

**SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**DRAFT MINUTES
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**

**April 28, 2005
Oakland Marriott**

This document represents the Synod Secretary's proposed version of the Minutes of the Synod Council's proceedings. It does not constitute an official record of the Council's actions unless and until the document is reviewed and approved by the Synod Council. The action of Council is expected to be taken at the June 24-25, 2005 meeting and may include corrections.

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Anderson, Paul Basting, Todd Bertani, Linda Boston, Donna Burroughs, David Flakoll, Ruth Hanusa, Greta Heinemeier, Sarah Isakson, Bruce Lohse, Vice President Larry Moeller, Bishop David Mullen, Jane Okubo, Moses Penumaka, Robert Miller, Keith Teague, Treasurer Karl Smith, Michael Telleen, Paul Theiss, Paul Werfelmann and Secretary Kathy Werfelmann.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Evelyn Thomas and Karen Johnson.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS: Harvey Blomberg, Noreen Meginness, Charles Ruthroff, William Wong (staff); Paul Bodin and Steve Switzer (Discipling Team Chairs); and Jean Lebbert (Synod Communicator).

OPENING: Vice President Larry Moeller called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Pr. Todd Bertani gave a devotion and prayer based on the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 and the Living Stones of 1 Peter 2, and asked the question "Do we want to throw stones, or be living stones?"

AGENDA: A motion was made and seconded (P. Werfelmann/Lohse) to adopt the agenda as distributed with the addition of two new items under new business: F. Fairtrade Coffee and Beans and G. Sale of Rwandan Crafts. The Agenda was **adopted** as amended. **(SC05.04.01)**

MINUTES: A motion was made and seconded (Okubo/Lohse) to adopt the minutes as modified by the following changes: (1) Page 2, paragraph above Leadership Discipling Team, should be "Harvey Blomberg reported that the Review Table of the Division for Outreach recently approved funding for our new missions. The missions are listed in Pastor Blomberg's report found on Green Page 4." and (2) Page 4, Synod Outreach Fund Policy Revision, last paragraph, first sentence should read "Passage of this amendment allows the Synod Outreach Fund to better plan allocations." **Motion carried. (SC05.04.02)**

REPORTS:

BISHOP: Bishop Mullen passed out copies of a letter he has received from Rev. Richard Magnus, Executive Director of the Division for Outreach and Rev. Michael Meier, Coordinator for Mission Support, Division for Congregational Ministries, in which they thank the Synod Council for their partnership. They also are encouraged by the renewed emphasis on new starts in our Synod.

The Bishop also noted his excitement about the upcoming Assembly. He recognizes that there are several very substantive items on the agenda and notes that these topics will enable us to talk about our mission and our future. It's a time to move forward and Bishop Mullen is assured that God will use the conversations to make change.

Bill Wong, Lead by Example, and Chuck Ruthroff, Plan for Mission, had no additions to their written reports.

Noreen Meginness reported on the wonderful Assembly that has been planned. She gave thanks for all the great support they have received from local volunteers, and noted that St. Paul's has moved its Sunday worship to the Synod Assembly.

Bud Egdahl reviewed his spreadsheet on stewardship for 2004 and noted that we are down one congregation as of March 2005.

Ms. Margie Back was introduced by Pr. Egdahl as the new Synod Mission Interpreter. Her hope is that people will become more familiar with and feel closer to the mission and ministry of the church. She is recruiting people to help spread the word, tell the stories, promote bulletin inserts and monitor the website, to keep congregations in the know about where their mission dollars go. She reiterates that this is not about raising money but raising awareness.

There was no report from the Council of Deans or any additional comments from Harvey Blomberg.

This is Paul Bodin's last council meeting as chair of the **Leadership Discipling Team**. He reports that the work of his committee can be seen in the Building, Healthy Multiplying Congregations document. He also noted that the events planned to help nurture and support rostered leaders will begin in June and July, and even be offered in Reno. This is also Amy Jo Mattheis's last year as chair of the **Witness and Service Discipling Team**.

Steve Switzer reported that the **Word and Sacrament Discipling Team** is also in transition, as the terms of all three chairs of the Discipling Teams are expiring. The Living Liturgy series will be starting at PLTS later this year.

FINANCE REPORT:

Karl Smith gave a brief verbal report in addition to the spreadsheets in the green pages. He reports that income is up and expenses are holding the line; exactly where they are expected at this time of year. He noted that the income is not uniform throughout the year, but income is up this year compared to other years at this time.

TASK GROUPS:

As chair of the Synod Council's task group on **Cultural Competency**, Linda Boston reported on the cultural awareness workshop planned for this Assembly. The Welcoming Church workshop will be led by Jane Okubo, Moses Penumaka, Lyle Beckman, Mary Brown and Linda Boston and will be offered two times.

Jane Okubo reminded us that we must be proactive not passive. We cannot just hang out a welcome sign and think that visitors will come. You must learn what your cultural neighborhood is, and then ask yourself what you are doing to prepare for them? Lastly, you need to evaluate your results.

Three Council members shared their cultural homework with the group. One questions "Who is of a culture other than me?" One reported that the person he interviewed didn't feel as though it was his country even though he'd been here for many years. The third echoed the same idea of still feeling like the outsider. Jane encouraged the Council to continue working on becoming more culturally aware.

Bob Miller reports that he has been emailing with Edie Lott in regards to **Hunger Awareness and Bread for the World**. He hopes to meet Edie at this Assembly. A main purpose is to keep this subject in front of congregations through use of Synod communication tools, as is presently being done, to encourage more participation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Synod Council members volunteered to facilitate at the **Resolutions** Hearings. Members will participate as follows:

- 05-01 Criteria for Viable Congregations – Mike Telleen and Jane Okubo
- 05-02 Congregation Property and Calls – Paul Bodin and Sarah Isaakson

05-03 Parent Churches – Dave Anderson and Moses Penumaka
05-04 Sexuality Task Force Report and Recommendation #1 - Bruce Lohse
05-05 Sexuality Task Force Report and Recommendation #2 – Linda Boston

A **motion was made** (Miller/Isakson) to amend the first Resolved of Resolution 05-02 *Congregation Property and Calls* to say: “Resolved, that the Synod Assembly express its will that the Synod Council approve, under the provisions of ELCA Constitution 9.71e, the request by any congregation to maintain title to its property (subject to the appropriate conditions and Synod Council’s approval), if that congregation has terminated its relationship to the ELCA to become an independent Lutheran congregation because of ELCA decisions concerning the blessing of same sex committed relationships and the ordination of persons living in such relationships; and be it further ...” Discussion followed regarding the possibility of this amendment being in violation of the ELCA constitution. Others thought that this amendment could cause people to stay in conversation. The vote was called and **this motion failed**. It was noted that an amendment might be coming from the Assembly floor on this same subject.

Discussion on the **Tri-Synod Ministry to Communities of African Descent Strategy** document followed. This document is presently being discussed by the Discipling Teams. It was agreed by the Council to wait for the Discipling Teams to report back to Council, and there is also the possibility of having one of the co-writers (Ray LeBlanc) speak to us in September. It was noted that this document may put more emphasis in strengthening established ministries and not on starting new missions.

NEW BUSINESS:

MT. CROSS: An in depth discussion of Mt. Cross took place at this time. Chuck Ruthroff reported that Mt. Cross’s total indebtedness amounts to \$462,686.42. The Lutheran Credit Union is willing to consolidate the camp’s loans with the Synod acting as guarantor. Because the camp is owned 50/50 by the ELCA and the LCMS, our half would be approximately \$170,000.

A letter from Bishop Mullen and District President, LCMS, Rev. Robert D. Newton, has been written to send to Greg Fry, President, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Northern California asking for three things; a comprehensive audit, a professional appraisal of all real property and copies of the monthly financial statements. These items are necessary in order for the Synod Council to take any action at the September 2005 meeting.

A short written report on Mt. Cross was provided by Karen Johnson who could not attend this Council meeting. Karl Smith gave a brief report, as he was directed to speak to the present treasurer/bookkeeper of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries on the Council’s behalf. He reviewed the profit and loss statement, balance sheet, a timetable for strategic planning and minutes. He finds the people in agreement that a large part of the problems are due to poor or inept financial planning. It appears that income is overstated and expenses are understated as compared to other years. The early positive cash flow may be due to not having the expense of a camp director. However, an interim camp director has now been engaged (Jerry Olstad).

A **motion was made and seconded** (Lohse/Teague) directing Chuck Ruthroff to organize loan documents with the Lutheran Credit Union with the understanding that we are willing to consider a loan guarantee of approximately \$170,000. A **motion to amend** was made and seconded (Miller/Hanusa) requiring the resignation of all ELCA board members presently serving on the Mt. Cross Board. Discussion continued. If the corporation dissolved, the proceeds would be split 50/50 with the LCMS *after* the first one million dollars, which the Sierra Pacific Synod would receive. We could only request the resignations of the ELCA members serving on the board, not the LCMS members. Is it possible to engage a consultant prior to the refinancing, in order to see what future options might exist? Can the new “redevelopment director” be given authority to accomplish some of these things? Vote on the **amendment failed**. Why does the Credit Union want a guarantee when the property is worth so much money? A comprehensive review of the camp is needed. The Synod Council has fiduciary responsibility for the camp. The proposed amount of incumbrance is equal to 15% of our annual budget. Linda Boston called the question. This original **motion carried**. (SC05.04.03)

A **motion was made and seconded** (Hanusa/P. Werfelmann) that the Council endorse and affirm the letter with its stipulations to Mt Cross from our Bishop and the LCMS District President.. **Motion carried. (SC05.04.04)**

The Synod Council plans to review the financial position of Mt. Cross at the September 2005 meeting, and discuss the comprehensive ministry review at the January 2006 meeting.

A resolution regarding the sale, assignment and endorsement for transfer of certificates representing stock, bonds, and/or other securities on behalf of the Synod, was presented by Chuck Ruthroff. He explained that the Synod has received a donation of approximately \$3,000 cash and \$180,000 stocks that need to be sold. A **motion was made and seconded** (Telleen/Burroughs) to authorize the Secretary to sign the resolution authorizing Bishop David Mullen and/or Chuck Ruthroff to sell, assign and endorse for transfer, certificates representing stocks, bonds, or utilities now registered or hereafter registered in the name of this Church. **Motion carried. (SC05.04.05)**

A **motion was made and seconded** (Lohse/Isaaks) to adopt the Consent Calendar *en bloc*.

Appointments:

- Word and Sacrament Discipling Team Chair, Ann Watkins (Our Savior/Lafayette), Witness and Service Discipling Team Chair, Dick Stahlke (Hope/El Sobrante), Leadership Discipling Team Chair, Todd Bertani (St. Mark/Fairfield),
- Tri Synod Campus Ministry Board Paul Werfelmann (Hope/Fresno)
- Chair of the Assembly Planning Committee ,Victor Berg-Haglund (Saron, Escalon).
- To Elder Care Alliance, Joan Stevenson, Our Savior's, Lafayette)
- Calls to ministry include Moses Penumaka (new mission start/Santa Clara), David Earnat (Hope, San Mateo), and Ginger Dumars (Mountain Lutheran Church/Groveland, Non-stipendiary).
- Changes to the governing documents of Bethlehem Lutheran Church/Auburn, Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church/South San Francisco, St. Stephen Lutheran Church/El Dorado Hills, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church/Fremont, St. Andrew's Evangelical Lutheran Church/San Mateo, and a name change from Christ the Victor Lutheran Church/Fairfax to Christ Lutheran Church of Fairfax.
- It was noted that one board position for PLTS and one position on the Assembly Planning Committee would not be filled at this meeting. **Motion carried. (SC05. 04.06)**

A **motion was made and seconded** (Smith/Boston) to accept the Auditor's Report as found in the 2005 Assembly Handbook Section 2, page 2.12. **Motion carried. (SC05.04.07)**

Vice President Moeller noted that he had given most of this information out through email. He emphasized the need for leadership development that many congregational president's had requested. This future training could be offered by the Word and Sacrament Discipling Team as their area relates to preparing for the baptismal life. It was noted that all three teams could collaborate in this area. Larry Moeller will communicate with the Bishop to decide which team might handle this and any other possible ideas.

A **motion was made and seconded** (Lohse/P. Werfelmann) to allow the sale of free trade coffee and coffee beans in the Hospitality Area during Assembly with all proceeds going to Lutheran World Federation. **Motion carried. (SC05.04.08)**

A **motion was made and seconded** (Burroughs/Hanusa) to allow the Global Mission Advocacy Team to sell at Assembly approximately 25 handcrafted items made by Rwandan women with the proceeds going back to the Rwanda women's cooperatives.. **Motion carried. (SC05.04.09)**

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND AWARENESS

An explanation of note 4 on the addendum to the Auditor's Report was given regarding the sale of property in San Rafael to Elder Care Alliance. The Bishop added that he and Chuck attended the groundbreaking, and that it's a wonderful example of a church meeting the community needs.

Greta Heinemeier commented that with the changing circumstances of Mt. Cross and with the new chairs of the Discipling Teams, perhaps we now need a separate Service Discipling Team.

Jane Okubo encouraged Council members to continue with their cultural awareness homework. Work to become more sensitive to the many cultures around us.

Outgoing Synod Council members Dave Anderson, Todd Bertani, Bruce Lohse, Moses Penumaka, Keith Teague, Evelyn Thomas and Paul Werfelmann were thanked for their service and dedication and will be further acknowledged at dinner following this meeting.

Pr. Moses Penumaka, as mission developer of a new mission start in Santa Clara, thanked the Council for its support and requested our continued prayers. He also thanked us for allowing him to be the first, and maybe the last, Indian pastor serving on Synod Council.

Larry Moeller read the actions of Churchwide regarding last year's resolution on Peace in Iraq. Meeting evaluations were requested to be filled out and left on the tables.

A motion was made and seconded (Lohse/Okubo) to adjourn. **Motion carried. (SC05.04.10)** The meeting ended at 5:30pm with a prayer. Dinner followed.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Werfelmann