

Steve referred to Page 6 of the Assembly handbook. He explained the most common rules of parliamentary procedure, and explained the system of voting cards that will be used for voting, as well as the five cards that may be used during the quasi committee of the whole for 'sensing' the assembly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Bishop Arends introduced Pastor Breck McHan, who made announcements concerning messages, binders and tote bags, meals, nurse availability, room keys and seating. He also asked for written questions for Rev. Dr. Kathryn Love. Golf carts are available for mobility needs.

Bishop Arends introduced Rev. Kristin Wendland, chaplain for the first Plenary session.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Bishop Arends introduced the following:

- Rev. Dr. Kathryn Love, Assistant Director for Discipleship/Evangelism and Director for Prayer and Spiritual Renewal with the Division for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission of the ELCA. She will bring us the Report of the ELCA, will preach at the evening worship service this evening, and will give a workshop on prayer tomorrow.
- Dr. David Cherwien, assembly musician from Mt. Olive Lutheran, Minneapolis

Other Guests:

- Sonia Solomonson, Managing Editor of *The Lutheran*
- Rev. John Carrier, Campus Minister, Winona State University
- Rev. Harris Hostager, former Assistant to the Bishop
- Rev. April Ulring Larson, former Bishop (will be present tomorrow)
- Gary Grindeland, Vice President of Church and Community Relations, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin.
- Barbara Manthei, Lutheran Social Services in La Crosse
- Rocky Danielson, Director for Raising Up Leaders (will be present later)
- Deborah Simonson-Smith, Associate Vice President, Mission Investment Fund
- Lon Buss, Regional Rep for Lutheran Men in Mission
- Lynn Tully, Regional Gift Planner, Lutheran Planned Giving of Wisconsin

Bishop asked past members of the Synod Council and Executive Committee to please rise. Thanks was given to them by applause.

ROSTER UPDATE AS OF APRIL 1, 2009

New Clergy in our synod:

The Rev. Paul Carlson, Kickapoo United & Peace Lutheran Churches
The Rev. Bryce Fellbaum, French Creek Lutheran Church
The Rev. Joseph Irvin, St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Rev. Timothy Johnston, Trinity, Bethany & Immanuel, Cashton
The Rev. Peter Jonas, Christ Lutheran Church, Arcadia
The Rev. Meredith McGrath, Good Shepherd, La Crosse
The Rev. Tom Meyer, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, La Crosse
The Rev. Anna Sorenson, Mt. Sterling & Utica, Mt. Sterling
The Rev. Steven Spilde, On-Leave-From-Call
The Rev. Laurie Weis, Trinity Lutheran Church, La Crosse
The Rev. Katherine Wold, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Wilton

Members of our Synod in the candidacy process:

Mr. David Arends
Ms. Loretta (Lori) Betz
Mr. Douglas Holtz
Ms. Erica Kielstrup
Mr. Benjamin Larson
Ms. Dawn Arndt Lindberg
Ms. Elizabeth McHan
Mr. Christopher Naig
Ms. Sarah Birkedal Nye
Mr. Paul Petersen
Ms. Tara Shilts
Ms. Kristine Stauffacher
Ms Gloria Stubitsch
Ms. Elisabeth Zant

Clergy Transferred:

The Rev. April Ulring Larson to Duluth, Minnesota
The Rev. Tom Lee to Lake Tomahawk, Wisconsin
The Rev. Liberty Lausterer to Owensboro, Kentucky

Clergy Changes Within our Synod:

The Rev. James Arends to Bishop, La Crosse Area Synod
The Rev. David Dahl to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
The Rev. Elizabeth Howe to Asst. to the Bishop, La Crosse Area Synod
The Rev. Lori Kleppe to Chaplain, U.S. Navy
The Rev. Judd Larson to retired
The Rev. Vern Skarstad to Interim, Bells Coulee Lutheran Church
The Rev. John Stake to On-Leave-From-Call
The Rev. Lanny Westphal to Dir. for Global Formation-Relationships, ELCA

AIM Marjorie Felde, Viroqua, died Dec. 20, 2008

Churches Celebrating Anniversaries in Our Synod in 2009

Bethany Lutheran Church of Viroqua – 125 years
Fagernes Lutheran Church – 150 years
Lower Coon Valley Lutheran Church – 150 years
North Beaver Creek Lutheran Church – 150 years
Middle Coon Valley Lutheran Church – 155 years
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church – 50 years
Wilmington Lutheran Church – 100 years (church building)

Bishop announced that any business not completed by 4:00 p.m. on Saturday will be directed to the Synod Council.

Bishop Arends turned the chair to Cheryl Mader, Vice President of the synod.

The Assembly Planning Committee was recognized and thanked for its work:

Rev. Breck McHan, Chair	Bishop Arends
Debbie Dukatz	Drew Stutesman
Lee Grippen	Rev. Jason Stanton
Cheryl Mader	Melanie Timmerman

With additional input and guidance from Rev. Libby Howe, Rocky Danielson, Rev. Lindsay Jordan and Rev. Karyn Bodenschatz

The Synod Council was introduced. Certificates have been given to those going off council, including the following:

Rev. Dave Bersagel
Dr. K. Roger Gilbert
Rev. Libby Howe
Dick Pirwitz
Carol Navrestad
Rev. Kristin Wendland

The assembly sang Happy Birthday to Rev. Roger Grow, celebrating his 70th birthday.

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR

Those in attendance:

- 63 pastors
- 170 lay
- Total of 233 voting members
- 11 youth
- 12 visitors and guests

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Khris Kleba, Synod Treasurer, reported. This is the second reading of the proposed 2010 budget.

- In this current financial crisis the synod has become even more conscious of expenses.
- Churchwide has reduced their budget.
- Page 1, Line 1: 55% of congregational giving (Mission Support) gets passed on to Churchwide.
- Page 1, Line 2: Partnerships are ministries with common mission; Lines 2L,2M and 2O will decrease to zero
- Page 2, Line 3: The budget for Synod Programs stays the same, \$18,300
- Page 3, Line 4: Synod Ministry
 - 4A.2, Assistant to the Bishop position has changed, with 50% now coming from Churchwide (increased focus on outreach). This amount goes directly to the assistant and does not go through the synod budget.
 - 4A.4 and 4A.5 are honorariums we will provide to individuals performing these roles
- Total proposed budget expenses for 2010 is \$1,060,058, a reduction of .5% over the past two years

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Marsha Bateman, Secretary of the Synod, reported. She expressed thanks for the work of the Nominating Committee; at the time of pre-assembly caucuses, there were nominations for every opening. Since that time, two openings have surfaced. They include South Conference Evangelism & Outreach, clergy position, and West Conference Evangelism & Outreach, lay position. Please contact Marsha or any member of the nominating committee with possible nominees.

THIRD OFFERING DESIGNATION

Bishop Arends spoke about the financial situation of the synod and the revised budget for 2009 of \$1,057,330. There is concern that the partnerships, with whom we hold close relationships, will not receive the amount budgeted to them. The third offering designation is an Assembly decision. The Synod Council has recommended it be for ministry beyond our doors, and an idea would be that it could be designated for our partnerships. This decision will be made later today.

SEXUALITY STATEMENT INFORMATION

Bishop Arends read the RESOLVED from a third resolution (Resolution 8) submitted by the Synod Council. This resolution says thank you to the task force, asks for prayer for voting members to the Churchwide Assembly, and does not act to memorialize the Churchwide Assembly either for or against the documents of the task force.

Therefore, there are now three resolutions on this topic. It is the prerogative of Reference and Counsel to order the resolutions. All will be presented after lunch tomorrow, after opportunities for learning and discussion at three workshop sessions and the quasi committee of the whole.

Reference and Counsel has suggested the following ordering of the resolutions:

- Resolution 8 presented first, as it calls for no action/memorializing. If it passes, the other resolutions would not be brought forward.
- If Resolution 8 is defeated, then Resolution 9 would be presented next. This resolution memorializes the Churchwide Assembly to reject the proposals in the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies*. This resolution does not address the proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality. If Resolution 9 passes, it automatically amends Resolution 10 to deal with the Social Statement only. If Resolution 9 is defeated, we then move to Resolution 10 in its entirety.

Tomorrow we will review this information again, and will then ask for a motion from the floor to consider another order. If there is not a motion, we will deal with them in the order suggested by Reference & Counsel.

Bishop explained that to memorialize the Churchwide Assembly, voting members receive a report of memorializations from synod assemblies. Some will call for direct action, while others will suggest how to vote.

REFERENCE & COUNSEL: Rev. Dave Dahl brought the following resolutions forward. They come moved and seconded from Synod Council.

RESOLUTION 1: Resolution for Bishop Emerita.

Resolution for Bishop Emerita

WHEREAS, the Reverend Doctor April Ulring Larson was elected to serve as the second bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod in 1992; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Larson served the synod faithfully for three full terms totaling sixteen years of service (one four-year term and two six-year terms); and

WHEREAS, during her terms in office she guided the growth of the synod in

- sharing the Word of the Gospel,
- raising up new leaders for the church,
- advancing ecumenical and interfaith relationships,
- growing the numbers of the faithful, and
- reaching out with the resources of the people of the synod - time, talent, treasure - to the betterment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and
- developing strong relationships of accompaniment with the Central Synod of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church (ILEP); and

WHEREAS, her election made her the first female Lutheran bishop in the ELCA and the second

female Lutheran bishop in the world, a position which through her leadership still serves to inspire women to consider the call to ministry; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the La Crosse Area Synod is deeply grateful for Bishop Larson's service and for the opportunity to continue in ministry with her as our colleague; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Area Synod confer onto the Reverend Doctor April Ulring Larson the honorary title of Bishop Emerita; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Area Synod express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the Reverend Doctor April Ulring Larson.

Submitted by the Synod Council of the La Crosse Area Synod, ELCA

SA09.05.03 ADOPT RESOLUTION 1: RESOLUTION FOR BISHOP EMERITA

Motion Carried.

Resolution 2: ELCA World Hunger Program

ELCA World Hunger Program

WHEREAS our Lord made it crystal clear that feeding the hungry and advocating for those in poverty is of the highest priority for those who are his disciples (Matthew 25:34-35); and

Deleted: ¶

WHEREAS the Tour de Rev's are setting out on a three-seater bamboo bicycle to raise awareness for the needs of the hungry and those in poverty (www.tourderevs.org); and

WHEREAS the Tour de Rev's goal is to raise \$5 million (\$1 per baptized member) in their 100 day, 13,000 mile ride to assist the ELCA in reaching it's goal of raising \$25 million annually for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal; and

WHEREAS the ELCA World Hunger Program and Appeal is incredibly effective and efficient in battling hunger and its causes and deserves our support; and

WHEREAS God's people respond generously when they see and understand a real human need; therefore be it

RESOLVED that each congregation of the La Crosse Area Synod be encouraged to offer their support and prayers for the Tour de Rev's leg of the journey through our synod on August 13-14th by:

- lifting up the incredible story of what our church is doing on behalf of the hungry and poor both here and abroad,
- educating the congregation on the needs of the hungry and those who live in poverty,
- encouraging their congregation to go make a generous contribution to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal in support of the Tour de Rev's event, striving for a goal of \$5 per baptized member. And be it further

RESOLVED as members of a church that fervently cares for the poor and hungry that we individually support this effort and the ELCA World Hunger Program with generous gifts of our own well beyond the \$5 per member.

Submitted by Rev. Kent Johnson, Rev. Stephan Sandness and Rev. Donald Fox on behalf of the La Crosse Area Synod Hunger subcommittee

SA09.05.04 ADOPT RESOLUTION 2: ELCA WORLD HUNGER PROGRAM

Motion Carried.

Rev. Kent Johnson encouraged support of the Tour de Rev's. The Tour de Rev's video was shown.

Rev. Wes Dunbar brought the following resolutions forward.

RESOLUTION 3: Resolution to Encourage Learning about Israel/Palestine.

Resolution to Encourage Learning about Israel/Palestine

WHEREAS the ongoing conflict and current conditions in the Holy Land prompt the sharing of fair and comprehensive information, especially the witness of our Lutheran companions in the region, and

WHEREAS the La Crosse Area Synod has made available a number of ways to learn about Israel/Palestine¹, and

WHEREAS our Bishop Jim Arends recently traveled to Israel/Palestine with the ELCA Bishops' Academy to speak first hand with Christians, Jews, and Muslims regarding the situation in that region, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod thank Bishop Jim and Lynn Arends whose travels to Israel/Palestine during a period of intense conflict model the ELCA's commitment to accompaniment with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations and members of the La Crosse Area Synod support the work of the Middle East Subcommittee, and be it further

RESOLVED that pastors and congregations in the La Crosse Area Synod welcome a call from a member of the Middle East Subcommittee to discuss and arrange for a presentation to educate our members about the issues in Israel/Palestine.

Submitted by The Middle East Subcommittee

SA09.05.05 ADOPT RESOLUTION 3: RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE LEARNING ABOUT ISRAEL/PALESTINE **Motion Carried.**

RESOLUTION 4: Faithfulness & Generosity in Challenging Times "Do the Macedonia!"

Faithfulness & Generosity in Challenging Times "Do the Macedonia!"

WHEREAS the grace of God was evident when the Macedonian Church gave to the saints in Jerusalem during a "severe test of affliction," not out of compulsion, but joy in order to have the "privilege of sharing

¹ Resources available from the Middle East Subcommittee include:

- A DVD produced by ELCA church-wide titled "Peace Not Walls"
- A DVD produced by ELCA church-wide concerning the Bishops Academy held in Israel/Palestine in January, 2009
- A power point presentation concerning the Mount of Olives Housing Project
- Power point presentations on the history of the conflict and on the Bishops Academy
- A website dedicated to post-trip resources for Awareness, Advocacy, Accompaniment, and Inter-Religious Relationships [<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/2009-Bishops-Academy.aspx>]

in the ministry to the saints” (2 Corinthians 8), and

WHEREAS many in our communities are currently bearing the burden of economic challenges through an economic recession that negatively affects all the facets of our lives including, but not limited to job losses, pay cuts and freezes, home foreclosures, reductions in lending and adverse conditions in farming, and

WHEREAS compared to national and state-wide statistics our region is weathering the recession better than most other states and counties¹, and

WHEREAS “God is able to provide us with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, we may share abundantly in every good work” (2 Cor. 9:8), and

WHEREAS people and congregations who trust in God’s provision at all times, and who therefore engage in delight-filled generosity, abound in stories to tell of blessing, health, vitality and mission; therefore be it

RESOLVED that every voting member of this assembly challenge him/herself to “Do the Macedonia!” and increase in financial giving “according to their means and even beyond their means” (2 Cor. 8:3), and work toward a discipline of giving at least 10% of their income to the ministries of their congregations in order to model the generous lifestyle to which all Christians are called, and therefore be it further

RESOLVED that every voting member of this assembly call on their congregational councils and leaders to “Do the Macedonia!” having within them the same desire to be generous *even in difficult times* according to their means and even beyond their means through mission support given to synod and ELCA ministries, and therefore be it further

RESOLVED that the voting members of this assembly encourage and support a program of ongoing congregational stewardship development that takes advantage of the abundance of stewardship resources (see addendum) and will boldly, frequently, specifically and sincerely:

TEACH & MODEL trust in God’s faithfulness and Biblical stewardship principles.

LISTEN & RESPOND to real needs in communities, our church and our world that call on us to be generous with everything we have.

ASK people to give of themselves, their time & their possessions to further the ministries of the church.

THANK people for all generosity shown, small and big, inside and outside of congregational life.

TELL the story of how God is changing lives in the local community, our synod, the ELCA and its mission partners around the world through our giving in all its forms using individual testimonies, mission interpreters, and whatever other means are available.

Submitted by the Mission Support Committee

SA09.05.06 ADOPT RESOLUTION 4: FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY IN CHALLENGING TIMES “DO THE MACEDONIA!” **Motion Carried.**

Assistant to the Bishop Libby Howe encouraged participation in the Faith Festival. Many came forward to “Do the Macedonia!” line dance.

REPORT FROM *The Lutheran* - Sonia Solomonson

Sonia Solomonson, Managing Editor of *The Lutheran*, reported. She asked that the assembly think about the question, “Where is God’s grace in your life?” These are the stories *The Lutheran* wants to tell; stories make connections, and she encouraged stories of God acting in our lives. Study guides are available online, as well as in the magazine. In addition, there are various subscription plans available for congregations, and she encouraged visiting the display table. She asked for input on how *The Lutheran* can be improved for our use. She also spoke about *The Little Lutheran*, written for ages six and younger, focusing on spiritual foundation and

evangelism. It follows the lectionary and may be used in worship bags, as a baptismal gift, etc. The price is \$24.95, or \$12.95 for six or more subscriptions.

LITANY FOR RECOGNITION OF ANNIVERSARIES & RETIREMENTS OF PASTORS & AIMS:

The following were honored:

5 Years

The Rev. Dana Jackson
The Rev. Kristin Wendland

30 Years

The Rev. Christine Hallemeier

10 Years

The Rev. Martha Hampton
The Rev. Debbie Schulze
The Rev. Daniel Wollman

35 Years

The Rev. William Rice

15 Years

The Rev. Kent Johnson
The Rev. Steven E. Meyer
The Rev. Jeffrey Ruetten

40 Years

The Rev. Ronald Nordin
The Rev. Steven Fossum
The Rev. Ordean Grant

20 Years

The Rev. Daniel Dibbert
The Rev. Dennis Snider

45 Years

The Rev. Howard Larsen
The Rev. Peter Peterson
The Rev. Clair Whitmore

25 Years

The Rev. Mark Teslik

50 Years

The Rev. Charles Hulsether
The Rev. Lyle Ness

55 Years

The Rev. Wayne Henderson
The Rev. Merrill Herder

Announcements were given by Rev. Breck McHan. Dr. David Cherwien led the assembly in song, and Rev. Kristin Wendland, North Conference dean, closed the session with prayer at 11:40 a.m.

PLENARY SESSION 2 – Center for Faith and Life

The session convened at 1:15 p.m. with song, led by Dr. David Cherwien.

BIBLE STUDY:

Bishop Arends introduced Rev. Leonard Liptack, Pastor, Faith of Black Hammer Lutheran Church, Spring Grove, MN, and Book of Faith Advocate. The text was Ephesians 2:8. Pastor Liptack spoke about praying with open eyes, and about prayer as Bible study. He highlighted the stream of God's grace throughout Scripture.

REPORT OF THE BISHOP: (Part I; Part II found in Assembly Handbook)

GRACE HAPPENS HERE!

In the La Crosse Area Synod

Assembly Theme Text:

For by grace you have been saved through faith,

*and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God –
not the result of works, so that no one may boast.
For we are what he has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.
– Ephesians 2:8-10*

Grace Happens Here!
I see it working in ongoing ministry:

Our **congregations** live grace. In the eight months I have served as bishop I have had the opportunity to help lead worship in twenty-eight of our congregations (eight in North Conference, seven in East, ten in South, and three in West); preaching in twenty-seven, assisting with confirmation in three, and installing pastors in three. I also had the joy of presiding over the ordination of Pastor Anna Sorenson in her home congregation, Trinity Lutheran of Cook, Minnesota.

A vast majority of our congregations have lively young people in the pews, seasoned congregational veterans providing the wisdom of experience, and a good range of folks in the middle. Some have declining enrollment yet are hopeful for their future and looking for ways to redevelop themselves into mission centers in their communities. Some have pastoral vacancies and, thanks to my interim assistant Pastor Harris Hostager and our present Assistant to the Bishop Pastor Libby Howe, all congregations that have submitted their profiles to the synod office either have names to consider or have meetings set to receive names.

Bridge of Life Mission Congregation is growing in members and in ministry. It continues to need the financial gifts of individuals and congregations as it heads toward independence and chartering.

Agape Asian Ministry is looking for new ways to cooperate with existing ministries within the synod to better reach out to the Hmong population of the region. A new approach will be announced by the end of this summer.

The **Raising Up Leaders** initiative continues to train certified youth and family ministers and to provide resources to help congregations lead youth to lifelong service of our Lord both in and beyond our congregations. From workshops on Stepping Stone Ministry and Peer Ministry to support groups for folks who work with youth, our synod, with the leadership of Rocky Danielson, is growing in its ability to raise up leaders.

Our **Companion Synods** continue to bless us as we seek to be a blessing to them. Pastor Pete Beckstrand of the Zion and Franklin Congregations served as teaching pastor to the Nekemte Christian Education College in **Ethiopia** in the fall of 2008. Future teaching pastors for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years are being interviewed. Lynn and I were privileged to represent our synod at the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Jubilee Celebration. The EECMY has been recognized as a church body by the Ethiopian government for fifty years. In addition the EECMY celebrated one hundred and ten years of ministry. Also, Lynn Arends visited the Central Synod for a month in January/February of this year exploring ways that we might work with the synod to grow the quality of their health care system. While there are many ways to connect, most vital at this time is sustaining the clinics themselves as ELCA funding comes to an end. A resolution on this will be coming before this assembly.

In March of this year I also had the honor of representing the synod in **Peru** at the Annual Assembly of the Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church (ILEP). Our companion synod in South

America is undergoing growing pains. Structural changes are taking place as they seek to minister more effectively as a body of congregations that comes from multiple missionary backgrounds. Their assembly was suspended on March 22 to provide time to find the best ways to work as a body. The meeting continues June 13 and the Lutherans of Peru covet our prayers. At the same time the church has grown from thirteen to fifteen congregations with another half dozen preaching points. I plan to lead a synod delegation to Peru in July of 2010. Applications to participate are available at this assembly.

Grace Happens Here!

I have seen it in projects and programs heading toward completion:

Lutheran Disaster Response's **Project Recovery** comes to an end this summer in the South Conference of our synod. God's grace has been made abundantly clear as blessed people gave of their time and sweat and finances to bless those who were hardest hit by the floods of the last two years. Their compassion and the work of LDR leaders will not quickly be forgotten. We will take time in this assembly to remember and to say thank you.

Our **Synod Office** at 2301 South Avenue in La Crosse has been open for over a year. All major renovations are completed to both the office and the rental properties leased primarily by Lutheran Social Service of Wisconsin. Final projects to complete include improved signage and the forming of some green spaces. The property has turned out to be excellent space and it is cost efficient. All estimates show that by the end of 2009, with our rental income paying a great share of our mortgage, the synod will be paying out no more for building space than we would have for rent. Each year as rental costs go up, the synod's outgo for mortgage will remain stable. So each year we will have more funds freed for mission.

Some basic numbers on synod property include:

Purchase Price	\$290,000
Renovation Costs	<u>\$503,695</u>
	\$793,695
General Donations	\$ 62,328
Pavers	\$ 49,150
Grants/Matching Funds	\$ 71,000
Program Reserves	\$ 20,326
Mission Investment	
Fund Mortgage	\$555,000
Budgeted Building Funds	\$ 4,491
Pledged	<u>\$ 31,400</u>
	\$793,695

At the end of 2008 we ended our appeal for building funds and pavers. We are thankful to all who contributed toward the cost of our new synod home and acknowledge major gifts of matching funds from Gundersen Lutheran and Thrivent for Lutherans. We thank everyone who added their physical labor to the project and acknowledge the leadership of Mr. Dick Mannstedt and Pastor Judd Larson.

Sugar Creek Bible Camp's Focus on the Future Campaign was approved to make an appeal throughout the synod a number of years ago. After a number of redesigns for programmatic applications and resource responsibility, the new dining hall and the new horse barn will be dedicated on June 27. The camp's final appeal to reduce the construction loan is under way. Gifts from synod members and congregations to Sugar Creek and **Luther Park** Bible Camps provide settings and scholarships that strengthen the faith of hundreds of young people and adults.

Lutheran **Campus Ministry**-La Crosse was also granted the privilege of raising funds throughout the synod a few years ago. They intend to break ground on a new facility in the spring of 2010 and anticipate a small wrap-up appeal to cover the cost of furnishings.

Grace Happens Here!
I see it in new ideas:

When a synod office turns over its pastoral staff, it would be easy to see ministry stall or flounder. This has not been the case in the La Crosse Area Synod. Our synod support staff, Melanie Timmerman, Deb Wold and Alice DaFoe, have graciously and skillfully shown Pastor Howe and myself the ways of continuing ongoing programs while capable and active committees are dreaming of new ways to be mission in their areas of ministry.

The **Olive Branch Awards** are a simple example. As Lynn and I had the opportunity to represent you by our participation in the Bishops' Academy trip to Israel/Palestine, we saw first hand the need for a peaceful resolve for the Jews, Muslims and Christians living in that ancient land. So I am glad the Middle East Subcommittee is honoring those who have helped with awareness, accompaniment, and advocacy in the cause of peace in the Holy Land. This new idea grew from the ongoing **Green Leaf Awards** honoring those who act to conserve God's creation.

The **teaming** of our Evangelism and Communications Committees is a second example of new ideas. Realizing the interweaving of the goals of their committees they have intentionally found a way to be mission together. A new web site has begun: **www.GraceHappensHere.org**. Log in for grace basics and grace stories. Find the basics of the best of being Lutheran Christians. Help friends find ELCA congregations near them. Use it to share your faith. Use it to proclaim that Grace Happens Here!

The **shared leadership** in our Candidacy Committee serves as a third example. The work of welcoming students into seminary education and accompanying them to ordination, consecration, and commissioning is rewarding, but time consuming. As Committee Chair Pastor Marty Hampton heads to a new call in Indiana she recommends that the chair be shared, so we have the first committee in the synod with co-chairs, Pastor Len Liptack and Pastor Joe Irvin.

A final example is the **Faith Festival Fair** at this assembly. The idea blossomed as the Planning Committee brainstormed ways to inform and engage assembly voting members. Three hours Friday afternoon and evening are scheduled to let us learn about ourselves, celebrate all that we do, and imagine mission for tomorrow, next month, next year, and years to come.

Grace Happens Here!
I see you live it:

A bishop friend of mine told me that a vast majority of my time in the office would be an opportunity to see the church at its best. Thank you all for letting his words come to pass.

I am thankful for the outpouring of **affection** and **good will** shown by our synod as Bishop April Ulring-Larson completed her final term in office. Her farewells were excellent tributes to her service of Christ in this synod. In the same way, I am thankful for the **hope** and **support** shown to me as I begin my term in this office. The Holy Spirit's presence and your presence in my installation service continue to inspire me. Thank you to all who made these special events in our synod's history extra special.

The **optimism** and **generosity** of our synod's people is energizing. We are in challenging financial times. Our 2009 budget has been revised with a \$100,000 decrease. If giving patterns do not change, it is possible that we should have revised by three times that amount. Yet synod leaders and pastors have encouraged us to stay at a challenging level, counting on the blessed among us to stretch ourselves to be a greater blessing to others.

The **respect** and **care** that we give one another is pure grace. As we discuss issues of sexuality at this assembly I look forward to clear and care-filled discussion. We seek to understand God's will for us in this aspect of our personal lives and shared relationships. I know that we will be able to disagree on the subject without questioning one another's faith in Christ.

The **prayer** support that you promise is humbling and appreciated. Your prayers of blessing for Christ's work through our synod are felt. I believe God grants your prayers for strength and guidance for our synod's leadership. Today I encourage your prayers for our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson invites us to join in 50 Days of Prayer for the Churchwide Assembly. Starting Monday, June 29, take time each day for fifty days to ask the Good Lord to guide our whole church into the future. Resources to guide individuals and groups in this time of reflection can be found at <http://www.elca.org/50days>

Special thanks to The Synod Council, Executive Committee, committee and subcommittee members, and, especially, the synod staff for the grace filled guidance they give me and provide for us all.

Ultimate thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Gracious One, who saved us, leads us, and gives us hope. Because of the presence of Jesus' Holy Spirit in the La Crosse Area Synod **Grace Happens Here!**

Living in grace with you,

Jim Arends, Bishop

DESIGNATION OF FINAL OFFERING:

Motion made and seconded for the third offering to be given for the medical clinics in Ethiopia.

SA09.05.07 DESIGNATE THIRD OFFERING TO MEDICAL CLINICS IN ETHIOPIA

Motion Carried.

REFERENCE & COUNSEL:

Rev. Kristin Wendland presented.

Resolution 5: CONTINUING RESOLUTION for the SYNOD CONSTITUTION

CONTINUING RESOLUTION for the SYNOD CONSTITUTION

WHEREAS the present synod constitution includes the following:

S11.05.09. There shall be a Global Mission Committee and it shall consist of at least 60 percent lay members selected by the bishop and approved by the Synod Council.

- a. The La Crosse Area Synod shall be in a companion synod relationship with the Central Synod of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and the Iglesia Luterana Evangelica Peruana (ILEP)*. The purpose of this relationship shall be to prayerfully walk together in Christ. This committee shall be responsible for developing and overseeing this relationship.

* Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church

b. All requests and plans for developing this relationship, including material or financial assistance for our companion synod, shall be coordinated through this committee, the bishop, the ELCA Global Mission program unit, and the leadership of the EECMY and its Central Synod or the leadership of ILEP.

c. This relationship may be extended to include other synods.

Therefore be it RESOLVED that the following continuing resolution be added to the synod constitution:

d. This committee shall consist of at least 12 members for three-year terms, including the following:

- 1) at least one representative from each of the four synod conferences;*
- 2) at least one communicator/publicist;*
- 3) the chairs and coordinators of Global Mission subcommittees and affiliated groups;*
- 4) at large members.*

e. The chair of this committee shall be nominated by the bishop and appointed by the Synod Council for a term of one year and may be reappointed. The secretary of this committee shall be elected by the committee for a term of one year, and may be re-elected.

Submitted by the synod Global Mission Committee

JoAnn Salava, Chair of the Global Mission Committee, clarified the motion.

SA09.05.08 ADOPT RESOLUTION 5: CONTINUING RESOLUTION FOR THE SYNOD CONSTITUTION **Motion Carried.**

Resolution 6: Companion Synod Clinic Funding

Companion Synod Clinic Funding

WHEREAS, the La Crosse Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is in a companion synod Relationship with the Central Synod of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, and

WHEREAS, the Central Synod lives out its mission of “serving the whole person” in many ways, prominent among these ways the operation of health care clinics in the cities of Bakko and Nekemte, and

WHEREAS, these clinics provide healthcare to thousands of people every year and are funded by fees paid by patients and grants from the ELCA World Hunger Fund, made possible by our on-going support of the Hunger Fund, and

WHEREAS, when ELCA World Hunger Fund grants come to an end, the healthcare ministries of the Central Synod will be unable to operate, leaving communities and people without healthcare, and

WHEREAS, this year marks the final year of support from the ELCA World Hunger Fund, and

WHEREAS, \$100 will fund one clinic for one day, providing care for about 50 patients, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod challenge the congregations and people of this synod to work together to provide financial support for the clinics in Bakko and Nekemte as an

expression of love for and companionship with the Central Synod of the EECMY, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Assembly direct the Ethiopia Subcommittee of the Global Missions Committee to lead efforts among the people and congregations of the synod to encourage generosity toward this project, and be it further

RESOLVED that monies gathered for this purpose be forwarded to the Central Synod as long as the clinics remain viable, and be it further

RESOLVED that should there be a time when the clinics cease to function or the La Crosse Area Synod deems it imprudent to continue funding these clinics, money raised for the purpose of funding these clinics but not yet forwarded to the Central Synod of the EECMY, shall remain in the custody of this synod and become available to be used to support the on-going relationship of this synod with the Central Synod according to the direction of this synod's bishop and Global Missions Committee.

Submitted by the Global Missions Ethiopian Subcommittee

SA09.05.09 ADOPT RESOLUTION 6: COMPANION SYNOD CLINIC FUNDING

Motion Carried.

Connie Scharlau presented the following resolution:

Resolution 11: Plight of the Hmong Refugees

PLIGHT OF THE HMONG REFUGEES

WHEREAS Resolution Six, *Save the Hmong Vietnam Veterans and Their Families*, was adopted by the La Crosse Area Synod ELCA meeting in assembly in June 2008 at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa; and

WHEREAS many congregations and leaders have responded to the resolution with letters and appeals to elected officials of our federal government; and

WHEREAS since June of 2008, the Thai government has repatriated thousands of Hmong refugees to Laos, and their location and condition is unknown because the Lao People Democratic Republic (LDPR) does not allow the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) to monitor the living conditions of these Hmong; and

WHEREAS, today the situation has not improved for the Hmong; news releases have stated that the food supply into Huay Nam Khao camp will be cut-off soon to pressure the remaining Hmong population to return to Laos, and the Thai government plans to repatriate all 5,000 Hmong in Phetchabun, Thailand from May to September 2009; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Church in Society Committee of the La Crosse Area Synod encourage pastors and congregations to ask the United States government to take serious action to end this old Vietnam War struggle

- to continue to support the Hmong Lao as stated in Resolution Six of the 2008 Synod Assembly
- to give the Hmong Lao the right to seek political asylum status, and
- to put pressure on the Thai and Lao governments to allow the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to monitor the Hmong in both Thailand and Laos.

Submitted by Agape Asian Ministry

SA09.05.10 ADOPT RESOLUTION 11: PLIGHT OF THE HMONG REFUGEES

Motion Carried.

2010 BUDGET

MMS to adopt the 2010 budget.

SA09.05.11 ADOPT 2010 MISSION SUPPORT BUDGET

Motion Carried.

PROPOSED SALARY GUIDELINES FOR COMPENSATIONS

The proposed guidelines come moved and seconded from Synod Council. Don Hoffmann, compensation subcommittee member, spoke about the process of determining guidelines this year. The committee looked at a very minimum addition due to the economy.

SA09.05.12 ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR COMPENSATION

Motion Carried.

Resolution 7: Continued Support of Bridge of Life

Continued Support of Bridge of Life

WHEREAS the ministry of Bridge of Life emerged out of the missional passion and generous gifts of the La Crosse Area Synod as an intentional outreach ministry to the unchurched, and

WHEREAS the ministry of Bridge of Life continues to model creative outreach in a unique setting and is willing to serve as a living learning laboratory for the synod, and

WHEREAS grant money and gifts from outside the congregation have declined faster than Bridge of Life has grown in its ability to be financially self-supporting, and

WHEREAS Bridge of Life will be kicking off a major outreach initiative in fall 2009, therefore be it

RESOLVED that members of the La Crosse Area Synod continue to lift up in prayer the ministry of Bridge of Life and contribute financially to help Bridge of Life grow in its outreach ministry, and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations of the La Crosse Area Synod send representatives to visit Bridge of Life or invite members of Bridge of Life to visit them to share experiences and resources for outreach ministry, and be it finally

RESOLVED that Bridge of Life make a progress report to the 2010 Synod Assembly.

Submitted by: Rev. Steve Meyer, Bridge of Life Lutheran Church
Rev. Dan Henderson, Holmen Lutheran
Rev. Houa Moua, Agape Asian Ministry
Mr. Paul Petersen, Lutheran Campus Ministry.

SA09.05.13 ADOPT RESOLUTION 7: CONTINUED SUPPORT OF BRIDGE OF LIFE

Motion Carried.

The Assembly watched a video from Project Recovery. Bishop Arends then introduced Rev. Gary Grindeland, Vice President of Church & Community Relations, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, and Gil Hoel from Project Recovery. Pastor Grindeland expressed thanks to all who have assisted in the ongoing flood recovery project. He encouraged the assembly to visit with LSS at the Assembly.

Pastor Breck McHan made announcements concerning the Faith Festival, supper, and evening worship.

The Assembly was led in song by Dr. David Cherwien and in prayer by Rev. Dave Bersagel, dean of the West Conference. The session closed at 3:30 p.m.

The Faith Festival was held from 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at Dahl Centennial Union. Dinner food was available at various locations in the Union.

The Assembly met at Marty's for gathering songs at 7:15 p.m. and for worship at 7:30p.m. The Rev. Dr. Kathryn Love was the preacher. The offering was designated for various synod ministries.

Saturday, May 30

PLENARY SESSION 2 – Center for Faith and Life

The session opened with a hymn sing led by Dr. David Cherwien, at 8:15 a.m.

Bishop Arends introduced Rev. April Ulring Larson and presented her with a certificate acknowledging the honorary title of Bishop Emerita. A gift was presented to her.

BIBLE STUDY

Bishop Emerita Larson presented a Bible study segment on Ephesians 2:8-10 with focus on verse 9. The center of scripture is Christ, who gives us God's grace unmerited. We hold highest the scripture texts that preach Jesus.

REPORT OF THE ELCA:

Bishop Arends introduced Rev. Dr. Kathryn Love for the report. She brought a video message from Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. "This church is called to bear witness to the faith at the intersection of fear and hope," Bishop Hanson said. We are a Book of Faith Church that resides at this intersection, and urged us to trust that God will take us down the road of hope, not fear. Dr. Love said that her prayer is for the revival of this church and spiritual renewal. She encouraged congregational renewal that begins with prayer and the sharing of stories.

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR

Those in attendance:

- 73 pastors
- 197 lay
- Total of 270 voting members
- 12 youth
- 16 visitors and guests
- Total of 298 persons

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Marsha Bateman reported. In answer to a question posed yesterday, conference deans are elected at pre-assembly caucus meetings, but do have to be elected to the synod council from this assembly. Cheryl Mader moved that in accordance with our synod constitution, we elect the recently elected conference deans to the synod council.

SA09.05.14 ELECT CONFERENCE DEANS TO SYNOD COUNCIL

MSC

Nominations have been received for the two open positions:

South Conference, Evangelism & Outreach, clergy (term to 2012): Rev. Anna Sorenson, Mt. Sterling & Utica, Mt. Sterling

West Conference, Evangelism & Outreach, lay (term to 2012): Carol Leidel, Prince of Peace, La Crescent

ELECTIONS

Bishop Arends led the election process. He asked for nominations for each category of the ballot. MMS to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot.

SC09.05.15 CAST UNANIMOUS BALLOT

Motion Carried.

The Assembly moved into quasi Committee of the Whole for one hour. The following documents were discussed:

- *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, A proposed social statement from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality
- *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Voting members had the opportunity to attend one of the following breakout sessions:

- "Verbal Snapshots from the Middle East," Bishop Arends
- "Calling the Church to Prayer: The ELCA Prayer Movement," Rev. Dr. Kathryn Love
- "How to Boost Congregational Singing," Dr. David Cherwien
- "So, I'm on the Church Council... How Do We Keep from Shooting Each Other?," Pastor Harris Hostager
- "Resource Me!," Pastor Peter Jonas and Pastor Len Liptack

PLENARY SESSION 4 – Center for Faith and Life

The session convened with song. The LYO group returned Bishop Arends with fun and games.

BIBLE STUDY

Sonia Solomonson, Managing Editor of *The Lutheran*, brought the third Bible study from Ephesians 2:8-10, focusing on verse 10. We are created for good works.

RESOLUTIONS ON SEXUALITY ISSUE

Bishop Arends again explained the suggested ordering of the resolutions:

The suggested order is as numbered:

- If Resolution 8 passes, the others will not be considered.
- If Resolution 8 fails, we move on to Resolution 9, which addresses on the Recommendations of the Task Force.
- If Resolution 9 passes, Resolution 10 becomes automatically amended to only address the Sexuality Statement.
- If Resolution 9 fails, we move to Resolution 10 in its entirety

Bishop asked the Assembly for a motion to change the recommended ordering of the resolutions. There was no motion made.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Rev. Dave Dahl presented Resolution 8.

RESOLUTION 8: Resolution in Response to Sexuality Resolutions

Resolution in Response to Sexuality Resolutions

WHEREAS, the 2001 ELCA Churchwide Assembly acted to initiate a process within the ELCA to develop a social statement on human sexuality; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with social statement development procedures, the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality was created at the direction of the ELCA Church Council to complete this task; and

WHEREAS, during the extended process of development of the social statement congregations of the La Crosse Area Synod have conducted forums, and at the 2009 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly provided opportunities to learn and discuss the various subjects dealt with by the Task Force; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2009 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly affirm the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their attention and commitment to the task they were given, for their desire to listen to the whole church in all its diversity, and for their modeling of a prayerful and pastoral approach to this difficult topic; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2009 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly hold in prayer all voting members of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly and ask for them the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2009 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly hold in prayer all those at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly who may be tasked to further engage the issues before the Assembly and ask for them the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution constitute the response of the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly to all resolutions before it relating to the work of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

Submitted by La Crosse Area Synod Council

A motion was made and seconded to amend the resolution by deleting the last RESOLVED. The amendment was defeated.

**SA09.05.15 ADOPT RESOLUTION 8: RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO SEXUALITY
RESOLUTIONS** **Motion Defeated.**

Rev. Kristin Wendland presented Resolution 9.

RESOLUTION 9: A Memorial Concerning Marriage Standard Policy for Rostered Leaders

A Memorial Concerning Marriage Standard Policy for Rostered Leaders

WHEREAS, as Lutherans *"We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone"*², and

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

² Formula of Concord, The Epitome, 1. – The Book Of Concord, Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Fortress Press, p. 486.

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

WHEREAS, Wolfhart Pannenberg, renowned Lutheran theologian, states:

For a church that allows itself to be pressured into regarding homosexual activity as no longer a departure from the Biblical norm, and to recognize homosexual partnerships as a form of personal relationship equivalent to marriage would no longer stand on the foundation of Scriptures but rather in opposition to its unanimous witness. A church that takes such a step has thereby ceased to be an evangelical church in the tradition of the Lutheran Reformation (Lutheran Forum 35/2:34 [Pentecost/Summer 2001]); and

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

WHEREAS, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly will consider the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies*³ which if passed will change the ELCA's teaching and policies to allow same-sex sexual relationships for pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA; and

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

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

WHEREAS, the ELCA currently expresses its expectations of pastors and other rostered leaders through the documents *Vision and Expectations*⁴ and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* which are in harmony with the commonly accepted sense of Scripture and its overwhelming understanding throughout history; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly thank the members of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality for their work; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reject the proposals in the *Report and Recommendations on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reaffirm the ELCA's current standards for pastors and other rostered leaders as expressed in *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.

Submitted by Rev. Timothy Duesenberg, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Onalaska, WI; Rev. David J. Baldukus, Olivet Lutheran Church, La Crosse, WI; Rev. Gary L. Daines, Our Savior's & Skogdalen Lutheran Churches, Westby, WI; Rev. Kathy Ingbritsen, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Viroqua, WI

**SA09.05.16 ADOPT RESOLUTION 9: A MEMORIAL CONCERNING MARRIAGE STANDARD
POLICY FOR ROSTERED LEADERS** **Motion Defeated.**

³ A report by the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality

⁴ Especially pertinent are the lines: "Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships."

Connie Scharlau presented Resolution 10.

RESOLUTION 10: A MEMORIAL CONCERNING HUMAN SEXUALITY FROM THE LA CROSSE AREA SYNOD TO THE 2009 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

**A MEMORIAL CONCERNING HUMAN SEXUALITY
FROM THE LA CROSSE AREA SYNOD
TO THE 2009 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

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

WHEREAS, the proposed social statement seeks to powerfully proclaim a Lutheran understanding of trust, love and service to God and to the neighbor as the proper foundation of understanding sexuality; and

WHEREAS, even after many years of thoughtful, respectful, and faithful Bible study and conversation, there remains much variation in the ELCA as to how to regard same-gender committed relationships and the rostered ministry of people in them; and

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

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council, at its March 2009 meeting, voted by an overwhelming margin to transmit to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly the proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality, its implementing resolutions, and a Recommendation on Ministry Policies⁵; and

WHEREAS, the 1993 Conference of Bishops stated, "We express trust in and will continue dialogue with those pastors and congregations who are in ministry with gay and lesbian persons, and affirm their desire to explore the best ways to provide pastoral care for all to whom they minister;" and

WHEREAS, in 1999 the Churchwide Assembly (this church's highest legislative authority) voted to reaffirm 1991 and 1995 actions of the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that "gay and lesbian people, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate *fully* [italics added] in the life of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;"⁶ therefore be it

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod, meeting in Assembly, memorialize the 2009 Churchwide Assembly as follows:

1. To adopt the proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality and its implementing resolutions, as recommended by the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality and transmitted by the ELCA Church Council.
2. To adopt the four resolutions (stated as "steps" in the attached addendum) of the proposed Recommendation on Ministry Policies ., as recommended by the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality and transmitted by the ELCA Church Council.

And be it further

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod thank the Task Force for its work and to continue to

⁵ Addendum "Description of Task Force Recommendations"

⁶ excerpt from CA99.06.27

hold the members of the Churchwide Assembly in our prayers as they engage in moral deliberation.

Submitted by the Church Council of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin, the Rev. Dr. Mark E. Jolivette, and the Rev. Gary Wees.

Addendum I:

II. Description of the Task Force Recommendations, excerpted from "Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies", February 19, 2009, pp. 6-7

236 In the face of these differing conclusions, all of which are represented on the task force itself, the task
237 force was unable to come to unanimous agreement. Although the recommendation that follows
represents

238 the consensus of most of the task force, it does not have the support of all. It is therefore presented
239 humbly, with a sense of burden for the sisters and brothers in Christ—both on the task force and in the
240 wider church—who are bound by their consciences to disagree.

241

242 *The task force recommends a process that begins with the assembly declaring its intention about what it*
243 *wants to do.* The proposed process begins with decisions about *whether* this church wants to find a way
to

244 recognize publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships; and *whether* this
245 church wants to move in the direction of rostering people living in such relationships. *If so*, then the
246 process leads to considering *how* this could be accomplished. The resolutions begin by seeking
agreement

247 on the principles before they address the practice.

248

249 *The recommendation thus consists of four resolutions, each of which takes a step in the decision-making*
250 *process.* The task force proposes to the assembly that the decisions be taken in four consecutive steps.

If

251 the assembly agrees to the first, then the second, third, and fourth would be considered only if the

252 preceding one(s) had been approved.

253

254 Step one asks the assembly whether, in principle, it is committed to finding ways to allow congregations
255 and synods that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong,
256 monogamous, same-gender relationships.

257

258 The work of the task force focused on the question of rostering people living in lifelong, monogamous,
259 same-gender relationships. Although the fourth resolution addresses the relationships of people who are
or wish to be rostered, the task force believes that this

260 question can be considered only if this church

261 offers the possibility of public accountability to lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships. The
262 task force considers this a necessary prior step because this church expects that all its rostered leaders
will

263 be held accountable in their relationships. Therefore, the task force asks the assembly to clarify its intent
264 on the general question of recognizing, supporting, and holding publicly accountable these relationships,
265 noting that approval of this first resolution would not imply commitment to a particular way of
266 accomplishing this.

267

268 Step two asks the assembly whether, in principle, it is committed to finding a way for people in such
269 publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of
270 this church.

271

272 This step is based on the assumption that, before being able to consider specific proposals for how to
273 accomplish such a change, this church must decide, in principle, whether or not it wants to move in this
274 direction. The approval of this second resolution would not, at this step, imply a commitment to a
275 particular way of accomplishing this.

276

277 Step three asks this church whether, in the future implementation of steps one and two (see above), it

will

278 commit to doing so in such a way that all in this church bear the burdens of the other, love the neighbor,
279 and respect the bound conscience of any with whom they disagree.

280

281 This step recognizes that agreement in this church on this matter does not exist. Therefore, decisions
282 about policy that serve only the interests of one or another group will not be acceptable. If this church
283 intends to move toward change or to decline to change, this step commits it to doing so in ways that
284 respect the convictions and provide space for the faithful witness of all.

285

286 Step four then presents a proposal for how this church could move toward change in a way that respects
287 the bound conscience of all.

A motion was made and seconded to consider the resolution in two parts; firstly, whether to be for
or against the social statement, and secondly to consider the four recommendations of the task
force one at a time.

The amendment was defeated.

A motion was made and seconded to add another RESOLVED:

And be it further

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod thank the Task Force for its work and to continue to
hold the members of the Churchwide Assembly in our prayers as they engage in moral
deliberation.

The amendment was passed.

**SA09.05.17 ADOPT RESOLUTION 10: A MEMORIAL CONCERNING HUMAN SEXUALITY
FROM THE LA CROSSE AREA SYNOD TO THE 2009 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

Motion Carried.

Rev. Gary Wees presented Resolution 12.

Resolution 12: Super Majority Memorial for Churchwide Assembly

Super Majority Memorial for Churchwide Assembly

WHEREAS the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted "to direct the Task Force for ELCA
Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009
Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual
persons from the rosters of this church;" and

WHEREAS the Constitutional and Legal Committee of the ELCA Church Council recommended
rules of procedure that "any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes
in this church's current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal
ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the
assembly for adoption;" and

WHEREAS the ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to reject this recommendation and adhere to
ELCA Constitutional parameters; and

WHEREAS a two-thirds majority vote is presently required for the adoption of an ELCA social
statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution; and

WHEREAS a decision to change church teaching and policy to allow pastors and other rostered
leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationship holds the potential to be very divisive in ELCA
synods and congregations and to cause both membership and financial losses for synods and

congregations; and

WHEREAS the ELCA is seeking ways to make decisions on a consensus basis rather than by close votes; and

WHEREAS though we appreciate the efforts that have gone forward in drafting the proposed changes in ministry standards, in order to be faithful to the family that is the ELCA, a change of this magnitude warrants careful consideration; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly that, as recommended by the Constitutional and Legal Committee of the ELCA Church Council, "any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption."

Submitted by: the Rev. Wes Dunbar, Grace, Elroy and the Rev. Leonard Liptack, Faith, Black Hammer.

A question was asked about the second WHEREAS. Clarification was made that the ELCA Church Council chose not to accept the recommendation from the Constitutional and Legal Committee.

SA09.05.18 ADOPT RESOLUTION 12: SUPER MAJORITY MEMORIAL FOR CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY **Motion Defeated.**

Bishop Arends thanked the Assembly volunteers, as well as all others who made the Assembly possible. He gave special thanks to our visitor Rev. Dr. Kathryn Love.

Bishop Arends offered an official welcome to Rev. Libby Howe, Assistant to the Bishop.

Rev. Breck McHan announced that the 2010 Synod Assembly would be held June 3-5 at Luther College.

The hat contest winners from Friday evening's Faith Festival were announced, with John and Nancy Solberg winning Fairest of the Fair, Rev. Libby Howe winning Most Lutheran, and Rev. Jean Pagliaro winning Most Original.

The LYO Youth Convo presented a skit to the assembly.

Worship with Service of Holy Communion was held. Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Libby Howe was the preacher. The offering was given for the medical clinics of our companion synod in Ethiopia .

The Assembly was closed at 3:50 p.m.

INDEX TO ACTIONS:

SA09.05.01 ADOPT AGENDA WITH QUASI COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

SA09.05.02 ADOPT RULES AS PRESENTED

SA09.05.03 ADOPT RESOLUTION 1: RESOLUTION FOR BISHOP EMERITA

SA09.05.04 ADOPT RESOLUTION 2: ELCA WORLD HUNGER PROGRAM

SA09.05.05 ADOPT RESOLUTION 3: RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE LEARNING ABOUT ISRAEL/PALESTINE

SA09.05.06 ADOPT RESOLUTION 4: FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY IN CHALLENGING TIMES "DO THE MACEDONIA!"
SA09.05.07 DESIGNATE THIRD OFFERING TO MEDICAL CLINIC IN ETHIOPIA
SA09.05.08 ADOPT RESOLUTION 5: CONTINUING RESOLUTION FOR THE SYNOD
SA09.05.09 ADOPT RESOLUTION 6: COMPANION SYNOD CLINIC FUNDING
SA09.05.10 ADOPT RESOLUTION 11: PLIGHT OF THE HMONG REFUGEES
SA09.05.11 ADOPT 2010 MISSION SUPPORT BUDGET
SA09.05.12 ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR COMPENSATION
SA09.05.13 ADOPT RESOLUTION 7: CONTINUED SUPPORT OF BRIDGE OF LIFE
SA09.05.14 ELECT CONFERENCE DEANS TO SYNOD COUNCIL
SA09.05.15 ADOPT RESOLUTION 8: RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO SEXUALITY RESOLUTIONS
SA09.05.16 ADOPT RESOLUTION 9: A MEMORIAL CONCERNING MARRIAGE STANDARD POLICY FOR ROSTERED LEADERS
SA09.05.17 ADOPT RESOLUTION 10: A MEMORIAL CONCERNING HUMAN SEXUALITY FROM THE LA CROSSE AREA SYNOD TO THE 2009 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY
SA09.05.18 ADOPT RESOLUTION 12: SUPER MAJORITY MEMORIAL FOR CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

ABBREVIATIONS:

MMS: Motion made and seconded.

MMSC: Motion made, seconded and carried
