

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

**SYNOD COUNCIL AGENDA  
January 28-29, 2011  
Synod Office  
9985 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento**

**Present:** Pr. Jeff Johnson, Perry Gray-Reneberg, Pr. Newt Kerney, Pr. Adisa Armand Miller, Merle Hanson, Pr. Susan Birkelo, Kay Valler, Kristina Garabedian, Pr. Brian Malison, Larry Struve, Pr. Tom Beck, Pr. Jose Luis la Torre, Gisela Daetz, Don Strauch, Mark Nelson, Lou Smith (Treasurer), Pat Cash (Secretary), Doug Miller (Vice-President), Bp Mark Holmerud.

**Staff:** Bishop's Associate Pr Nancy Nelson, Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Jim Goldsmith, Administrative Assistant Karen Idler, DSO Lauren Sullivan

**Finance Committee Members:** Linda and Irv Lownes

**Discipling Team Chairs:** Ann Watkins (Word & Sacrament), Kent Madsen (Witness & Service)

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2011**

Vice President Doug Miller welcomed all present and called the meeting to order at 2:15pm

**Opening Devotions** were led by Pr. Brian Malison on the theme of spiritual leadership, reading from "Leadership Prayers" on 'Wisdom.' He also distributed a bibliography of resources on leadership

**SC11.01.01 MSC** ( Malison/Valler) to adopt the agenda with flexibility at the discretion of the chair.

**SC11.01.02 MSC** (Gray-Reneberg/ laTorre) to accept the December draft minutes with spelling corrections for 'Hanson', 'Adisa', and 'Birkelo' and the addition of Don Strauch as being present.

**SPS Policy on Outreach Fund** (97-002): The Task Force (Gisela Daetz, Rev. Jeff Johnson, Lou Smith [Treasurer], Rev. Jim Goldsmith [staff], Kent Madsen[Witness & Service DT]) presented the report and answered questions from the Council. It was decided to address each point separately.

Report and Recommendations of the Outreach Fund Task Force

The Outreach Fund Task Force recognizes that the preservation and management of the corpus(assets) of the FUND is a high priority, in recognition of the legacy of the gifts that have been placed in the FUND. In addition, the Task Force affirms the need for greater flexibility in the use of income from the FUND for mission and ministry.

Therefore, the Outreach Fund Task Force recommends that the Synod Council take the following action:

1. *Replace Policy 97-002 (Synod Outreach Fund) with a new policy that would establish the Sierra Pacific Synod Fund for New and Renewing Congregations and Innovative Ministries (the "FUND")*

- All liquid assets currently in the Outreach Fund will become part of the FUND.
- The FUND will hold and manage only liquid assets.
- FUND assets will be managed according to the SPS Investment Policy (under development)
- Under normal circumstances 5% of the value of the income-producing assets of the FUND shall be available annually for grants ("spend rate")
- For FY 2011-2012 and FY 2012-2013, the Task Force is agreeable to a spend rate of 10% of the value of the income-producing assets of the FUND, in addition to the previously authorized grants for support of the DSO position, to help alleviate anticipated SPS budget deficits.

Comment: Deviating from the 5% for the FY 11-12 and 12-13 to 10% would help with budget issues. It is the Task Force intent to return to 5%.

**MS** (Daetz/Johnson) to approve recommendation 1. It was suggested that a letter sent to congregations explaining the changes undertaken.

**SC 11.01.03 MSC** (Struve/Johnson) to amend the motion to clarify that a new policy is being developed to replace 97-002 with the understanding that bullet points 4 and 5 be put into practice for budget years 2011-2013

**SC 11.01.04** The amended motion carried.

2. *Create a Task Force to draft a Gift Acceptance Policy*

Such a policy will specify the types of gifts that may be accepted, the kinds of donor restrictions that will be considered, policies for retaining gifts in their original form vs. converting them to cash, and the final disposition of different types of gifts. The Synod Council will retain final approval of the disposition of gifts that are filtered through the Gift Acceptance Policy

Discussion: It will need to be determined by Council where the funds coming in will go under the gifts acceptance policy. If there is no specification from the donor then it is unrestricted, goes into the general fund and Council determines.

**SC11.01.05 MSC** (Johnson/Gray-Reneberg) to create the Gift Acceptance Policy Task.

The current Outreach Fund Task Force will prepare a draft Gift Acceptance Policy for Council review.

3. *Create a Grants Committee for New and Renewing Congregations and Innovative Ministries that will recommend distribution of the FUND's annual disbursements.*

- A Grants Policy and Procedures will need to be developed
- The Witness and Service Discipling team, other entities and innovative ministries will be able to apply annually for grants
- Beginning in FY 2013-2014 all funding for New and Renewing Congregations will be supplied by grants from the FUND.

- Multi-year grants are eligible for consideration.
- The Synod Council will approve grant distribution schedule(s) annually.

4. Rescind Policy 97-001 (Mission Endowment Fund)

**SC11.01.06 MSC** (Johnson/ Armand Miller) to adopt Item 4

5. Commit to sell the Stelling/Cupertino property (an option: offer Bethel, Cupertino “right of first refusal” to purchase at fair market value), with proceeds to remain in the FUND.

6. Commit to sell the Hollister property (an option: offer current lessee “right of first refusal” to purchase the property at fair market value), with proceeds to remain in the FUND.

7. Create a property management team to assist staff in managing real property that is no longer part of the FUND, or is received and retained at a later date

- Determine how the San Leandro property (Christ Oromo congregation) is to be held and managed, separate from the FUND.

**SC11.01.07 MSC** (Johnson/Beck) Approve item 7. This currently falls under Harvey’s purview.

The Nominating and Executive staff will work together to appoint members to the *Grants Committee*.

Since Harvey Blomberg has been involved with respect to the properties in items 5 & 6, there may be plans underway and no action will be taken on these at this point.

Doug Miller is to prepare an article for the weekly Synod Newsletter regarding the changes to this policy and plans for the use of the FUND. It was also suggested that a letter might be sent to congregations with an explanation of the changes.

### **Proposed Budget 2012-13** – presentation & discussion

A series of Sense motions was taken by Linda Lownes with regard to the following items in the budget: Anticipated Congregational Mission Support, ELCA Mission Support, Staff Salaries, proceeding with calls for additional FTE assistants to the Bishop. She. Lou Smith and Pr. Jim Goldsmith will prepare a revised budget proposal for discussion Saturday morning.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **LAMN Resolution**

**SC11.01.08 MSC** (Daetz/Johnson) to approve the resolution presented by Larry Struve on behalf of LAMN as follows:

Now therefore it is hereby Resolved by the Sierra Pacific Synod Council (Council) as follows:

1. The Council hereby expresses its strong support for LAMN and urges the LAMN Policy Council to maintain a viable advocacy ministry in the Stat if Nevada, notwithstanding the loss of grant funds from ELCA Churchwide, and

2. The Council further endorses the concept of fund raising appeals, subject to review and endorsement by the Council or the Bishop or other designated representative of the Synod, which are deemed appropriate and effective by the LAMN Council to supplement the token amount allocated to LAMN in the Synod budget, so that this ministry can continue beyond the 2011 Nevada Legislative Sessions; and
3. The Council urges the Synod Finance Committee and other leaders of the Synod to provide help, advice and assistance to LAMN, so that this important ministry of the church can continue in the State of Nevada,

**SC11.01.09 MSC** (Holmerud/Valler) to approve the 385 Club fundraiser through which individuals/groups will be invited to make donations in the amount of \$385 to support the ministry of LAMN.

1. **Resolution 10-03** - The Task Force assigned to fulfill the study as stated in this resolution presented their report to the Council (Attached to minutes). The Task Force will create a summary of this report for the Assembly report, due in March 13 at the latest.

**Warner Trust Fund**...40 grant requests have been received. The amount to be disbursed this year is \$8828. The Committee will consist of Pr Newt Kerney, Gisela Daetz and Kristina Garabedian. Council agreed to approve selections via an e-vote. In the future, copies of the grant requests will be disseminated to the Committee for review prior to the winter meeting of the Council.

**SC11.01.10 MSC** (Kerney/ Garabedian) to approve Pr Sarah Isakson as a member of the Mt Cross Board.

**SC11.01.11 MSC** (Beck/Struve) to approve Eric Jones as a member of the Mt Cross Retreat Board (4 abstentions)

**Compensation guidelines**...no report yet

**Written reports** were received from Pr Harvey Blomberg, Pr Jim Goldsmith , Leadership DT- Margaret McClean ,Witness & Service DT-Kent Madsen, Bp Mark Holmerud, Cindi Eckert , and Cindy Arnett, President

**SC11.01.12 MSC** ( Gray- Reneberg/Hanson) to adopt the Consent Calendar, minus the removals, as follows:

- a. Rev. Holly Feather, to *On Leave From Call*
- b. Rev. Edward O'Donnell, extension of Synod Call to Special Ministry at VITAS Innovative Hospice Care, Newark
- c. Bishop Emeritus David Mullen, roster change from On Leave From Call to Retired
- d. Approval of Constitution and By Law changes for St Paulus (San Francisco), Emanuel (Modesto), Mountain Lutheran (Groveland) and Immanuel (Alameda).

**SC11.01.13 MSC** (Malison/Kerney) to delete 'for an additional 6 months' and approve on leave from Call status for Pr Paul Werfelman

**SC11.01.14 MSC** (Daetz/Gray-Reneberg) to approve on leave from call status (only) for Pr Mark Howard.

**SC11.01.15 MSC** (Kerney, Valler) to approve on leave from call status for Pr Chris Warner Carey.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**SC11.01.16 MSC** (Daetz,/Valler) to accept with regret the Council resignation of Suzanne O'Dea. The Council will appoint a replacement at the May Council meeting.

Pr Brian Malison led the Council in Evening devotions and the meeting was recessed at 8:25pm

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2011**

9:00am Pr Brian Malison shared morning Devotions based upon a reading related to Integrity.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**SC11.01.17 MSC** (Hanson/ Daetz) to accept the December 2010 Financial report and place it on file for audit

**Proposed Budget**

**MS** (Valler/Armand Miller) to approve the proposed budget for presentation to the Assembly in May.

**SC11.01.18 MSC** (Struve/Daetz) to amend the motion to include presenting this budget using a slightly different format. The new format would move items shown as income to the end of the document budget and indicate that the monies are a source of funding to cover the expected expenditures. Lou Smith is to send Council members a copy of the proposed budget as it would appear for the Voting Members.

**SC11.01.19** The amended motion to approve the proposed 2011-12 budget for presentation to the 2011 Synod Assembly for adoption **carried** with one abstention

**SC11.01.20 MSC** (Smith/Daetz) to adopt the proposed spending plan for 2011-12  
It is necessary to identify those who will be planning the presentation of the budget for Assembly.

**SC11.01.21 MSC** (Smith/ Malison) to increase the salaries of the Bishop's staff with respect to current guidelines (another year of service step up) for fiscal year 2011-12  
The funds for this increase are already in the budget as approved by the Assembly in May 2010.

**Additional written reports-**

Bishop's Associate Pr. Nancy Nelson In addition to her written report, she distributed information about the position proposed and funded by Gloria Dei, Sacramento, CA at their closing. This included background information on Pr Cindy Beck and a description of the position to be funded/filled. It was proposed that Pr Beck be brought on half time and she would also take on a part time Interim position as well. The tentative start date would be March 1, 2011.

**SC11.01.22 MSC** (Daetz/Smith) to bring Pr. Cindy Beck on board effective March 1 in the position of Synodical Mission Advocate as proposed in the gift from Gloria Dei, Sacramento.

Word & Sacrament –Ann Watkins expressed the need for individuals to serve on this Discipling team. Present vacancies include a Dean, a representative from District C, and an At-large member. Someone is especially needed to work in the area of music and lay leadership. Suggestions should be e-mailed to Nominating Committee chair, Pr. Peggy White.

**Budget 2012-13** Additional discussion regarding budget issues. Concerns were expressed about using up the funds from Golden Gate for general operations. It is necessary to challenge individuals and congregations to step up their giving. How do we assist congregations in understanding that the benevolence gifts are supporting a vision for ministry? How do we move into a 3 year emphasis with respect to understanding the vision and the ministry of this Synod and offer options for increased stewardship? When will we be able to present some Stewardship materials/program support to congregations? It would be desirable to have the Council meeting to determine proposed budget fall at a time when the full year's information is available.

**SC11.01.23MSC** (Holmerud/Cash) to propose a change to by-law SB11.01.04b as follows

b. Develop and recommend to the Synod Council the operating budget of this synod, including estimates of income and expense for all the parts of this synod's ministry, and present its budget recommendation to the Council at least ~~three months~~ sixty days before the Synod Assembly that will consider the budget for adoption. Preparation of the Committee's recommendation to the Council shall include opportunities for participation by the conferences, by the institutions and agencies related to this synod, by the church-wide agencies, and by each organizational unit that will carry out parts of the program to be recommended to the Synod Assembly.

**Racial and Ethnic Ministries Presentation** Pr. Rubio Bowley

Pr Bowley reported on the work of the Racial and Ethnic Ministry Central Committee and the Working Groups

1. Antiracism group: Pastors Adisa Armand-Miller and Joe Barndt
2. Multicultural diversity/cultural competence group...Jane Okubo and Pr. Rod Seeger
3. Mission Strategies group Pastors Bill Ruth, Susan Birkelo and Rubio Bowley

Upcoming activities

Multicultural Workshop Planned April 1,2 at St Matthew, Walnut Creek, CA.

Antiracism event June 2-4 at Mt Cross

Mission Strategies group plans visits to congregations where there are persons of color and talking with the leadership there to help grow those racial and ethnic ministries and also to find ways to integrate their gifts and ministries as part of the Synod's mission.

Evaluations were distributed. Kristina Garabedian will compile these in the future and have Council members use an on-line survey format.

Closing Devotions were led by Pr Brian Malison, related to the 1 Corinthians reference to being clay jars. Leaders do not have the ability to be strong. We rely on Christ for strength.

**SB11.01.24 MSC** (Holmerud/Birkelo) to adjourn at 12:25pm.

### UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Feb 27, 2011	3:00pm Celebration of St Francis' returning to ELCA
April 1-2, 2011	Multicultural ministry Conference, April 1-2, 2011, St Matthew, Walnut Creek, CA
May 12, 2011	Synod Council Meeting- Hyatt, Burlingame, CA [ Snack: Kristina Garabedian; Devotions: Mark Nelson]
May 13-15, 2011	Synod Assembly- Hyatt, Burlingame, CA

### **Resolution 2010-03 REGARDING BIENNIAL SYNOD ASSEMBLIES**

**WHEREAS** the Sierra Pacific Synod has been facing increased financial challenges and stresses in recent years; and

**WHEREAS** the cost of annual synod assemblies adds additional financial stress to congregations already faced with making difficult choices in ministry funding; and

**WHEREAS** other synods of the ELCA appear able to meet biennially in assembly, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA direct its Synod Council to prepare a feasibility study identifying the underlying costs and benefits of a transition to a biennial (i.e. 'every-other-year') synod-assembly gathering pattern for presentation to the 2011 Synod Assembly; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that such study would include the clear identification of the necessary changes to synod finances, constitution, by-laws and standing rules needed in order to enable the 2011 Synod Assembly to approve such action.

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### **RESPONSE TO RESOLUTION 2010-03**

Following receipt of Resolution 2010-03 the Sierra Pacific Council at its June 25-26 2010 meeting began preparation of the following study to determine the feasibility of biennial assemblies together with identification of the necessary changes to synod finances, constitution, bylaws and standing rules. Council member Mr. Perry-Gray Reneberg was appointed together with Rev. Tom Beck to report back to the Synod Council with their findings. At a later meeting of the Synod Council, Mr. Don Strauch agreed to assist. This team has held conversations with Treasurer Lou Smith and Director of Synod Operation Laureen Sullivan. There have also been conversations with the Conference of Deans and at meetings of the Synod Council.

**We report these findings:**

In regard to the *underlying costs and benefits of a transition to a biennial (i.e. 'every-other-year') synod-assembly gathering pattern* we note the total assembly expenses have varied following the past four assemblies. \$111,262 was spent in Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Assembly at Reno; \$84,338 in FY2008-2009 Assembly at Fresno; \$80,934 in FY2007-2008 Assembly in Oakland, \$64,347 in FY2006-2007 Assembly in Reno.

Following a review with the chair of the Assembly Planning Committee we determined that costs to congregations included room registrations at approximately \$100 per person, per night; parking at \$15 per night, an estimated per diem expense of \$43.00 per day (with part of that per diem reduced when meals of a lunch and a dinner was provided through Synod Registration). Travel costs to congregations were estimated at .50 per mile. It seems obvious that congregations in the Redwood Conference and northern portion of the Northern Mountain Valley Conference consistently bear a larger travel expense to Synod Assemblies in Reno, Sacramento, the Bay Area or Fresno. Congregations also carry the expenses for clergy, lay and perhaps also visitor registration.

With regard to the financial impact of the Sierra Pacific Synod's transition to a biennial assembly, we expect the above costs to the Synod and to Congregations of the synod to be reduced by half over a two year span. A biennial assembly would cost the Synod and the Congregations less.

With regard to *the necessary changes to synod finances, constitution, by-laws and standing rules needed in order to enable the 2011 Synod Assembly to approve such action*; we find several actions would need to be taken. These include adjustments to the way in which elections are held, particularly when the present rules expect a three year cycle; changes in the scheduling of conference assemblies; changes in the manner in which fund appeals are made; and various delays to actions of the Synod such as the enactment of amendments to the bylaws; and the process of creating a two year budget. We find the Synod constitution has ten items which would demand amendments; the Synod bylaws have six items; and there are three policies which would need to be changed. We observe should a transition to a biennial assembly take place the work of the Synod between assemblies would be entrusted to the Synod Council for a two year period rather than a one year period.

#### **We offer an interpretation:**

A change to biennial assemblies from the present practice of holding a yearly assembly for the Sierra Pacific Synod can be done. It would effect a cost savings to the Synod budget and a cost saving to congregations. While it may appear that a change to biennial assembly is a simple means to reduce cost it should be noted that there are implications to this proposed change which the 2011 assembly should consider.

The 27 items requiring possible change impact the Synod's life. Considerable energy will need to be spent to revise the Synod's constitution and Policies. These revisions are often to items that have intrinsic value to the Synod. Is it well for the Synod Council to extend its leadership for a two year term without reporting to the Synod as a whole? Does it serve the Synod to alter its election cycles? Will the voice of the Synod be diminished by refraining from meeting every year and not have yearly opportunity to neither make resolutions for Church Wide assembly nor hear yearly reports from its officers and discipling teams?

As noted in the Synod Profile of 2008, a sense of disconnection, weak communication, and lacking unity among congregations of the Synod was reported. We therefore ask, "How will a change to biennial Synod Assemblies address these concerns?"

While as some note the work of the assembly can be done through electronic means, some note the face-to-face meeting of members of the Synod has a certain benefit. We ask, "Would a biennial assembly pattern serve to reduce this benefit to the result of creating a greater sense of separation by the congregations of the Sierra Pacific Synod?"

Together with these questions, we await ruling and implementation of the ELCA Church Wide assembly who may begin a three year cycle. As a Synod of the ELCA we will need to match our manner of business to that of the ELCA. We note that when the ELCA pattern is set, the Sierra Pacific Synod must revisit the question asked by Synod Resolution 2010-03.

The Synod Council extends its thanks to the framers of Resolution 2010-03 and to the Assembly in 2010. There is a right and proper interest in ministry and in stewardship shown by this action. After study we observe that implementing Resolution 2010-03 would be more than a mechanical process. The questions raised in this interpretation need to be raised, discussed and resolved before action is taken to move the Sierra Pacific Synod from a yearly to biennial assembly. In addition, it seems prudent to await the proposed future change by the ELCA Church Wide Assembly to triennial assemblies before changes to the Sierra Pacific Synod's constitution, bylaws and policies.

This report is submitted following review at the Synod Council Meeting of January 28-29 by council members Mr. Perry Gray-Reneberg, Rev. Tom Beck and Mr. Don Strauch.