who are more conservative and pietistic have watched the church and the society become more and more permissive. He doesn't believe this will bring us together.

Rev. Daniel Doerring asked what is sent to the Churchwide Assembly when memorials are adopted.

Rev. Joseph Crippen, St. John, Northfield and a former member of the ELCA Church Council stated that the whole memorial is submitted.

Rev. Lynn Rigg, retired pastor from Red Wing rose to speak in opposition to the resolution. She reminded the assembly of her story from the previous evening of her friend who denied his orientation for many years so he could serve the church. She wonders how many dollars have been spent while we have been talking. She wonders what would have happened if we had spent that money and energy in mission.

Rev. James Peterson, retired, speaking in favor of the resolution quoted Paul in Romans 1 & 2 on homosexuality and marriage it is clear that homosexuality is sin.

Rev. Michael Gustafson spoke in opposition to the resolution. His concern is for the people who are already disenfranchised. Who looks out for their welfare? He is grateful for the good work put in on the two documents.

Bishop Usgaard announced that the limit on debate had been reached and called for the vote. He called on the elections committee to count voter cards.

Voted

Yes-151; No-272

SA09.05.18 failed to adopt Resolution 2009-11.

BIBLE STUDY

Rev. Bouman was welcomed back to the assembly to present the second part of the Bible Study.

RECOGNITION OF ANNIVERSARIES OF ORDINATIONS

Bishop Usgaard and Ms. Gangstad welcomed pastors to the stage to recognize the anniversaries of ordinations:

25th Anniversary: Revs. Dwight DoBell, Mark Dumke, James Ahlquist, John Henriksen, Dave Klawiter, Luther Mathsen, and Lane Zaffke.

40th Anniversary: Revs. Philip Eaves, John Heruth, M. Eugene Leiter, and Lyndon West.

50th Anniversary: Revs. Raymond Haugland, Roger Knudson, Charles Espe, Owen Gaasedelen, Paul H. Christensen, J. David Dybvig and Paul Reppe.

55th Anniversary: Revs. Eldon Person, Vernon Faillettaz and Harlan Blockhus.

60th Anniversary: Rev. Glennys Knutson
The assembly congratulated these pastors with warm applause. Bishop Usgaard led the assembly in singing *Christ Be Our Light*.

CHANGE IN AGENDA

Bishop Usgaard asked for the assembly's permission to make an adjustment to the agenda. He proposed finishing the work on the resolutions and then moving to the Report of the Treasurer. There was no objection and the bishop called upon Mr. Petersburg to present the next resolution.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

John Petersburg presented **Resolution 2009-08: That the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Become a Reconciling in Christ Synod.**

WHEREAS, in Baptism, we welcome all into the community of faith; and WHEREAS, in

Holy Communion, we invite and welcome all to the Lord's Table; and

WHEREAS, congregations of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America have adopted public statements of openness and welcome; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been at work since 2001 to develop and state a foundational framework that will help it discern what it means faithfully to follow God's law of love in the increasingly complex sphere of human sexuality; and

WHEREAS, some sectors of society and some church bodies and congregations shun gay, lesbian, transgender, and bi-sexual people from their midst; and

WHEREAS, the Reconciling in Christ program of Lutherans Concerned / North America provides resources and linkages to congregations who choose to affirm and welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, otherwise shunned; and

WHEREAS, the Reconciling in Christ program exceeds 400 settings, including twenty-four synods; now,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Meeting in Assembly, request the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council to become a Reconciling in Christ member by developing, adopting and submitting an Affirmation of Welcome that may also become a model to its member congregations.

Submitted by Rev. Judy A. Gustafson and the undersigned voting members of the 2009 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly: Marcia Nagel, Jim Nagel, Tom Engstrom, Dottie Barrett, Rev. Robert Albing, Rev. Bruce W. Benson, Allan Bieber, Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner, Zashata Burton, Rev. Joy Gonnerman, Rev. Judy Reitz Gustafson, Rev. Michael A. Gustafson, Rev. Jennifer A. Koenig, Rev. Kristen Schlauderaff, Roger Sween

Roger Sween, United, Red Wing was recognized and spoke in favor of the resolution. Welcome and reconciliation has been expressed

for the children of God by members of this assembly. This resolution takes a step forward for that reconciliation. The ministry of welcome of RIC congregations comes from I Corinthians. This synod is called on to begin this process.

Rev. Daniel Baker, First, Albert Lea rose in opposition to this resolution. This is not a neutral resolution in the midst of this debate. It is aligning us with an advocacy group – Lutherans Concerned. It is a group that wants us to change our policy and teachings. It is a group outside the church. It is a group more radical than the statement and recommendations. It is ill advised at this time.

Monika Hartsel, St. Olaf Student Congregation. St. Olaf noted that the student congregation is a long time Reconciled in Christ congregation. She has been amazed at the extraordinary faith of people in the congregation expressed in the face of discrimination. Two former Student Congregation presidents have been of homosexual orientation and felt called to ministry in this church. RIC has given them the support and skills to speak the word. WWJW means not "What Would Jesus Do?" but "Who would Jesus welcome?" He would welcome everyone. She would hope we could fling open the gates.

Jack Schlichting, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls spoke in opposition to this resolution. This resolution would lump our congregation, which doesn't want to support the statement and recommendations as part of an RIC synod. How would you feel if I asked the synod to become a Word Alone synod?

Rev. Judy Gustafson, Grace, Nerstrand the author of the resolution stated that as long as there are Christian voices that ostracize gay and lesbian persons, there has to be a voice to say "no". She grieves the gifted, faithful people who are shut out. Romans doesn't say homosexuals are sinners, it says we are all sinners. She has seen too much hurt and pain to sit back and let it happen and not say "no".

Rev. David Rossow, Christ, Byron spoke in opposition to the resolution. He opposes it in

spite of the passionate voices he has heard. It makes a perception that those congregations who may oppose this do not care about gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in Christ and he does not believe that is true. In the bond of peace and love and respect he wants to believe that his brothers and sisters who see it in a different way are not lacking in love. Out of his love for them, he prays each congregation could find its ways to love and welcome gay and lesbian brothers and sisters.

The limit on speaker was reached and the bishop called for a vote. He determined a hand count was necessary. The tellers were summoned to count the vote.

Rev. John Carrier, Winona Campus Ministry, asked if it was too late to table the resolution. The chair declared that to be the case.

Voted Yes-171; No-149
SA09.05.19 to adopt Resolution 2009-08:
That the Southeastern Minnesota Synod become a Reconciling in Christ Synod.

Mr. Petersburg presented **Resolution 2009-07: Welcome and Support to Persons of Same-Gender Sexual Orientation**

WHEREAS, Lutherans believe that what is at stake in the Bible is the Gospel, and

WHEREAS, over the years, Lutherans have changed the way they understand various assumptions and ideas of the Bible in light of scientific discoveries by astronomers, paleontologists, biologists, etc., and

WHEREAS, not only in matters of geophysics and history, but also in very human matters, the church has been led by the Gospel and human understanding to turn away from previously accepted “truths” such as the inferiority of women, dark-skinned people, and those who are left-handed, and

WHEREAS, the study of human sexuality now recognizes that sexual orientation, though most often an orientation toward heterosexuality, also manifests itself in a same-gender, or homosexual orientation, and

WHEREAS, Lutherans now know that the old fear of homosexuality being contagious arose from falsehood and misunderstanding, and the concern that gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered adults might “recruit” young people to same-gender orientation is based on this falsehood, and

WHEREAS, members of Southeastern Minnesota Synod congregations during the past 20 years have learned from gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people in their own families and congregations that God can and does call such people to lives of faith and faithfulness without renouncing their sexual orientation and identity, just as the early church learned over time that the Holy Spirit did not require gentiles to become Jews in order to be welcome in the family of God,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod hereby declares in assembly that it understands same-gender sexual orientation to be part of God’s good creation, not a perversion of it; and that the time has come for the church to commit itself to welcoming and supporting people with such orientation into the full life of the church, encouraging them to live by the standards and commitments of sexual faithfulness to which all God’s children are called.

Submitted by Rev. W. Bruce Benson and the undersigned voting members of the 2009 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly: Rev. W. Bruce Benson, Rev. Joy Gonnerman, Rev. Diane M. Goulson, Rev. Jennifer Anderson Koenig, Rev. Judy Gustafson, Erin Armstrong, Monika Hartsel, Rev. Joanna Mitchell, Rev. Richard L. Jorgensen, Rev. Michael Gustafson, Rev. Kristen Schlauderaff, Roger Sween, Zashata Burton, Marcia Nagel, Jim Nagel, Tom Engstrom, Dottie Barrett, Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner, Allan J. Bieber, Rev. Robert Albing

Erin Armstrong, St. Olaf Student Congregation, was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. She noted that the St. Olaf Student Congregation has been an RIC congregation since 1987. She grew up in diversity – diversity of thought and gender identify. Although we disagree on this issue we are united in the gospel. She has appreciated the dialogue and the decisions of the day.

Jan Overgaard, First, Albert Lea was recognized to speak in opposition to the resolution. She has been surprised at what this assembly is saying. The resolution doesn't say anything about marriage and commitment. It doesn't speak of family. It speaks of self gratification. She wonders about how children figure out who they are when they have only fathers or only mothers. She expressed her displeasure with the assembly.

Rev. Dennis Timmerman, Our Savior, Spring Valley offered an amendment to the resolution. Beginning on line 55 strike the words *to be part of God's good creation, not a perversion of it* and insert *to be fully part of the same fallen creation that God loves and has redeemed in Jesus Christ as all of us are*. The motion to amend was seconded.

Rev. Timmerman spoke to his amendment. We are all in need of God's redemption. Our redemption does not come about by our own intrinsic goodness.

Rev. Bruce Benson, St. Olaf Student Congregation, Northfield, author of the resolution, has some objection to the new language but he wrote the resolution the way he did because the idea that homosexuality is a perversion has been replaced. But homosexuality as a perversion is still an issue in this church. But he would be content with this.

There was no further speaking to the amendment and the call for the assembly to vote on the amendment to Resolution 2009-07.

Voted
SA09.05.21 to amend Resolution 2009-07:
Resolution to Welcome and Support to

Persons of Same-Gender Sexual Orientation at line 55 —

To strike: ~~be part of God's good creation, not a perversion of it and insert.~~

To insert: To be fully part of the same fallen creation that God loves and has redeemed in Jesus Christ as all of us are.

Debate on the amended resolution commenced. Because the resolution was amended, counting speakers for and against started over.

Speaking against the resolution, Lou Hermanson, Hosanna, Rochester said he doesn't feel welcome in many congregations because they don't have enough leg room. He doesn't believe we need to single out any group. The ground at the cross is level. By implication, those we don't name may feel excluded.

The question was called and the bishop directed the assembly to vote.

Voted
SA09.05.22 to adopt Resolution 2009-07
Resolution to Welcome and Support to
Persons of Same-Gender Sexual
Orientation as amended.

Mr. Petersburg presented the final resolution of the assembly, **Resolution 2009-21: A Memorial in Support of the Social Statement on Human Sexuality and the Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies.**

WHEREAS, the Task Force for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Studies in Sexuality has earnestly studied and struggled with these matters for eight years, and their work models and invites mutually respectful dialogue about sexuality throughout this church; and

WHEREAS, the proposed statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust, powerfully proclaims this church's teachings on trust, love, and service to neighbor as the proper

foundation of sexuality, while honestly recognizing that there is no consensus regarding same gender relationships or the rostered ministry of people in them; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council, at its March 2009 meeting, voted by an overwhelming margin to recommend to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly the proposed statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust, its implementing resolutions, and Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies; and

WHEREAS, the Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies allows a way to maintain a uniform standard and process for candidacy and call throughout this church while respecting the bound consciences of all; and

WHEREAS, the time has come for both those in this church who support publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous same gender relationships and those who oppose them to join together in creating a means to continue living together faithfully in the midst of disagreement;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, meeting in Assembly, memorialize the 2009 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the proposed statement, Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust and its implementing resolutions, as recommended by the ELCA Church Council;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Meeting in Assembly, memorialize The 2009 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the four parts of the proposed Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies, as recommended by the ELCA Church Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Meeting in Assembly, memorialize The 2009 Churchwide Assembly to add the following to the implementing resolutions of the document Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

a. That the appropriate churchwide units be directed to develop, in consultation with those most affected, resources for

congregations or faith communities and ministers that choose to do so to support same-gender relationships by holding them publicly accountable in the exchange of promises of lifelong love and fidelity.

b. That the Vocation and Education unit be directed to develop, and the Church Council be directed to approve, procedures for the reception from another Lutheran church body and for the expedited reinstatement to the roster or to candidacy of those whose rostering was precluded by previous policies on same gender relationships.

Submitted by Rev. Joy Gonnerman and the undersigned voting members of the 2009 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly: Marcia Nagel, Jim Nagel, Tom Engstrom, Dottie Barrett, Rev. Robert Albing, Rev. Bruce W. Benson, Allan Bieber, Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner, Zashata Burton, Rev. Joy Gonnerman, Rev. Judy Reitz Gustafson, Rev. Michael A. Gustafson, Rev. Jennifer A. Koenig, Rev. Kristen Schlauderaff, Roger Sween

Rev. Joy Gonnerman rose to speak in favor of the resolution. She commented that this is answers the questions about family raised by an earlier speaker. She also noted that this doesn't force any congregation to participate if they are not comfortable with the blessing. But it gives other congregations that wish to that option. She also noted that the church blesses all sorts of things like building, animals, paraments, etc. and that blessing a relationship should be just as important.

Rev. Theodore Granquist had a question about the language in b. by what is meant by "another Lutheran church body".

Rev. Gonnerman said she was actually thinking about any other Christian church body so pastors who have left the ELCA can come back.

Rev. Granquist offered an amendment to line 91 striking the word "expedited" and inserting the word "case-by-case." The motion to amend was seconded.

Rev. Theodore Granquist commented that no reinstatement should

expedited but rather be done on a case-by-case basis.

There was no further speaking to the amendment and the vote was called.

Voted

SA09.05.23 to amend Resolution 2009-12: A Memorial in Support of the Social Statement on Human Sexuality and the Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies line 91 as follows: ...procedures for the reception from another Lutheran church body and for the expedited case-by-case reinstatement...

Anna Amy, Cross of Christ, Welch has studied the document but is not clear on some items. She made a motion to table the resolution.

The motion was seconded.

The bishop informed the assembly that the motion to table was not debatable and required a simple majority.

The vote was called and the bishop ruled the motion carried.

A division of the house was called from the floor. The bishop called on the Committee on Elections to count the vote.

During the division of the house, a member asked for a point of information. She asked what the vote would be to table. The chair noted that a majority vote was needed to table.

Voted Yes-166; No-145

SA09.05.24 to table Resolution 2009-12: A Memorial in Support of the Social Statement on Human Sexuality and the Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Mr. Mark Bradley, Synod Treasurer, made a motion to adopt the 2010 budget.

The motion was seconded.

Rev. Karen Hanson, Chaplain, Red Wing was recognized to offer an amendment to the proposed 2010 budget to:

1. Increase Luther Seminary to \$150,000;
2. Decrease Personnel \$25,000; and
3. Decrease Board Designated Operating Reserves \$70,000

The motion was seconded.

Rev. Hanson, speaking to the amended commented that she is concerned that Luther requested nearly \$160,000 and the synod is only budgeting \$55,000. Luther Seminary is our primary mission partner and it is our duty to support the seminary.

Mr. Bradley was asked to speak to the amendment. He commented that he understands and is sensitive to how difficult it is to budget. He referred to page 93 and page 95. Using funds from Personnel and the operating reserves would jeopardize funding the Children, Youth and Family staff person and a cut to the sabbatical funds.

Rev. John Carrier, Winona Campus Ministry, noted that it is unfair for the synod staff to bear the brunt of this change. He said we need to increase our giving rather than cut staffing. To cut in the area of youth is where the future is in the church.

Fred Knutson, Our Savior, Owatonna, asked if this is a one year option. What happens in 2011?

Mr. Bradley replied that we can only make this reduction in reserves once.

There was no further speaking to the amendment and the bishop called the assembly to vote on the amendment.

Voted

SA09.05.25 failed to adopt the amendment to the 2010 budget.

Speaking to the motion to adopt the budget, Rev. John Carrier, Winona Campus Ministry said that this synod used to lead the way in support of Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota. This is the mission field of the most unchurched group. He stated again that we

need to increase benevolence and not be a people of fear.

There was no further speaking to the budget and the bishop called for the vote.

Voted

SA09.05.26 to adopt the proposed 2010 budget.

Vice president Gangstad invited the Churchwide Assembly Voting members to join the bishop at the worship center.

Ms. Gangstad called attention to the names on the screen and asked for applause to thank all of these volunteers.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Rev. Karen Behling, Our Savior, Austin and a member of the Book of Faith Initiative task force was introduced. Rev. Behling read Romans 7: 15-25a for the final Dwelling in the Word moment.

CLOSING OF THE ASSEMBLY

Bishop Usgaard gathered the elected Churchwide assembly voters and led the assembly in prayer for them. He then led the assembly in the Litany for the Closing of an Assembly. The assembly ended by singing *O Day of Peace*.

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary
Deborah Norrie, Recorder

Minutes Committee
Helen Nelson, Grace, Waseca
Jeff Setterlund, Bethel, Rochester
Rev. David Rossow, Christ, Byron