

SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS

Present

The Rev. Albert Ahlstrom
Mr. William Anderson
The Rev. Edward Barnett
The Rev. William Baum
Bishop Stephen Bouman
Mr. Robert Buescher, Treasurer
Ms. Hope Card
Ms. Christine Connell, DM
Ms. Maria del Toro
Mr. Gerald Erikson
Dcn. Charles Germain
Mr. Gene Hiigel
Ms. Elizabeth Hoffman
The Rev. Perry Kirschbaum
The Rev. Kathleen Koran
The Rev. James Krauser, Secretary
Dr. Earl Marsan
Ms. Minerva Melendez
The Rev. Annemarie Noto, PhD
The Rev. Robert Schoepflin, Esq.
Ms. Beverly Small
Mr. Jonathan Westerlund

Excused

Dcn. Alan Chen
Ms. Renee Wicklund, Esq.
Mr. Hans Vogel, Vice-President

Absent

Mr. Patrick O'Brien

GUESTS

The Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich, ELCA
Ms. Tammy Jackson, ELCA
The Rev. Jonathan Linman
Ms. Marion Steadman, Pres – WELCA
The Rev. Richard Mueller – Deans Rep
Mr. Howard Capell, Esq.

STAFF

The Rev. A. David Anglada
Ms. Constance Duever
Ms. Patricia Lawrence
Mr. John Litke
The Rev. Dr. Gary Mills
Dcn. Gayle Ruege
Ms. Mary Tennermann
The Rev. Robert Wollenburg
Ms. Lily Wu

I. CALL TO ORDER

Bishop Bouman called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

II. DEVOTIONS

Pr. Fred McElderry

Bishop made introductions:

- Rev. Jonathan Linman, churchwide representative
- Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich, Exec. for Synod and Constituent Relations, ELCA
- Ms. Tammy Jackson, Assoc. Director Synodical Relations, ELCA
- Mr. Howard Capell, Esq. MNYS attorney

Bishop Bouman also introduced synod staff and expressed his gratitude for their gifts and dedication to the vision and mission of this synod.

Bishop Bouman shared that he was prepared to stand for re-election after the churchwide assembly, but then received a letter nominating him for the position of Executive Director of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Ministries unit of the ELCA. He went to Chicago with an “attitude of listening” and after a full day of meetings with several people, entered a time of discernment. Bishop Bouman contacted presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and accepted this call to the ECOM.

Bishop Bouman offered an official statement of resignation as bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod effective 3 Feb 08. A letter of resignation addressed to Mr. Hans Vogel and the synod council is forthcoming. He will take some vacation time at the end of January and begin at the EOCM on 4 Feb 08.

Bishop Bouman believes that the ELCA wants to learn from what has been developing in Metro New York. The ELCA wanted a missionary bishop who can work with the Conference of Bishops, and the seminaries on a national level.

Bishop Bouman stated his concerns and fears as we transition. The ELCA is 97% white. The MNYS is close to 33% non-white. He reminded the council that as a synod – we’ve collectively built our Latino ministries, our Asian ministries, our campus and outdoor ministries. We have become a resource on immigration and other social justice issues. He warned that we cannot afford factional politics or to lose “the vision” of Isaiah 58. We need to welcome the stranger in our midst. Bishop’s hope is that we will let the vision minister to us. His sense is the synod does not want to rush through an election, but do some “due diligence”. We need stability in the office and we have a good staff that will push the vision and keep us on point.

The Bishop appointed the Rev. James Krauser, Secretary, to chair the meeting in the absence of Mr. Hans Vogel, Vice-President. No exception was taken.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as presented

IV. MINUTES, September 18, 2007, consideration of

It was noted that Bishop Younan’s name was spelled incorrectly. The minutes were approved as corrected.

V. SPECIAL GUESTS

Bishop Bouman welcomed the Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich and Ms. Tammy Jackson from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and indicated that both have worked with other synods through the process of transition between bishops many times – most recently in the Caribbean Synod.

Pastor Bender Schwich explained that the function of the Synodical and Constituent Relations Unit of the Office of the Presiding Bishop’s is to support the mission and ministry of each synod in their own particular area, but most especially in times of transition. She gave assurance that she and her department are at our disposal, and will walk with the MNYS through the process of bidding farewell to Bishop Bouman and

greeting a new bishop.

Pr. Bender Schwich distributed a Synod Transition Checklist (**EXHIBIT A**) which provides guidance through the steps of:

- Closure with an outgoing bishop and welcoming a new bishop
- Preparation for interim bishop
- Preparation for bishop's election
- Other Details (transfer of files and documents; transfer to signature authorization, etc.)

She went through the checklist line by line – fielding questions and offering explanation and clarification. Printed information from the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and the Northeastern Ohio Synod (**EXHIBIT B**) was provided to the council as a helpful model for MNYS.

Pr. Bender Schwich explained the process of a *Synod Ministry Audit*. This evaluation tool is conducted by the ELCA Synodical Relations Unit and enables a synod to determine its needs and develop a profile. This resource proves helpful in a synod's discernment process. This synod ministry audit can be conducted over a 2-3 day period with a report to the synod council six weeks prior to the synod assembly.

Ms. Tammy Jackson emphasized the value of communication – communication – communication – timelines and transparency throughout the process. Ms. Jackson stressed the importance of strong leadership during the time of transition to alleviate anxiety and fear.

Discussion determined that an interim bishop for the care of staff and for good order would best serve the synod.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, Mr. Buescher moved four (4) motions for consideration and adoption by the synod council.

ACTION SC07:11/1

***RESOLVED*, that the Metropolitan New York Synod conduct its election for bishop as previously announced at the May assembly; and be it further**

***RESOLVED*, that in the intervening months the MNYS conduct a ministry audit utilizing the resources and personnel of the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA.**

ADOPTED

ACTION SC07:11/2

***RESOLVED*, that the executive committee in consultation with the presiding bishop, recommend a candidate and contract for an interim bishop for the January synod council meeting, reporting all nominees of the presiding bishop to the synod council.**

ADOPTED

ACTION SC07:11/3

WHEREAS, the calls of rostered persons on the staff end with the tenure of Bishop Bouman,

RESOLVED, that these calls shall be extended until the end of 2008, subject to the normal terms of call and severance.

ADOPTED

ACTION SC07:11/4

RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee be authorized to appoint a transition team of eight persons. The members of the transition team will serve until the installation of the new bishop.

ADOPTED

Pr. Bender Schwich invited the synod council to provide names of possible candidates for consideration by Bishop Hanson for the office of interim bishop in MNYS. Former bishops of the ELCA are advisable. The following names of former bishops in the ELCA (now retired) were provided to Pr. Bender Schwich to contact and verify availability, followed by recommendation to Bp. Hanson.

- The Rev. Theodore F. Schneider
- The Rev. Paul R. Landahl
- The Rev. David A. Olson
- The Rev. Harold Skillrud

Additional names may be given to Pr. Bender Schwich for contact and consideration through 6 Dec 07. The Executive Council will meet in December to review possible candidates and to prepare for the January council meeting.

VI. REPORT OF THE BISHOP

- a. Comments on issues of the wider church, synod, congregations, and the public arena
 - i. Bishop Bouman introduced Mr. Howard Capell. Mr. Capell provided a report to inform and update the synod council on several situations concerning congregations in the synod. Mr. Capell noted that there are many congregations in distress. There have been some property sales and several are under synod administration. Mr. Capell stated that several of the congregations have filed civil court action against the synod. Mr. Phil Harris (ELCA legal counsel) are collaborating on our responses. In addition to Bethlehem, Brooklyn, Mr. Capell updated the synod council on St. Paul's, Richmond Hill and St. John's in the Bronx.
 - ii. Bishop Bouman introduced Pr. Robert Wollenburg to inform and update the synod council on our partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Pr. Wollenburg spoke about our synods commitment to complete by May 2008 the 1M endowment that will support and maintain Christian education (incl. our teachers) in our companion synod. We are currently 225K short of our goal. Pr. Wollenburg has asked that between now and the May assembly, we as a synod act intentionally to meet our goal either in gifts or

pledges. A formula for raising the funds in the 18 conferences has been developed and was included in a letter to conference deans dated 01 Nov 07
(EXHIBIT D)

- iii. Staff reviews went very well. The Bishop expressed his appreciation of a gifted and dedicated staff. He also thanked Pr. Brenda Smith and Mr. Paul Jensen for their participation on the staff review team.
- iv. The Town Hall Meetings have been very successful. There has been great attendance and good participation. Pr. Wollenburg and Ms. Sarah Gioe have done a super job in organizing and coordinating them.

B. Public Ministry:

1. Bishop Bouman will be joining an interfaith delegation from the United States to dialogue with Iranian religious, political and academic leaders. The delegation includes former Senator Chuck Hagel, UN ambassador John Danforth, and several religious (interfaith) and political leaders. The theme is “Statecraft in the Abrahamic Traditions.” He will be giving a presentation on Luther’s “Two Kingdoms” theology. These conversations are sponsored by PRIO, (the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo), and the Vatican through the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C. These interfaith conversations will be important in the years ahead in our global community.
2. The Bishop will not be traveling to Jerusalem with Wagner students in January. Pr. Gary Mills will assume that responsibility and make that trip instead.

C. Appointments

Mr. Donald B. O’Neil – Ministry Coordinator/Development Mgr.
Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Hollis **(EXHIBIT D)**

The Rev. Carol E. Fryer – Wartburg Adult Care Community, Mt. Vernon **(EXHIBIT E)**

The Rev. James Thomas – Candidacy Committee MNYS

The Rev. Fabian Arias – Candidacy Committee MNYS

The Rev. Christopher Mietlowski – Candidacy Committee MNYS

Appointments without objection

Ms. Christine Connell advised the synod council that her appointment to the board of NYDIS was out of order and should be rescinded. Ms. Connell’s request was noted by Mr. Krauser.

D. Calls

The Rev. Marsh Drege, Exec. Director for Seafarers and International House, New York, effective 01 Jan 08 **(EXHIBIT F)**

ACTION SC07:11/5:

RESOLVED, that the Rev. Marsh Drege be called through the Metropolitan New York Synod Council as Executive Director for Seafarers and the International House, New York.

ADOPTED

- E. Trexler Grants
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| The Rev. Robert Fritch | \$ 650. |
| The Rev. Kathleen Koran | \$ 250. |
| The Rev. Paul Milholland | \$1,000. |

VII. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Mr. Buescher distributed the current Congregation Partnership Support report (**EXHIBIT G**) and the Property Assets report (**EXHIBIT H**). Please see the following for details:

- a. Mission Support Summary (**EXHIBIT I**)
- b. Congregation Term Budget Estimates (**EXHIBIT J**)
- c. Summary of Significant Items (**EXHIBIT K**)

Mr. Buescher directed the council's attention to the Congregation partnership report and the Mission Support Summary YTD (thru 10/31/ 07). If we continue on this course we will meet our 1.4M budget. The signs are encouraging, but we must continue to exercise careful supervision of spending. Comparison charts on property assets, funds covered by cash assets, and operating expenses as compared to overall funds were provided.

The Executive Committee has been working diligently on updating the Ten Year Plan. The intent of the plan was to restrict or limit the spending of funds obtained from property sales. At the "Ten Year Plan" meetings, the committee has been looking at "what ifs", which include limiting salary increases for staff. Mr. Buescher noted that not all the elements of the plan are in place, but the plan will remain conservative as the study of staff costs and functions continue. The Financial Management Committee wants to present a budget for 2009 at the upcoming synod assembly.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Constitutions
Advent, Manhattan, amendments to constitution, contact made.

- b. Election of Executive Committee
Names placed in nomination included Pr. William Baum, Dr. Earl Marsan, Pr. Fred McElderry, Ms. Renee Wicklund. Pr. Edward Barnet received one vote as a "write-in" on the election ballot (*amended IAW Synod Council directive 15 Jan 08*)

Elected were: Pr. William Baum, Dr. Earl Marsan, Pr. Fred McElderry, Ms. Renee Wicklund.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Mr. Buescher moved the resolution to approve sale of stock (**EXHIBIT L**)

ACTION SC07:11/6:

***RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council direct appropriate officers to execute such documents as required, attesting to the approval of such sale by the corporation.**

ADOPTED

- b. Pr. Gary Mills recommended on behalf of the Synod Assembly Committee that the synod council approve the 2008 synod assembly registration fees (**EXHIBIT M**)
- \$175. (voting member /with meals)
 - \$ 25. (visitor)
 - \$150. (meal package)

ACTION SC07:11/7:

RESOLVED, that the synod council approve the synod assembly registration fees of \$175. per voting member, \$25. per visitor, \$150. per meal package.
ADOPTED

- c. Archives Advisory Committee – Sutter Memorial Archives (**EXHIBIT N**)
Pr. James Krauser takes exception to the proposed name for the MNYS archives as *The Sutter Memorial Archives*. Members of the council questioned the naming of the memorial archives. A possible suggestion might be: the Sutter Memorial Collection of the MNYS Archives. It was moved we postpone this resolution pending contact and approval by the Sutter family.

ACTION SC07:11/8:

RESOLVED, that the synod council postpone consideration of the Archives Advisory Committee in regard to the MNYS archives until the Sutter family has been contacted and approves recommended name for the archives.
ADOPTED

- d. Mr. John Litke introduced a resolution for the leasing of the Bayside parsonage (**EXHIBIT O**)

ACTION SC07:11/9:

RESOLVED: that the Officers of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America, acting solely and on behalf of the Synod be and hereby are authorized, empowered and directed to negotiate and sign a lease agreement with Messiah Lutheran Church, 42-15 165th Street, Flushing NY for the use of the property located at 202-16 23rd Avenue Bayside, NY, with terms substantially in accord with the following conditions:

1. The Synod will retain title to the property and will retain appropriate comprehensive insurance for the building.
2. The Synod will be responsible for major repairs (e.g. roof, boiler replacement, etc). (None are anticipated as of Nov 2007.)
3. Messiah will be responsible for all utilities and routine maintenance of the building and grounds, including minor repairs to appliances.
4. Messiah will be responsible for any insurance for the contents.
5. Messiah may only use the premise for housing for called pastoral staff unless the Synod agrees in writing to a change in this condition.
6. The lease is immediately terminated if the pastor accepts a call to another congregation.

- 7. When the lease is terminated, Messiah will return the parsonage to the care of the synod in broom-clean condition with all appropriate maintenance completed.**

ADOPTED

- e. Bethany, Brooklyn request for synod administration (**EXHIBIT P**)
Considerable discussion ensued around Bethany's request. The congregation is willing to establish the school as an organizational unit of the synod .

ACTION SC07:11/10:

***RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod shall apply synodical administration of BETHANY and shall take charge and control of the property of BETHANY to hold, manage and convey the same on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod and shall administer synodical administration to BETHANY and its members upon their request.**

ADOPTED

- f. St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Bedford Street, Brooklyn (**EXHIBIT Q**)
John Litke advised the council that we will most likely use a mail/fax balloting procedure to authorize sale of St. Peter's, Brooklyn should such action be required before the next scheduled synod council meeting. (*See item H*)
- g. Pastors Compensation Guidelines for 2008
ADOPTED
- h. Synod Council e-ballot regarding approval of synodical administration of Bethlehem, Brooklyn. (*This action item was added IAW directive from Synod Council on 15 Jan 08*)

ACTION SC07:11/11

***RESOLVED*, that the Synod Council of the Metropolitan New York Synod shall apply synodical administration of Bethlehem, Brooklyn and shall take charge and control of the property of Bethlehem to hold, manage and convey the same on behalf of the Metropolitan New York Synod and shall administer synodical administration to Bethlehem and its members.**

ADOPTED

X. DEANS REPORT

The Rev. Richard Mueller reported for the deans. They had a good meeting earlier in the day. Had discussion concerning the transitional process and the election process of a new bishop. The deans were in favor of a May election at the 2008 synod assembly.

XI. YOUTH REPORT

Mr. Jonathan Westerlund reported on his trip to Tanzania and the transforming experience of meeting the young girl who was an AIDS orphan. Jonathan also reported on the most recent events including "Fright Fest" at Great Adventure in New Jersey. Eight congregations participated. The Jr. High Retreat (Feb 22-24 2008) and the Sr. High Retreat (Feb 29 – Mar 2) are both planned for Koinonia. Positions are still available on the LYO board.

XII. AUXILLIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Women of the ELCA

Ms. Marion Steadman reported on the upcoming Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA in July 2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah. She also noted the focus of WELCA on fair trade products and the campaign to intentionally purchase those products in our supermarkets. In March 2008, a WELCA Super Saturday is planned at the Wartburg. The focus will be on domestic violence and child abuse awareness. Ms. Steadman also stated that the organization is asking for the submittal of congregational events to be published in the Witness.

XIII. OTHER

XIV. CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Gayle E. Ruege
Administrative Assistant to the Bishop