

**SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS**

<b>The Rev. Albert Ahlstrom</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Mr. William Anderson</b>	<b>2012</b>
The Rev. Edward Barnett*	2010
<b>The Rev. William Baum</b>	<b>2012</b>
The Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite	2012
<b>Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer*</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Ms. Hope Card</b>	<b>2010</b>
Mr. Gerald Erikson	2010
<b>Dcn Charles Germain</b>	<b>2010</b>
Mr. Gene Hiigel	2010
<b>Ms. Barbara Holm</b>	<b>2012</b>
The Rev. Dr. Jack Horner (resigned)	2012
<b>Ms. Barbara A. Johnson</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>The Rev. Perry Kirschbaum</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>The Rev. James Krauser, Secretary*</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Dr. Earl Marsan*</b>	<b>2010</b>
§Ms. Minerva Melendez*	2010
<b>The Rev. Annemarie Noto, PhD</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Dcn. Robert Rainis</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Mr. Brian Reardon</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>*The Rev. Robert A. Rimbo, Bishop</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>The Rev. Robert Schoepflin, J.D.</b>	<b>2010</b>

<b>Mr. Hans Vogel, AiM*</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Ms. Renee Wicklund, Esq.*</b>	<b>2010</b>
Mr. Jonathan Westerlund	2010
<b>Ms. Grace Yukich</b>	<b>2012</b>

**AUXILLIARY MEMBERS**

Conference of Deans: Pr. Laurie Cline  
 Pr. Marvin Henk  
 Lutheran Men in Mission: Judge Daniel Joy  
 Women of the ELCA: Ms. Marion Steadman

**STAFF**

**Ms. Sarah Gioe**  
**The Rev. Dr. Jack Horner**  
**Pr. Kathleen Koran**  
**Pr. Jonathan Linman**  
**Mr. John Litke**  
 The Rev. Dr. Gary Mills  
**Dcn. Gayle Ruege**  
**Ms. Kathleen Schmidt**  
**\*Members of Executive Committee**  
 §Excused absence

The Metropolitan Synod Council met on September 19, 2009 at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in New Rochelle, NY. Before convening the meeting the council shared in the Holy Communion.

Vice President Hans Vogel called the meeting to order at 10:10am.

1. Adoption of Agenda

Agenda adopted as amended inserting a new Item H “Resolution on Administration of Synod Properties and Appointment of Trustees” in Section 7.

2. Adoption of Minutes of 27 June 2009

VP Vogel communicated our legal counsel’s concern about the publication of certain items leading to the confidential stamp on documents provided to members. A correction was noted regarding the loan to Pr. Mills in Section 4.B. Text should read \$35,000 not \$35.

**A motion to approve the minutes as amended was adopted.**

3. Bishop’s Report

A. Comments of the Bishop

Bp. Rimbo reviewed some of the activities of his summer. [Printed report attached. to file copy]

Since the last council meeting the bishop had engaged in much travel and particularly noted his visit to Romania.. He also made a visit of introduction to the Northwest Diocese of the ELCT and brought with him Aaron Schutte our new funded teacher for the KEMPS. An additional teacher is being sought to replace Gayle Kliever who will leave at the end of the year.

He made a visit to Minnesota including the Churchwide Assembly.

He reported that the all the new staff members had begun their work and had hit the

ground running.

He reported that Pr. Mills had accompanied Pr. Terri and Michael Church who had accepted the call to an English speaking ministry there, and had not yet returned.

Pr. Koran, he reported would arrive at the meeting later in the day as she was representing him at the WELCA convention on Staten Island.

Retreats had been held for the staff and for the Conference of Deans.

He described the Churchwide Assembly as an amazing experience. He noted that the assembly adopted the social statement on human sexuality and the four ministry policy changes. He said that the agreement approving full communion with the United Methodist Church was the first agreement with a church body larger than the ELCA. Additional actions taken by the Churchwide Assembly were:

- o Malaria Initiative.
- o AIDS Initiative
- o Initiated Social Statement on Justice for Women

He next spoke of our attention multicultural concerns and has arranged for an ELCA mediator to meet with the executive staff and the Black Pastors group. He announced that the majority of the time for the synod council retreat will be given over to anti-racism training. He said that he is also working to reconstitute the synods Multi-Cultural commission and the Commission for Women.

He said that significant attention had been given to the “cash flow crisis.”

He addressed the on-going visits to the conferences, reporting that they would be complete by the end of Novembers.

Bishop Rimbo reported on Ecumenical and Interfaith events: He attended Vespers sponsored by Archdiocese of NY anticipating the opening the General Assembly of the UN and said that it was a wonderful experience.

He will attend the “Appeal of Conscience” annual meeting and banquet.

He reported that Pr. Laurie Cline is representing the bishop at the Ordination of the new Episcopal bishop for Long Island.

Pr. Ahlstrom announced an upcoming conference at Union seminary at which Larry Rasmussen and Bishop Hanson will be presented with medals.

Bishop Rimbo also mentioned movements for establishment of additional non-geographic synods.

## B. Calls, Appointments, etc.

Bishop Rimbo announced appointments to the following committees:

- Environmental Stewardship Committee
  - Brady Barnstable
  - Pr. Becky Feters
  - Sarah Gioe (Staff)
  - Andrew Miller
  - Stephen O’Rourke
  - Matthew Pace
  - Odd Sangesland
  - Megan Tennermann
  - Grace Yukich, Chair
- Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education Board
  - Rev. Jonathan Linman

Recommendation to the Conference of Bishops of  
On Leave from Call Extensions for:

Rev. Sarah Geddada  
Rev. Philip Kunder  
Dcn. Donna Nekarda, AiM

Mr. Hans Vogel, AiM  
Rev. Ruby Wiles

**ACTION (SC09:9/1)**

**A motion to approve the appointments and recommendations was adopted *en bloc*.**

C. Staff Reports

Staff members offered brief comments on the printed reports, followed by comments and questions from the members of the council. [Attached to file copy]

4. Financial Report (Treasurer's Report)

Mr. Buescher reviewed his printed report and charts. [Attached to file copy]

Changes in assets since first of the year were noted as due to the addition of property now owned. Changes in "non-property" assets reflect expenditures.

Net operating income to date of \$39,000. Cash down from \$3.5M at end of June to \$2.95M.

He observed a bulge in expenses in July, due to some unusual expenses, costs of schools (Holy Trinity, St. Stephens)

He reported 106 Mission Support commitments. YTD Mission Support commitments down \$55,658.

He anticipates Mission Support will fall \$200K short of budgeted \$1.4M.

5. Old Business

Executive Committee recommendations from Cash Flow Task Force [CFTF] were the next item on the agenda.

Ms. Kathy Schmidt gave a brief introduction concerning the establishment of the Cash Flow Task Force. She reported that Task Force was authorized by the Executive Committee when it became apparent that we would run out of available cash by the end of October or early November.

Mr. Buescher moved the resolutions on behalf of the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee Resolutions:

Whereas, grants from all sources (ELCA, other organizations, and individuals) have been steadily decreasing in recent years, and

Whereas, Mission Support from congregations of the Synod has continued to decline, and

Whereas, continued increase in maintenance cost of owned properties, support of congregations under Synodical Administration, and specific support to other congregations have resulted in extraordinary expenditures, and

Whereas, investments have lost value related to the current recession, and

Whereas, the Synod is facing seriously low cash assets; therefore be it

*RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council ratify the Executive Committee's action, on behalf of the Synod Council, in establishing a Cash Flow Task Force for the purpose of examining possible policy and specific actions to improve cash availability, and with Synod Council approval, proceed to implement those actions. The members appointed are Pr. Robert Schoepflin, Pr. Gary Mills, Barbara Johnson, John Litke, Robert Buescher, and Kathleen Schmidt.

Whereas, the Cash Flow Task Force has made initial evaluations and suggestions, and

Whereas, the Treasurer and Staff have taken some steps to delay some authorized payments to preserve cash assets, pending approval by the Synod Council, the Cash Flow Task Force

wishes to present a series of Resolutions for consideration by the Synod Council, therefore be it

*RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to Partnership Grants and Mission Support Grants:

Partnership Grants:

Restore payments that were suspended 9/1/09 as the cash position warrants as determined by the staff and approved by the Treasurer.

Mission Support Grants:

Mission Messiah – Flushing: Terminate the existing grant as of 9/1/09.

Mission Our Savior – Manhasset: Discontinue the matching funds grant as of 9/1/09.

Mission Oceanside - Oceanside: Delay September and October payments. Review rate of need, and authorize further deferral or delay on recommendation of the Cash Flow Task Force.

Mission Christ – Yonkers: Close the synodically authorized worshiping community.

Mission Grace – Astoria: Delay the commitment of \$50,000 per year for 10 years, and re-evaluate it every three (3) months.

No new applications for Mission Redevelopment Funds will be accepted for the 2009-2010 fiscal year; and be it

*RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to Education Grants:

Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education: Submit last quarterly payment for 2009, and discuss future with LMHE.

Lutheran Schools Association: Withhold remaining budgeted payment for 2009.

Student Christian Center at SUNY –New Paltz: Withhold last quarterly budgeted payment for 2009.

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia: Withhold last quarterly budgeted payment for 2009; and be it

*RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to owned properties:

St. Paul's - Richmond Hill: Ratify the change for receipt of \$75,000 of sale price from 6 months to 9 months. Complete sale transaction as soon as legally and logistically able.

Parsonages of Bethany – Brooklyn; St. Peter's - Brooklyn: List for sale, and await firm offers.

Parsonage of Good Shepherd – Bayside: List for sale and await firm offers, but reconsider if Synod may have need for a parsonage; and be it

*RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to congregations under permanent Synodical Administration:

Holy Trinity – Hollis: Close church, and list property for sale.

St. Peter's – Bronx: Put under permanent Synodical Administration and take title to property when deemed appropriate by the Synod's legal counsel; and be it

*RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to congregations under temporary Synodical Administration and others for which support has been ongoing:

Grace – Jeffersonville; First Lutheran – Jeffersonville; Salem - Brooklyn; Salam Arabic – Brooklyn; Our Savior – Brooklyn; Zion – Brooklyn: Withhold temporary support.

St. Stephen's – Brooklyn: Request repayment of (approx.) \$300,000 of advances.

The CFTF prepared a report in the form of a chart which was distributed. The chart listed the grant expenses and obligations of the synod. Ms. Schmidt reviewed sections 2-6 of the Task Force report.

The council recessed for lunch.

Following lunch an additional chart illustrating the breakdown of the partnership grants was distributed. A review of this chart which addressed the grants contained in section 1 of the CFTF report was given by Pr. Horner.

Following Pr. Horner's presentation the discussion of the resolutions was suspended to meet with the members of Holy Trinity, New Rochelle who have petitioned to leave the ELCA.

6. Holy Trinity, New Rochelle

Bishop Rimbo welcomed the members of the congregation, who were asked to introduce themselves. All were members of Holy Trinity, New Rochelle, [HTNR] for more than 10 years.

The Bishop confirmed that they as a congregation had acted in fulfillment of the constitution and not the synod had to fulfill its constitutional obligation to approve or disapprove the termination of the relationship between the congregation and the ELCA. He apologized that perhaps the synod office might have let some things fall through the cracks.

An extensive conversation ensued. Several members of the council posed questions to the group. Responses were offered by Pr. Swensson and others. Pr. Swensson said that as the congregation had fulfilled the requirements of the constitution to withdraw from the ELCA, the council should act to approve their action. He hoped that a decision would be made that day.

Pr. Ahlstrom responded to HTNR in the form of a letter which he read aloud.

The guests from HTNR were again thanked for the attendance and a brief recess took place as they left.

Following the recess, Pr. William Baum offered the following resolution (seconded):

*RESOLVED*, because the MNYS values the Christ centered ministry of Holy Trinity, New Rochelle and believes the congregation's contribution to the life and witness of our synod is richly beneficial to the *koinonia* of our synod's congregations, for the sake of our shared and interdependent witness to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, we respectfully request Holy Trinity, New Rochelle remain in the fellowship of the Metropolitan New York Synod of ELCA.

There was a brief discussion.

**The motion in response to the request of Holy Trinity, New Rochelle was adopted.  
ACTION (SC09:9/2)**

**The motion in response to the request of Holy Trinity, New Rochelle was adopted.  
RESOLVED**, because the MNYS values the Christ centered ministry of Holy Trinity, New Rochelle and believes the congregation's contribution to the life and witness of our synod is richly beneficial to the *koinonia* of our synod's congregations, for the sake of our shared and interdependent witness to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, we respectfully request Holy Trinity, New Rochelle remain in the fellowship of the Metropolitan New York Synod of ELCA.

5. Old Business - continued

The council then resumed discussion of the recommendations of the Executive Committee in response to the Cash Flow Task Force report. Several modifications were made to the text by common consent.

**Motions approved en bloc**

[Secretary's Note: the resolutions have been assigned individual action numbers for ease of reference.]

**ACTION (SC09:9/3)**

**RESOLVED**, that the Synod Council ratify the Executive Committee's action, on behalf of the Synod Council, in establishing a Cash Flow Task Force for the

**purpose of examining possible policy and specific actions to improve cash availability, and with Synod Council approval, proceed to implement those actions. The members appointed are Pr. Robert Schoepflin, Pr. Gary Mills, Barbara Johnson, John Litke, Robert Buescher, and Kathleen Schmidt.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/4)**

**RESOLVED, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to Partnership Grants and Mission Support Grants:**

**Partnership Grants:**

**Restore payments that were suspended 9/1/09 as the cash position warrants as determined by the staff and approved by the Treasurer.**

**Mission Support Grants:**

**Mission Messiah – Flushing: Terminate the existing grant as of 9/1/09.**

**Mission Our Savior – Manhasset: Discontinue the matching funds grant as of 9/1/09.**

**Mission Oceanside - Oceanside: Delay September and October payments. Review rate of need, and authorize further deferral or delay on recommendation of the Cash Flow Task Force.**

**Mission Christ – Yonkers: Close the synodically authorized worshipping community.**

**Mission Grace – Astoria: Delay the 10 year commitment of \$50,000 per year, and re-evaluate it every three (3) months.**

**No new applications for Mission Redevelopment Funds will be accepted for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/5)**

**RESOLVED, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to Education Grants:**

**Lutheran Ministries in Higher Education: Submit last quarterly payment for 2009, and discuss future with LMHE.**

**Lutheran Schools Association: Cancel remaining budgeted payment for 2009.**

**Student Christian Center at SUNY –New Paltz: Cancel last quarterly budgeted payment for 2009.**

**Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia: Cancel last quarterly budgeted payment for 2009.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/6)**

**RESOLVED, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to owned properties:**

**St. Paul's - Richmond Hill: Ratify the change for receipt of \$75,000 of sale price from 6 months to 9 months. Complete sale transaction as soon as legally and logistically able.**

**Parsonages of Bethany – Brooklyn; St. Peter's - Brooklyn: List for sale, and await firm offers.**

**Parsonage of Good Shepherd – Bayside: List for sale and await firm offers, but re-consider if Synod may have need for a parsonage.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/7)**

**RESOLVED, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to congregations under permanent Synodical Administration:**

**Holy Trinity – Hollis: Close church, and list property for sale.  
St. Peter’s – Bronx: Put under permanent Synodical Administration and take title to property when deemed appropriate by the Synod’s legal counsel in consultation with the Executive Committee.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/8)**

**RESOLVED, that the Synod Council authorize the following actions related to congregations under temporary Synodical Administration and others for which support has been ongoing:**

**Grace – Jeffersonville; First Lutheran – Jeffersonville; Salem - Brooklyn; Salam Arabic – Brooklyn; Our Savior – Brooklyn; Zion – Brooklyn: Delay temporary support and restore them as the cash position warrants as determined by the staff and approved by the Treasurer..  
St. Stephen’s – Brooklyn: Request repayment of (approx.) \$300,000 of advances.**

7. New Business

A. Synod Council schedule (w/additional dates)

VP Vogel reviewed the scheduled for the balance of the year  
Oct. 20 Meeting New date  
Nov. 20-21 Retreat Previously scheduled  
Dec 15. Meeting New date.

B. 2010 Pastor’s Compensation Guidelines

The Compensation Guidelines for 2010 were presented.  
Mr. Buescher offered amendments to Paragraph 12 on p. 5 (and subsequent references) to clarify the distinction to the compensation given for housing versus that reportable for tax purposes

*RESOLVED, that the current draft of the 2010 Pastor’s Compensation Guidelines be amended before final approval by the Synod Council as follows:*

To amend ¶12, p. 5”

~~After the Housing Allowance has been established (by formal action of the congregation council) the pastor may wish to have an additional amount from Base Salary designated toward Housing Allowance in accordance with IRS provisions. Consult with the pastor and determine the redesignated amount for Housing Allowance, if any.~~

~~Enter amount redesignated for Housing Allowance 12 \$ \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~Record this amount on line 40, p. 22.~~

After a Housing Allowance has been established as part of compensation, the pastor may wish to prepare to defend to the IRS that the Housing Allowance, or even a larger amount, represents his actual housing cost, which, with formal acknowledgement of the congregations council becomes the Exempted Housing Allowance which the congregation will report to the IRS as excluded from income tax. The pastor must consider his/her entire compensation, including the Housing Allowance (paragraph 11), as taxable amount for Self Employment tax purposes.

12 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Record this amount on line 40, p. 22.

*RESOLVED*, that all references to the amount recorded with paragraph 12 elsewhere in the document, including line 40, on p. 22, reflect this name change.

It was observed that the logo on the cover page was not current and that it should be changed. This was incorporated into the action.

**The amendments were adopted.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/9)**

**To approve the 2010 Pastor's Compensation Guidelines as amended.**

C. 2010 Synod Assembly

Due to our fiscal constraints the Executive Committed recommend that the schedule for the 2010 assembly be revised from 3 days to 2 days.

**The motion was adopted.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/10)**

**RESOLVED**, that the 2010 Synod Assembly be changed from a three day schedule to two days.

D. Trexler Grant

Only one application for a Trexler Grant was received.

The committee recommended a grant of \$1000 to Pr. Heidi Neumark for travel to Germany and Brazil to do interviews and research for the book that she is writing which will deal with a Lutheran perspective on the issues of inclusion, justice and reconciliation, particularly as connected to the ministry of Trinity 100th St/NY and the story of her own recently discovered Jewish heritage.

**ACTION (SC09:9/11)**

**To award a \$1,000 grant from the Trexler Fund to Pr. Heidi Neumark.**

E. Election of Executive Committee

The following persons were nominated for the Executive Committee [4 to elect]:

Pr. William Baum	Dr. Earl Marsan
Pr. Edward Barnett	Ms. Renee Wicklund
Ms. Minerva Melendez	

A ballot was taken.

**ACTION (SC09:9/12)**

**Elected to the Executive Committee**

<b>Pr. William Baum</b>	<b>Dr. Earl Marsan</b>
<b>Pr. Edward Barnett</b>	<b>Ms. Minerva Melendez</b>

F. Executive Committee recommendation (see above)

G. Resolution for authority to borrow

Mr. Buescher introduced the following resolution:

Whereas, there have been delays in liquidation of some of the Synod's assets, and likely that other delays could occur, and



Whereas, such delays could seriously affect the ability of the Synod to meet even its minimal obligations prior to the next Synod Council meeting; Therefore be it

**RESOLVED, that Synod officers be authorized to borrow or otherwise encumber presently owned property assets up to \$2 million; and be it further**

**RESOLVED, that such arrangements be reported at the next Synod Council Meeting, when this resolution will be presented for continuance or termination.**

**ACTION (SC09:9/13)**

**The resolution was adopted.**

H. Resolution on Administration of Synod Properties and Appointment of Trustees

Deacon Rainis offered a motion regarding the appointment of trustees to oversee synod properties. The motion asked that the appointments of trustees will be as follows: 1) member of the SC, 2) Dean or another from the specific conference which the property is located, 3) member of the Bishop's staff, . All appointments are subject to the approval of the SC. Further, the trustees are to prepare and submit for the SC, and for each SC meeting, for review, comment and determinations it may choose to exercise in regard to each property or entity.

No trustee shall have responsibility for more than one entity/trusteeship

After some discussion it was determined that it needed further refinement. Mr. Buescher asked that Bp. Rimbo comment on the proposal in his next report.

**A motion to postpone discussion until the October meeting was adopted.**

Members were advised that an election would be scheduled to elect an interim member of the Synod Council to serve in place of Pr. Horner.

8. Other Reports

- Deans – No report.
- Youth

Brief comments/reports were offered on the Heart of Distinction Awards, the Region 7 summit and the Illinois LYO trip

The response of Ms. Alexandra Alam El Din youth who attended the Youth Convocation at the Churchwide Assembly as shared. One of our members, Ms. Nicolette Faison of Elmont was elected national president for a three year term and made a presentation to the Churchwide Assembly.

Information regarding the ELCA's adoption of a goal for youth participation was distributed.

- Auxiliary Organizations – No reports.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm with prayer by the bishop.

Rev. James G. Krauser, Secretary

Gayle E. Ruege, Exec. Administrative Assistant to the Bishop