

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

**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING  
June 25-26, 2010  
St Paul Lutheran Church  
701 S Pleasant St Lodi, CA**

**Members Present:** Rev. Adisa Armand-Miller, Rev Susan Birkelo, Rev Jeff Johnson, Rev Tom Beck, Rev José Luis La Torre, Merle Hanson, Mark Nelson, Jay Hines-Shah, Rev Newt Kerney, Ann Brannen, Perry Gray-Reneberg, Kay Valler, Lou Smith (Treasurer), Pat Cash (Secretary), Douglas Miller (Vice President), Bp. Mark Holmerud

**Absent:** Don Strauch, Gisela Daetz, Rev. Brian Malison, Kristina Garabedian, Mauri Hamilton

**Staff:** Rev. Jim Goldsmith, Rev Harvey Blomberg, Rev Nancy Feniuk Nelson, Laureen Sullivan, Karen Idler

**Guests:** Kent Madsen (Chair, Witness and Service DT), Nick Droge (Leadership DT), Cindi Eckert (Resource Center), Cindy Arnett (Women of the ELCA)

**CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm Doug Miller, Vice President

**Opening Devotions**—Pr Adisa Armand-Miller led the council in opening devotions related to “Be still and know that I am Lord.”

**Behavioral Covenant** was read by Merle Hanson

**Welcome and Introductions** Those in attendance were asked to introduce themselves, including their home congregation.

**Adoption of Agenda**

**SC10.06.33 MSC** (Armand-Miller/ Gray-Reneberg) to adopt the agenda as presented with additions/changes

**Approval of Minutes** –

**SC10.06.34 MSC** (Brannen/Kerney) to approve the minutes of the May meeting with the addition of the word “what” in item 7, page 1.

**Reports**

**Bishop Holmerud**

- The Assembly Planning Committee is meeting on June 26 also at St Paul’s to do evaluations and start planning for 2011. Mark Allen Powell will be keynote speaker. Pr. Jim Goldsmith will work with planning and Powell. Assembly will be held at the Hyatt in Burlingame, CA.
- Life Lutheran, Richmond: the property will revert to the Synod upon approval of their vote to leave the ELCA. This is due to the original agreement signed by Life when St James’ congregation closed
- One more congregation: Emanuel, Lodi has voted to leave the ELCA and affiliate with LCMC. The congregation in Oakhurst is affiliating with LCMC but cannot be dually affiliated and this issue will be addressed with the congregation. St Timothy’s, San Jose is affiliating with Lutheran CORE which is not yet a denomination, but should it become so then St. Timothy’s would need to decide between CORE and the ECLA for affiliation.
- Regarding the EOCM grants received by Sierra, Life and Chinese congregations, a decision about how to resolve the funding should be forthcoming.

- Gloria Dei, Sacramento is selling its property and has an escrow agreement with another congregation to purchase it. Gloria Dei will close. Trinity in Hollister is also closing, that property will be conveyed to the synod, and they will pay the note to EOCM. The Synod will manage the property and probably rent to another congregation.
- Conversations have been held with member/former members of Lord of Life/ Elk Grove, Shepherd of the Valley/Galt, Gloria Dei/ Sacramento and Trinity/Pleasanton about forming Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities.
- Looking at the LIFT (Living Into the Future Together) conversations, and as we see congregations closing and additional mission opportunities, discussion needs to be held regarding how we might reconfigure for ministry in this Synod
- Bishop Mark will be joining a group from the Southwest California Synod on their trip to El Salvador, July 31—August 11. Bp Gomez will be retiring and plans are to try to have the new bishop at the 2011 Assembly.
- July 25 at 4pm at St Mark's in San Francisco, a Rite of Reception will be held to receive onto the roster of the ELCA the Extraordinary Lutheran Ministry clergy. Pr Ross Merkel will be reinstated; Pastor Steve Sabin will be reinstated at the celebration of his 25th Anniversary of Ordination in his congregation. Attending the July 25th event will be former SPS Bishops Matthias and Mullen along with Bishop David H. Brauer-Rieke, Oregon Synod and Bishop Dean Nelson, SW California Synod
- Bishop's Mutual Ministry committee met and is looking at his job description. Plans are underway to set up a process for a Ministry Review for the Bishop every two years. Pr. Peg Schultz-Akerson is chair of the Bishop's review.

## 2. Bishop's Associate Nancy Feniuk-Nelson

- The actual physical move of the office is underway with the temporary Rio Linda site being the only actual site at this time. Permanent space in Sacramento has been located (2500 sq ft). Rental cost is still unknown. Late Fall would be likely move. Other staff are working via virtual offices until sites are available: Fresno hopefully by mid August; San Francisco, somewhere between Aug and Oct.
- Staff - Karen Idler and Laureen Sullivan have been a great asset. Outgoing staff received severance packages based on their time in service. With respect to questions regarding the financing of staff positions, last year the Council voted to move forward with staffing changes and commit funds. We continue to wait for the funding from Golden Gate. To be fully staffed, still needed are full time assistants to Bishop in Sacramento and San Francisco. Necessary support staff and book-keeper will be part time positions. It is possible that the positions may be listed and interviews held for both locations with start times to be determined.
- Still working with mobility and vacancies, first call, candidacy. It may be possible to place folks with fewer hours but push for full time benefits.

## 3. Assistants to the Bishop

### **Pr Jim Goldsmith:**

- Jim's written report summarized the congregations he has visited, those with whom he is working on the call process, work in the area of communications with the website and the e-newsletter and beginning work on synod stewardship plans, with a focus for stewardship ready for the September meeting of Council.
- Campus ministry: The previous, tri-synod board is dissolving and each synod will have its own board. A task force is meeting July 15 to plan for that. Information will come to the Synod Council for recommendation to the 2011 Synod Assembly with the necessary Constitutional changes.

### **Pr. Harvey Blomberg:**

- Harvey introduced and welcomed Kent Madsen, the new chair of Witness and Service DT

- New starts: David and Ariana Arands are the mission developers at American Canyon . Ordination is set for July 24. The Milwaukee area Bishop and Bishop Mark will be present. Their commissioning as mission developers will be held in American Canyon. Many thanks to Prs Fulton (Vallejo) and Hamilton and Webb (Napa) for their work and the work of their congregations in planting this new congregation.
- Ministry with the Asian community continues, including the Lahu community in the Fresno area and an Asian (and some S Asians as well) in the Cupertino area.
- He just returned from a meeting in Houston “Partners in Evangelical Worship”: how to use resources from worship to evangelize.
- At the end of July, he will attend the semiannual Mission Developer training.
- He attended two Synod Assemblies this year– ours and the Oregon Synod. The Oregon assembly featured San Francisco Episcopal priest, Sara Miles. She was an excellent presenter and the tone of the assembly was very good.

4. **Treasurer** Lou Smith has asked Linda Lownes, Finance Committee, to serve as an assistant treasurer for him. He explained the green pages report for the Council and indicated that the audited financials are now on the website as promised at Assembly.

## 5. Discipling Teams

### Leadership Nick Droge

- Two workshops were held at Assembly on sabbaticals and mutual ministry committees.
- Professional Leaders Conference- 2010- Gran LaBakken in Tahoe area...
- The Team did a survey with voting machines at Assembly about shared values around compensation and is using the results to inform a task force that will make recommendations about guidelines. The plan will be to have the Assembly voting members vote on the guidelines each year, which will be a continuing resolution. There are a number of factors to be considered and the “formula” created will include education, ‘first career’ experience, time in service, responsibilities and more. Full time service in a congregation is defined as 55 hours a week.

### Witness and Service Kent Madsen submitted a written report which included the following:

- A total of \$100,000 in Partnership Support Grants has been requested from EOCM for 5 congregations in the Synod.
- A regular ministry review will be held with Grace, Richmond to review the use of grants received
- The team requested some time to discuss and learn more about the Outreach Fund. Next meeting: September 9

Word and Sacrament Ann Watkins submitted a written report. The Team is in transition and will meet July 17 to discuss areas of focus for team members. The only event currently being planned is a Catechumenate Training in January 2011. The next training for Book of Faith will be set when the subgroup is fully staffed.

## 6. Other

- *Cindy Arnett*, SWO W-ELCA President, shared information about the women’s upcoming retreat at Asilomar in November and the 2011 National Gathering in Spokane. She also shared copies of the newsletter.
- *Cindi Eckert*, Resource Center-indicated that the LIFT task force requested information from the Center, and shared her response, indicating that the more support for the Center that LIFT hears, the better for the Centers around the country.

Unfinished Business - none

## New Business

### 1. Consent Calendar

**10.06.35 MSC** (Hines-Shah/ Hanson) to adopt the adopt the Consent Calendar as modified. (Perry Gray-Reneberg abstaining)

- Renew a Synod Call to Interim Ministry for 2 years to Pastors Stan Niemi and Cindy Beck
- Extend On Leave From Call status for Pastors Kirk Shipley and Stephen Simmonds
- Approve On Leave from Call status for Pastors Mary Sanders and Jeri Gray-Reneberg
- Appoint Ms Suzanne O’Dea as Synod Council member, Lay Female, District A for a two year competition of a vacated term.
- Approve the appointment of Linda Lownes to the Finance Committee (Term Expiring 2013)

1a. Fundraising Request: A request was made by Grace, Palo Alto to advertise the fundraiser for Dar al-Kalima College in Bethlehem in the Synod’s e-newsletter. Questions arose regarding what can and should be ‘advertised’ and where to draw the line. Is there any policy?

**MS** (Beck/Valler ) to approve the request. It was suggested that information on an opportunity to hear Rev Raheb could be mentioned.

**MSC** ( Hines-Shah/Kerney) to amend to provide general information on the event with a link to Grace, Palo Alto in the article

**SC10.06.36** Amended motion carried.

## 2. Executive Committee Election

The chair opened the floor to nominations for Council Executive Committee. Three persons are elected at large. It was indicated that balance between lay and clergy might be a consideration.

Nominees: Newt Kerney, Susan Birkelo, Ann Brannen, Tom Beck, Adisa Armand Miller,

**MSC** (Hanson/Hines-Shah) to close nominations.

**SC10.06.37** Written ballot resulted in ***Pastors Newt Kerney, Susan Berkelo and Adisa Armand Miller*** elected.

## 3. Account signatures

**SC10.06.38 MSC**(Valler/Nelson) to have Lou Smith and Doug Miller as signers on the Thrivent Account. Former signers to be deleted.

**SC10.06.39MSC** (Birkelo/Hines-Shah ) to add Doug Miller, Lou Smith, Pr. Jose Luis laTorre, and Kay Valler to the Credit Union account, deleting others except for Pat Cash, Bp Holmerud and Pr Nancy Nelson.

## 4. Resolution 03-0-10: Biennial Assembly Task Force

Note that the last whereas is faulty: other synods use different formats but do not have assemblies as such every two years. Pr.Tom Beck and Perry Gray– Reneberg volunteered to work on establishing a Task Force and gathering information, perhaps providing a survey for the District Gatherings

Have someone make determination Nominate to co-chair a team to ID members and develops process;

**SC10.06.40 MSC** (Valler/ Hanson) to have Beck and Gray-Reneberg co-chair a team to identify Task force members and bring reports to each Council meeting.

## 5. Policy Task Force: The Synod policies need to be updated.

**SC10.06.41 MSC** (Beck/Kerney) Secretary Pat Cash & DSO Laureen Sullivan to review policies and make recommendations to the Executive Committee.

## 6. Constitution Review Task Force– must report back at September meeting in order to be able to make any changes at the 20100 Assembly

Years 3 and 4 of Bp Mark’s term will focus on evaluating and possibly reorganizing the Synod. This includes looking at the number of Discipling Teams and reviewing the way districts, conferences and other aspects of the Synod function and how they might function better (like the LIFT process being done throughout the ELCA) The Constitution needs to be nimble and agile and allow for the Synod to adjust structure and operations without major time lapses as would be needed with constitutional changes. The proposal is to see how structure issues can be placed into Continuing resolutions for easy adjustment by Council. The consti-

tution needs to be able to assist with the question: What is God calling us to do and be in the future and what changes are needed to accomplish that.

**MS** (Valler/Smith) that Jay Hines-Shah and Jose Luis la Torre. **MSC** (Hines-Shah/Beck) to amend the motion by adding Secretary Cash to the group.

**SC10.06.42** Amended motion carried

### **6. Reception of ELM/reinstated Clergy**

**SC10.06.43 MSC** (Nelson/ Birkelo) to use \$5000 out of the budget to fund the July 25, 2010 Rite of Reception event at St Mark's,SF.

### **7. Council Assignments**

#### **Ministry Partner Liaison Assignments**

**PLTS-** Jay Hines-Shah

**LOM-** Gisela Daetz

**Candidacy-**Susan Birkelo

**Warner Trust-** Maurie Hamilton, Kristina Garabedian

**Assembly Planning-** Perry Gray-Reneberg, Suzanne O'Dea

**Mission Coalition (South Valley)-** Brian Malison

**Global Mission-** Jeff Johnson

**Racial and Ethnic Ministries-** Adisa Armand-Miller, Kay Valler, Mark Nelson

**LSS-** Ann Brannen

**ECA-**Newt Kerney, Don Strauch

**Campus Ministry-** Merle Hanson

**LAMN-**

**LOPP-** Jose Luis la Torre

**Council of Deans –** Tom Beck

#### **Conference Liaisons**

**Redwood-** Suzanne O Dea (Perry Gray-Reneberg)

**Gateway-**Perry Gray-Reneberg

**N. Mt Valley-** Perry Gray-Reneberg

**Foothill-**Kay Valler

**San Francisco-**Jeff Johnson

**S. Alameda-** Ann Brannen

**Santa Clara-** Gisela Daetz

**Sierra San Joaquin-**Merle Hanson,

**Central San Joaquin-** Merle Hanson

**Vineyard-**Pat Cash

**Delta Diablo-**Lou Smith

**Sierra Nevada-**Tom Beck

**Sacramento-** Don Strauch

**East Bay-** Jay Hines-Shah

**Peninsula-**

**Monterey Bay-** Mark Nelson

**Central Valley-**Merle Hanson,  
Kristina Garabedian

**South Valley-** Brian Malison

6:00pm

#### **Dinner**

7:00pm

**Prayer Partners** were selected by drawing

Kent Madsen & Brian Malison

Jim Goldsmith & Tom Beck

Mark Nelson & Doug Miller

Jeff Johnson & Lou Smith

Harvey Blomberg & Perry Gray-Reneberg

Margaret McClean & Kristina Garabedian

Suzanne O'Dea & Gisela Dietz

Pat Cash &

Kay Valler & Bp Mark

Maurie Hamilton & Adisa Armand-Miller

Ann Brannen & Jose Luis laTorre

Nancy Nelson & Newt Kerney

Merle Hanson & At Large Member

Jay Hines-Shah & Ann Watkins

Don Strauch & Susan Birkelo

**8. Assembly Budget Process**– The Bishop reported on sorting out the numerous items that fall under that budget and costs that do not reflect the actual assembly expenses themselves. Once that is accomplished a truer picture of what the Assembly itself costs can be determined.

**Evening Devotions-** Pr Adisa Armand- Miller

## SOCIAL TIME

9:00am Morning Devotions – Pr Adisa Armand-Miller  
Based on Luke 3 :7-18 ‘What shall we do.’

Pr. Mark Price of St Paul’s welcomed the Council and shared about the mission and ministry of the congregation: Youth Mission trips; VBS (300 at VBS); spring arts camp and fall sports camp’ plans for a drama camp for next July; an associate pastor is coming on board ; Lodi demographics are changing and St Paul’s is considering a Spanish language ministry and will want to call bilingual/bicultural minister.

9. **Certification process for Interim Ministers:** Pr Stan Niemi presented the proposed process for Intentional Intern Ministry:

- a. apply through the Office of the Bishop
- b. participate in a training process – initial course work and then field work during interims (like an intern)
- c. each new Interim minister will have a relationship with a supervisor,
- d. since part of the interim process for congregations is to reconnect with Bishops office/ synod, this also requires that interims attend conference/district events/ gatherings
- e. final evaluation

**SC10.06.44 MSC** (Beck/Kerney) that Council endorse the process as described by Stan Niemi

10. **Racial and Ethnic Ministries group presentation**– Pr. Susan Birkelo and Pr. Adisa Armand-Miller  
Adisa

Reference was made to the September 09 session with Pr Joe Barndt when discussion focused on the question: Where is the church and where are we as individuals in the area of anti-racism? How far had we come?? How had things changed? How are things better and how are they worse? The same questions were again posed. Responses included the following:

### Better

- More diverse hymnody and liturgy; more Spanish language from ELCA and women of the ELCA
- increase in people of color ;
- Freed in Christ-social statements;
- SPS has 5-7 new ethnic ministries vs suburban ...majority of funding goes to ethnic ministries;
- 20 years ago weren’t even having this conversation or if it did come up people were put in a place so they didn’t bring it up again;
- elections at last assembly resulted in a more diverse group of people;
- The climate is changing. There is a growing desire to learn about other cultures.

### Worse

- The least diverse place is the church and the most diverse is the community;
- synod staff is ‘monotone’
- ministry usually seems to lean more toward the ‘building and less toward than community;
- Tokenism still exists;
- Prevailing white culture stays the same;
- inclusivity = assimilation;

- The church hasn't made a commitment to the city;
- we have a service mentality toward global partners but have difficulty with the accompaniment model
- fear of the other still exists
- our silence in situations of white pride
- 22 years later 2%, not 10% of new members are people of color/primary language other than English

The Racial and Ethnic Ministries Working Group has three teams:

- R E strategies team: leadership development;
- Cultural Competence: increasing skills for cross cultural relationships/how to become more diverse
- Antiracism- transforming structures;

Nov 18-20 at Mt Cross is the next antiracism workshop. It was suggested that additional locations be considered

### **11. Congregations Voting to Leave the ELCA: Chinese Lutheran, San Francisco and Life Lutheran, Richmond**

Bp Mark reviewed once again the constitutional articles related to the process congregations wishing to disaffiliate with the ELCA must follow. Pr. Harvey Blomberg stated that EOCM will send letters to both congregations that their loans are due and payable..

**SC10.06.44MSC** (Gray-Reneberg/ Hanson) to approve the vote of Life Lutheran Church, Richmond CA to leave the ELCA

**SC10.06.45MSC** (Hines-Shah/Beck) to approve the vote of Chinese Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA to leave the ELCA

Grace Lutheran, Redway is a former **ALC** congregation so when it leaves if it doesn't affiliates with another Lutheran body the property could be assigned to the 5 voting against departure. It needs to be affiliated with another Lutheran body or it will come to the Synod Council for vote.

**12. At large Council position:** This position was vacated as a result of Pam Bertani's resignation.

**SC10.06.46 MSC** (Hines-Shah/Hanson) to conduct an e-votes on the candidate(s) to fill this position prior to next meeting

### **12. Items for Discussion**

1. Meeting Locations– discussion was held regarding the pros and cons of meeting in congregations with overnight accommodations in hotels vs. retreat centers where accommodations are provided on site with meeting rooms.

2. Assessment of Assembly – Kathryn Beck, chair of Assembly planning, joined the Council to receive information and comments. Items raised were

- Smoke free environments are important.
- Positive- inspirational, worship space but worship space needs to be addressed; separate focus from plenary
- Workshops: too many great ones; one thing missing was not enough communication regarding the workshops

- Need to define workshop areas that may be under-represented,. Inquire at Fall District assemblies and inquire RE: workshops leaders, topics, etc.
- Liked the more focused **in depth** theme; felt more unity/in-synch with one another.

3. Meeting Evaluation– would like to have electrical strips and wifi for computers and if possible, send materials by e-mail

Closing Devotions and Grace were led by Pr Adisa

Meeting adjourned 12:15pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Cash, Secretary

**Upcoming Dates**

**2010**

Sep 24-25	Synod Council at Mercy Center, Burlingame
Nov/Dec	SC + Finance Committee (& Ministry Partners) RE: 2012 Budget

**2011**

Jan 28-29	Synod Council
May 12	Synod Council--Burlingame
May 13-15	Synod Assembly--Burlingame
June 24-25	Synod Council
Sep 23-24	Synod Council