



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

**Synod Assembly**  
**May 7-8, 2010**  
**Minutes**

Under the theme **God's work, our hands...Congregations Alive in Communities**, the twenty-third assembly of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America opened with worship at 8:30 AM on Friday, May 7, 2010 in the Exhibit Hall at the Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, Minnesota. Worship was led by Rev. Glenn Monson and Rev. Karen Behling, Our Saviors, Austin. Music was led by members of St. Olaf and Our Saviors Lutheran Church, Austin. Bishop Harold Usgaard preached. The theme of the assembly was God's work, our hands...alive in our communities. At the conclusion of worship, Bishop Usgaard led the assembly in the Litany of the Opening of an Assembly.

*MISSION MOMENT*

The assembly viewed a video *Bible Hands*, one of the video submissions from the ELCA video contest. Rev. Jay Dahlvang was recognized to bring a mission moment on the Bible Book of Faith initiative in the synod.

*CALL TO ORDER*

Bishop Harold Usgaard called the first plenary of the 2010 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly to order at 10:00 AM. He welcomed participants to the assembly.

*INTRODUCTIONS*

Rochester Mayor Ardell Brede, Bethel, Rochester was welcomed to bring a greeting to the assembly.

Bishop Usgaard welcomed a number of special guests: Carlos Pena, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Rev. Paul Baglyos, Region 3 Coordinator, ELCA; Dr. Alex Mkumbo and Dr. Peter Kijanga from the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Dr. Mkumbo and Dr. Kijanga were recognized to bring a greeting from our brothers and sisters in Tanzania.

Bishop Usgaard also recognized synod officers Shirley Gangstad, Vice president; BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary and Mark Bradley, Treasurer. Ronald Jensen, Bethel, Rochester served as parliamentarian.

Seminary graduates assigned to the synod for call were introduced to the assembly: Susan Froehlich, Katie Fick and Barbara Peterson.

*RIVER OF GIVING AWARDS*

Rev. Clark Cary from the synod's World Hunger Task Force addressed the assembly. He reported \$630,970 in giving to ELCA World Hunger projects from this synod. He was assisted by members of the task force in recognizing congregations in the synod for special recognition in their world hunger gifts: Trinity, Blue Earth and Salem, Albert Lea from Blue Earth River Conference; First, Kenyon and Spring Garden,

Cannon Falls from the Cannon River Conference; St. John, Waseca and LeSueur River, New Richland from the Minnesota River Conference; Root Prairie, Fountain and Elstad, Peterson from Root River Conference; and, Grace, Austin and Little Cedar, Adams from the Zumbro River Conference.

The assembly watched another ELCA video contest submission, *Nurturing Soul and Soil*.

#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Rev. Mark Niethammer, Cedar Valley, Winona and Looney Valley, Houston, chair of the Committee on Credentials was called on to bring the credentials report. Other members of the Committee on Credentials were: Rev. David Knox, Faith, Wabasha; Sherry Kuns, Our Savior, Owatonna; Linda Kraushaar, Trondhjem, Hayward; and Karen Peterson, East St. Olaf, Byron.

Lay voters	323
Clergy voters	157
AIM voters	5
Total voters	485
Voice	4
Visitors	30
Total assembly	519

#### ADOPTION OF THE RULES

The bishop called the assembly's attention to the rules as printed on pages 12-19 of the pre-assembly report.

He noted the rule allowing Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities to send voters to the assembly. The bishop introduced the members of two synodically authorized worshipping communities in Faribault, Nile Our Saviors and the Dinka Community, Zumbro, Rochester.

He noted that late resolutions may be submitted until 3:00 PM on Friday.

He announced an error noting that the deadline for nominations is 5:00 Friday rather than 3:00.

He noted a rule on the top of page 16 that reads, "*Unless determined by a majority vote of the assembly, speeches during discussion of motions resolutions shall be limited to three speaking in favor and three opposed*". The bishop announced he would entertain a motion to remove that rule.

Motion,  
Seconded to remove the rule limiting speakers during debate

The bishop called on the assembly to vote by showing their voting cards. He called for a division of the house.

#### Assembly Action

Yes: 254 No: 210

**SA10.05.01 to remove the following rule: *Unless determined by a majority vote of the assembly, speeches during discussion of motions resolutions shall be limited to three speaking in favor and three opposed.***

Motion,  
Seconded to retain the alternating speakers for and against during debate.

#### Assembly Action

**SA10.05.02 to retain the rule of alternating speakers for and against the resolution during debate**

Motion,  
Seconded to adopt the rules as amended

#### Assembly Action

**SA10.05.03 to adopt the rules as amended.**

*ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA*

The bishop called the assembly's attention to the agenda as printed on pages 8-9 and asked for a motion to adopt the agenda.

Motion,

Seconded to adopt the agenda as printed in the pre-assembly report

**Assembly Action**

**SA10.05.04 to adopt the assembly agenda as printed.**

*DWELLING IN THE WORD*

Rev. Nancy Dreier, Zion, Lake Crystal was recognized to offer a moment of Word and prayer.

*REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP, ELCA*

Carlos Pena, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was introduced to bring the Report of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. Mr. Pena related a bit about himself and explained the fury of Hurricane Ike that devastated Galveston Island, his home. He spoke of the support of the church in the aftermath of the storm. The church in communities is brought home when we witness the work of the church in time of disaster. God's work is indeed done by our hands.

Mr. Pena thanked the bishop for his leadership not only in the synod but to the churchwide organization. He also thanked the synod council for their faithful work on behalf of the synod and the whole church.

The assembly watched the video report from Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. Mr. Pena further commented that the ELCA is all of us, the millions of Lutherans serving Christ in this country. The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is an important piece of the ELCA.

*MISSION MOMENT*

The assembly viewed the video *Fair Trade Coffee* and Rev. Fred Rengstorf, Our Savior, Rochester was recognized to bring a mission moment on the Glocal Mission Gathering to be held in the synod in July.

*REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL*

Bishop Usgaard called on Mary Deters, Trinity, Spring Grove, from the Committee on Reference and Counsel to present Resolution 2010-07: Advocate to Stop Usury

Whereas predatory loan practices in the subprime lending industry have increased at an alarming rate and are taking advantage of as well as harming the economic wellbeing of our neighbors who are most financially vulnerable; and

Whereas the bipartisan Minnesota Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020 identified predatory lending as a major cause of poverty entrapment, and in their final recommendations urged legislation to: "Ban predatory practices, including payday loans and refund anticipation loans that are not subject to strict usury laws;" and

Whereas the dramatic increase in the number of predatory loans and the amount of capital flowing through payday lenders are not providing borrowers with a solution to their financial strains, but instead have created a nightmare of debt entrapment for many consumers; and

Whereas our Scriptures, Martin Luther's writing, and the principles found in Lutheran ethical teaching expressed in our ELCA social statements, particularly "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" direct us as Christians in society to advocate for

policies that foster financial practices that do not unfairly take advantage of people who are in need; and

Whereas, as of February 2010, sixteen states and the District of Columbia have banned or instituted interest rate caps on payday lending, and none of the interest rate caps exceed 36% APR, and in 2006 the US Congress limited the interest rate on payday loans to military members and their families to 36% APR;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod in assembly call on our members to learn more about predatory lending abuses and non-usurious alternative practices; and

Be it further resolved that we condemn as usurious any interest rate that exceeds 36% annualized percentage rate APR; and

Be it further resolved that we urge the Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota to advocate with the members of our congregations for legislation that prohibits usurious practices with regulation that limits interest charges in Minnesota to not more than 36% APR.

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

Rev. Al Girtz, Bethlehem, Mankato was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. He related a story of someone who used a credit card to pay medical bills and got into deep financial trouble because of the high interest rates.

Jack Schlichting, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls, rose to speak against the resolution because it doesn't include the high overdraft charges by banks and it doesn't address educating our members about the proper use of credit.

Rev. Clark Cary asked that Rev. Mark Peters be recognized by the assembly. Rev. Mark Peters, Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. His office has been working on this for two years. This is a major concern in the State of Minnesota.

Rev. Don Berg, retired, asked why the 36% was chosen. Rev. Mark Peters answered that the US Congress has set that as the cap. Other states have capped it at 36%.

There was no further speaking to the resolution.

### **Assembly Action**

#### **SA10.05.05 to adopt Resolution 2010-07: Advocate to Stop Usury.**

Ms. Deters returned to present Resolution 2010-04: Proper Use of God's Name in Public Discourse.

Whereas, the use of God's name in public discourse increasingly violates the traditional Judeo-Christian understanding of the Second Commandment;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod (SEMNSynod) in assembly encourage congregations and all people

1. to use God's name in "prayer, praise, and thanksgiving";
2. to avoid using God's name to "curse, swear, lie, or deceive";
3. to exemplify respect for God's name to those who disregard this command in their public discourse;
4. to seek continued amendment of personal public discourse, to the end that all that God has done and continues to do in the world through Jesus Christ is honored; and

Be it further resolved that the SEMN Synod in assembly encourage congregations of the synod

1. to discuss this subject in appropriate congregational settings, such as adult studies, Bible studies, congregation councils, confirmation classes, Sunday schools, youth programs;
2. to read all or parts of this resolution on January 2, 2011, (which could be celebrated as Name of Jesus), or on any Sunday in which the congregation lifts up in a special way the honoring of God's name.

Submitted by Bethel Lutheran Church Council, Rochester, Minnesota.

Rev. Norman Wahl, Bethel, Rochester rose to speak in favor of the resolution. He spoke to his experience of watching television and being appalled at the language. He urges people to use this as an opportunity to teach the proper use of God's name.

Rev. Howard White, Trondhjem, Lonsdale rose to offer an amendment to the first whereas statement. This was ruled out of order.

Rev. White then spoke in opposition to the resolution. Different Christian groups number the commandments differently. Also, Jews differ in their understanding of what the second commandment is. He also feels that the phrase "Judeo-Christian" can be insulting to those who follow the Jewish tradition.

**Assembly Action**  
**SA10.05.06 to adopt Resolution**  
**2010-04: Proper Use of God's Name in**  
**Public Discourse**

*DWELLING IN THE WORD*

Dorothy Gesme, Trinity, Hayfield was recognized to offer a time of

Dwelling in the Word. The bishop invited the assembly to rise and sing the hymn *Rise, Shine*.

Following announcements, the assembly recessed for lunch.

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The second plenary of the 2010 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly was called to order at 1:00 PM, Friday, May 07, 2010.

Bishop Usgaard, Shirley Gangstad and Carlos Pena led the assembly in honoring the pastors who have retired in the last year. Those pastors included Rev. Christine Engstrom, Rev. Joel Erickson, Rev. Ronald Gilthvedt, Rev. Gary Hanson, Rev. Barbara Knutson, Rev. M. Eugene Leiter, Rev. John Malm, Rev. John Miller, Rev. Paul Nelson, Rev. Edward Nieman, Rev. Robert Rendahl and Rev. Steven Ronningen. The pastors in attendance were presented with certificates and retirement pins.

Pastors celebrating ordination anniversaries were honored. Honored for 25 years of ordained ministry: Helen Beckstrand, AIM; Rev. Elaine Siemsen, Rev. Randy Johnson, Rev. Thomas Isaacson, Rev. John Lestock, Rev. Linda Gunderson, Rev. Arne Halbakken and Rev. Karen Hanson.

Honored for 40 years of ministry: Rev. Richard Spande, Rev. Larry Tantow, Rev. David Barker, Rev. Richard Hegal, Rev. Sylvan Hengesteg, Rev. Michael Dobbins, Rev. Michael Lockerby, and Rev. Del Sailer.

Honored for 50 years of ministry: Rev. Donohue Sarff, Rev. Robert Schroeder, Rev. Fred Gonnerman, Rev. Warren Diskerud, Rev. John Friedli, Rev. Charles Anderson, Rev. Paul

Peterson, Rev. Russell Rudolf and Rev. Arthur Lunow.

Honored for 55 years of ministry were Rev. Gerhard Huggenvik, Rev. Robert Paulsen, Rev. Ronald Onnen, Rev. Ivan Fagre and Rev. Roy Hendrickson.

Honored for 65 years of ministry were Rev. Marvin Nygaard, Rev. Bertrand Petrick, Rev. S. M. Schreitmueller, and Rev. Marvin Witte.

These pastors were honored by the assembly and presented with certificates.

#### *MISSION MOMENT*

The assembly watched a video *Inspiring Future Leaders*. Rev. Margaret Sander, Good Shepherd, Wells and the student leaders participating in the Young Servant Leaders Institute (YSLI) offered the assembly a mission moment about leadership training.

#### *REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS*

Rev. Mark Niethammer was called on to bring the report of the Committee on Credentials.

Lay voters	341
Clergy voters	181
AIM voters	5
Total voters	527
Voice	5
Visitors	34
Total assembly	566

Rev. Curtis Zieske, Trinity, Albert Lea the chair of the Synod Nominating Committee was called on to bring report of the nominating committee. Other committee members are Rev. Sarah Nietz, Minneola, Goodhue; Rev. Carl Bruihler, First, LeSueur; Ben Ekern, Root River Conference and Rev. Liz Erickson, St. John, Elkton.

Rev. Zieske reported that nominations were printed in the pre-assembly report on pages 64 - 91. Additional nominations are found on an addendum in your packet. Nominations were not read to the assembly. Additional nominations for any of the listed vacancies may be made by completing the nomination form available at the assembly desk by the stage. The deadline for submitting further nominations is 5:00 PM today, Friday, May 7, 2010.

Rev. Zieske reported the following vacancies on the ballot:

On Ballot 1:

- There is one vacancy on the Augsburg College Corporation Board for a lay or clergy member from Zumbro River Conference.
- On the list of Synod Council nominees, Mr. Glenn Leckband is also an incumbent council member.

On Ballot 3:

- There are two vacancies for alternate clergy voters from Minnesota River Conference. Vacancies may be filled by either male or female clergy.
- There is one vacancy for an alternate clergy voter from Root River Conference. This vacancy may be filled by either male or female clergy.
- There is one vacancy for an alternate clergy voter from Zumbro River Conference. This vacancy may be filled by either male or female clergy.

On the second page of Ballot 3:

- There are two vacancies for alternate lay female voters from Root River Conference.
- There is one vacancy for an alternate multicultural female voter. This vacancy may be filled from any conference.

#### *REPORT OF THE TREASURER*

Treasurer Mark Bradley was introduced to bring the treasurer's report. Mr. Bradley pointed out the audit report beginning on page 92 of the pre-assembly report. The 2009 spending to the 2009 budget was printed on pages 107-108; his report of 2009 activity is found on page 111; and the revised 2010 and proposed 2011 budgets are printed on pages 112-113.

Mr. Bradley reported that undesignated giving from congregations was 4.7% under plan and 1.2% less than 2008. He reported that 2009 spending was 5% under plan due to staffing decisions and ELCA stewardship support. The synod council authorized distribution of the 2009 surplus to web redevelopment, the Mission Development Fund, Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota, and Luther Seminary.

He also reported that much of the investment loss reported in 2008 has been recovered in 2009.

He noted that the 2011 proposed budget would be voted on during the third plenary on Saturday. Any budget amendments can be turned in to the assembly table by 5:00 PM Friday. He further reported on the cuts to the 2010 adopted budget.

Bishop Usgaard asked if there were questions regarding the budget presentation.

Rev. Elaine Siemsen, interim, LeRoy, LeRoy, highlighted the reduction to campus ministry. She noted that campus pastors have taken a 20% cut in salary and this is painful.

#### *BIBLE STUDY*

Vice president Gangstad assumed the chair to introduce the Bible study leader, Bishop Usgaard. Bishop Harold Usgaard

led the assembly in a study of Philippians. At the end of the study session he led the assembly in singing *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*.

Bishop Usgaard announced that he was reversing his ruling that whereas statements in resolutions cannot be amended. According to Robert's Rules of Order, the whereas statements can only be amended when all the resolved statement amendments have been done. He asked if there was someone who would move to reconsider Resolution 2010-04: Proper Use of God's Name in Public Discourse. Such a motion can only be made by someone who voted in the affirmative.

Motion,  
Seconded to reconsider Resolution 2010-04.

#### **Assembly Action**

**SA10.05.07 to reconsider Resolution 2010-04: Proper Use of God's Name in Public Discourse.**

Rev. Howard White was recognized and made a motion to strike "Judeo-Christian" in Resolution 2010-04 and substitute "Lutheran". The motion was seconded. There was no speaking to the amendment and the bishop called on the assembly to vote on the amendment.

#### **Assembly Action**

**SA10.05.08 to amend Resolution 2010-04 by striking "Judeo-Christian" and substituting "Lutheran".**

The bishop then called on the assembly to vote on the amended resolution.

**Assembly Action  
SA10.05.09 to adopt amended  
Resolution 2010-04: Proper Use of  
God's Name in Public Discourse.**

Mary Deters, Committee on Reference and Counsel presented Resolution 2010-05: Amendments to Southeastern Minnesota Synod Constitution.

Whereas the 2009 Churchwide Assembly adopted amendments that are optional provisions to synod constitutions; and

Whereas these amendments may be adopted by the Synod Assembly on a majority vote at an assembly under †S18.12;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the 2010 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly adopt the optional amendments as stated in the Official Notice of Required Provisions. Proposed document follows.

Submitted by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council, BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary.

Bishop Usgaard directed the assembly to the attached information and explained the constitutional changes being made.

There was no discussion and the bishop called for a vote.

**Assembly Action  
SA10.05.10 to adopt Resolution  
2010-05: Amendments to  
Southeastern Minnesota Synod  
Constitution**

Fred Knutson, Our Savior, Owatonna was recognized to ask a question about the earlier vote. He was informed that the rules were on page 133 of Robert's Rules of Order, 10<sup>th</sup> edition.

Mary Deters presented Resolution 2010-01: Resolution Regarding Augsburg Fortress Pension Plan Termination.

Whereas the ELCA social statement entitled, "Economic Life: Sufficient Sustainable Livelihood for All," promotes economic justice, and

Whereas Augsburg Fortress Publishers (AFP) is legally incorporated as "The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," and a unit of this church, and

Whereas AFP has terminated its defined benefit pension plan reducing the pension payments expected through this plan;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod in assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to investigate means to restore lost pension benefits for current and retired employees of Augsburg Fortress; and

Be it further resolved that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod in assembly memorialize the ELCA to initiate an independent investigation to determine how the AFP pension program came to be underfunded. Submitted by the undersigned: Rev. Zane Anderson, Rev. Betsy Dartt, Rev. Wade Davick, Rev. Kerry Eversole, Rev. Stephanie Frey, Rev. Gail Klavetter, Rev. Roger Knudson, Rev. Roger Michaelson, Rev. Mark Niethammer, Rev. Scott Olson, Rev. Lynne Rigg, Rev. Mary Waudby, Rev. Lane Zaffke

Rev. Stephanie Frey, Trinity, Spring Grove rose to speak in favor of the resolution. She commented that this has caused extreme hardship on some retirees. She would like to know how it came to be so severely underfunded when it was fully funded in 2001. We

advocate for justice around the world and rightly so. What about justice for those who work for the church?

Rev. Joseph Crippen asked who is being memorialized in this resolution. Who will this go to?

The bishop explained that an assembly memorializes another assembly. This would go to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. It might be better to ask the synod council to memorialize the ELCA church council.

Rev. Rolf Wangberg commented that the writers of this resolution didn't know whom to memorialize.

Rev. Stephanie Frey stated that she would be happy to have the synod council memorialize the ELCA church council as a more immediate response.

Rev. Elaine Siemsen made a motion to table the resolution to give the authors an opportunity to revise the resolution. The motion was seconded.

**Assembly Action**  
**SA10.05.11 to table Resolution**  
**2010-01: Resolution Regarding**  
**Augsburg Fortress Pension Plan**  
**Termination.**

The assembly watched a video greeting from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia.

Vice president Gangstad made several announcements and introduced Rev. Linda Gunderson to introduce the workshops: 1. What is this missional church led by Rev. Linda Gunderson; 2. Ethnic ministries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with Rev. Peter Reuss and the African leaders; 3. Lutherans talk about Jesus – a workshop for shy Lutherans led by Rev. David Wangaard; 4. We pray for our pastors, congregations and communities led by Rev. Kathie Nycklemoe; and 5.

Challenges to our communities with Bonnie Rietz and Kyle Nordine.

*DWELLING IN THE WORD*

Joanne Revoir, Our Saviors, Austin was recognized for a Dwelling in the Word.

The assembly closed the plenary by singing *Lord you Gave the Great Commission*.

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The assembly was recessed until the Service of Morning Prayer on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM. Workshops were offered twice and the assembly gathered at 5:30 PM in the Auditorium for a buffet supper.

Following the meal, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Endowment Committee made scholarship and debt retirement grants. Recipients of Fund for Leaders in Mission Scholarships were: Katherine Chatelaine, Trinity, Owatonna; Wal Reat, Nile Our Saviors, Faribault; Cassandra Sauter, Spring Garden, Cannon Falls and Michael Walerius, Trinity, Owatonna.

Recipients of First Call Debt Retirement grants were: Rev. Emily Carson, Rev. Andrea Myers, Rev. Leslie Neist, Rev. Mark Niethammer and Rev. Charlie Ruud.

Mark Peterson, President of Lutheran Social Service Minnesota was introduced. He called on members of Our Savior's, Austin to come forward for the presentation of the LSS 2010 Servant of Christ award.

*DWELLING IN THE WORD*

Rev. Andrew Myers, associate pastor, Grace, Albert Lea offered a Dwelling in the Word moment.

Bishop Usgaard then introduced Dr. Richard Torgerson, President of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa and Ms. Louise Hemstead, La Farge, Wisconsin and a member of the ELCA Church Council. Along with Carlos Pena, these guests led a panel discussion of the ELCA's Living into the Future Together (LIFT).

The ELCA Church Council has commissioned a task force to develop and recommend options for the future of the ELCA in light of its identity, changes in its environment and its call to God's mission.

At the conclusion of the panel discussion, Bishop Usgaard offered closing prayer.



The 2010 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly gathered for a Service of Morning Prayer on Saturday, May 08, 2010 at 8:30 AM. Rev. Linda Gunderson and Larry Iverson served as worship leaders. Rev. Peter Reuss and the Sudanese Synodically Authorized Worship Leaders Wal Reat and Kamen Makwar read from Acts in English, Nuer and Dinka. Carlos Pena preached.

*CALL TO ORDER*

Following worship, Vice president Gangstad called the third plenary to order.

*REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS*

Rev. Mark Niethammer was called on to present the report of the Committee on Credentials.

Lay voters	354
Clergy voters	186
AIM voters	5
Total voters	545
Voice	6
Visitors	35
Total Assembly	586

*BIBLE STUDY*

Vice president Gangstad assumed the chair and called on Bishop Usgaard to continue his study on Philippians. At the end of the study session he led the assembly in singing *Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service*.

*MISSION MOMENT*

The assembly watched a video, *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church After School Program* and Mary Kinde, Christ Through Hands Ministry, Faribault presented a mission moment. Part of the presentation included honoring the St Olaf College Student Congregation for their volunteer work for Christ Through Hands.

*REPORT OF THE SYNOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE*

Rev. Curtis Zieske was called on to present the nominations received from the assembly. Rev. Elaine Siemsen was nominated for the Augsburg College Corporation Board from Zumbro River Conference. Rev. Dean Smith was nominated for 2011 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members – Clergy Alternates from Minnesota River. Robert Hanson was an additional nomination for 2011 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members – Lay Male Alternate from Blue Earth River Conference. Amalie Niethammer was nominated for 2011 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members – Lay

Female Alternates from Root River Conference.

Motion,  
Seconded to cast a unanimous ballot.

Jack Schlichting, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls, objected to the unanimous ballot. The bishop directed the assembly to cast their ballots for all slots.

Fred Knutson, Our Savior, Owatonna asked if the rules could be suspended and the vote could be done by acclamation? The parliamentarian ruled that there had been an objection to a unanimous ballot.

#### *DWELLING IN THE WORD*

Milly Halverson, Trinity, Spring Grove was called on to bring a Dwelling in the Word moment. The bishop led the assembly in singing *This Little Light of Mine*.

#### *REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL*

Julia Accola of the Committee on Reference and Counsel was introduced to present the re-written Resolution 2010-02: Resolution to Rescind Social Statement – “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” and the Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies.

Whereas the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) 2009 Churchwide Assembly (2009 CWA) adopted the Social Statement—“Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust;” and

Whereas the 2009 CWA also adopted the Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies (RRMP) which calls on the ELCA

1. to "commit itself to bear one another's burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all;" and

2. to "respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree; declared the intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making about candidacy and the call process; eliminated the prohibition of rostered service by members in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous same-gender relationships; recognized and committed to respect the conviction of members who believe that the ELCA should not call or roster people in committed same-gender relationships; called for development of accountability guidelines; directed that appropriate amendments to ministry policy documents be drafted and approved by the church council; and urged that this church continue to trust congregations, bishops, synods and others responsible for determining who should be called into public ministry;" and

Whereas the ELCA Constitution calls this church

1. to: (4.02.f) "Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives;" and

2. to: (5.03.j) "Assure faithfulness to this church's confessional position and purpose and provide for resolution of disputes;" and

Whereas some contend that the Social Statement and RRMP have resulted in an increase in membership losses, congregational and pastoral divisions, synodical financial losses, and an increase in congregational departures;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod recognize that these changes have wounded the Church, bringing division, pain, and losses; and

Be it further resolved that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, in recognition of the divisiveness of these ministry changes and financial and membership losses, memorialize the 2011 Churchwide assembly

1. to rescind the social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust";
2. to rescind the 2009 ministry policy changes;
3. to rescind the implementing resolution; and
4. to uphold and commend the entire church to continued study of Holy Scripture in regard to sexual norms and boundaries for sexual behavior as we seek to be united around and faithful to God.

*Submitted by Blue Earth River Conference in Assembly*

Rev. Dan Baker, First, Albert Lea rose to speak in favor of the resolution. He noted that the church changed in August 2009. He believes the changes are unwise and unlivable. He noted the distress of some ecumenical partners. He quoted a number of African Lutheran leaders.

Rev. Richard Jorgenson speaking against the resolution said we are all "pick and choose" Biblical literalists. He noted that 150 years ago the church debated slavery. Fifty years ago the church debated apartheid. Both used the bible to defend the position.

Rev. Cary Larson spoke in favor of the resolution. He quoted Jesus as saying a house divided against itself cannot stand. He questioned the unity we talk about in the ELCA.

Rev. Sarah Nietz was recognized to speak against the resolution. She noted that as Lutherans we read the bible through the lens of Jesus. If we are to read the bible literally there are a lot of

things that Jesus said we also need to take literally.

Rev. Julie Fiske spoke in favor of the resolution. She noted that perhaps because of discord caused by the decisions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly we need to consider that a mistake was made. Sometimes we do make mistakes and need to reconsider.

Linda Flom Raschke, Messiah, North Mankato spoke against the resolution. She believes that the church has studied this for many years. She believes the decisions were spirit led. She also pointed out that there are many families that have returned to the church. We have had gay and lesbian clergy for years, it is time to celebrate the varied gifts.

Rev. Roger Michaelson, Rushford, Rushford, spoke in favor of the resolution. He believes that if we are serious about mission we will rescind the social statement and the ministry policies.

Jonathan Heimer, Christ, Faribault, rose in opposition to the resolution. There is a new church in his community that claims to interpret the Bible literally. He finds it to be filled with hate. The ELCA has been a church of openness and acceptance and he feels ashamed that some parts of the ELCA want to go backwards.

Collette Krenik, Our Saviors, Cleveland rose to speak in favor of the resolution. She finds this resolution an answer to prayer. She is troubled by the churchwide assembly actions.

The question was called. The bishop called for a vote on ending debate. The bishop declared the debate ended.

The bishop then called on the assembly to vote on Resolution 2010-02. The bishop called for a division of the house.

## Assembly Actions

Yes 178 No 294

### **SA10.05.11 to defeat Resolution 2010-02: Resolution to Rescind Social**

Julia Accola presented Resolution 2010-03: Memorial to Change Social Statement Ratification Procedure

Be it resolved that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod in assembly memorialize the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Church Council to present for consideration by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly a procedure that would require Synodical ratification of Social statements and amendments to Churchwide governing documents.  
*Submitted by the Blue Earth River Conference in Assembly*

Rev. Cary Larson spoke in favor of the resolution. He called upon the church to use due process in decisions. How could these decisions be made? The voting members don't represent us? He criticized the lobbying that goes on among the voting members.

Rev. Elaine Siemsen, LeRoy, LeRoy spoke against the resolution. She pointed out that the conversation has been going on for 20 years. She pointed out that perhaps she, as a pastor, has failed to bring these things to her members.

Rev. Dan Baker, First, Albert Lea spoke in favor of the resolution. Even though the Churchwide assembly is the highest legislative authority they never meet again, they never read the minutes. Is this the best way to do this? Other churches use a ratification process. Let the whole church speak rather than leave the church in a quagmire. Let the churches wrestle with the social statements.

Rev. Michael Mandsager, First English, Faribault rose to speak in opposition to the resolution. He pointed

out that we have had a long process of studying and responding on these issues including our synod assemblies. He also noted that the congregations are us, the synod is us and the Churchwide assembly is us. He disagrees that we are not united. We disagree on this issue but our unity is in Christ. The process did work.

Collette Krenik spoke in favor of the resolution. She felt her congregation was not informed of what was going on with the social statement that came to the churchwide assembly.

Rev. Steve Kidder, Christ the King, Mankato spoke against the resolution. His congregation did study the social statement. His congregation has had a time of discernment to express their feelings about the issue. People do have an opportunity to express their opinions and the process does work. He believes the Holy Spirit is at work in the churchwide assembly.

Rev. Mark Granquist, Luther Seminary spoke in favor of the resolution. The question is not about what happened with the sexuality social statement, but about whether or not the process should change. Should the wider church ratify what the churchwide assembly does?

Linda Flom Raschke, Messiah, North Mankato spoke in opposition. As a layperson we are not meant to be spoon-fed. It is our responsibility to study these issues. It is a cop out to say we didn't get the information when it is available. This resolution would tie the hands of the assembly.

Rev. Kevin Woestehoff asked if this passed what would change. The bishop responded that where constitution issues are involved it takes two votes at two different assemblies.

Passing a social statement is a six year process. A churchwide assembly requests the statement. Julia Accola, Good Shepherd, Rochester who serves on the Church in Society Program Unit Board, explained the process of social statement development. The task force is selected, a study is created and sent out to congregations for comments from congregations and individuals. The draft statement is published and hearings are held in each synod. The final draft goes to the church council which releases the document to the church and it is adopted or defeated at the churchwide assembly.

Paul Overgaard, First, Albert Lea spoke in favor of the resolution. He pointed out this is a governance issue. He thinks that leadership would want people to be more involved in the decisions of the church. We have not been involved. It may be our own fault. But instead of wishing to diminish governance activities would push us to be involved.

Jonathan Heimer, Christ, Faribault spoke in opposition. He asked how many members are in the ELCA. Are they all going to have a vote? Is this practical? Is this what it means? The bishop explained that it says to consider a synodical ratification.

The question was called. The assembly voted to end debate and the bishop called the assembly to vote on the resolution. The bishop called for a division of the house.

### **Assembly Actions**

Yes 234 No 225

**SA10.05.12 to adopt Resolution 2010-03: Memorial to Change Social Statement Ratification Procedure**

### *ADOPTION OF THE 2011 BUDGET*

Treasurer Mark Bradley announced that no budget amendments were received and he made a motion to adopt the proposed 2011 budget.

Rev. Elaine Siemsen made a motion to direct the synod budget amount for Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota be directed to the two synodical campus ministry sites. The bishop ruled the motion out of order. The six Minnesota synods have an agreement to support Lutheran Campus Ministry Minnesota.

Anna Amy, Cross of Christ, Welch asked what happens if we don't have money to meet the budget. Mark Bradley answered that we adjust spending as the year plays out and we have reserves at our disposal. Also, this is the 2011 budget that the synod council may adjust downward if necessary.

Julia Accola, Good Shepherd, Rochester commented on the crisis in campus ministry. She suggested that members have the option to give to campus ministry.

### **Assembly Action**

**SA10.05.13 to adopt the 2011 budget.**

The assembly viewed a video, *Take and Eat*.

### *REPORT OF THE BISHOP, SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD*

Shirley Gangstad assumed the chair and introduced Bishop Usgaard to deliver his report to the assembly.

The bishop asked the assembly to rise as he had a moment of prayer for the pastors who have died in the last year. Those pastors were: Rev. Gordon Rasmussen, Rev. Vincent Aaker, Rev. Jennings Feroe, Rev. Rolf Aaseng, Rev. Harlan Blockhus, Rev. Loren Halvorson,

Rev. Robert Harter and Rev. Joel Rustad.

The bishop called on the outgoing synod council members to be recognized. They were introduced to the assembly and presented with gifts. The assembly celebrated their service with warm applause. The outgoing council members were: Craig Nelson, Dorothy Gesme, Rev. Roger Claxton, Karen Ortloff, Rev. Tammy Dahlvang and Vonda Humburg.

Two others were recognized for their service to the synod. BettyAnn Hernke, the Synod Secretary has served as secretary for 9 years. Mark Bradley has served as treasurer for 4 years. Both are retiring. They were presented with gifts, thanked for their service and recognized with warm applause by the assembly.

The bishop recognized the synod staff: Rev. Linda Gunderson, Larry Iverson, Rev. Peter Reuss, Deborah Ann Norrie, Kari MacIver, Katie Livingood, Cheryse Brenno Sloan and Kathy Bolin.

God's work, our hands....in Our Communities. It's about mission. The bishop reminded that it has always been about mission for the church. It is not only about mission by sending others to be missionaries. We have mission responsibilities here, in our own communities. He invited several members of the assembly to relate the work happening in their communities. He reminded the assembly of the partnership congregations have with the ELCA. He noted the constitutional items that foster the interdependent relationship of congregation-synod-Churchwide. It is about relationship and responsibility. He reminded the assembly that the work of the assembly is their work. The call from the Lord to be a church in mission is what keeps him going and he is blessed.

The assembly received his report with warm applause.

#### *DWELLING IN THE WORD*

At the conclusion of the bishop's report Rev. Kristin Schlauderaff, St. Paul's, Red Wing offered a Dwelling in the Word moment. The bishop led the assembly in singing *O Zion, Haste*.

The assembly was recessed for lunch.

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Bishop Usgaard called the fourth plenary to order at 1:00 PM. The assembly watched the video *Parish Nursing – Prince of Peace*, La Crescent, Minnesota – the award winning video in the ELCA video contest.

#### *REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS*

Rev. Mark Niethammer was welcomed by the assembly to bring the last report of the Credentials Committee:

Lay voter	355
Clergy voters	190
AIM voters	5
Total voters	550
Voice	6
Visitors	35
Total Assembly	591

#### *REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL*

The bishop entertained a motion to remove Resolution 2010-01 from the table. The motion was made and seconded.

Rev. Stephanie Frey offered the amending language to the resolution.

Therefore be it resolute that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod in assembly **direct its Synod council to memorialize the ELCA Church**

**Council: 1. to investigate means to restore lost pension benefits for current and retired employees of Augsburg Fortress; and 2. to initiate an independent investigation to determine how the AFP pension program came to be underfunded.**

The amending motion was seconded.

Rev. Frey spoke to the resolution. She was grateful for the time taken to improve the resolution and thanked the Reference and Counsel Committee and Vice president Carlos Pena for their assistance. She hopes that people will vote for the resolution.

Carlos Pena was asked to speak to the resolution as the leader of the church council. He thanked the assembly for their hospitality. Regarding the resolution he noted that the ELCA is joined in the lawsuit. He is limited in what he can say. Because of the lawsuit they will not be able to act on the resolution. Until the suit is settled there is no action that can be taken.

Rev. Stephanie Frey commented that she doesn't consider Mr. Pena's comments a reason not to pass the resolution. This resolution puts the request on record.

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

**Assembly Action  
SA10.05.14 to adopt the  
amendment to Resolution 2010-01:  
Resolution Regarding Augsburg  
Fortress Pension Plan Termination.**

Rev. Rolf Wangberg rose to speak in favor of the resolution. He believes that Augsburg Fortress did the correct thing in ending the defined benefit plan. He does believe that it asks the church to talk about what happened and to look at

ways that lost pensions could be restored.

Rita Garrison, Central, Winona was recognized to speak in favor of the resolution. She has lost her pension and thinks this should be investigated.

There was no further speaking to the resolution.

**Assembly Action  
SA10.05.15 Resolution 2010:01 was  
passed as amended.**

Julia Accola presented Resolution 2010-06: 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 2010 Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly adopt the revised document, 2011-2012 Minimum Compensation and Benefits Guidelines for Pastors, Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers, and lay professionals serving in congregations in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Submitted by the Southeastern Minnesota Synod's Lay and Clergy Leadership development Team, Ms. Karen Ortloff, Chair.

Bishop Usgaard called on John Petersburg, a member of the task force that developed the guidelines, to speak about the guidelines. Mr. Petersburg stated that working group knows that congregations want to pay their pastors a fair wage. Last year the beginning salary was adjusted to bring it in line with nearby synods. But that survey also showed that the longer serving pastors had a higher level guideline. The working group has taken this into consideration in this new document.

Jack Schlichting, St. Ansgar, Cannon Falls rose to speak in favor of the resolution. He thinks this was well done and easy to use. He pointed out that these are guidelines. Some congregations will have to pay more but other congregations will be challenged to meet the guidelines.

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

**Assembly Action**  
**SA10.05.15 to adopt**  
**Resolution 2010-06: Minimum**  
**Compensation and Benefits**  
**Guidelines.**

*BIBLE STUDY*

Shirley Gangstad assumed the chair and introduced the bishop to present his final bible study. The bishop concluded his Bible study on the Book of Philippians. At the conclusion of the study he lead the assembly in singing *Lord Jesus, You Shall be my Song*.

*MISSION MOMENT*

The assembly watched a video: KidsKrew Summer Program and received a mission moment from Chad Campbell, Good Earth Village.

*REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR ELECTIONS*

Bishop Usgaard called on the Committee for Elections to deliver their report. The committee was comprised of: Rev. Betsy Dartt, Greenfield, Harmony; Rev. Matthew Griggs, Central Freeborn & East Freeborn, Albert Lea; Dave Reedstrom, Calvary, Rapidan; Joanne Flugstad, First, Lake City; and Loren Else, Mount Olive, Rochester. Rev. Matt Griggs, chair, delivered the report of the Committee for Elections. Elected were:

Synod Treasurer: John Petersburg  
Synod Secretary: Jodie Archer  
Blue Earth Conference alternate  
male voting member: Craig Nelson  
Write in for alternate female  
multicultural: Nyayoka Deng, Nile Our Savior's, Faribault

Elected to the Augsburg College Corporation Board: Rev. Jason Bryan-Wegner, Ms. Diane Jungbluth, Rev. Jeffrey Laeger-Hagemeister, Rev. Mark Niethammer, Rev. Shelly Olson, Ms. Sheila Opsal, Rev. Charles Ruud, Rev. Elaine Siemsen.

Elected to the Committee on Consultation: Lori Ruthenbeck

Elected to the Committee on Discipline: James Nagel

Elected to the Synod Council: Magok Alim, Tim Bremseth, Allan Bieber, Rev. Josh Ehrler, Rev. Kathy Fullarton, Karen Hagen, Bonnie Hermann, Barbara Kittelson, Glenn Leckband, Rev. Julie Malone, Rev. Peter Nycklemoe, Rev. David Rossow, Zachary Battel and Samantha Stanley.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Members – Clergy: Rev. Wendy Anderson, Rev. Matthew Griggs, Rev. Arthur Sharot, Rev. Michael Mandsager, Rev. Albert Girtz, Rev. Nancy Hansen, Rev. Gail Klavetter, Rev. Leah McDowell, Rev. Kristi Koppel and Rev. Karna Hagen.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Members – Lay Males: Craig Ludtke, Burton Will, Mel Strand, Arland Henderson, and Ron Jensen.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Members – Lay Female: Andrea Jensen, Erica Staab, Colette Krenik, Karen Nelson, Sonja Cook, Mary Overvold-Ronningen.

Churchwide Assembly Voting Members – Youth: Jonathan Heimer

Churchwide Assembly Voting  
Members – Young Adult: Anna Wencil  
Churchwide Assembly Voting  
Members – Multicultural Male: Jake  
Torrez

Churchwide Assembly Voting  
Members – Multicultural Female: Mary  
Godi

Alternate Churchwide Assembly  
Voting Members – Clergy: Rev. Carrie  
McElfresh, Rev. Curtis Zieske, Rev. Dan  
Forsgren, Rev. Kathleen Lowery, Rev.  
Dean Smith, Rev. Dennis Timmerman,  
Rev. Leslie Neist.

Alternate Churchwide Assembly  
Voting Members – Lay Male: Craig  
Nelson, Bob Hanson, Robert Holmen,  
Ward Ask, Donald Baum, Darold  
Bothun.

Alternate Churchwide Assembly  
Voting Members – Lay Female: Mary  
Laeger-Hagemester, Kris Portinga,  
Glenda Granowski, Amalie Niethammer,  
Stephanie Quigg.

Alternate Churchwide Assembly  
Voting Members – Youth: Megan  
Brown

Alternate Churchwide Assembly  
Voting Members – Young Adult: Tasha  
Exe

Alternate Churchwide Assembly  
Voting Members – Multicultural Male:  
Moses Godi

Churchwide Assembly Voting  
Members – Multicultural Female:  
Nyoyoka Deng

Bishop Usgaard quoted Bishop  
Hanson who said, “It is not an election  
won; it is a call received.” He thanked  
all who have accepted the call to serve  
and lead in the church.

There were no further resolutions to  
bring before the assembly. The assembly  
viewed a final video **God’s work**.

#### *DWELLING IN THE WORD*

Kathy Bolin, Bethel, Rochester was  
called on to bring a final Dwelling in the  
Word.

Bishop Usgaard thanked the  
assembly for their attention, for their  
input, for their Holy Stories. He hoped  
that they received as much as they have  
given. He also asked them to share the  
experience with their congregations and  
to share the excitement of the church in  
their communities.

The bishop called on the assembly to  
sing *I Love to Tell the Story* while the  
Congregational Mission Interpreters  
gathered at the worship center. Ms.  
Gangstad led the assembly in a prayer of  
consecration for the synod mission  
interpreters.

#### *CLOSING OF THE ASSEMBLY*

Bishop Usgaard led the assembly in  
the litany for the closing of the assembly  
and led the assembly in singing the  
closing hymn, *Now Thank we all our  
God*.

The assembly adjourned at 2:20 PM.

BettyAnn Hernke, Secretary  
Deborah Ann Norrie, Recorder

Minutes Committee  
Genie Hanson  
Larry Iverson  
Rev. Van Miller  
Helen Nelson