

**MINUTES OF THE
TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR SYNOD ASSEMBLY OF THE
METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**May 31-June 1, 2013
Westchester Marriott Hotel, Tarrytown, New York**

The Assembly began with the opening Eucharist at 10:00 am, with Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo preaching and Pr. Kathleen Koran presiding.
At the conclusion of the Eucharist, Bishop Rimbo led the assembled in the rite for the Opening of an Assembly.

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2013

PLENARY SESSION I

At 11:15 am Bishop Rimbo called to order the first plenary session of the Assembly, saying:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

I welcome you to the 22nd Regular Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is a delight to see all of you and I look forward to working with you.

I am here to facilitate our time together. In general, I don't like using a gavel and will only do so to catch your attention. I ask that you direct your questions, statements and requests to me as the chair, even when you are debating another voting member. When necessary I will seek the counsel of others, but for the sake of good order, please speak directly to me.

We follow the rules of the assembly which we will review in a few moments. These largely rely on Roberts' Rules of Order, the most current edition. The goal of the rules is to keep conversation and debate lively and civil.

Finally, I want to remind you that you are here as a voting member of this assembly. As in our Sunday gathering around Word and Sacrament, worship and prayer will be central to our time together. As a voting member, you are not here to represent your congregation or conference, at least not in the sense that legislators allegedly represent you in government. You are here to participate in the life of this synod, to express your opinions and to vote according to your conscience. This is a central principal of the ecclesiology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and of our Synod which we will make every effort to observe and uphold.

Again, welcome in the Name of Jesus our Savior and Lord.

Bishop Rimbo then introduced Pr. Kathleen Koran and Ms. Leila Johnson as the hosts for the plenary session, and Pr. Robert Modr as Assembly Chaplain.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Minerva Melendez gave the registration report.

Clergy	146
Lay Voting Members	213
Total Voting members	<u>359</u>
Visitors	<u>68</u>
Total Attendance	427

Bishop Rimbo introduced Mr. Tony De LaRosa as the Parliamentarian for the assembly. Mr. De LaRosa is Interim Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of New York City. He is certified as a Professional Registered Parliamentarian by the National Organization of Parliamentarians, the highest level of certification in Robert’s Rules of Order and has served for 25 years with several national entities within the Presbyterian Church and is currently a director member of the Board of Pensions of the PCUSA. Bishop Rimbo stated that as presiding officer of the Assembly, he will confer privately with the Parliamentarian on matters of procedure and that questions from the floor will be directed to the Parliamentarian directly only by point of order.

Bishop Rimbo then introduced the Assembly Planning Committee Chair, Ms. Elizabeth Hoffman, a member of Trinity, Rocky Point, who has served on synod council and as a voting member of the churchwide assembly. Ms. Hoffman introduced the hotel liaison persons on her committee.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda for the assembly was adopted as presented.

Bishop Rimbo asked those speaking in favor of or against a matter before the assembly to do so at one of the microphone, holding up a red or green card, and noted that they will be limited to three minutes.

**Metropolitan New York Synod
Agenda
Friday, May 31 - Saturday, June 1, 2013**

Friday, May 31, 2013

8:00 am	Registration
9:00	Worship Rehearsal
9:30	Orientation
10:00	Eucharist and Opening of the Assembly

PLENARY SESSION I

HOSTS: Staff: Pr. Kathleen Koran /APC: Leila Johnson

- 11:15 Welcome
Bp. Robert Rimbo
- 11:17 Introduction of Assembly Chaplain, Pr. F. Robert Modr
Bp. Rimbo
- 11:19 Registration and Attendance Report
Ms. Minerva Melendez
- 11:21 Introduction of the Parliamentarian/Mr. Tony De LaRosa
Bp. Rimbo
- 11:23 Introduction of the Assembly Planning Committee Chair
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann
- 11:25 Adoption of the Agenda
Bp. Rimbo
- 11:27 Rules and Procedures
Bp. Rimbo
- 11:29 Introduction of Chair, Committee on Reference and Counsel
Ms. Renée Wicklund, Esq.
- 11:31 Introduction of the ELCA Representative: Pr. Gregory Villalon
Bp. Rimbo
- 11:32 Introduction of Synod Officers and Synod Council
Bp. Rimbo
- 11:35 Synod Council Report
Ms. Maria del Toro, Vice-President
- 11:50 Song
“Claimed, Gathered and Sent”
- 11:55 Announcements
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann
- 11:57 Prayer
Pr. F. Robert Modr, Chaplain
- 12:00 LUNCH
Tarrytown Ballroom, Garden Terrace or on your own

PLENARY SESSION II

HOSTS: **STAFF: Pr. Jonathan Linman / APC: Pr. Marc Herbst**

- 1:15 pm Bible Study
Bp. Rimbo
- 2:00 ELCA - Justice for Women
Ms. Fern Lee Hagedorn
- 2:05 Report of the Treasurer
Mr. Frank Suttell
- 2:10 Presentation of the Proposed 2013 Revised Budget and 2014 Budget
Mr. Edward Wagner, Chair Financial Management Committee (FMC)
Mr. Frank Suttell, Treasurer (discussion at Budget Breakfast)

- 2:20 Presentation of the Ten Year Plan
Mr. Edward Wagner, Chair: FMC
- 2:40 Mission Moment
Pr. Katrina Foster, St. Michael's, Amagansett
- 2:55 BREAK
- 3:15 Registration and Attendance Report
Ms. Minerva Melendez
- 3:17 Qwizdom Voting Devices Explanation
Drew Wilson, Qwizdom Rep
- 3:19 Song
"Claimed, Gathered and Sent"
- 3:22 Reference and Counsel I
Ms. Renee Wicklund
- 3:55 ELCA Report
Pr. Greg Villalon
- 4:30 Report of the Strategic Plan (Part I)
Ms. Maria del Toro / Mr. Tom Massey / Pr. Emily Scott, Chair,
- CLAIMED
- 5:25 Song
"Claimed, Gathered and Sent"
- 5:30 Ecumenical Guest Greetings
Bp. Andrew Dietsche, The Episcopal Diocese of New York
Bp. David Benke, Atlantic District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
- 5:40 Report on the Process for the Election of a Synodical Bishop
Pr. Robert Schoepflin
- 5:50 Announcements
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann
- 5:55 Prayer
Pr. F. Robert Modr, Chaplain
- 6:00 Dinner
Tarrytown Ballroom, Garden Terrace or on your own
- 7:30 Forums / Receptions / Prayer at the End of the Day
- **Evangelism for today: Your congregation's web presence:** *Westchester*
 - **Luther's two-fold kingdom or separation of church and state?:** *Irvington*
 - **How to avoid hearing "Book 'em Danno" over the church books :** *Lyndhurst*
 - **Not your grandparents' church: New models for ministry today:** *Westchester A*
 - **Spark: Igniting faith conversations in community:** *Hudson*
 - **Portico Benefit Services Reception:** *Sleepy Hollow*
 - **Wartburg Reception:** *Dutchess*
- Rooms are subject to change. Prayer at the End of the Day will conclude each forum or reception.*

Saturday, June 1

6:30-8:00 Breakfast: Tarrytown Ballroom, Garden Terrace
7:00 Budget Breakfast
8:00 Morning Prayer

PLENARY SESSION III

HOSTS: **STAFF: Pr. Jack Horner / APC: Pr. Stephanie Pope**

8:30 am Call to Order
 Bp. Rimbo

8:32 Registration and Attendance Report
 Ms. Melendez

8:34 Prayer
 Pr. F. Robert Modr, Chaplain

8:36 SANDY Disaster Response
 Pr. Craig Miller

9:00 Candidacy Report
 Pr. Jeff Kolbo

9:10 Recognition of Anniversaries
 Pr. Kathleen Koran

9:30 Congregation Anniversaries
 Pr. Kathleen Koran

9:35 Introduction of the Deans / Rostered Leaders new to MNYS
 Pr. Kathleen Koran

9:40 Reference & Counsel II
 Ms. Renee Wicklund

10:10 Mission Moment
 Dr. David Hahn, Long Island Lutheran Middle & High School

10:25 Strategic Plan Report (Part II)
 Ms. Maria del Toro / Mr. Tom Massey / Pr. Bill Baum, Chair,
 GATHERED / Ms. Barbara Johnson, Chair, SENT

11:15 Song
 “Claimed, Gathered and Sent”

11:20 Lutheran Medical Center/ Lutheran Health Care
 Pr. Donald Stiger

11:30 Malaria Campaign
 Pr. Jack Horner

11:40 Revised 2013 / Proposed 2014 Budgets Questions & Adoption
 Mr. Frank Suttell / Mr. Ed Wagner

11:50 Heart of Ministry Award
 Dcn. Charlie Germain

11:55 Announcements
 Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann

11:57 Prayer

Pr. F. Robert Modr, Chaplain

12:00 Lunch: Tarrytown Ballroom, Garden Terrace or on your own

12:00 Worship Rehearsal

PLENARY SESSION IV

HOSTS: **STAFF: Kathleen Schmidt / APC: Pr. Scott Paradise**

1:30 pm Eucharist
 Bp. Rimbo

2:35 Registration and Attendance
 Ms. Minerva Melendez

2:37 Portico
 Mr. Steve Knutson

3:00 Constitutional Change (2nd reading)
 Pr. Robert Schoepflin

3:10 Mission Moment
 Koinonia 50th Anniversary / Executive Directors

3:25 Announcements
 Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann

3:30 Closing of the Assembly

Adoption of Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure were adopted.

Bishop Rimbo then introduced Ms. Renee Wicklund, Chairperson of the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Report of the Committee will be given during the second plenary session.

Bishop Rimbo next introduced The Rev. Gregory Villalon, Director for Missional Leadership and Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA. In addition to his current position, Pr. Villalon developed and oversees the Theological Education for Emerging Ministry Program (TEEM). Pr. Villalon is the ELCA representative to the Assembly and will present a report later in the Assembly.

Bishop Rimbo also introduced and welcomed The Rev. Peggy Wuertele, Region 7 Coordinator.

Bishop Rimbo next introduced the members of the Synod Staff:

Pr. Percy Butiku: Assistant to the Bishop for Multicultural Missions

Mr. Brandon Dicks: Administrative Assistant

Ms. Sarah Gioe: Director of Communication and Interpretation

Pr. Jack Horner: Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission

Pr. Jeffrey Kolbo: Candidacy Coordinator

Pr. Kathleen Koran: Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations
Pr. Jonathan Linman: Assistant to the Bishop for Formation
Deacon Gayle Ruege: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Ms. Kathleen Schmidt: Assistant to the Bishop for Administration and Finance
Ms. Rebekah Wedge: Administrator to the Executive Staff.

Bishop Rimbo next invited Maria Del Toro, Synod Council Vice President to the podium and thanked her for her ministry to our Synod. He then introduced the other Synod Officers and members of the Synod Council:

The Rev. William Baum, a member of the Executive Committee
The Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite
Ms. Christine Connell, DM
Ms. Maria Del Toro, Vice President
The Rev. Khader El-Yateem
Dcn. Charles Germain
Ms. Hazel Goldstein
Ms. Barbara Hansen
The Rev. Marc Herbst
Mr. Eugene Hiigel
The Rev. Brenda Irving
Ms. Barbara Johnson, a member of the Executive Committee
Ms. Savanah Lochansingh
Dr. Carlos Lopez
Dcn. John Malone
Ms. Minerva Melendez, a member of the Executive Committee
The Rev. Paul Milholland, a member of the Executive Committee
The Rev. Craig Miller
Dcn. John Prosen
Mr. Brian Reardon
The Rev. Kit Robison
Ms. Terra Rowe
The Rev. Robert Schoepflin, Secretary
Mr. Frank Suttell, Treasurer
Ms. Abby Triebel
Mr. Christopher Vergara
Ms. Karen Woolley

Report of the Synod Council

Ms. Maria Del Toro, Vice President, then gave her report to the Assembly.

Our Synod Council has worked incredibly hard all year and I would like us to thank the members of our Synod Council for all their hard work. (applause from Assembly)

Good Morning!

I am pleased to be before you to report on the hard work of OUR Synod this past year.

The report in your packets, listing the actions taken by the Synod Council over the past year demonstrates it has been a busy year. It has also been a sad year, for super storm Sandy did horrible damage to many of our churches. But our synod, staff and individual churches rallied to the assistance of those affected and Pastor Craig Miller, Disaster Relief Coordinator will provide you with a status report.

At the last Assembly you set the priorities for our Synod Council when you overwhelmingly adopted our Synod's Strategic Plan, which will guide our Synod over the next ten years.

And remember, it is a 10-year plan. This is a marathon, not a sprint. We planned for significant impact - and that will take time.

And you will also remember that we did not change our constitution – our Strategic Plan works within the construct of our constitution. You will also remember we have invested implementation of the strategic plan in four committees. The Financial Management Committee was already a standing committee. Ed Wagner is the chair. We created three additional committees based on the three strategy areas: Claimed, Gathered, Sent.

And those three words, Claimed, Gathered and Sent, what we call our planning strategies, are the guiding principles, the foundation, and the very soul of our plan. We, as Lutherans, are marked with the cross of Christ forever, and claimed, gathered, and sent or the sake of the world.

And you will also remember that those Planning Strategies, Claimed, Gathered, and Sent, are our answer to the very important question: What does God want our Synod to do to reach future generations in the Metropolitan New York area with the life-changing gospel? The implementation plan for those planning strategies will put flesh on the bones of our Strategic Plan. Many of you laughed last year when I told you the devil was in the details, but I wanted you to forget about the detail devil and focus on the strategy. Well this year we are going to tell you how we are addressing those devil details – and invite you to be a part of God's Work, Our Hands.

At its first meeting after this Assembly, our Synod Council began the implementation process by charging the Executive Committee to establish the three strategy committees and recommend chairs. After much prayer, the Executive Committee recommended and the Council approved three outstanding leaders: Pastor Emily Scott for the Claimed Strategy Committee, Pastor William Baum for the Gathered Strategy Committee and Ms. Barbara Johnson for the Sent Strategy Committee.

Pastor Emily Scott is the Pastor of St. Lydia's a new church start of our Synod located in South Brooklyn that has been involved in connecting to the community in innovative ways. We felt that her creative and innovative ideas for new ministries are ideal for the person leading the Claimed Strategy.

Pastor Baum has served for twenty years at Saint Barnabas Church in Howard Beach, Queens. He has demonstrated capable and dedicated leadership in chairing some of our Synod's most challenging committees, from congregational viability norms to human sexuality, Christian ethics, and revision of our constitution. This depth of experience, coupled with a dozen years' service on our Synod Council and Executive Committee, make him an excellent choice to lead our Gathered Strategy Committee.

Ms. Barbara Johnson is a retired New York City school principal. She has provided leadership to our Synod's Working Group for Racial and Ethnic Awareness and Sensitivity and Unity and Diversity. Her experience as an educator, a leader in her community, in addition to the many years of service to our Synod Council and the Executive Committee makes her the ideal person to lead the Sent Committee.

The Executive Committee and the Chairs of the four strategies, Claimed, Gathered, Sent AND Financial Management, worked in the development of charges for each committee, which were approved by our Synod Council. Appropriate Synod staff was assigned to work with each committee and are full participants.

All the strategies are intricately related. The three strategy chairs and the chair of the Financial Management Committee, along with the Vice President, Treasurer and the Bishop, work together to ensure the integration of the work of all the committees.

Then we did an interesting thing: we invited anyone who wanted to serve to apply to be on the committees. We had more than 100 people apply. We followed the representation principles in our Constitution. This made the process more challenging; but we know it is worth it to have diversity of perspectives on these important committees.

On December 4th, we had a member orientation for all committee members, facilitated by our consultant, Tom Massey, who continues to assist in the Strategic Planning Process.

The Bishop, Synod staff and Executive Committee continue to do outreach with the conferences, leadership training retreats, etc. to communicate the status of the Strategic Plan.

This afternoon, Emily Scott, the chair of the Claimed Strategy, will be speaking to us about her committee's work on how people connect to the work of our Synod and how they grow in their faith. The focus will be on how we communicate our story of what it means to be Lutheran and why that matters.

The Gathered and Sent Strategy committees will present tomorrow. The Gathered Strategy Committee aims to ensure we have sustainable ministries of word and sacrament for the next generation. They are leading us in developing forward thinking ways of looking at our locations. And they are seeking new patterns for leadership development that will enhance our ability to take advantage of the fast changing social and demographic challenges ahead.

The Sent Strategy has the task of leading us in proclaiming the Gospel by responding to specific societal needs and issues – not by creating new programs – but by discovering the

amazing models currently in our congregations today, and creating networks to spread these models throughout our Synod. When you consider the needs of the people in our communities, the list is long and diverse. The members of the Sent Committee have worked hard to narrow the list to four priority areas: Education, Health, Family Support, and Employment. They will be asking for your opinions, and engagement, on these tomorrow.

And, of course, good stewardship of our resources is critical to the sustainability of our synod and our ability to serve future generations. While the reality of our finances was one of the reasons for our Synod initiating a strategic planning process, you may remember that the principle driving the plan is not the finances but our mission.

Nevertheless, we are not ignorant of the budget implications or our responsibility to ensure that we are financially sustainable. This is why the Financial Management Committee will report on a financial ten- year plan.

Some of you will probably say, why is this taking so long? Why don't you have concrete recommendations? Well, we are making a paradigm shift. These are ten-year strategies. Of necessity, it is a slow process. What does God want our Synod to do to reach future generations in Metropolitan New York and beyond with the life-changing Gospel, not just create activities for the next year? Significant impact requires a thoughtful, unrushed process.

Our plan is the work of many, many hands. And I would like to take time to thank our Bishop, whose leadership has made it all possible. Also, thanks to the Chairs of the four strategy committees, our Synod Staff, the committee members, the Deans, our consultant Tom Massey and, above all, you, this Assembly, for your overwhelming support.

Sometimes, as we struggled with the many issues before us, it was easy to feel overwhelmed, trying to discern what the Holy Spirit was calling us to do. I often think that we are like those travelers on the road to Emmaus, so busy discussing our stories, that we do not see the risen Christ right there amongst us.

We, all of us here, together, have embarked on a long journey and the risen Christ is right amongst us. We believe this is the Lord's work. And let us remember that the three strategies of the Strategic Plan are the words from the liturgy of the affirmation of our baptism. So I ask you:

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy Baptism?

To live among God's faithful people,

To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper,

To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

To serve all people following the example of Jesus,

And to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Please respond:

"We do. And we ask God to help and guide us.

Let us pray for one another and give thanks for the Risen Christ that walks amongst us. Thank you.

Bishop Rimbo asked Mr. Roosevelt Credit to lead the voting members of the Assembly in the song “Claimed, Gathered and Sent.” A resounding rendition of the song followed.

Bishop Rimbo invited Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann to the podium for announcements.

Bishop Rimbo then invited Pr. Robert Modr to the podium to close the session with prayer.

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2013

PLENARY SESSION II

The second plenary session of the Twenty-second Regular Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod was called to order, by Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo at 1:23pm. Bishop announced that the offering at our morning Eucharist, which is designated for the Arkansas Oklahoma Synod for tornado relief, amounted to \$3,407. He then introduced Pr. Jonathan Linman and Pr. Marc Herbst as the hosts for the plenary session.

Bishop Rimbo then led the Assembly in a Bible Study on the Office of the Keys.

“The Office of the Keys”

A few years ago I suggested to our Synod Staff and Executive Committee that it might be good to spend some time at Synod Assembly focusing on fundamental Lutheran teachings, things included, for example, in Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism*. We started with the Ten Commandments. We took a bit of a break last year and focused on the biblical basis for our Strategic Plan, but that, of course, had a lot to say about “Church.” And now, today, we return to an oft-neglected aspect of basic Lutheranism, “The Office of the Keys.” I don’t know this for a fact, but I suspect that there is some interest in having me lead you in studying this subject because it is, in fact, part of the foundational job description for bishops as discussed in the Augsburg Confession. Take a look at this small portion of Article 28:

Our people teach as follows. According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command (John 20:[21-23]): “As the Father has sent me, so I send you...Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

I hasten to assure you that this is also part of the *pastor’s* job description and, in fact, part of the job description for all of us. But it is fundamental to the ministry to which you have called me. So let’s talk about it.

The practice of “confession and absolution” differs widely, if it is practiced at all, among the various Christian traditions. Let’s just try the clicker-thing on this:

Raise your hand if your congregation offers confession and forgiveness at every service of worship.

Watch it now:

Raise your hand if it is offered only as part of the Service of Holy Communion.

Raise your hand if you have an extended corporate confession and forgiveness on Ash Wednesday or Maundy Thursday.

Raise your hand if Private Confession and Absolution is offered.

Raise your hand if your congregation offers all of the above.

A Bit of Background

Bear with me a bit, please. I *think* I am something of a liturgical theologian, so I want to do a *quick* overview of the conduct of Confession and Absolution. It's actually quite simple. It consists of one or more Christians confessing their sins to another Christian or a group of Christians and then hearing the word of forgiveness spoken directly to those who have confessed. To confess one's sins is to name them either collectively or individually and to ask for forgiveness for them in the confidence that they can and will be forgiven by God and the community of Christians who act in God's name. To be absolved is to be loosed from beneath the burden of what has been confessed.

Our Lutheran Confessions refer to this as "The Office of the Keys" because Jesus described the authorization to forgive sins as the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19). Some traditions assign to the confessing penitent certain *tasks* to do or *prayers* to say in order to assist in the formation of one's life as a disciple. The danger in such a practice is that people are way-too-easily-given the impression that by such *acts* they are earning their forgiveness, at least in part, and that the death of Christ is therefore either partially unnecessary or partly insufficient in effecting forgiveness. That was one of Luther's problems with the church of his time. But there is another extreme: those churches where they've ceased offering this altogether, usually on the ground of arguments used in the sixteenth-century reforms of the abuses of it and also as a result of the idea of the priesthood of all believers popularized during that time: if all Christians may approach God *directly* and do not *need* to have forgiveness mediated through a pastor, why go to the pastor at all or have a cleric pronounce the forgiveness of sins to a congregation?

The Lutheran Confessions name The Office of the Keys – Confession and Forgiveness – a Sacrament, so at least confessionally speaking, we have three.

In the early church this sacrament was used for two primary purposes. Most often it was the means by which those persons known as "the lapsed ones" – for example, people who had "cracked" under the tactics of persecutors and who had either cursed Jesus or denied him as their Lord and had divulged the names and locations of other Christians – how they were brought back to the congregation. In some cases they were never allowed back. In other cases, if they repented and confessed their denial of Christ and their betrayal of others, they were forgiven. There was precedent for that practice, of course. Even the "chief" apostle, Peter, was a "lapsed one." Three times, under threat of persecution, he had cursed and sworn in denying that Jesus was his Lord (Mark 14:66-72).

The other major use of confession and absolution, especially in the Middle Ages, was for the benefit of those Christians who had not committed a public offense or endangered the lives of the community members, but whose consciences were burdened with one or more sins. Confession and absolution was available for such persons who desired to have the community share in *hearing* their burden in a very direct way, so that the sinner, now unburdened and not so consumed and preoccupied by the terrors of conscience, might be useful to others in the community and be one of the forgivers in that community as well as one of the forgiven. After all, how can you bear another's burden when you cannot even hold up under your own?

Thus far the liturgical history. Now to some images and a look at biblical texts.

On the Screen: Rembrandt's Return of the Prodigal Son
Images of Absolution

Last Autumn Lois and I had the distinct privilege of traveling to Helsinki, Finland, and, from there, on to St. Petersburg, Russia. I was invited to speak about liturgical renewal at the Pastor's Conference of the Church of Finland and then we took a train from Helsinki to St. Petersburg. It was a wonderful trip and allowed us to check off the "bucket list" a visit to the Hermitage, the magnificent collection of art in St. Petersburg, and specifically to see this painting: Rembrandt's amazing *Return of the Prodigal Son*. I turned the corner into this rather small gallery and caught my breath at seeing this.

As I said earlier, Jesus himself directly commanded his disciples to forgive and to retain (that is, not-forgive) sins. But that command does not include a description of how you go about doing that forgiving. Other New Testament passages do. The Sacrament of Confession and Forgiveness, like the other sacraments, is acted-out gospel. The setting for the story line of this Sacrament is always within a family situation of one kind or another: it takes place among the baptized, the members of Abba's family. In one way, the plot is very simple. Christians simply act out one of Jesus' many blasphemies, one of the things for which he got in big trouble: he forgave sins, and he told us that we should do likewise. But that simple script may easily be dressed up with one of Jesus' own story lines about how forgiveness is administered in families like Abba's.

Thus, the excellent example of this parable commonly known as the Prodigal Son. You can read it silently as I continue to tell it to you.

Luke 15:11-32 on Screens

One of the sons breaks up the family by collecting his inheritance even before his father is dead, and squanders that for which his father had spent his life working. When the full pain of what has occurred finally dawns on this son, he determines that he will go back home, confess his sin, and ask to be received back, perhaps not into the big house but at least into the servants' quarters. So back he goes. What *he does not know* is that the father, and presumably the whole family, has been looking down the street for him every day for all of the days his son has been gone, hoping desperately that this would be the day on which he would return.

Back to the Picture

And, today, here comes the son up the path! Out he runs to hug him and kiss him, and the son begins to blurt out his confession. He is a sinner against his parents – please note that one of the hands of the parent in Rembrandt’s painting is distinctly feminine and one is masculine. Going on with the story: the son is prepared to confess that he is not worthy to be called a son. But he cannot even get the rest of his prepared speech out, the part about renting some of the servants’ quarters, because the parent interrupts him. The father orders the festive clothing broken out of storage, the fatted calf slaughtered so that both veal piccata and veal parmigiana can be prepared, and the party begun immediately! “We’ve never quit setting your place at the table! Welcome back!”

Let’s sing this amazing story now.

“Our Father, We Have Wandered”

ELW #606

Then Back to the Painting

This is a picture of God and God’s family, us, at work. The work is the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness is not magic. It is not some formula learned in the seminary by clergy to be spoken only when the laity performs the first half of the rite. It is work. It is the whole family, even the self-righteous older siblings who have a hard time swallowing all of the mercy which keeps overruling the justice, bearing the burden of what has occurred in the lives of the family members. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the inheritance is blown and cannot be recovered. No one will ever forget the pain of the months of separation. Parent and child might *each* be in need of therapy, in fact, just to cope with it all. But the family is restored. One who was dead is alive. And so long as the family bears the weight of what happened together, the burden is bearable. It cannot become something which isolates individuals and fractures the family.

Friends: forgiveness is work. It is putting oneself in the place of the sinner, even as Jesus Christ did, and bearing the burden and the pain of the sin. It is living as the wronged party without vindication. It is learning how to share even the pain which I have inflicted upon others, and standing under my own self-righteous condemnation of other sinners. It is the business of being the church.

This is not to say, however, that the Christian’s or the church’s life consists only in bearing pain and sharing grief. Remember that line from the parable and the hymn about calf and robe and ring! Fact is: all the story lines in the New Testament which have to do with lost ones returned or prodigals forgiven conclude with celebration and joy. That is the truest mark of the forgiven forgivers – their joy. Such joy is not giddiness, it’s not some perpetual high. It’s more like a quiet wholeness and peace which the Hebrew Scriptures describe with the word *shalom*. *Shalom* is the peace of having everything in its proper place, of having the lost found, of the sinners forgiven and restored to God’s family.

Let me make this very clear because it has everything to do with my job and your job, it is at the burning center of our strategic plan, it is the point of the ministry of our synod:

**The church must always remember
to keep all of the places set at the family's table.**

No sin is too heavy for the family to bear. No sinner is unwelcome at the table. Our Father-Mother God's will is that eventually all the kids come home. They are never forgotten.

Forgiveness Is The Church's Work

And that leads us to another family forgiveness text, this one in Matthew 18.

Matthew 18:15-17 on Screen

This is the famous text which describes the procedure of church discipline. If a member of the family sins against another, the matter should first be taken up privately. If, however, the sinner, will not hear the other family member, that one should take along two or three other family members to confirm what he or she has to say. Finally, if they are still not heard by the sinner, the matter should go before the whole church – that is, before the congregation-family. If the person will not even listen to what the whole congregation has to say, then that person is to be treated as a Gentile and a tax collector.

But let's be really careful here. This text is easily twisted into something which it is not. It is not grounds for excluding sinners or for vindicating those who have been wronged.

Several features of Matthew 18 indicate that it has a very different thrust and that it is read properly only by those who are still crying out to their Abba. First of all, what is it that the church or any of its members has to say to a sinner? Members of the church have certainly not become wiser or more adept at escaping sin. We are, at the same time, sinners and saints. Oh, to be sure, we have renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh – but we have *not* escaped them, right? Right??? Therefore, we have only one word to say to sinners. It is the just and merciful Father's word: I forgive you.

If sinners do not hear or listen to that word, it is likely that they do not consider themselves sinners. Then, of course, their sins are retained, they go unforgiven, at least to all appearances. God has, after all, been known to chase a single lamb, sweep for a lost coin, but God does not force forgiveness and mercy on anyone, either. God does not coerce. But, because rejecting mercy is very dangerous business, the church, God's family, us, keeps trying to get the sinner to hear the message of forgiveness for Christ's sake, even if it requires having a family gathering – call it a congregational meeting – in which every last member of the family takes a try at getting the message across in a trustable fashion. If the family cannot be restored even by such a measure, the erring family member should be treated like a Gentile or a tax collector, that is, an outsider.

But watch it again. Think about this question:

How do you treat Gentiles and Tax Collectors?

Another part of Jesus' scandalous behavior was that he continually ate with them and counted himself among them. He joined them on their side. He bore their burden. He never gave up on anyone, it seems. And back home in the family they are still setting a place for every Gentile and every tax collector at the table, waiting for the day when they will be back and the family restored. In the meantime, family members are out hunting for them and eating with them in their places of isolation, reminding them that their place at the family table is still set.

How do I justify this interpretation? By the story which *precedes* it.

Matthew 18:10-14

This is Matthew's version of the parable of the lost sheep. There the Father is compared with a shepherd who is willing to leave his ninety-nine sheep in the mountains while he goes off in search of a single lost one. It's *not* because the shepherd has this obsessive-compulsive "thing" about having an even hundred, since the fastest way to have only one sheep is to leave ninety-nine in the mountains and go off in search of a loner. No. The shepherd, God, is hung up on *lost* ones, not on round numbers. Matthew suggests that the family learn to operate like God, to live by God's Spirit, and to have the same incurable hang-up over every single lost sinner.

True, it is neither fair nor just to operate that way, to save the big parties for the returns of the prodigals. But that is the only kind of parties there are in the reign of God. And what about the family members who run away repeatedly or keep renewing their Gentile status or insist on collecting taxes? Matthew has an answer for that question, too, in this same forgiveness chapter.

Matthew 18:21

Peter asks how often a family member ought to be forgiven, thinking by all that is fair, there should be a limit somewhere. But Jesus responds that in the Family of God the capacity for forgiveness expands by geometric proportions and in the end knows no bounds.

The Office of the Keys – Confession and Forgiveness, therefore, describes the inner workings of the family of God. Along with the Lord's Supper, it is what keeps the family together. It is the *only* thing that keeps the family together. For the family is not maintained by the will of its members or by its moral superiority. Its glue is the forgiveness of sins.

Rembrandt one last time.

Forgiveness is work. And everyone in the family is charged with doing it. It is not confined to particular people or to particular situations. Even when the pastor, on behalf of whole family, pronounces the forgiveness which every member is really empowered to say, forgiveness remains the work of the whole community. The whole family together pledges, in that absolution, that they will in fact bear the burdens of the terrified and aching ones in the community.

And just as baptism is not magic or something to get and forget about like a vaccination, so forgiveness of sins is the whole life's work of a Christian. To forgive is, in a broad sense, to live

by the Spirit, to live compassionately, constantly putting oneself in the position of the sinners encountered in every minute of every day. Sometimes the forgiven ones will not even catch on that some anonymous forgiver has done the Spirit's work on them, even as Jesus died for a lot of folks who never caught on to the great forgiveness which took place. Christ died in the place of, and for the sake of, a world which hardly noticed. So it also happens when the forgiven forgivers of Abba's Family take their forgiveness out of confining buildings into all the world. Then, you see, the story of how our sins have been forgiven will never end.

Thank you.

This Bible Study was given in lieu of a verbal report by the Bishop. The Bishop's written report to the Assembly follows.

Bishop's Report to the Synod Assembly *May 31 – June 1, 2013*

God our creator, the resurrection of your Son offers life to all the peoples of earth. By your Holy Spirit, kindle in us the fire of your love, empowering our lives for service and our tongues for praise, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

This prayer, the one prayed in many of our assemblies on the Day of Pentecost, can serve as the framework for my Report. First, and foremost, it's all about God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I hope that is clear in everything we do as the Metropolitan New York Synod. We are extending the very life of God *to all the peoples of the earth*. We have been living the new life of the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ. You have seen that in the amazing pre-assembly Bulletin of Reports. You will experience it as we gather here these days. We give thanks that fully twenty-four percent of this Assembly is comprised of saints from non-white, non-European descent; the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America watches us to lead in diversity. At this Assembly we will learn about the ministry we do as a synod; the partnerships we share with congregations, agencies and institutions; and the many challenges we face with hope and joy. I pray that, if you have not already done so, you will become closely connected with the ministries we share by faithfully reading our weekly e-letter, joining with conference gatherings, participating in the opportunities offered by our ongoing implementation of our strategic plan and sharing in the life of your local congregation.

God is *empowering our lives for service* in a vast array of areas, and has demonstrated that in this past year. The amazing response to Superstorm Sandy in those areas most hard hit and in every congregation of our synod is a sign of the empowering Spirit of God. We continue to work with congregations and other ministries: Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn; Lutheran Social Services; Lutheran Counseling Center; Lutheran Disaster Relief and our local coordinator, Pastor Craig Miller; our sisters and brothers throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; various civic, educational, religious and non-profit organizations; and a host of other individuals and groups. You will see many of these,

including our own synod committees, in the reports, presentations and “commercials” offered during our time together and printed in your bulletin. I hope you will experience the breadth and depth of our shared ministry.

God is also empowering *our tongues for praise* and we will experience that in these days. We will worship together. We will devote time and attention to continuing our conversation about another part of Luther’s *Small Catechism*, the oft-neglected but tremendously important section on the Office of the Keys. We will be greeted by ecumenical guests from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of New York. We will share ideas with one another about what it means that we are called, gathered and sent for the life of the world as we review and look forward to the implications of our strategic plan for such a time as this. We will rejoice in our unity with the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America represented by the presence and witness of Pastor Gregory Villalon, a native New Yorker who is home with us these days and as we together mark the 25th Anniversary of the formation of our ELCA.

As we gather in assembly, we bear in mind and prayer other synods of this church meeting at the same time: Delaware-Maryland; Southwest California; Metropolitan Chicago; Minneapolis Area; North Carolina; Northeastern Ohio; Southeastern Iowa; West Virginia-Western Maryland; Greater Milwaukee; Montana; Nebraska; and Southeastern.

This is a time for me to give thanks to the people with whom I am privileged to serve most directly:

Our Synod Staff:

Pr. Perucy Butiku, Assistant to the Bishop for Multicultural Missions
Mr. Branden Dicks, Administrative Assistant
Ms. Sarah Gioe, Director of Communication and Interpretation
Pr. Jack Horner, Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission
Pr. Jeffrey Kolbo, Candidacy Coordinator
Pr. Kathleen Koran, Assistant to the Bishop for Congregations
Pr. Jonathan Linman, Assistant to the Bishop for Formation and Vocation
Deacon Gayle Ruege, Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Ms. Kathleen Schmidt, Assistant to the Bishop for Finance and Administration
Ms. Rebekah Wedge, Administrator to the Executive Staff

You can read about the ministries in which these wonderful people are engaged in Section B of the Bulletin of Reports.

I also thank Ms. Ardath Heard and Ms. Joan Schwarz who are tireless volunteers in our office.

As we gather in assembly I want to especially thank one staff member, Pastor Jack Horner, who has accepted the call to be lead pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. While I am sad to see Jack leave us at the end of these two days, I am grateful

for the amazing work which he has done to help shape our evangelical mission as a synod and I am hopeful for his new ministry in this parish. Jack has been an agent of the Holy Spirit among us and we are grateful.

The search has begun for a new Director for Evangelical Mission to replace Jack. In the interim we will be served by Pr. Michael Bennethum, DEM for the Northeast Pennsylvania Synod.

Our Deans:

The Conference of Deans meets on a monthly basis and provide helpful theological insight and communications about what is happening in the conferences. Their reports and appended names are in Section B of the Bulletin of Reports.

Our Synod Council:

I am continually amazed at the gifts of those who serve on our Synod Council and Executive Committee. These people have done amazing work in our strategic planning process (about which you will hear much at this assembly) and our ongoing life as a synod of this church. I especially thank Ms. Maria del Toro, our Vice-President, who has been a tremendous asset to me and to this synod. I hope you will take the opportunity to thank members of our Synod Council personally:

Pr. William Baum, also serving on the Executive Committee

Pr. Rosalind Brathwaite

Ms. Christine Connell, Diaconal Minister, who also serves on the ELCS Church Council

Ms. Maria del Toro, Vice-President, also serving on the Executive Committee

Pr. Khader El-Yateem

Dcn. Charles Germain

Ms. Hazel Goldstein

Ms. Barbara Hansen

Pr. Marc Herbst

Mr. F. Eugene Hiigel

Pr. Brenda Irving

Ms. Barbara Johnson, also serving on the Executive Committee

Ms. Savanah Lochansingh

Dr. Carlos Lopez

Dcn. John Malone

Ms. Minerva Melendez, also serving on the Executive Committee

Pr. Paul Milholland, also serving on the Executive Committee

Pr. Craig Miller

Dcn. John Prosen

Mr. Brian Reardon

Pr. Kit Robison

Ms. Terra Rowe

Pr Robert Schoepflin, Secretary, also serving on the Executive Committee

Mr. Frank Suttell, Treasurer, also serving on the Executive Committee
Ms. Abby Triebel
Mr. Christopher Vergara
Ms. Karen Woolley

New Synodically-Rostered Deacons

The following deacons were set apart since our last Synod Assembly: Coreen Blake; Eric Faret; Patricia McDonnell; John McDonnell; George Rossetti; Gavin Schwen; and Angela Rios.

New Pastors

Since our last Synod Assembly we have welcomed new pastoral leaders in various places. I refer you to Section A of the Bulletin of Reports, pages A-7 and A-8, which presents their names and the congregations and ministries in which they serve.

I am grateful for the continuing relationship-building in which we are engaged. Our Conference Visitations, which have included staff members in addition to me over the past 18 months, have been very well-received. At these events we have met with committed lay and ordained leaders and have learned about what is happening around our synod. They have been times of rich conversation.

At last year's Assembly we received a report on Preaching and Sacramental Practices for our review. Because of time limitations, I suggested at the Assembly that we defer consideration of this report until this year. Since then, our Executive Committee decided not to place the report on the agenda for consideration because it is a document that reviews and conveys what is happening in the Synod more along the lines of a report rather than an action that would guide us; put another way, it is more descriptive than proscriptive. I will be sending the document to each pastor, deacon and congregation in the near future along with a pastoral letter regarding its potential use.

I am thankful to God for the loving support and care of my spouse, Lois, and for our children and grandchildren (Owen is 5, Zoe is 2) and for my extended family. I am happy to report that I am in good health and enjoy the ministry to which you have called me. While some days are challenging, there is never a time when I dread the hours ahead or behind. I am grateful for the people of this synod and the great ministry in which we are serving.

Always Being Made New

As we gather in assembly the promises of God continue to guide us and empower us. As our church's 25th Anniversary Theme declares, we are always being made new. That is most certainly the case as we together work to implement the stunning strategic plan which we have entered into and as we seek to proclaim the gospel of the Risen Christ in our wonderfully diverse, challenging communities. With all of this in mind, I invite you to

return to the beginning of this Report and pray again and continuously for our Metropolitan New York Synod.

Come, Holy Spirit!

The Rev. Dr. Robert Alan Rimbo

Bishop

ELCA Justice for Women

Bishop Rimbo invited Ms. Fern Lee Hagedorn, a member of the ELCA Justice for Women Task Force to address the Assembly. Ms. Hagedorn encouraged the voting members to be involved in the process of developing the pending ELCA social statement on Justice for Women, by joining her in discussion at mealtimes or by contacting the task force.

Report of the Treasurer

Bishop Rimbo invited Mr. Frank Suttell, Treasurer, and Mr. Edward Wagner, FMC Chair to the podium.

Mr. Suttell began by thanking Robert Buescher for his work during eight years at Synod Treasurer and for his help in helping Frank in his new position as Treasurer. He also thanked Ms. Kathleen Schmidt, Assistant to the Bishop for Administration and Finance, for her assistance to him and her work in the bishop's office.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

of the

Metropolitan New York Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May 31 – June 1, 2013

Four Topics to Be Presented

1. 2012 Report of the Independent Auditors
2. A Summary of the Financial Condition of the Synod
3. The 2013 Revised Budget and the Proposed 2014 Budget
4. Ten-Year Financial Projections

The purpose of this Treasurer's report is to present four topics for information purposes. There will be opportunity to discuss these topics at the budget breakfast tomorrow morning and the full assembly will debate the budget at approximately 11:45 a.m. tomorrow. The first topic is the purpose and the results of the audit by Tait, Weller & Baker. The second topic is a review of the current financial condition of the Synod compared to the last several years. The third topic is the adjusted budget for this year and the proposed budget for next year. The final topic will be a set of

ten-year financial projections based on certain assumptions. I will be joined by Ed Wagner, Chair of the Financial Management Committee for the last two topics which are the product of extensive work by that Committee.

2012 Report of the Independent Auditors

- Synod management prepares the financial statements.
- Auditors determine if statements present fairly the financial position of the Synod.
- Auditors again issued a “clean” opinion.

“clean” opinion but now call an “unmodified opinion”. Whichever euphemism you wish to use, the auditors have attested that our books fairly present our financial condition. I do not get terribly excited about an unqualified opinion. In truth, a qualified opinion is rare and usually indicates major problems with the books and/or the entity presenting the books. What I do get excited about is an audit which keeps me and the audit committee fully informed and supports our management with up-to-date accounting principles. In this respect, the audit was a success.

A complete and final copy of the auditors’ report is available to you, and I recommend your reading it. I understand that reading audit reports is an acquired taste but there is a wealth of information there if you have the time. Some of the footnotes are fairly routine but if you read them all you can learn a great deal about how we keep track of our operations.

The Financial Condition of the Synod

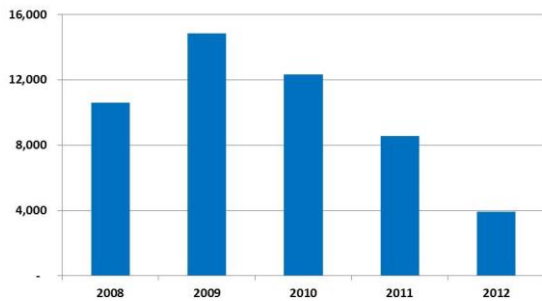
1. Real Property Assets
2. Monetary Assets
3. Expense Budget History
4. Congregational Contributions History

Tait, Weller & Baker, our Independent Auditors, have completed their work and issued their opinion.

The purpose of an audit is to determine if our books as prepared and presented by management fairly present that our assets and liabilities are fully and accurately stated, and that the changes in our assets and the cash flows for the year are presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Once again this year our auditors have given us what we used to call an “unqualified” or

I would like to move on to a discussion of the financial condition of the Synod. The financial strength of the Synod is determined by what we own and how well we manage those assets and how well we control our spending. In this discussion I will cover our real property assets which are churches whose congregations have ended their mission; our monetary assets which are cash and near cash assets; our recent trend in expense budgets; and our recent trend in congregational giving.

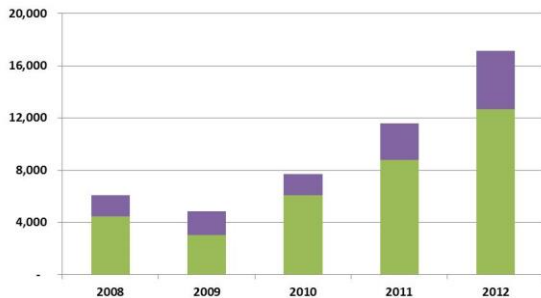
Real Property (in \$000)



As you can see, there has been a steady drop in our real property assets over the past four years. The changes in 2012 were the sale of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Brooklyn with a book value of \$5.8 million and the acquisition of St Thomas Lutheran Church in the Bronx with a book value of \$1.2 million for a net decrease in real property of over \$4 million.

Generally it is a good sign when real property assets decrease. We receive no income while holding such assets and in fact have to expend resources for maintaining the property. Our current policy of moving the properties or repurposing them as quickly as possible is showing fruit.

Monetary Assets (in \$000)

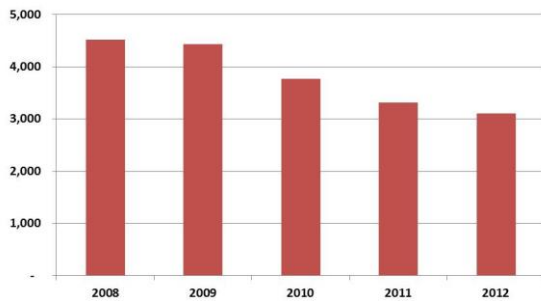


Monetary assets are cash, receivables and investments. These assets are represented by the total column on the chart. The green bottom portion of the column is the amount that was invested in the ELCA investment fund A. The purple top portion of the column represents the assets not invested in the fund. You should not assume that the purple portion represents only non-performing assets just because they are not in the ELCA fund. A significant portion of those assets are in interest bearing mortgages.

As you can see our monetary assets have been growing very nicely over the last four years. Some of this growth is natural as we sell down our vacant churches and invest the proceeds. Some of this growth is due to a recovering stock market. 2012 was also helped by a very generous bequest and the past years have benefitted from the expense reduction program.

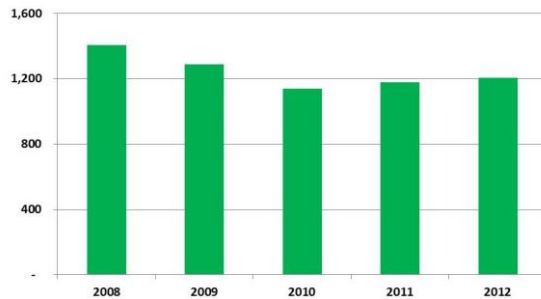
Subsequent to the end of 2012 we have moved our investment assets of approximately \$12 million from the ELCA fund to Walden Asset Management at the recommendation of the FMC. We believe that this move will provide us with more control over our investments at a lower fee.

Expense Budgets (in \$000)



As you can see, our budgeted expenses have shown a steady drop in the last few years, from \$4.5 million in 2009 to just over \$3 million in 2012. These drops have resulted from the staff making some very difficult decisions on personnel and facilities and then carrying through on those decisions. However, we all agree that more hard decisions and tight budgeting lie ahead if the Synod is to attain solid sustainability. We believe that the well thought out strategic plan, the implementation of which you will hear about in this assembly, will substantially strengthening the Synod.

Congregational Contributions (in \$000)



For the second year in a row, congregational contributions have increased, albeit by rather small amounts. Also the current level is well below historical highs. For example, in the years 2001, 2002 and 2003 congregational contributions hovered just under \$1.6 million. In 2012 contributions were approximately \$25 thousand above 2011 but also around \$20 thousand below budget. Virtually all the 2012 shortfall from budget came in December and January. There are strong indications that this drop was due to the ravages of super storm Sandy.

We all agree that we would like to increase congregational contributions to the historic highs and beyond. We believe the strategic plan will help accomplish this goal in two ways. First by developing stronger congregations which will be in a better position to support the Synod. Second by supplying a cause that is worthy of charitable support. It is well known in philanthropic circles that donors much prefer to give to causes than to institutions. The strategic plan will establish such causes worthy of donor support.

Presentation of the Adjusted 2013 Budget and Proposed 2014 Budget

Mr. Edward Wagner presented the Adjusted 2013 Budget and the Proposed 2014 Budget. He informed the Assembly that the structure of both budgets has been modified to group income and expenses into five areas: Claimed, Gathered, Sent, Synod Governance, and Finance and Administration.

METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD
Revised 2013/Proposed 2014 Budgets
Synod Assembly
May 31-June 1, 2013

	2013 BUDGET		2014 BUDGET
	Adopted (May 2012)	Revised (May 2013)	Proposed (May 2013)
FUND 1 BUDGET - PROGRAM			
REVENUE			
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CONGREGATIONS			
Undesignated Mission Support	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000
Total Contributions from Congregations	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000
GRANTS, UNDESIGNATED GIFTS, & OTHER CONTRIB.			
ELCA Grants (Congregational and Synodical Mission)	10,000	15,000	15,000
Undesignated Gifts	50,000	25,000	25,000
Suttler Memorial Fund	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total Grants & Other Contributions	61,000	41,000	41,000
TRANSFERS FROM OTHER FUNDS			
Metro New York Synod Fund	-	571,279	695,726
Net Proceeds from Sales - Support of Operations	773,554	-	-
Mission Redevelopment Fund ("MRF") - Partnership Grants	445,500	385,900	385,900
Transfers from Designated Funds		148,500	148,500
Bishop's Mission Fund	24,340		
Gay and Lesbian Outreach Fund	5,000		
Youth Ministry Fund	3,500		
Strategic Planning - (MRF)	-		
Tanzania Teachers - Other expenses (MRF)	-		
Urban Empowerment Fund - General Support	50,000		
Tanzania Endowment Fund	25,000		
Wider Church Fund - Companion Synod (Romania)	40,000		
Total Transfers from Other Funds	1,366,894	1,105,679	1,230,126
OTHER INCOME			
Investment Income	162,383	225,000	280,000
Loan Interest	6,600	106,350	106,350
Rental Income - Lutheran Counseling Services	2,400	2,400	2,400
Total Other Income	171,383	333,750	388,750
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS	2,849,277	2,730,429	2,909,876

EXPENSES

	2013 BUDGET		2014 BUDGET
	Adopted (May 2012)	Revised (May 2013)	Proposed (May 2013)
CLAIMED			
Faith Formation			
Staff - Leadership training and spiritual direction for lay leaders; theologian in residence	97,312	111,491	124,293
Total	97,312	111,491	124,293
Family Ministries			
Children, Youth and Family Ministries	3,500	3,500	3,500
Staff participation and support	3,310	3,294	3,384
Total	6,810	6,794	6,884
Communications - Claimed			
Website Maintenance	3,500	4,000	4,000
Publications - Lutheran New Yorker	-	9,500	9,500
Staff - Communications support for Claimed strategy	25,149	28,455	29,315
Total	28,649	41,955	42,815
Strategic Planning - Claimed			
Strategic plan implementation support	-	7,000	7,000
Total	-	7,000	7,000
Strategic Support - Claimed			
Resources for implementing new strategies	-	-	25,000
Total	-	-	25,000
Total Claimed	132,771	167,239	205,992
GATHERED			
Mission Resources			
Outreach Committee	500		
Mission Resources Table	10,000		
Strategy Table	1,500		
Stewardship & Mission Support Table	2,500	7,500	7,500
Staff participation and support	36,656	34,830	35,134
Total	51,156	42,330	42,634
Partnership Grants			
Partnership Grants	445,500	385,900	385,900
Staff - grant management	54,106	49,899	51,194
Total	499,606	435,799	437,094
Congregational Consultations & Resources			
Rostered Leaders Support	1,250	1,250	1,250
Congregation Consultations & Resources	1,500	1,500	1,500
Staff participation and support	266,949	280,137	354,413
Total	269,699	282,887	357,163
Communications - Gathered			
Staff - Communications support for Gathered strategy	21,099	21,828	22,481
Total	21,099	21,828	22,481

	2013 BUDGET		2014 BUDGET
	Adopted (May 2012)	Revised (May 2013)	Proposed (May 2013)
Leadership Formation			
Bishop's Retreat	5,000	9,000	9,000
Candidacy Retreat	2,500	1,500	1,500
Deans Retreat	5,500	5,000	5,000
Staff Retreat	2,250	2,250	2,250
Ministerium & Other Education Events	7,500	7,500	7,500
Orientation of New Pastors	500		
Renewal & Boundary Workshop	1,200		
Worship Day	1,000		
Urban Leaders Institute	9,000	7,500	5,000
Candidacy Expenses	15,000	20,000	20,000
Staff participation and support	116,203	105,462	117,439
Total	165,653	158,212	167,689
Education/Internship Grants			
Lutheran Ministries In Higher Education Grant	43,370	43,370	43,370
Lutheran Schools Association - Dues	9,800	9,800	9,800
Student Christian Center at SUNY New Paltz Grant	13,000	13,000	13,000
Philadelphia Seminary Grant	65,000	65,000	65,000
Horizon Internships	12,000	12,000	12,000
Staff - management and support	6,861	7,143	7,358
Total	150,031	150,313	150,528
Strategic Planning - Gathered			
Strategic plan implementation support	-	46,000	46,000
Total	-	46,000	46,000
Total Gathered	1,157,243	1,137,369	1,223,589
SENT			
Companion Synods			
Companion Synod - Romania (Salaries/Benefits)	40,000	-	-
Companion Synod - Tanzania (Teacher Salary)	17,000	20,000	20,000
Companion Synod - Tanzania (Teacher Benefits/Travel)	8,000	10,000	10,000
Travel & Hospitality (Tanzania)	5,000	7,500	7,500
Staff for program management	38,225	20,031	20,543
Total	108,225	57,531	58,043
Committees/Commissions			
Committees/Commissions		7,500	7,500
Companion Synod (Tanzania Committee)	500		
Companion Synod (Romania Committee)	500		
Commission for Gay & Lesbian Ministries	5,000		
Commission for Multicultural Affairs	500		
Hunger Committee	1,000		
Environmental Stewardship Committee	2,000		
Staff participation and support	14,311	15,971	16,387
Total	23,811	23,471	23,887

	2013 BUDGET		2014 BUDGET
	Adopted (May 2012)	Revised (May 2013)	Proposed (May 2013)
Multicultural Ministries			
Latino Diakonia	-		
Latino Outreach	4,000		
Asian Ministries	4,000		
Multicultural Ministries		10,000	10,000
Staff participation and support	37,772	43,355	44,470
Total	45,772	53,355	54,470
Social Ministry Organizations			
NYS Council of Churches	1,500	-	-
Social Ministry Organizations (SMO) - Events	10,000	10,000	10,000
Staff participation and support	16,551	20,179	30,210
Total	28,051	30,179	40,210
Communications - Sent			
Staff - Communications support for Sent strategy	21,537	22,290	22,957
Total	21,537	22,290	22,957
ELCA Support			
ELCA Mission Support	618,750	618,750	625,000
Total	618,750	618,750	625,000
Strategic Planning - Sent			
Strategic plan implementation support	-	7,000	7,000
Total	-	7,000	7,000
Strategic Support - Sent			
Resources for implementing new strategies	-	-	25,000
Total	-	-	25,000
Total Sent	846,146	812,577	856,568
SYNOD GOVERNANCE			
Synod Assembly			
Synod Assembly (net of registration)	40,000	50,000	60,000
Staff - management and participation	46,824	30,458	31,225
Total	86,824	80,458	91,225
Synod Council			
Synod Council	7,000	10,000	10,000
Synod Council Committees	3,500	2,500	2,500
Committee Expense (Archives & Historian)	3,000	7,500	7,500
Staff participation and support	56,977	53,096	54,576
Total	70,477	73,096	74,576
Synod Events			
Region 7 Coordinating Council	10,000	7,500	7,500
Worship Events & Ordinations	5,500	5,000	5,000
Staff participation and support	16,551	16,468	16,921
Total	32,051	28,968	29,421
Total Synod Governance	189,353	182,523	195,222

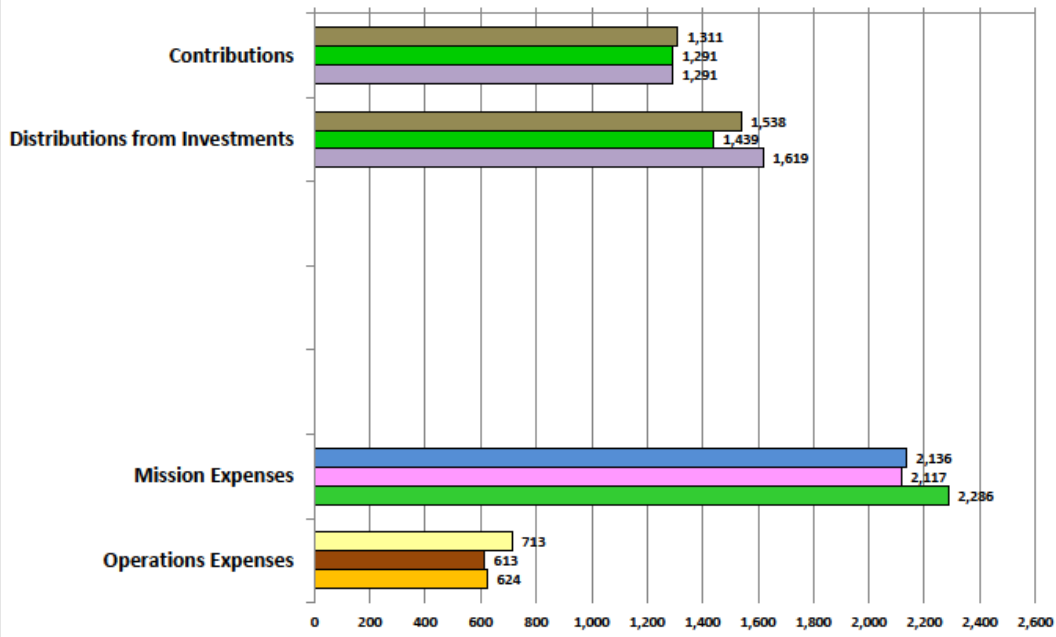
	2013 BUDGET		2014 BUDGET
	Adopted (May 2012)	Revised (May 2013)	Proposed (May 2013)
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION			
General Office Management			
Telephone	12,250		
Telephone/Internet Access		15,000	15,000
Professional Services - Technology	7,500	7,500	7,500
Computers & Other Equipment	5,000	5,000	5,000
Data Base Expense (Raiser's Edge/MIP)	8,000	15,000	15,000
Internet Access fees	4,800		
Office Supplies/Printing	7,500	8,500	6,500
Postage & Shipping	11,000	10,000	9,000
Printing	7,000		
Other Expense	1,500	1,519	1,227
Staff - general office management	36,707	20,643	19,462
Total	101,257	83,162	78,689
General Accounting			
Payroll Service Fees	7,500	4,000	3,500
Credit Card Fees	1,500	1,500	1,500
Staff - general accounting services	60,172	33,184	31,798
Total	69,172	38,684	36,798
Facility			
Rent & Facility Management	173,111	176,587	180,119
Utilities (Supplemental a/c)	1,500	-	-
Maintenance and Repair	7,500	7,500	7,500
Depreciation Expense	30,000	15,000	15,000
Staff - facility management	4,696	2,581	2,480
Total	216,807	201,668	205,099
Audit/Legal			
Professional Services - Audit	22,000	21,500	21,500
Legal Fees	10,000	25,000	25,000
Staff - audit and legal management	41,466	29,384	29,954
Total	73,466	75,884	76,454
Insurance			
Directors & Officers/Employment Practices Liability Insurance	6,500	6,500	6,500
Insurance (NYS Disability/Dishonesty Bond)	2,000	2,000	2,000
ELCA Shared Risk Assessment	1,250	1,632	1,650
Workmen's Comp Ins/State Unemployment Insurance	7,500	7,500	7,500
Property & Liability Insurance	10,000	10,000	10,000
Miscellaneous, Contingencies	28,488	-	-
Staff - Insurance reviews and management	7,324	3,692	3,814
Total	63,062	31,324	31,464
Total Finance and Administration	523,763	430,721	428,504
TOTAL EXPENSES - FUND 1	(2,849,277)	(2,730,429)	(2,909,876)
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS - FUND 1	2,849,277	2,730,429	2,909,876
NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUND 1	0	0	0

	2013 BUDGET		2014 BUDGET
	Adopted (May 2012)	Revised (May 2013)	Proposed (May 2013)
FUND 7 BUDGET - SYNOD-OWNED PROPERTIES & SYNODICAL ADMINISTRATION			
REVENUE			
Synod Owned Properties - MRF (Budget Est Only)	50,000	200,000	200,000
Synodical Admin Properties - MRF (Budget Est Only)	125,000	150,000	150,000
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS	175,000	350,000	350,000
EXPENSES			
Synod Administration/Owned Properties - TBD	175,000	214,703	147,300
Synod Administration/Owned Properties - Staff Staff - administration and management	0	135,297	202,700
TOTAL EXPENSES - FUND 7	(175,000)	(350,000)	(350,000)
TOTAL REVENUE AND FUND TRANSFERS - FUND 7	175,000	350,000	350,000
NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUND 7	0	0	0

SUMMARY - FUNDS 1 AND 7			
TOTAL EXPENSES - FUNDS 1 & 7	(3,024,277)	(3,080,429)	(3,259,876)
TOTAL REVENUE & FUNDS TRANSFERS - FUNDS 1 & 7	3,024,277	3,080,429	3,259,876
NET INCOME (LOSS) - FUNDS 1 & 7	0	0	0

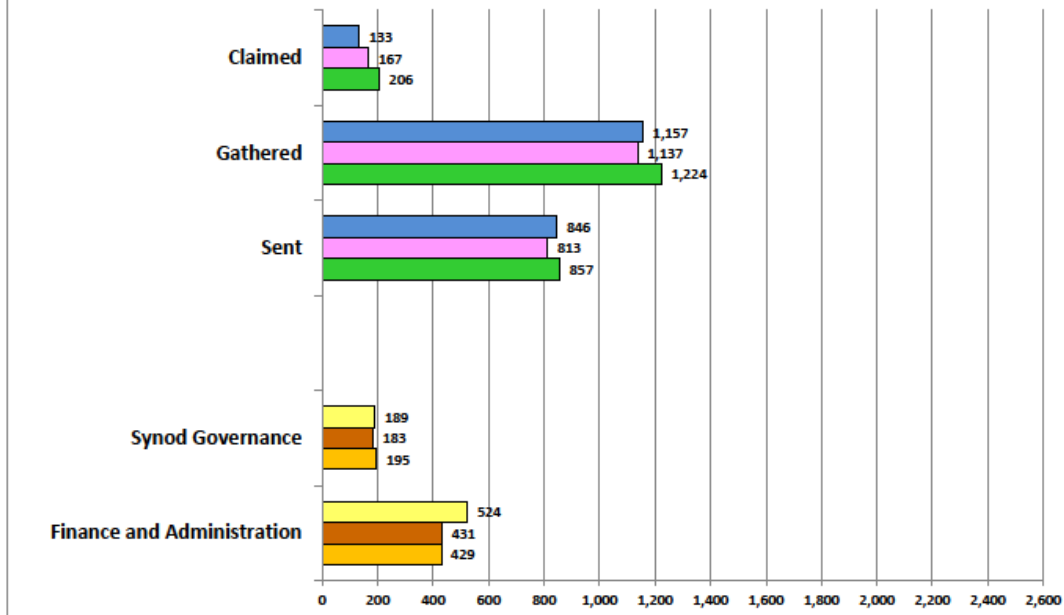
Revenue and Expenses

- 2013 Adopted Budget: \$2,849,277
 - 2013 Revised Budget: \$2,730,429
 - 2014 Proposed Budget: \$2,909,876

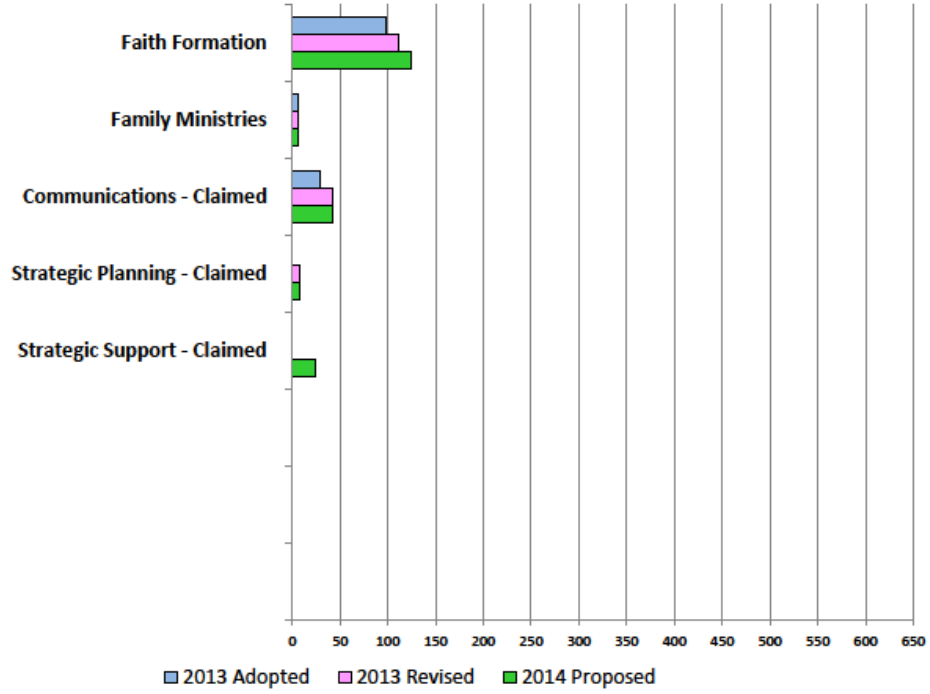


Total Expenses

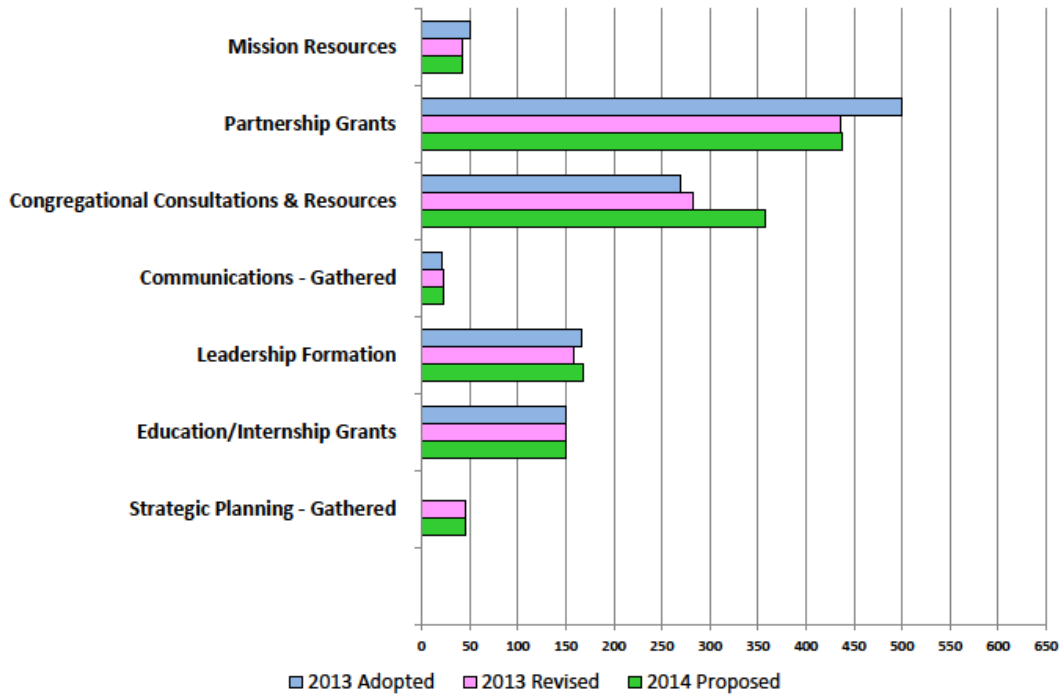
- 2013 Adopted Budget
 - 2013 Revised Budget
 - 2014 Proposed Budget



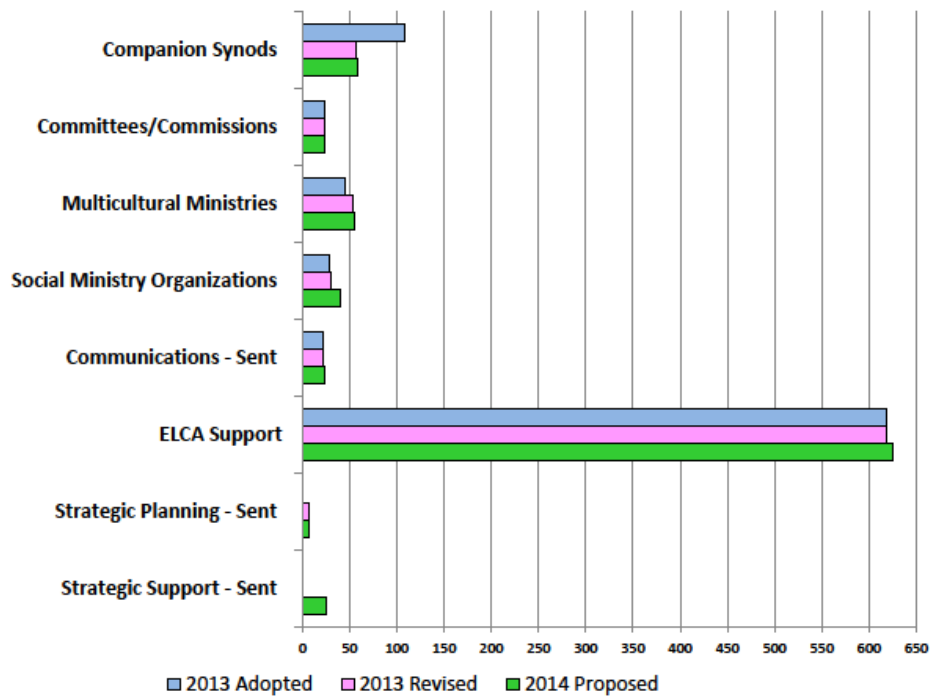
Claimed



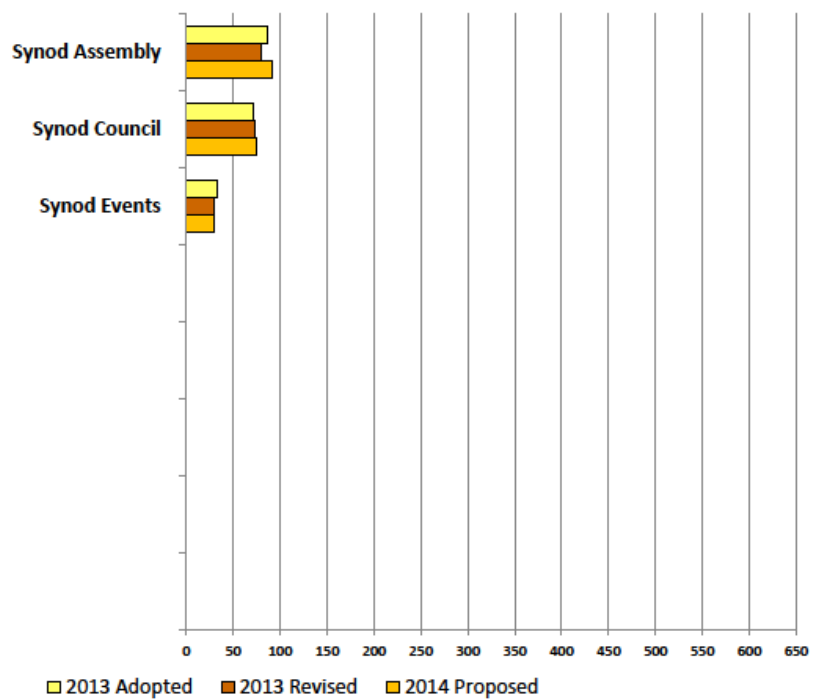
Gathered



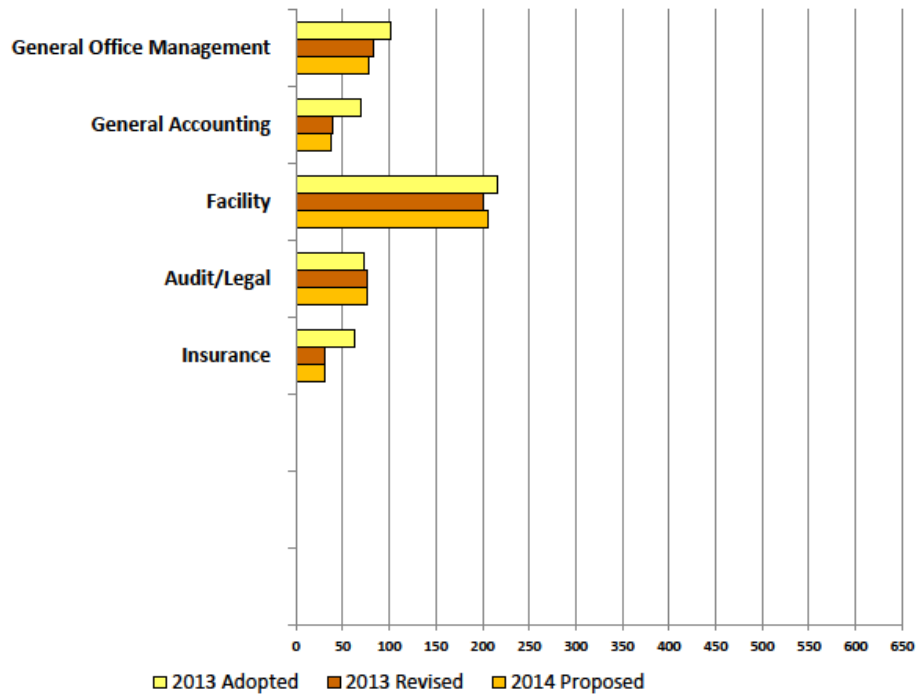
Sent



Synod Governance



Finance & Administration



Presentation of Ten Year Plan

Mr. Wagner then presented the Ten Year Plan.

Ten-year Financial Projections

Metropolitan New York Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
May 31, 2013

1

What are the synod's financial goals?

- Attain a sustainable balance between income and expenses
- Dedicate resources from property sales to mission
- Preserve investments and provide predictable income

2

An endowment will provide responsible stewardship of synod investments

- All invested funds are placed in the endowment
- Only a sustainable percentage of market value is withdrawn each year

3

- The agenda says “Plan” but a definitive plan needs to be coordinated with more fully developed strategic mission programs

- FMC, with our synod council endorsement, has developed more concrete policies and analytical tools for long-term financial **planning**

- *Title.....**goals***
- *Bullet 1.....* Currently that is not **true**
- *Bullet 2.....* The strategic plan you adopted last year included a provision to “Allocate 100% of the net proceeds from the sales of synod owned property to the Synod Restricted Funds to support the key **strategies**”
- *Bullet 3.....* This goal is already in the Investment Policy adopted by the synod council in 2011
- These goals were reiterated and reinforced by our synod council in March **2013**

- *Title.....**investments***
- *Bullet 1..... **endowment***
- *Bullet 2*
- This actually is not new. The policy of 2011 calls for an endowment-type structure for managing the synod's investments
- This approach is critical toward achieving the third goal of preserving investments and providing predictable income
- Our objective is to achieve this within the next ten years, consistent with all of our synod's strategic **goals**

Funding for the synod's mission is a budgeting priority

- Effective 2013 all distributions from investments of property proceeds will be used solely for mission
- Strategic experimental, start-up and multiple year commitments will be accommodated
- Mission initiatives will be funded through the annual budgeting process

4

- Title priority
- Bullet 1..... mission
- Bullet 2..... accommodated
- Bullet 3
- These provisions are included in our synod council's resolution of March 2013

The budget is now restructured to clarify the use of all synod resources

- Revenue comes from two sources:
 - Contributions from congregations and individuals
 - Distributions from investments
- The budget identifies spending by programs:
 - Five strategic areas
 - 20 Mission programs within **Claimed, Gathered and Sent**
 - 8 Operations programs within **Synod Governance and Finance & Administration**
 - Both cash and staff costs are identified for each of the 28 programs

5

- As described during the presentation of the budgets,

- Title..... resources
- Bullet 1..... investments
- Bullet 2..... programs
- Sub-bullet 1..... Administration
- Sub-bullet 2..... programs

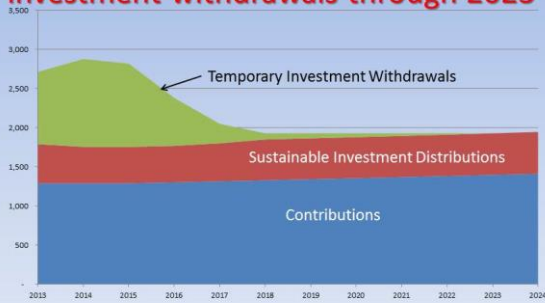
The FMC calculated an array of 10-year forecasts to achieve long-range goals

- *The current level of spending is not sustainable under any reasonable set of expectations*

6

- To get an understanding of the effect of changes in the various factors affecting our synod's financial condition, the FMC calculated an array of 10-year forecasts to achieve our long-range goals
 - The reality is clear.
 - *Bullet 1.....expectations*

Realistic forecast provides for increased contributions and temporary investment withdrawals through 2023



congregational support over the last two years. The 2014 budget assumes no increase over 2013.

- This forecast assumes 1% per year increase (above inflation) in congregational giving
- That means the current \$1.25 million would increase to \$1.4 million, plus inflation, by 2024.
- Remember that congregational giving was \$1.6 million ten years ago. That is \$2.1 million in today's dollars
- To maintain a sustainable endowment, investment distributions will be about \$500,000 per year
- Over the next few years, temporary investment withdrawals will be needed to jump start the implementation of the strategic plan and to allow time to carefully review the synod's program priorities and fully implement needed changes.

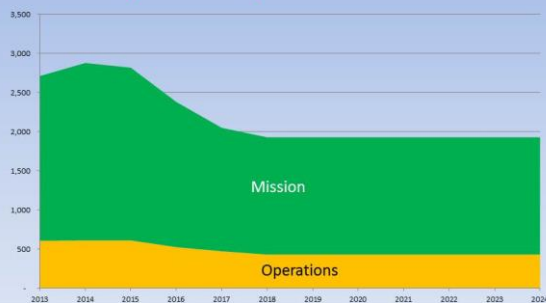
- One forecast that we believe is realistic is represented here. The values are in constant dollars, that is, no inflation is included

- This forecast provides for increased contributions from congregations and temporary investment withdrawals

- Contributions from congregations, shown in blue, are critical. As you can see, in the future after the temporary investment withdrawals end, congregations will provide three-quarters of our synod's revenue.

- Frank noted a slight increase in

Realistic forecast will result in 30% lower expenses by 2018



- *Title.....and beyond*

- The left side of this chart shows the proposed spending on mission and operations in 2013 and 2014

- It also projects future spending levels based on the available revenues shown on the previous slide

- It assumes proportionate reductions in mission and operations from the revised 2013 spending levels .

MNYS can achieve sustainable stewardship

- Modest annual contribution increases from congregations and a critical evaluation of programs will stabilize both mission and finances
- Mission spending will exceed distributions from investments under all projections
- Delaying action will reduce future opportunities

- It is possible for the synod to achieve sustainable stewardship
- *Bullet 1.....finances*
- *Bullet 2....* We ran both very optimistic projections and very pessimistic projections and this was true for all
- All projections will require spending reductions from the current level. Lengthy delays will only reduce the amounts available in the future from investments

A final 10-year financial plan will be prepared for the 2014 Assembly

- Enable key strategy initiatives
- Address priorities among existing programs
- Develop increased contributions
- Include a 5 year budget plan
- Provide a road map toward a sustainable future

- *Title.....that will do the following,*
- *Bullet 1.....initiatives*
- *Bullet 2.....programs*
- *Bullet 3.....contributions*
- *Bullet 4.....plan*
- *Bullet 5*
- Thank you for your attention.
- The FMC will be available to discuss this further at tomorrow's budget breakfast.

Mission Moment

Pr. Katrina Foster, Pastor of St. Michael's, Amagansett, and Ms. Marge Harvey, President of the congregation reported on the completion of the affordable housing project at St. Michael's. A video presentation was given. "There is nothing we cannot do if we trust the Spirit."

Bishop Rimbo invited the voting members and guests to sing "Come Thou Font of Every Blessing." He then announced a twenty minute break.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Minerva Melendez gave the updated registration report.

Clergy	184
Lay Voting Members	243
Total Voting members	<u>427</u>
Visitors	<u>71</u>
Total Attendance	498

Mr. Drew Wilson then gave instructions in the use of the Quizdom voting devices.

Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Ms. Renee Wicklund began by explaining the difference between a resolution and memorial, and then introduced the first item to come before the Assembly.

Item One

A Memorial in Support of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)

Whereas, under current U.S. immigration law, a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident is permitted to sponsor his or her spouse, child, or parent for permanent resident status; and

Whereas, under current U.S. immigration law, a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident is not permitted to sponsor his or her same-gender partner for permanent resident status; and

Whereas, approximately 25 other countries allow their citizens to sponsor their same-gender partners in the immigration process¹; and

Whereas, there are approximately 36,000 bi-national, same-gender families in the U.S.; and

Whereas, approximately 35% of male bi-national couples and 39% of female bi-national couples are raising a total of more than 17,000 children²; and

Whereas, due to the inability of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to sponsor their same-gender partners, these citizens and legal permanent residents can be forced to live abroad, thus uprooting their children, disrupting their careers, and breaking ties with their families, communities, and places of worship; and

Whereas, current immigration law does not provide for equal justice and equal protection for gay and lesbian citizens and legal permanent residents; and

Whereas, the ELCA has a long-standing commitment to calling for comprehensive federal immigration reform; and

Whereas, a bill called the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) has been introduced in the Federal legislature to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate discrimination in immigration by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and of lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and of lawful permanent residents and to penalize immigration fraud in connection with permanent partnerships; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon President Obama and elected officials in Congress to support and to press for passage of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) or its equivalent as a component of comprehensive immigration reform; and be it further

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_equality

² <http://immigrationequality.org/2011/11/williams-institute-releases-new-data-on-lgbt-immigrant-families/>

RESOLVED, that if a bill for comprehensive immigration reform is passed before the start of the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and if the bill does not include UAFA or its equivalent, the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call for the reintroduction of UAFA in the U.S. legislature; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to commend

Bishop Thomas M. Aitken, Northeastern Minnesota Synod,
Bishop James A. Arends, La Crosse Area Synod,
Bishop David H. Brauer-Rieke, Oregon Synod,
Bishop Bruce H. Burnside, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin,
Bishop Jessica R. Crist, Montana Synod,
Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod,
Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod,
Bishop Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane, Delaware-Maryland Synod,
Bishop Mark W. Holmerud, Sierra Pacific Synod,
Bishop Felipe Lozada-Montañez, Caribbean Synod,
Bishop Dean W. Nelson, Southwest California Synod,
Former Bishop Margaret Payne, New England Synod,
Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, Metropolitan New York Synod,
Bishop Michael Rinehart, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod,
Bishop Stephen S. Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod, and
Bishop Martin D. Wells, Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod

for their courageous witness and their stand for justice in adding their names to the *Faith Coalition for UAFA*³; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage the clergy and other leaders of congregations in this church to support the Uniting American Families Act by communicating with their elected representatives, encouraging them to co-sponsor and to support a just, comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration law that includes the principles of UAFA.

Submitted to Metropolitan New York Synod by

Rev. Ann Tiemeyer on behalf of

- The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer
- The Rev. Mark Erson
- The Rev. Heidi Neumark
- The Rev. Thomas S. Taylor
- The Rev. J. Elise Brown
- The Rev. Jared R. Stahler

³ http://immigrationequalityactionfund.org/images/FaithCoalition_SignOnLetter.pdf

- The Rev. Eduardo Fabian Arias
- The Rev. Amandus J. Derr
- The Rev. Thomas Mugavero
- The Rev. Phil Tryzynka
- The Rev. James Sudbrock
- The Rev. Brooke L Swertfager
- The Rev. Gary Mills
- The Rev. Christopher Mietlowski
- The Rev. William Heisley
- The Rev. Clint Padgitt
- Marc Almendarez Stutzel
- The Rev. Tina Talvitie
- The Rev. Paul B. Milholland
- Council of St. John’s – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lower East Side – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lutheran Church – Manhattan

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends passage of this Memorial.

Motion was made and seconded to adopt this memorial. Discussion followed.

Amendment was suggested by Pr. Ben McKelahan. Bishop put aside the memorial in order to perfect the amendment.

The next item was introduced.

Item Two

A Memorial Calling for Conversations About Ministering to Same-Gender Couples and Their Families

Whereas, the ELCA, meeting in Assembly (2009), resolved to “commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships”; and

Whereas, the ELCA Social Statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) states that the ELCA:

1. “recognizes that it has a pastoral responsibility to all children of God” (p. 19);
 2. “supports legislation and policies to protect civil rights” for all and has also “called upon congregations and members of this church to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to **advocate for their legal protection**” (p. 19, emphasis added);
- and

3. “will attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law” for all (p. 33); and

Whereas, marriage has been recognized for same-gender couples in twelve states and the District of Columbia; and

Whereas, four additional states (Illinois, Hawaii, Oregon, and New Jersey) are widely expected to consider legislation recognizing marriage for same-gender couples between 2013 and 2015, encompassing twelve additional synods that minister to more than 1.1 million Lutherans (about 25% of total ELCA membership); and

Whereas, the Supreme Court of the United States is currently considering whether to declare unconstitutional the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and California’s Proposition 8, both of which restrict the individual and family protections afforded by marriage; and

Whereas, individuals, congregations, and pastors have requested advice and resources to assist in their mission to support same-gender couples and their families; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

1. to invite and encourage conversations among this church’s congregations, rostered leaders, and the Conference of Bishops regarding (a) the growing trend in state and federal laws toward marriage equality, and (b) how all the expressions of the ELCA can respond to the needs of the neighbor, including discussion and sharing of resources that would be most helpful for those wishing to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and couples and their families;
2. to invite and encourage conversations among this church’s congregations, rostered leaders, and the Conference of Bishops regarding ways that this church can advocate for equal protection under the law for same-gender couples and their families; and
3. to invite and encourage the ELCA Church Council and the churchwide organization to make provision for Voting Members to engage in these conversations at the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, as the church continues to discern its ministry in the emerging context.

Submitted to Metropolitan New York Synod by

Rev. Ann Tiemeyer on behalf of

- The Rev. Mark Erson

- The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer
- The Rev. Heidi Neumark
- The Rev. Thomas S. Taylor
- The Rev. J. Elise Brown
- The Rev. Jared R. Stahler
- The Rev. Eduardo Fabian Arias
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- The Rev. Clint Padgitt
- Marc Almendarez Stutzel
- The Rev. Tina Talvitie
- The Rev. Paul B. Milholland
- Council of St. John's – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lower East Side – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lutheran Church – Manhattan

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends passage of this Memorial.

Motion to adopt was made and seconded.

Assembly voted – 301 to 40 to adopt the Memorial, with no abstentions.

SA2013.05.01 A Memorial Calling for Conversations About Ministering to Same-Gender Couples and Their Families

ADOPTED

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

1. to invite and encourage conversations among this church's congregations, rostered leaders, and the Conference of Bishops regarding (a) the growing trend in state and federal laws toward marriage equality, and (b) how all the expressions of the ELCA can respond to the needs of the neighbor, including discussion and sharing of resources that would be most helpful for those wishing to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and couples and their families;

2. to invite and encourage conversations among this church's congregations, rostered leaders, and the Conference of Bishops regarding ways that this church can advocate for equal protection under the law for same-gender couples and their families; and
3. to invite and encourage the ELCA Church Council and the churchwide organization to make provision for Voting Members to engage in these conversations at the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, as the church continues to discern its ministry in the emerging context.

The next item was brought forward.

Item Three

A Memorial in Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

Whereas, currently 29 states do not have laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation, and currently 34 states do not have laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace on the basis of gender identity⁴; and

Whereas, employees should be judged on the quality of their work and not on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; and

Whereas, legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity has been introduced in every Congress since 1994; and

Whereas, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 1397/S. 812) is an example of such legislation; and

Whereas, the ELCA's Social Statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* states, "While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this church is united on many critical issues" (p. 19), and that this church

1. "supports legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services" (p. 19);
2. "has called upon congregations and members of this church to welcome, care for, and support same-gender couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection" (p. 19);
3. "will advocate for public policies that support and protect families" (p. 24); and

⁴ <http://www.hrc.org/laws-and-legislation/federal-legislation/employment-non-discrimination-act>

4. “will attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity. Such individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse” (pp. 33-34); and

Whereas, the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial to endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and to affirm advocacy “in support of laws barring discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation” (see CWA resolution CA97.06.29); be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate to take up and pass legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synodical bishops, clergy, and other church leaders to speak publicly in support of legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge lay leaders to make this Assembly’s position and the ELCA’s position known to their Members of Congress in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate.

Submitted to Metropolitan New York Synod by

Rev. Ann Tiemeyer on behalf of

- The Rev. Heidi Neumark
- The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer
- The Rev. Mark Erson
- The Rev. Thomas S. Taylor
- The Rev. J. Elise Brown
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- The Rev. William Heisley
- The Rev. Clint Padgitt
- Marc Almendarez Stutzel
- The Rev. Tina Talvitie
- The Rev. Paul B. Milholland
- Council of St. John's – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lower East Side – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lutheran Church – Manhattan

The Committee on Reference and Counsel makes no recommendation regarding passage of this Memorial.

Motion to adopt was made and seconded

Ginny Cummings moved amendment to add a fourth resolve:

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge synods to not do business with companies known to discriminate.

After the motion was seconded, the Amendment approved 227 to 109, with no abstentions.

The Assembly then adopted the Memorial, as amended, 271 to 55, with no abstentions.

**SA2013.05.02 A Memorial in Support of Legislation Prohibiting Employment Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity
ADOPTED**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate to take up and pass legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synodical bishops, clergy, and other church leaders to speak publicly in support of legislation that would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge lay leaders to make this Assembly's position and the ELCA's position known to their Members of Congress in the United States House of Representatives and United States Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge synods to not do business with companies known to discriminate.

Report of ELCA

Pr. Greg Villalon gave report from the ELCA, including a recorded message from Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson.

Pr. Villalon spoke powerfully about how important it is to be together – to be part of a church. Our support helped make some life-changing ministries happen across this country, including 58 new congregations, and supporting 168 congregations that are coming alive again, in 2012.

Pr. Villalon announced that September 8, 2013 is the date set for celebrating the 25th anniversary of the ELCA. It is hoped that all congregations will participate.

He closed by giving thanks to God that we in Metro New York are claimed, gathered and sent, and always being made new.

Report on the Strategic Plan (Part 1)

Bp. Rimbo invited Vice President Maria Del Toro, Strategic Plan Consultant Tom Massey, and Claimed Strategy Chairperson Pr. Emily Scott to the podium to present part 1 of the Report on the Strategic Plan.

VP Del Toro:

Good afternoon. A strategic plan is a very good beginning to ensure we use our time and resources wisely in serving God. We worked for a year to develop it; but our strategic plan is just a starting point and a road map. Now we must implement the strategies into tactical plans that will direct our resources, organize our efforts, and measure our results.

As I said this morning, we have four committees working on this in an integrated manner. Today you will hear from Pastor Emily Scott on the work of the Claimed Strategy Committee, and the other three tomorrow.

Before Pastor Scott takes the stage, I would like to challenge you not to just hear information being presented; but listen to what God may be calling your congregation to do with this information.

This first circle on the screen represents the strategic plan for our synod. The second circle represents the ministry of your local congregation. You will notice they are not completely overlapping.

We know the plan contains some strategies and tactics that will not be applicable to your congregation. Likewise, we know there are some ministries of your congregation that will not be a part of our Synod's strategic plan. But that intersection of the two can produce a work for God that neither entity could alone.

And I want to challenge you to consider one more, very important circle. This circle represents your personal service for God. This is what God has called you to do for the Kingdom. It is what you affirmed this morning in our covenant of baptism. As with the other two circles, there

are places where your personal ministry is not a part of the Synod or maybe even your local congregation.

But I want you to prayerfully consider how you can join with your Lutheran sisters and brothers to more powerfully share the Gospel with the people of Metropolitan New York and beyond.

Pastor Scott – please share with us the work of the Claimed Strategy Committee and how we can all be engaged in your work.

Pr. Scott:

As you know very well by now from singing our song all morning, our Strategic Plan has three strategies, which are, Claimed, Gathered, and Sent. My name is Emily Scott, and I'm the chair of the Claimed Strategy.

I've been working in collaboration with the Claimed Strategy Committee members to explore the ways in which folks in the Metro New York area are connecting to what our Synod, and the churches in our Synod, are up to. Together, we've been looking at three key areas:

Connection -- all the different ways that people participate in the life of the church.

Commitment -- the ways we challenge people to grow deeper in their faith.

and Communication -- the ways we share our message with the world.

We've been doing good work in all three areas, but today I'd like to focus our attention on what our committee has been up to when it comes to communication.

I just want to say right up front that for many of us, the word "communication" can be kind of loaded. I can't tell you how many times someone has come up to me and guiltily confessed, "now I know I should be on facebook, but I don't really get it." And before we get much father, I should tell you that I am someone who tends to resist new technology until I can't resist it any longer.

Sometimes, in our church communities, we feel guilty that the church website doesn't get updated often enough, or that we're not on facebook yet. Technology can change quickly, and it can be overwhelming.

I think it's important to remember that communication, however, is not just about technology. Technology is a set of tools that help us communicate our message, not the other way around. So our first job is to figure out just what that message is, and then employ websites and facebook and twitter and texts in strategic ways to help us get our message out there.

The Claimed Committee started by asking a very basic question: Who are we, and why does anyone care?

That's really the central question we need to answer, isn't it, if we're to speak in bold and compelling ways about our faith.

What does it mean to be Lutheran and what do Lutherans, and Lutheran Theology have to offer the world that the world is in desperate need of?

One of the first things that we realized when we set about doing our work was that for every member of our committee, being a Lutheran really mattered. We shared our stories of how we had come to this particular tradition, and what it had offered us that was different -- and notice I didn't use the word "better," but "different" from other denominations.

We began to realize that it was very important that we learn to tell these stories in ways that ignite the hearts and minds of those who hear them. If we could learn to do that, we would have learned a lot about how to communicate our message.

One important thing that our committee is learning is that Lutheran theology has something to offer that the world desperately needs. There are people in the world who need to hear that God is not hateful but loving. Who need to hear that God does not want to imprison them, but want them to be free. There are people who are suffering, who can be liberated by this message. There are people who are fearful and need to know that God is a God of love.

I wonder how many stories there are in this room of God's liberating, healing love, discovered in a Lutheran congregation?

These are stories that our committee wants to hear. They are stories that we hope to collect and share, using those tools of technology that have such power to spread a message.

We feel really confident that there are a lot of great stories out there of hope, freedom, and liberation that the world badly needs to hear. And we want to hear them to, and begin to figure out how to use the tools of technology to share them. Today we're prepared to record those stories.

Around the room, you'll see members of the Claimed Committee and some folks we've enlisted wearing yellow tee-shirts that say, "Tell me your Lutheran Story." I would like for all of you to stand. Any time during Assembly, you are invited to find someone wearing a yellow shirt, and record your story. If you heard a really good story in your group, you could encourage the person who told it to record it! Thank you – you may sit down now.

In addition to telling our own stories, we knew that we needed to explore the Lutheran story -- the story of this church – our Lutheran Theology.

Our denomination is gifted with a unique and nuanced theology, inspired by God, germinated in the mind and heart of Martin Luther, penned by Luther and his colleague Phillip Melancthon, and lived out and embodied by congregants and preachers right up to today.

We needed to delve deep into Lutheran theology and think in fresh and new ways about how the unique message of the Lutheran tradition can be most powerfully expressed in these days.

Some of us began gathering to explore Lutheran theology, searching for language and symbols to help us express that theology in our current context. We read various works of Luther, and spent a great deal of time with a collection written by Lutheran women and women of color, called "Transformative Lutheran Theologies." We wanted to explore the potential of Lutheran theology to liberate us, especially those of us who have experience oppression.

The more we thought about Lutheran Theology, the more we realized that it's a deeply counter-cultural message we're trying to communicate to the world.

Ours is a theology that emphasizes that Christ's victory over death took place in his greatest moment of weakness. That's a counter-cultural message in a country that always wants to be more, bigger and better.

Ours is a theology that recognizes that as God's creatures we are flawed and imperfect, and always will be -- both saints and sinners, loved by God. That's a counter cultural message in a country where we seem to believe that is we buy the right clothes or wear enough makeup or loose enough weight, we can perfect ourselves.

Ours is a theology that says that we can't earn God's grace. That God's love is freely given to us, whether we deserve it or not. That's a counter cultural message in a country that thinks we can pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, that we get what we deserve, and often, that those who experience tragedy through illness or natural disaster, must have done something to deserve it.

So we have a big task in front of us. Figuring out how to share a message that powerfully disrupts so many assumptions about who's worthy and who isn't, who's deserving and who isn't, who's powerful, and who isn't.

Ours is a theology from below. We confess our faith in a God who is with us in the muddiest and murkiest moments of our existence. Who loves us in the depths our darkest days.

There is no pure place to stand from, when one is a Lutheran.

We will never be perfected.

We will never get that gold star we've been so anxiously awaiting.

We labor alongside the God who came among us, an infant in a feeding trough.

We are healers and sufferers.

Loved, not for what we do, but simply because.

Mary Joy Philip at the Lutheran School of Theology describes Lutheranism like a lotus flower, rooted in the murky depths of a muddy pool. It is from those murky depths that the flower, blooms.

After reading all those books, we wanted to talk to some people about what they say when they're asked what it means to be Lutheran.

And so we turned to all of you. We put out a call on through the Metro New York Synod e-newsletter, and asked you to fill out an online form, telling us what you say when someone asks you what it means to be Lutheran. Basically, "what's your Lutheran elevator speech?" How do you capture the essence of the Lutheran faith in just a few words? What is your Lutheran Mantra?

And we got some fantastic responses.

"It's nothing that we do."

"to be a Lutheran is to be a joyful Christian."

"God loves us anyhow"

"Our Lutheran faith is one of the Western (Catholic) tradition that stresses Grace: God's love of the unlovable. We do not seek to earn God's love, but celebrate it as a gracious gift, and try to respond to it with appropriate living, worship, and prayer."

"It's not about me, it's about God and the way God reaches out to all of us through grace, in Jesus Christ. Because of God's grace, we live gracefully and graciously."

"Protestants with Mass"

"There's only one God -- quit trying to get his job!"

"Simply put -- it's all about God's grace!"

"God is for us!"

"Freed by grace to tell it like it is."

"God's love: freely given, radically shared"

"Faith that liberates"

What do you say when someone asks you why you're a Lutheran? How hard or easy is it for you to talk about? Can you do it without using any "Lutheran lingo?"

Our committee wants to hear your ideas for Lutheran Mantras. We think that we'll get some great ideas from you -- ideas we can use as we develop a communications strategy.

The Claimed Committee is really excited to be here today, because it's an excellent opportunity for us to hear from you about your experience of communicating in your congregations. We

have some questions we'd like to ask you -- and the answers that you provide will aid us in our work!

How important do you think an online presence is to the mission of your church?

Very important

Sort of important

Not very important

What do you think is the most important aspect for a Church website?

Beautiful pictures of the church and the congregation

information for church leaders

times and locations of services prominently listed and up to date

mission of the church very clear

up to date design

How do you think your church is doing when it comes to web and social media presence?

really well!

okay

not so well

not sure

What are the graphics like for your church (signs, pamphlets, posters for events)

Clip art

Boring

Beautiful

Out of date!

What would help you update your graphics?

List of freelancers to work with

More funding for graphics

Better technology and training in how to use it

How do you think your website looks?

Great! It really represents our church community

It looks like it was designed in 1998

Terrible

Getting There

What do you think is the greatest impediment to your church having a better website?

no one's in charge of the website

the person who was in charge of the website moved away or stopped updating it

no one at the church is sure where to start

we don't have adequate staff to attend to the website

we don't have the budget to have a website

Does your church have a presence on facebook or twitter?

Yes, but no one updates it

Yes, and it's going great!

No, but we want to

No, and we don't want to

What sort of support do you think your church most needs when it comes to web presence and social media?

how to build our website

how to keep our website regularly updated

how to get a better looking website

getting high quality photographs for the website

learning how to strategically employ facebook and twitter

funding our website

finding someone who is passionate about website communication and trained to do it

Thank you all very much for your answers, and for your participation today. Please know that your participation, though the telling of your stories, through the Lutheran Mantras you've written, and through the information you've just provided, provide are an important part of the work that our committee is doing.

Our goal is not to hand down mandates or guidelines or great big handbooks of recommendations about how congregations should be communicating in our Synod. Rather, we hope to create a culture of communication in our Synod -- a vibrant, thriving culture in which congregations have the resources and tools they need to dream up creative ways to tune and share the Lutheran Message.

You may go home tomorrow with a wild idea about how your congregation might offer presence to your community -- through colorful banners waving outside the church or an active discourse taking place online. Through stories shared face to face, or through the symbols of iron gates and brick walls being replaced by vining flowers. We hope that you will feel empowered and equipped to share the message of Grace, using whatever tools and technology you can lay your hands on.

We have a story to tell, and the world is hungry to hear it. How will you tell the good news of what God is doing?

Bp. Rimbo then invited Mr. Roosevelt Credit to lead the Assembly in the song "Claimed, Gathered, and Sent."

Ecumenical Greetings

The Rt Rev. Andrew Dietsche, Bishop of New York, brought the Assembly greetings from our sisters and brothers in the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

The Rev. Dien Taylor, 1st Vice President of the Atlantic District-Lutheran Church Missouri Synod brought the Assembly greetings from our sisters and brother in the Atlantic District.

Report of the Commission on the Bishop Election Procedure

Bp. Rimbo invited the Synod Secretary, Pr. Robert Schoepflin to present the report. Pr. Schoepflin introduced those who had served with him on the Commission:

Mr. Daniel Nigro
Ms. Cassandra Wilson
Mr. David Ehlers
Mr. Daniel Wingard
Ms. Renee Wicklund
Pr. Amandus Derr
Pr. Brenda Irving
Pr. Daniel Ward
Pr. Paul Milholland.

Pr. Schoepflin then reviewed the procedure that was adopted at the 2012 Synod Assembly for nominating candidates for the Office of Bishop. The election will take place at the 2014 Synod Assembly. The process calls for a Bishop Election Committee to be selected at this time. The committee is to be comprised of ten members, six lay and four clergy, to be selected by lot from names submitted by the conferences of our Synod.

The names submitted for selection, by conference, were:

Bronx

Rev. Jonathan Recabarren (clergy)
Rev. Michael Thomas (clergy)
Ms. Hope Card (lay)
Ms. Marie Plaisir (lay)
Ms. Salina Williams (lay)

Southwest Brooklyn

Mr. Lenny Bartkus (lay)
Mr. Joe Bruzzi (lay)
Ms. Christine Hansen (lay)
Rev. Diane Wildow (clergy)

Northeast Queens

Rev. Daniel Peter (clergy)
Rev. Paul Downing (clergy)
Ms. Mary Downing (lay)
Ms. Nina Smith (lay)

Brooklyn Bridges

Rev. Ben McKelahan (clergy)
Mr. Eric Johnson (lay)
Rev. Stephanie Kershner (clergy)
Mr. Everton H. Robinson (lay)
Mr. Phil Fox Rose (lay)

Northwest Queens

Ms. Doris I. Tegge (lay)
Rev. Joseph Mantovani (clergy)
Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite (clergy)
Ms. Henrietta Markisch (lay)

Southwest Nassau

Rev. Edward G. Barnett (clergy)
Rev. Jerome Taylor (clergy)
Ms. Dorothy Criscuolo (lay)
Dcn. John Prosen (lay)
Mr. Walter Wagner (lay)

Manhattan

Rev. Ann Tiemeyer (clergy)
Ms. Gretchen Mundinger (lay)
Mr. John Ogren (lay)
Rev. Chris Mietlowski (clergy)
Ms. Madelyn Soussoudis (lay)

Western Suffolk

Ms. Jacqueline DeVille (lay)
Ms. Barbara Hansen (lay)
Rev. Joanne Bond (clergy)
Dcn. Richard Thyden (lay)
Rev. Joel Brandt (clergy)

Hudson

Mr. Dan Wingard (lay)
Ms. Mary Heller (lay)

The name of each person submitted had been written on a 3x5 index card. The cards with names of clergy submissions were placed into one bowl and the cards with names of lay submissions were placed into a second bowl. Our ecumenical guests, Bishop Andrew Dietsche and Pr. Dien Taylor were then invited to draw six names from the bowl containing the lay submissions and four names from the bowl containing the clergy submissions. Pr. Schoepflin announced the names as they were selected.

Those selected to serve on the Bishop Election Committee were:

Ms. Hope Card (lay)	Rev. Jonathan Recabarren (clergy)
Ms. Nina Smith (lay)	Rev. Diane Wildow (clergy)
Ms. Henrietta Markisch (lay)	Rev. Joseph Mantovani (clergy)
Mr. John Ogren (lay)	Rev. Ann Tiemeyer (clergy)
Ms. Mary Heller (lay)	
Mr. Walter Wagner (lay)	

Bp Rimbo thanked Bishop Dietsche and Pr. Taylor for their assistance with the selection process.

Bishop Rimbo invited Ms. Elizabeth Hoffmann to the podium for announcements.

Bishop Rimbo then invited Pr. Robert Modr to the podium to close the session with prayer.

After dinner, voting members attended one of five forums and two receptions that were held. Prayer of the End of the Day was led in each forum and reception at its conclusion.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2013

PLENARY SESSION III

The third plenary session of the Twenty-second Regular Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod was called to order, by Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo at 8:35am. He then introduced Pr. Jack Horner and Pr. Stephanie Pope as the hosts for the plenary session.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Minerva Melendez gave the updated registration report.

Clergy

187

Lay Voting Members	247
Total Voting members	<u>434</u>
Visitors	<u>77</u>
Total Attendance	511

Bishop Rimbo then invited the Assembly Chaplain, Pr. Robert Modr, to open the session with prayer.

Sandy Disaster Response

Bishop Rimbo asked Pr. Craig Miller, MNYS Disaster Response Coordinator to report to the Assembly. Pr. Miller spoke of his work since being appointed as Disaster Response Coordinator after Superstorm Sandy. He then introduced a series of speakers who addressed the Assembly. Pr. Bill Baum offered a video presentation of work done at St. Barnabas, Howard Beach. Pr. Gary Squire spoke of restoration work on Staten Island. Pr. Danielle Miller spoke of work in Oceanside. Ms. Christine Connell of Lutheran Social Services New York spoke of work that Lutheran Disaster Response of New York is doing. Ms. Molly Blancke spoke of the work of Lutheran Counseling Center in offering programs and seminars to help adults, children and families deal with disaster.

Pr. Craig Miller concluded the report by telling the Assembly: “The disaster was big. Our response must be big.”

Report of Candidacy Committee

Pr. Jeffrey Kolbo gave the report of the Candidacy Committee.

Three candidates were approved for ordination or admission to the ELCA roster of ordained ministers in 2012:

Peter Roy, a member of Dobbs Ferry Lutheran Church, who received his M.Div. from Gettysburg Seminary and is awaiting call in the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Emily Scott, founder and pastor of St. Lydia’s, Brooklyn, who received her M.Div. from Yale and completed her ELCA residency requirement at Philadelphia Seminary.

The Rev. Chryll Crews, a member of Holy Redeemer, Brooklyn, was approved for admission to the roster of ordained pastors as one ordained in another Christian tradition. She received her M.Div. from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta and awaits call in the Metropolitan New York Synod.

Eleven applicants were granted entrance to candidacy since the 2012 Assembly:

Tammy Daniels, member of Holy Redeemer, Brooklyn
 Kathryn Lawler, member of Our Saviour Atonement, New York
 David Wunsch, member of Our Saviour Atonement, New York

Winston Dookram, member of Ascension, Deer Park
Sherri Celeste Wortes, member of New Hope, Jamaica
James Miller, member of Immanuel, New York
Joseph Brewer III, member of St. Peter's, New York
Tristan Shin, member of Our Saviour, Brooklyn
David Grainson, member of Oceanside, Oceanside
Paul Miller, member of Gustavus Adolphus, New York
Maritza Cruz, member of Holy Trinity, New York

Pr. Kolbo concluded his report by noting that twenty eight members of the Metropolitan New York Synod are presently engaged in the candidacy process.

Recognition of Anniversaries

Clergy

Five Years

The Rev. Danielle L. Miller
The Rev. Frederick J. Johnsen
The Rev. Judith Delgado

Ten Years

The Rev. Annemarie R. Noto
The Rev. Carol L. Kessler
The Rev. Martin E. E. Malzahn
The Rev. Marva M. Jenkins
The Rev. Robert N. Harris
The Rev. Rosalind M. Brathwaite

Fifteen Years

The Rev. Edward G. Barnett
The Rev. Laurie B. Cline
The Rev. Norman D. White
The Rev. Sonja M. Tillberg Maclary

Twenty Years

The Rev. J. Elise Brown
The Rev. Kathleen Koran
The Rev. Perry J. Kirschbaum
The Rev. Rhonda J. Hoehn
The Rev. William Clark Jr

Twenty-five Years

The Rev. Brooke L. Swertfager
The Rev. Estelle Coles-Lloyd
The Rev. Joel K. Brandt

The Rev. Mark Y. S. Chen

Thirty Years

The Rev. Garry W. Squire
The Rev. Harriet J. R. Wieber
The Rev. Heidi B. Neumark
The Rev. Jeffrey P. Laustsen
The Rev. Kenneth G. Simurro Jr

Thirty-five Years

The Rev. Clint Padgitt
The Rev. Daniel B. Ward
The Rev. Martin F. Hauser
The Rev. Ronald M. Klose
The Rev. Terrence L. Weber

Forty Years

The Rev. Edward R. Schreiber
The Rev. George F. Handzo
The Rev. John W. Havrilla
The Rev. Kam H. Lai
The Rev. Paul D. Schmiede
The Rev. Richard O. Hill
The Rev. William D. Eggers
The Rev. William H. Beljean Jr

Forty-five Years

The Rev. George W. Summers
The Rev. Gerard R. Gaeta
The Rev. Larry L. R. Johnson
The Rev. Robert G. Sonnenberg

Fifty Years

The Rev. Gary C. Santmire
The Rev. Paul C. Walley

Fifty-five Years

The Rev. Edgar W. Oestreich
The Rev. Elvin R. Urdahl
The Rev. James R. Corgee Jr
The Rev. John G. Huneke
The Rev. John R. Heller
The Rev. Lee H. Wesley
The Rev. Romaine L. Gardner

Sixty Years

The Rev. Harald K. Kuehne
The Rev. Maury M. Drum

Sixty-five Years

The Rev. Helmut T. Dietrich

ELCA Rostered Lay Deacons

Fifteen Years

Ms. Jacquelyn J. Mize-Baker, AiM

Twenty-five Years

Ms. Mary-Elaine E. Leake, AiM

Thirty Years

Ms. Carol A. Tabatt, AiM

Ms. Virginia M. Puelle, AiM

Fifty Years

Ms. Marilyn H. Benner, AiM

Synodical Deacons

Five Years

Deacon Barbara Faraca

Deacon Barbara Meberg

Deacon Ingrid Compton

Ten Years

Deacon Kamy Moghbeli

Deacon Sharon L. Brennen

Deacon Dorothy S. Hecker

Deacon Margaret-ann R. O'Donnell

Deacon Carol A. Rios

Deacon Iris M. Hippner

Deacon Austin Stack

Fifteen Years

Deacon Edward W. Basche

Deacon Carol Fehleisen

Deacon Margaret H. Fielding

Deacon Charles Germain

Deacon Lynne W. Hansen

Deacon Daphne Heslop

Deacon Klaus D. Jonietz

Deacon Dorothy Kafalas

Deacon Donna Lange
Deacon Paul E. Lumpkin
Deacon Robert Michaelis

Pr. Kathleen Koran recognized rostered leaders celebrating silver and golden jubilee anniversaries and presented each of them with a certificate and pectoral cross.

25 Years Ordained

Pr. Joel Brandt
Pr. Mark Chen
Pr. Estelle Coles-Lloyd
Pr. Brooke Swertfager

50 Years Ordained

Pr. Paul Walley
Pr. Gary Santmire

25 Years AiM

Ms. Elaine Leake

50 years AiM

Ms. Marilyn Benner

Pr. Koran then recognized congregations celebrating significant anniversaries.

50 Years of Ministry

Calvary, Hauppauge
Abiding Presence, Fort Salonga
Grace, Yorktown Heights

75 Years of Ministry

Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights
Trinity, Brewster

100 Years of Ministry

St. John's, Mamaroneck
Bethany, Elmhurst

125 Years of Ministry

Trinity, Manhattan

150 Years of Ministry

Trinity, Middle Village
Immanuel, Manhattan

Call and Transition Report (not verbally reported to Assembly – printed here from Bulletin of Reports)

The Rev. R. Griffin Thomas, resigned as pastor of Messiah Brooklyn, effective July 30

The Rev. Andy Fetters, called as pastor of St. Mark's, Waukesha, WI

The Rev. Rebecka Fetters, resigned as pastor of St. John's, Lynbrook, effective July 15

The Rev. William Heisley, elected dean of Manhattan Conference

The Rev. Linda Bell, elected dean of Brooklyn Bridges Conference

The Rev. Albert Triolo, called as pastor of St. Mark's, Springfield, VA, effective July 1

The Rev. Martin Malzahn, Named Associate Director of Earl Hall/Assistant University Chaplain at Columbia University, effective August 15

The Rev. Tim Johansen, called as pastor of Temple, Havertown, PA

The Rev. David Drysdale, called as pastor of Holy Communion, Dallas, NC. Ordained September 1.

The Rev. Jonathan Recabarren, called as pastor of Fordham, Bronx, effective September 4. Ordained December 8.

The Rev. Krista Vingelis, called as associate pastor of Our Saviour, Jamaica, effective October 6

The Rev. Daphne Burt, called as pastor of Good Shepherd, Hamden, CT, effective September 1

Sister Kathleen Brighton, called as a deaconess of Good Shepherd, Brooklyn, effective September 3

St. Thomas Lutheran Church, Bronx, Congregation closed on September 16

The Rev. Kristina Ahlman, called as pastor of Solomon, Woodville, OH. Last Sunday at Calvary, Hauppauge was August 26

The Rev. Rodney Smith, called as pastor of New Hope, Jamaica, effective December 2. Ordained December 8.

The Rev. Deborah DeWinter, issued an invitation to extended service at First, Poughkeepsie, effective September 30.

Sión Iglesia Luterana (Zion Lutheran Church), moved to 619 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

The Rev. Emily Scott, called as pastor of St. Lydia's, Brooklyn. Ordained December 8.

The Rev. Rhonda Hoehn, called as pastor of St. Paul's, New City, effective December 2

St. Lydia's, transitioned from a synodically-authorized worshiping community to a congregation under development

The Rev. Mark Kiesel, called as pastor of Ascension, Franklin Square, effective January 1

Seafarers and International House, merged with German Seaman's Mission

The Rev. Eugene Koene, called as pastor of Hope, Warren, OH, effective January 10

The Rev. Laurence McFarland, resigned as pastor of Bethlehem, Bronx, effective October 7

The Rev. Richard Mueller, resigned as pastor of Immanuel, Kingston, effective January 31

The Rev. Jeanne Warfield, called as pastor of Grace, Forest Hills, effective February 10

The Rev. Linda Bell, resigned as pastor of St. Luke's, Brooklyn, effective February 28

The Rev. Robert Rainis, called as term-call pastor of Trinity, Wyandanch, effective March 1

The Rev. Tina Reyes, called as pastor of Shepherd of the Hills, Sparta, NJ. Ordained on February 17.

The Rev. Haiko Behrens, resigned from the ELCA. Called as pastor of St. Peter's Parish in Graubuenden, Switzerland

The Rev. Flora Hartford, called as associate pastor of Ascension, Deer Park, effective April 18

The Rev. Jennifer Richards, called as pastor of Trinity and Our Saviour, Staten Island, effective March 10

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Bronx, Congregation closed on March 10

The Rev. Harry Schenkel, called as pastor of St. Paul's, East Northport, effective March 18

The Rev. Clifford Lewis, called as pastor of Our Saviour, Grand Bahama, effective March 3

The Rev. Jack Horner, called as pastor of Trinity, Camp Hill, PA, effective June 16

The Rev. Kevin O'Hara, called as pastor of Our Savior, Patchogue, effective May 19

The Revs. Michael and Terri Church, called as pastors of Our Saviour, Warrenton, VA

Indonesian Lutheran Church, Elmhurst, Congregation closed on May 12

The Rev. Mark Erson, called as pastor of St. John's, Manhattan, effective May 19

Pr. Koran next introduced the members of the Conference of Deans:

Pr. Paul Block, Bronx
 Pr. Paul Egensteiner/Pr. Norman White, Tappan Zee
 Pr. William Heisley, Manhattan

Pr. Brenda Irving, Southeast Queens
Pr. Jeffrey Laustsen, Southwest Nassau
Pr. Jay Longan, Northwest Queens
Pr. Robert Modr, Peconic
Pr. Ernie Mossel, Delaware Hudson
Pr. Martin Nale, Western Nassau
Pr. Dennis O'Rourke, Hudson
Pr. David Parsons, Brooklyn Bridges
Pr. Gary Schulz, Northeast Queens
Pr. Micah Stumme, Southwest Queens
Pr. Garry Squire, Staten Island
Pr. James Watrud, Western Suffolk
Pr. Diane Wildow, Southwest Brooklyn
Pr. Kinberly Wilson, Eastern Nassau
Pr. Kipp Zimmermann, South Shore Brooklyn

Pr. Koran next introduced pastors new to our Synod:

Pr. Deborah DeWinter, First, Poughkeepsie
Pr. Mark Kiesel, Ascension, Franklin Square
Pr. Jonathan Recabarren, Fordham, Bronx
Pr. Emily Scott, St. Lydia's, Brooklyn
Pr. Rodney Smith, New Hope, Jamaica
Pr. Krista Vingelis, Our Saviour, Jamaica

Pr. Koran finally introduced deacons who were set apart in April 2013:

Dcn. Coreen Blake, Prince of Peace, Cambria Heights
Dcn. Eric Faret, Ascension, Deer Park
Dcn. John McDonnell, St. John's, Lindenhurst
Dcn. Patricia McDonnell, St. John's, Lindenhurst
Dcn. George Rossetti, Faith, Syosset
Dcn. Angela Rios, St. Peter's, Baldwin
Dcn. Gavin Schwen, Abiding Presence, Fort Salonga

Mission Moment – Long Island Lutheran Middle and High School

Bp Rimbo invited Dr. David Hahn, Head of School, to speak to the Assembly about the ministry of Long Island Lutheran Middle and High School and Long Island Lutheran Day School. Dr. Hahn noted that Long Island Lutheran is the second largest parochial system in the country.

Report of the Reference and Council Committee, Part 2

Ms. Renee Wicklund presented the second part of the report of the committee.

Item One (reintroduced after being earlier set aside by Bp. Rimbo for perfection of proposed amendment)

A Memorial in Support of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)

Whereas, under current U.S. immigration law, a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident is permitted to sponsor his or her spouse, child, or parent for permanent resident status; and

Whereas, under current U.S. immigration law, a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident is not permitted to sponsor his or her same-gender partner for permanent resident status; and

Whereas, approximately 25 other countries allow their citizens to sponsor their same-gender partners in the immigration process⁵; and

Whereas, there are approximately 36,000 bi-national, same-gender families in the U.S.; and

Whereas, approximately 35% of male bi-national couples and 39% of female bi-national couples are raising a total of more than 17,000 children⁶; and

Whereas, due to the inability of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to sponsor their same-gender partners, these citizens and legal permanent residents can be forced to live abroad, thus uprooting their children, disrupting their careers, and breaking ties with their families, communities, and places of worship; and

Whereas, current immigration law does not provide for equal justice and equal protection for gay and lesbian citizens and legal permanent residents; and

Whereas, the ELCA has a long-standing commitment to calling for comprehensive federal immigration reform; and

Whereas, a bill called the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) has been introduced in the Federal legislature to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate discrimination in immigration by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and of lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and of lawful permanent residents and to penalize immigration fraud in connection with permanent partnerships; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon President Obama and elected officials in Congress to support and to press for passage of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) or its equivalent as a component of comprehensive immigration reform; and be it further

RESOLVED, that if a bill for comprehensive immigration reform is passed before the start of the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and if the bill does not include UAFA or its equivalent,

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration_equality

⁶ <http://immigrationequality.org/2011/11/williams-institute-releases-new-data-on-lgbt-immigrant-families/>

the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call for the reintroduction of UAFA in the U.S. legislature; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to commend

Bishop Thomas M. Aitken, Northeastern Minnesota Synod,
Bishop James A. Arends, La Crosse Area Synod,
Bishop David H. Brauer-Rieke, Oregon Synod,
Bishop Bruce H. Burnside, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin,
Bishop Jessica R. Crist, Montana Synod,
Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod,
Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod,
Bishop Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane, Delaware-Maryland Synod,
Bishop Mark W. Holmerud, Sierra Pacific Synod,
Bishop Felipe Lozada-Montañez, Caribbean Synod,
Bishop Dean W. Nelson, Southwest California Synod,
Former Bishop Margaret Payne, New England Synod,
Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, Metropolitan New York Synod,
Bishop Michael Rinehart, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod,
Bishop Stephen S. Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod, and
Bishop Martin D. Wells, Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod

for their courageous witness and their stand for justice in adding their names to the *Faith Coalition for UAFA*⁷; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage the clergy and other leaders of congregations in this church to support the Uniting American Families Act by communicating with their elected representatives, encouraging them to co-sponsor and to support a just, comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration law that includes the principles of UAFA.

Submitted to Metropolitan New York Synod by

Rev. Ann Tiemeyer on behalf of

- The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer
- The Rev. Mark Erson
- The Rev. Heidi Neumark
- The Rev. Thomas S. Taylor
- The Rev. J. Elise Brown
- The Rev. Jared R. Stahler
- The Rev. Eduardo Fabian Arias
- The Rev. Amandus J. Derr

⁷ http://immigrationequalityactionfund.org/images/FaithCoalition_SignOnLetter.pdf

- The Rev. Thomas Mugavero
- The Rev. Phil Tryzynka
- The Rev. James Sudbrock
- The Rev. Brooke L Swertfager
- The Rev. Gary Mills
- The Rev. Christopher Mietlowski
- The Rev. William Heisley
- The Rev. Clint Padgitt
- Marc Almendarez Stutzel
- The Rev. Tina Talvitie
- The Rev. Paul B. Milholland
- Council of St. John's – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lower East Side – Manhattan
- Council of Trinity Lutheran Church – Manhattan

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends passage of this Memorial.

Pr. Ben McKelehan withdrew his proposed amendment.

The Assembly voted to adopt the Memorial 277 to 35, with no absentions.

**SA2013.05.03 A Memorial in Support of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)
ADOPTED**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon President Obama and elected officials in Congress to support and to press for passage of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA) or its equivalent as a component of comprehensive immigration reform; and be it further

RESOLVED, that if a bill for comprehensive immigration reform is passed before the start of the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and if the bill does not include UAFA or its equivalent, the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call for the reintroduction of UAFA in the U.S. legislature; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to commend

**Bishop Thomas M. Aitken, Northeastern Minnesota Synod,
Bishop James A. Arends, La Crosse Area Synod,
Bishop David H. Brauer-Rieke, Oregon Synod,
Bishop Bruce H. Burnside, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin,
Bishop Jessica R. Crist, Montana Synod,
Bishop H. Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod,
Bishop Richard H. Graham, Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod,
Bishop Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane, Delaware-Maryland Synod,**

**Bishop Mark W. Holmerud, Sierra Pacific Synod,
Bishop Felipe Lozada-Montañez, Caribbean Synod,
Bishop Dean W. Nelson, Southwest California Synod,
Former Bishop Margaret Payne, New England Synod,
Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, Metropolitan New York Synod,
Bishop Michael Rinehart, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod,
Bishop Stephen S. Talmage, Grand Canyon Synod, and
Bishop Martin D. Wells, Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod**

for their courageous witness and their stand for justice in adding their names to the *Faith Coalition for UAFA*⁸; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage the clergy and other leaders of congregations in this church to support the Uniting American Families Act by communicating with their elected representatives, encouraging them to co-sponsor and to support a just, comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration law that includes the principles of UAFA.

⁸ http://immigrationequalityactionfund.org/images/FaithCoalition_SignOnLetter.pdf

Item Four

A Memorial to Commission an Adult Catechism

Whereas, the Reformation Jubilee in October of 2017 is nearing, and

Whereas, Luther's Catechisms have provided and continue to provide a strong foundation for the education of the faithful in both doctrine and piety; and

Whereas, while the chief parts Luther's Catechisms remain a timeless outline for learning and discourse among God's people, their scope and content was shaped by their historic antecedents and many factors specific to that time; and

Whereas, in the nearly 500 years since the publication of these catechisms, there has been a profound increase in literacy and education among clergy and laity alike; and

Whereas, through the intervening centuries, many topics that were not directly addressed in the catechisms, have been addressed or continue to be addressed by thoughtful Christians, whether professional theologians, clergy or laity, such as the relationship between faith and science; the relationship between church and state; the faith implications of participatory democracy; religious freedom and tolerance; relations between the races; gender roles; sexual expression and reproduction; sexual orientation; medical questions regarding extraordinary and end-of-life care; issues of justice, such as human rights, slavery, capital and corporeal punishment, torture, nationalism, and economic justice; warfare and weaponry; ecology; genetic engineering; and many others; and

Whereas, many of these topics have been the subject of studies and papers prepared for the guidance of church leaders and shaping of policy, for the education of the people of God, and addressing the general population, most recently in the form of Social Teaching Statements; and

Whereas, continued reflection and formulation of teaching related to core theological topics such as the atonement and work of Christ, the mission of the Church, inter-faith relationships, and most especially the sacraments and the ministry of the Church have been the constant task of the church through internal studies, and in recent decades in partnership with other Christian communities through inter-church dialogues and agreements; and

Whereas, there exists no single resource pulling together the various discussions of these topics for general use and study by the faithful; and

Whereas, the *Evangelisches Erwachsenen Katechismus* [*Evangelical Adult Catechism*] published by the VELKD in Germany, now in its 8th edition, and *The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church* (published internationally) offer examples of other church bodies that have produced adult catechisms that can serve as models for us; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request the Church Council to commission,

through the appropriate channels with appropriate funding, the development of an Adult Catechism as a resource for the church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that this catechism be prepared as an educational resource to supplement Luther's Catechisms, not as vehicle for establishing specific policies or norms within the Church or for binding the consciences of its members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that the Church Council invite ELCA Full Communion Partner churches to participate in this project so that continued inter-church dialogue may be enriched and shared throughout the churches, and so that we may further live out the promise of our partnerships; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this catechism take into account and reference the extensive bilateral ecumenical dialogues of the past 50 years.

Submitted to the Metropolitan New York Synod by
Rev. James G. Krauser

With additional sponsors

The Rev. William Baum

Mr. Robert Buescher

The Rev. Michael Church

The Rev. Martin Hauser

Mr. Paul K. Jensen

The Rev. Leo Longan

The Rev. Fred McElderry

The Rev. David J. Meyers

The Rev. Dr. Gary Mills

Ms. Jacquelyn Mize-Baker, AIM

The Rev. Annemarie R. Noto, Ph.D

The Rev. Gary Schulz

The Rev. James Anderson

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends passage of this Memorial.

After second and discussion, the Assembly adopted the Memorial 278 to 43, with no abstentions.

SA2013.05.04 A Memorial to Commission an Adult Catechism

ADOPTED

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request the Church Council

to commission, through the appropriate channels with appropriate funding, the development of an Adult Catechism as a resource for the church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that this catechism be prepared as an educational resource to supplement Luther's Catechisms, not as vehicle for establishing specific policies or norms within the Church or for binding the consciences of its members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorializes the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that the Church Council invite ELCA Full Communion Partner churches to participate in this project so that continued inter-church dialogue may be enriched and shared throughout the churches, and so that we may further live out the promise of our partnerships; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this catechism take into account and reference the extensive bilateral ecumenical dialogues of the past 50 years.

Item Five

A Resolution Regarding Ascension Day

Whereas, the Metropolitan New York Synod adopted a Strategic Plan in 2012 as one of three expressions of the Church interdependent with congregations and a churchwide expression; and

Whereas, the Synod acts to help people grow in faith through engagement with the Lutheran tradition ("is claimed"), ensures Word and Sacrament ministry is provided on the territory of the Synod ("is gathered"), and responds to specific societal needs and issues ("is sent"); and

Whereas, the Festival of the Ascension of Our Lord, occurring always on a Thursday in the spring of the year within the weeks of Easter in anticipation of Pentecost, is a celebration of the Body of Christ "left behind" to work God's gracious mission in the world; and

Whereas, some occasions are especially appropriate for synodical settings, extra-congregational yet serving the whole Body of Christ (e.g., ordinations, setting apart of ministry partners, affirmation of vows among rostered persons, recognition of lay ministries in the world, special anniversaries of rostered leaders, historic congregations, and specialized ministries, installation of deans and/or Synod executive staff), which events can be reserved for this celebration whenever appropriate; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this Synod Assembly encourages the Bishop in consultation with the Synod Council and Conference of Deans to set aside time for a "cathedral" event on Ascension Day or the Eve of the Ascension of Our Lord in each successive year, possibly during a Synod Assembly, to lift up the strength and meaning of the Ascension of Our Lord in the widest possible public acclamation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations and ministries of the Synod be encouraged to attend this celebration, inviting and enabling participation without detracting from local, ecumenical, and congregational celebrations of the Ascension of Our Lord.

Submitted to the Metropolitan New York Synod by

Pastor Albert R. Ahlstrom
Dr. Jocelyn D'Antonio
Pastor Ed Barnett
Pastor J. Elise Brown
Pastor Michael Church
Deacon Charles Germain
Pastor John Heller
Pastor Jack Horner
Pastor Paul Milholland
Deacon Karen Nurmi
Pastor Anthony Stephens
Pastor James Sudbrock
Pastor Jerome Taylor
Pastor Dennis Walker
Pastor Kipp Zimmermann

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends passage of this Resolution.

After second and discussion, the Assembly adopted the Resolution 295 to 27, with no abstentions.

**SA2013.05.05 A Resolution Regarding Ascension Day
ADOPTED**

RESOLVED, that this Synod Assembly encourages the Bishop in consultation with the Synod Council and Conference of Deans to set aside time for a “cathedral” event on Ascension Day or the Eve of the Ascension of Our Lord in each successive year, possibly during a Synod Assembly, to lift up the strength and meaning of the Ascension of Our Lord in the widest possible public acclamation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations and ministries of the Synod be encouraged to attend this celebration, inviting and enabling participation without detracting from local, ecumenical, and congregational celebrations of the Ascension of Our Lord.

Item Six

A Resolution Urging Congregation Support for the *diakonia* Program® and Other Leadership and Lay Education Ministries

Whereas, all Christians are called by Jesus to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:16-20); and

Whereas, we are included in Jesus’ instruction to “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34); and

Whereas, the *diakonia* Program is a program of lay theological education designed to prepare Christians to fulfill more effectively their baptismal calling as servants of Christ; and

Whereas, the *diakonia* Program prepares Christians of many ages, different educational backgrounds, and different goals for their ministry and servanthood through a two-year process of spiritual and theological formation; and

Whereas, the *diakonia* Program provides a comprehensive program for training to adults during weekly classes in Bible, church history, theology, and practical ministry; and

Whereas, the *diakonia* Program provides lay adults with opportunities to assess their God-given talents and how best to apply them; and

Whereas, the *diakonia* Program equips lay people to teach, empower, and befriend the needy in our midst, feed the hungry, and witness to the power of the Gospel; and

Whereas, the church of today is in need of knowledgeable, committed, and empowered lay leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that every congregation of the Metro New York Synod be encouraged to support the *diakonia* Program by the following actions:

- a. Making congregation members aware of the benefits of the *diakonia* Program through bulletin announcements, Web site links, and newsletters;
- b. Supporting members who may be seeking to learn more about their faith;
- c. Hosting *diakonia* Program graduates for temple talks and/or presentations to congregation groups;
- d. Providing financial support for members to participate in the *diakonia* Program;
- e. Encouraging congregation leaders to participate in the *diakonia* Program; and
- f. Assisting *diakonia* Program graduates in our synod to identify roles for ministry in congregations and the synod;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Synod commend and support *diakonia* Program graduates for the dedication they have exhibited in and through their study of God's Word and their willingness to serve God; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all voting members of this Synod Assembly be encouraged to support the *diakonia* Program and other leadership and lay education ministries through their prayers and actions.

Submitted to the Metropolitan New York Synod by the *diakonia* Program NY Steering Committee

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends passage of this Resolution.

After second and discussion the Assembly adopted the Resolution 301 to 18, with no abstentions.

**SA2013.05.06 A Resolution Urging Congregation Support for the *diakonia* Program® and Other Leadership and Lay Education Ministries
ADOPTED**

RESOLVED, that every congregation of the Metro New York Synod be encouraged to support the *diakonia* Program by the following actions:

- a. Making congregation members aware of the benefits of the *diakonia* Program through bulletin announcements, Web site links, and newsletters;**
- b. Supporting members who may be seeking to learn more about their faith;**
- c. Hosting *diakonia* Program graduates for temple talks and/or presentations to congregation groups;**
- d. Providing financial support for members to participate in the *diakonia* Program;**
- e. Encouraging congregation leaders to participate in the *diakonia* Program; and**
- f. Assisting *diakonia* Program graduates in our synod to identify roles for ministry in congregations and the synod;**

and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Synod commend and support *diakonia* Program graduates for the dedication they have exhibited in and through their study of God's Word and their willingness to serve God; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all voting members of this Synod Assembly be encouraged to support the *diakonia* Program and other leadership and lay education ministries through their prayers and actions.

Item Seven

A Resolution to Create one Metropolitan New York Synod Nominations and Elections Committee

Bp. Rimbo deferred consideration of this resolution to the 2014 Assembly so that the proposed constitutional language could be perfected.

Report on Strategic Plan, Part 2

Bp. Rimbo invited VP Maria Del Toro, Strategic Plan Consultant Tom Massey, Gathered Strategic Committee Chair Pr. William Baum, and Sent Strategic Committee Chair Ms. Barbara Johnson to give part two of the report on the strategic plan.

Maria Del Toro:

Thank you for your participation yesterday with the Claimed Strategy. Today you will have the opportunity to do the same with our Gathered and Sent Strategies. I would like to call Pastor Bill Baum to the stage to present the exciting work of the Gathered Strategy Committee.

Bill Baum:

Gathered by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will live among God's faithful people, hear God's Word and share Christ's supper.

Back when Hurricane Sandy was projected to visit its wrath upon our area, the people in my community in southern Queens began to make plans. They knew they would be challenged by what the wind and waves might bring. So they made plans. They'd lived through storms before and knew that there would certainly be at least some moderate beach erosion. They assumed there could be maybe an inch of flooding in some basements.

They stocked up on water and gas and canned goods. They moved their cars to higher ground. They elevated basement items, appliances and boxes of storage, a few inches off the floor. Yes, the storm would bring changes, but little did they know that the plans they made would not be up to the unexpected challenges it would leave in its wake.

The changes Sandy wrought were far beyond the scope of most everyone's plans. On even the highest ground in the neighborhood, the cars were all destroyed. The basements and garages and all their contents, destroyed. Many first floors, furniture, books, clothes, appliances, destroyed. Thousands of lives were changed profoundly. You see, our plans

must match the magnitude of the changes and challenges that we face. Big changes and challenges need to be met with equally big plans.

How do we prepare to face big changes and challenges in our lives, our communities, our congregations, our synod?

The Gathered Strategy Committee aims to ensure we have sustainable ministries of word and sacrament, both now and for the next generation. It will lead us in planning forward-thinking ways of looking at the locations of our ministries. It will lead us in investigating new patterns for leadership development. All this will help us plan for, and indeed, take advantage of the fast changing world around us, with all its social and cultural challenges.

The members of the Gathered Strategy Committee are:

*Meg Fielding, from Holy Trinity in Rockville Centre
Hazel Goldstein, from St. John's in Middletown
Carlos Lopez, from Advent in Manhattan
John Malone, from Holy Trinity in Brooklyn
John Prozen, from Incarnation in Cedarhurst
Maritza Ortiz Cruz, from Holy Trinity in Manhattan
Stephanie Whelpley, from St. Andrew's, West Hempstead
Amandus Derr, from Saint Peter's in Manhattan
Brenda Irving, from Prince of Peace in Cambria Heights
Rebecca Pollicino, from Grace in Uniondale
Myself, the chair, from Saint Barnabas in Howard Beach*

In addition, we have three wonderful Bishop's Liaisons to help us:

*Kathleen Koran, from Emanuel in Pleasantville
The regrettably departing, Jack Horner, also from Emanuel in Pleasantville
and Kathy Schmidt, from Saint Peter's in Manhattan*

Our Synod Council charged the Gathered Strategy Committee to develop plans for our synod guided by six principles:

- 1. Recognize that the cultural and demographic changes washing over us are beyond our control and may be filled with the movement of the Holy Spirit*
- 2. Stop devoting resources to resisting the tide*
- 3. Learn to swim with the tide and respond to it in new ways*
- 4. Fund innovative new ministries that emerge from our changing seascape, rather than struggle to maintain unsustainable ministries*

5. *Detach our understanding of ministry from solely buildings based, developing smaller foot-printed ministries that are sustainable.*

6. *Commit to conserving assets for future generations*

And, our Synod Council asked the committee to focus in particular on three priorities:

First, develop plans for new and renewed ministries to ensure we have sustainable assemblies of word and sacrament, both now and for the next generation. And, that naturally leads, secondly, to the question of locations. Where should these new and renewed ministries be located? And, third, what sort of leadership will they need in order to thrive?

So at the heart of our Synod Council's assignment to our Gathered Strategy Committee, it's easy to image a giant flashing sign that says changes ahead! In fact, you don't even need to imagine it, here it is.

So, let's talk about how we deal with change. And, now we get to use our clickers.

Which kind of change do you prefer?

- A. No Change*
- B. Loose Change*
- C. Chaotic Change*
- D. Planned Change*

Which kind of healthcare do you prefer?

- A. Emergency Room Visit*
- B. Masking of Symptoms*
- C. Emergency Root Canal*
- D. Planned Medical Care*

Our synod has been changing. You've probably noticed. A few short decades ago, we were a synod of some 240 congregations. We now number a bit under 200; and our Bishop has said we may see that number settle around 150. That's a lot of change. And for the most part, we haven't had plans big enough to match the scope of that change. In a word, it's been chaos. One by one, congregations have come to the completion of their ministries, very often in chaotic pain and distress.

A good deal of this is because our basic conception of congregational life didn't really plan for a natural life-cycle that includes a beginning, middle and end. The Church of Christ remains forever. But congregations come and go. They are called into being by the Spirit to pursue a mission in a given time and place. And when that mission is fulfilled their ministry is complete.

In our synod's experience, when congregations are unable to plan for the completion of their ministry, they become vulnerable to deterioration and exploitation by opportunistic people. This results in significant losses. Over recent years our synod has paid to reclaim from New

York City buildings that were foreclosed ("in rem") for back taxes, and it has paid the bill for multiple building code violations. For every empty building our synod holds title to, and there have been many, the costs in utilities, insurance and management fees average above \$60,000 a year. All the while, we are incurring substantial legal costs.

Over the past decade, together all these expenses have easily surpassed 4 million dollars. Can we think of ways we would rather spend 4 million dollars? So, this is a matter of our shared stewardship of the assets that God and our forebearers in the faith have handed down to us. How will we plan to steward these gifts for the next generation?

God spoke through the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43.19)

Clearly, God is doing a new thing among the congregations of our synod. As we together explore the mystery of our new context, you'll be glad to know that our Synod Council has made plans for additional support to guide us through implementation of our strategic plan. Having heard clearly the concern expressed at last year's Synod Assembly, that faithful pastoral care and presence accompany implementation of our synod's strategic plan, one staff member will be assigned to walk with congregations and pastors through their transitions. And there will be additional support to guide property assessment and management.

As we scan the horizon to see what new things God has in store for us in the years ahead, we'll also take a look at some of the exciting possibilities for continuing our community presence through mixed use building developments.

For example, the fantastic senior housing developed by Pastor Foster and the people of St. Michael's in Amagansett. And we'll open doors to our ecumenical partners to see what new things God is springing upon them. For example, there's a budding leadership development venture called the Entrepreneurial Fellowship Program at Auburn Theological Seminary. Sounds interesting!

So here's a final question. And we don't need our clickers for this one. Is this statement True or False?

*The church of Christ, in every age
Beset by change, but Spirit-led,
Must claim and test its heritage
And keep on rising from the dead.
Evangelical Lutheran Worship - Hymn 729)*

All those in favor, say aye.

Thanks for all you do in your ministries gathered around our Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to call on Barbara Johnson, leader of the Sent Strategy Committee to come and share with us the work of this critical committee.

Barbara Johnson:

The purpose of the Sent Strategy Committee is to network congregations, ministries, and leaders to proclaim the Gospel while responding to specific societal need and issues, and to also speak on specific issues of justice and peace. Allow me to share with you the members of the Sent Strategy Committee.

Lay members are:

Ingrid Compton

Eric Faret

Zena Spence

and myself, Barbara A. Johnson- Chair

Clergy members are:

Reverend Albert R. Ahlstrom

Reverend Linda Bell

Reverend Marsh Drege

Reverend John Flack,

Reverend Robert Schoepflin

Reverend James Sudbrock.

Our Bishop's Liaisons are:

Reverend Percy Batiku

and Sarah Gioe.

We want you to look around your communities to determine unmet needs and issues that challenge your neighbors. To this end, we used a process I used as a teacher and later as an elementary school administrator called Brainstorming. First, we discussed our passions for service as Lutherans. Our group discussion identified numerous passions as each member of the committee expressed with enthusiasm an unmet need.

The list continued to grow as we each expressed our zeal for being able to do something about, homelessness, joblessness, poverty, hunger, families, schools, war veterans, climate change, and of course, bringing people to know and love Christ. This is quite a list.

We also had a meeting I'll call an "unearthing discussion meeting" where we talked about the wonderful efforts many local congregations are making in meeting some unmet or underserved needs. I share with you the determination of a congregation in whose average Sunday attendance is approximately 45. This congregation saw the need to feed the many families that could be described as the working financially challenged or unemployed and lacking affordable housing or homeless.

After our area and the country experienced the financial crash in 2008, so did much of the funding that was available to sustain the previously existing food pantries. A member of the congregation had knowledge of pantries closing and encouraged the congregation to fill the

need. With no government or private funds available, the congregation was determined to open a food pantry themselves.

Research, evaluating space needs, the number of volunteer needed, re-designing available space, and meeting basic Department of Health guidelines, led to a Food Pantry opening that originally provided food for fewer than 35 families in 2008 and as recently as April 2013, now provides food for more than 70 children, 2,807 individuals which represents serving the needs of 1, 277 families. The volunteers packed more than 95 bags of non-perishable food to distribute this April. These are large numbers, but what is more encouraging and fascinating is that all the food that is distributed is donated by the members and friends of the congregation!

Feeding those in need, partnership- connecting with the community near the congregation and advocating/messengers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is very similar to Jesus feeding the multitude with 2 fish and five loaves of bread. He saw a need and met it!

This is just one example of being sent into the world. Lutheran's always provide services. Lutheran World Relief provides support in water, agriculture, climate, health and livelihoods. This is civic participation when there is a specific need and in prevention services. Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn is providing medical care, Family Health Centers, Senior Housing, Extended Care and Rehabilitation, Community Care Organization and other programs.

Lutheran Social Services provides services through neighborhood programs of adoption, foster care, independent living programs, residential programs, specialized residential housing and general social service programs. They also provide middle and high school education to special needs students at the New Life School to children that cannot be accommodated by the NYC Department of Education. In October of 2012 LSSNY became the largest provider of Universal Pre-K, Head Start and the Child Care programs in NYC.

Of course when a disaster happens Lutheran Disaster Response is quickly on site and remains where there is a need until the job is done. The Boston Marathon terror attack and tornado in Moore, Oklahoma are the most recent examples of Lutheran Disaster Response at work. And finally, let's remember Lutheran Campus Ministries, providing Lutheran ministry on campus, available to all students, not just Lutherans.

This list is not complete and you may say, "If all this is being done, what can I do?" I'd like you to think about just that. What can you do as you are sent into the world or on a smaller and perhaps more manageable scale, sent into your community or congregation's neighborhood?

Please allow your mind to ponder for a minute, the numerous meanings for the word sent. Sent means delivering, motion, action of some dimension, disseminate, emit, showed, launch, delivered, relayed, hurled, propelled, projected and cast.

Sent, in essence, means a sense of movement or motion. What do you believe you can achieve as you are sent. Is your faith based ministry ready to be sent?

What can you accomplish with your congregation, or will you have to be bold and courageous? I challenge you to be the catalyst for serving and addressing the underserved and sometime barely visible through services, partnerships and being advocates for justice and peace. However, remember our Synod will find ways for you to network with other congregations, partners and agencies to help you accomplish this. It is "God's Work, Our Hands" and "We are Always being made New".

Let me share with you the work of the Sent Committee to date. The members of the Sent Strategy Committee were able to refine their passions into the categories of Education, Health, Family Support and Employment.

We will share with you some research that will be helpful in your decision-making. Now this is your opportunity to participate in our work while making decisions about your work with your congregation, our Strategic Plan and personally.

Maria Del Toro:

As you heard from the Claimed Strategy Committee yesterday, and the Gathered and Sent Strategy Committees today, we are all well on our journey to transforming our Synod into a sustainable, vibrant and innovative synod where we all have an opportunity to work together for the good of the world. It is a challenge that we all have freely accepted but we are not alone in our journey.

Think of the Great Commission. In the Great Commission Jesus instructs us to go out and teach, make disciples of all nations and to baptize all in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are given a great task, BUT THERE IS THE GREAT PROMISE. WE ARE NOT ALONE. FOR JESUS SAYS, "AND SURELY I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, TO THE VERY END OF THE AGE." LET US SAY AMEN TO THAT.

Thank you!

Bp. Rimbo invited Mr. Roosevelt Credit to lead the Assembly in the song "Claimed, Gathered and Sent."

Report of Lutheran Medical Center/Lutheran Health Care

Pr. Donald Stiger, Senior Vice President, Mission and Spiritual Care at LMC, addressed the Assembly about the work LMC does in serving the community. LMC has largest emergency room and trauma center in all of Brooklyn. LMC is celebrating its 130 anniversary this year. A video presentation was made to the Assembly.

Mission Moment, Malaria/Kilimanjaro Project

Ms. Karen Nurmi, Pr. Carol Fryer and Pr. Jack Horner spoke of their climb of Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds for the ELCA Malaria Project. The Assembly was treated to video presentation of their climb up Mount Kilimanjaro.

Bp. Rimbo invited Ms. Elizabeth Hoffman to the podium for announcements. He then invited Pr. Robert Modr to close the session with prayer.

The Assembly celebrated the Holy Eucharist in the ballroom at 1:30pm.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2013

PLENARY SESSION IV

The fourth plenary session of the Twenty-second Regular Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod was called to order, by Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo at 2:345pm. He then introduced Ms. Kathleen Schmidt and Pr. Scott Paradise as the hosts for the plenary session.

Adjusted 2013 Budget and Proposed 2014 Budget

The proposed adjusted budget of \$2,730,429 for fiscal year 2013, having been presented to the Assembly during an earlier session by Mr. Frank Suttell, Synod Treasurer, was brought before the voting members for adoption.

**SA2013.05.07 Ratified an Adjusted Budget of \$2,730,429 for F.Y. 2013
ADOPTED**

The proposed budget of \$2,909,876 for fiscal year 2014, having been presented to the Assembly during an earlier session by Mr. Frank Suttell, Synod Treasurer, was brought before the voting members for adoption.

**SA2013.05.08 Adopted a Budget of \$2,909,876 for F.Y. 2014
ADOPTED**

Heart of Ministry Award

Deacon Charles Germain presented the award for 2013 to Oceanside Lutheran Church.

Report of the Committee on Registration

Ms. Minerva Melendez gave the final registration and attendance report for the Assembly.

Clergy	182
Lay Voting Members	243
Total Voting members	<u>425</u>
Visitors	<u>88</u>
Total Attendance	513

Bishop Rimbo invited Mr. Steve Knutson, of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, to the podium to address the voting members. Mr. Knutson spoke about health care reform and how ELCA health plan will be impacted.

Bishop Rimbo announced that the offering at the Eucharist, designated for ELCA Malaria Relief, amounted to \$3,192.

Mission Moment

Tom Ahlstrom, one of the Executive Directors of Koinonia, spoke to the Assembly about the ministry of Koinonia and its 50th Anniversary Celebration. He invited all to partner with Koinonia in the programs being offered. First Weekend in August and First Weekend in October will be special anniversary celebrations.

Bishop Rimbo invited Ms. Elizabeth Hoffman to the podium for final announcements.

Closing of Assembly

Bishop Rimbo expressed final words of appreciation to the Assembly Chaplain, Pr. Robert Modr, to the Synod Worship Team, chaired by Pr. Frank Nelson, to the musicians for the Assembly, especially Mr. Tom Schmidt and Mr. Roosevelt Credit, to the Assembly Planning Committee, chaired by Ms. Elizabeth Hoffman, to the Reference and Council Committee, chaired by Ms. Renee Wicklund, to Synod VP Maria Del Toro and members of the synod council, the members of Emanuel, Pleasantville, who assembled the assembly packets, to the Assembly Parliamentarian, Mr. Tony De La Rosa, to our consultant for the synod strategic plan, Mr. Tom Massey, to the Assembly photographer, Mr. Bob Williams, to Jonathan Delgado and the crew from Dynamic Event Group for providing the audio/video technology for the Assembly.

Special words of thanks were also directed to Ms. Rebekah Wedge who served as Synod Assembly Coordinator, and finally to Pr. Jack Horner who has served this synod faithfully in the bishop's office.

Bishop Rimbo then invited a motion to adjourn, which was made, seconded and passed.

The assembly concluded with the Order for the Closing of the Assembly.

*Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Robert Schoepflin
Secretary, MNYS*