



**NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD  
2006 ASSEMBLY MINUTES  
PLENARY SESSION ONE**

Wachovia Arena  
Wilkes-Barre, PA  
Friday, May 19, 2006  
1:00 PM

The Synod Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod for 2006 took place May 19 -20, at the Wachovia Arena in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The theme of the Assembly was "Action: Sharing the Story of God's Love."

Bishop David Strobel led the Order for the Opening of a Synod Assembly. He declared that a quorum was present.

Bishop Strobel called attention to the Pulpiters from St. Paul, Fountain Hill, to give a presentation on the Rules of Procedure as printed in the Bulletin of Reports. He reminded the Assembly that those eligible to vote were seated by Mission District. He thanked the local arrangements committee for their good work. The bishop acknowledged leaders from our full communion partners and reminded the Assembly that they would have voice and vote.

Bishop Strobel then called upon the Secretary, Barbara Taylor, who presented the following resolution:

**Resolved, that the 2006 Synod Assembly program  
(as distributed) be adopted.**

Since this motion came from the Synod Council, it needed no second. Pastor John Pearson asked to amend the agenda to include a Report from the Constitution Committee. It will be added to the agenda for Saturday at 9 AM. The resolution was adopted unanimously by a voice vote. The Secretary stated that copies of the 2005 Minutes Book had been corrected and certified by the Bishop and the Secretary, and prepared for deposit in the archives.

The Bishop pointed out the next item on the agenda, the report of the Nominating Committee. The list of nominees and biographical information appears on the pages that were distributed.

Bishop Strobel announced that anyone intending to make a nomination from the floor for any position must see Pastor Catherine Ziel to obtain a biographical information form at the time the nomination is made. Those forms must be returned to the ushers' station no later than 2:15 PM.

The Bishop announced that the floor was open for nominations. The following names were placed in nomination:

- AiM Marlane Druckenmiller --- Churchwide Assembly
- Pastor Carl Shankweiler – Synod Council
- Nancy Bleam – Synod Council

The Bishop declared nominations closed.

Bishop Strobel pointed out that several nominees were running unopposed. It was moved and seconded to have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for those nominees. He called for the vote and declared the following people elected:

- Synod Council: Donald F. Smith, Jr., Nancy Bleam, Christie Kaufman
- Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia Board: Jack Bradt
- Churchwide Assembly Voting Members: John P. Fritch, Bruce D. MacLaiughlin, Gregory W. Frey, Lee Becker, Edward Vermillion, Charles Rush, Lois Sterling, Joan Moyer, Beth Titus, Maritza Torres Dolich

Vice President Kinney took the chair. She pointed out the report of the Bishop beginning on page 5 of the Bulletin and asked for questions.

The Bishop called attention to the Report of the Vice President on page 8 of the Bulletin and of the Synod Council on pages 11-18 and asked for questions. Vice President Kinney gave a brief oral report on her work and on the work of the Synod Council. She noted that the only action item in the Synod Council report to come before the Assembly is the adoption of the 2007 program proposal, found on pages 52-53.

Bishop Strobel called on Secretary Taylor for the report of the Secretary. She stated that her report was on pages 8-11 and 57 and asked that errors or omissions be brought to her attention so any necessary corrections could be made.

Bishop Strobel called forward Treasurer David Hinrichs, who presented the Treasurer's Report.

The Bishop reminded the Assembly that we will see anniversary videos from three of the pastors celebrating their fiftieth anniversary of ordination. Pastor Helmut Kaffine's video was shown.

The Bishop called upon Pastor David Rowe to present the first report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel. He invited committee members to stand.

The Bishop stated that at the 2005 Assembly the following rule of procedure was adopted, to take effect this year:

Resolutions received by the Committee of Reference and Counsel less than one week before the opening of the Synod Assembly will be brought before the Assembly to decide whether or not they should be considered. Each resolution will be considered only if the Assembly votes by a simple majority to consider it.

If anyone wishes to submit a resolution to be considered by the Assembly, it must be submitted to the committee by the end of the break today, at 3 PM. Pastor Rowe presented the first report of the committee.

#### **I. The committee received the following resolution from Pastor Peter Bredlau**

**WHEREAS**, Lutheran Campus Ministry of the ELCA will celebrate its centennial anniversary in the United States during 2007, the first campus pastor, Howard Gold, having been called to the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1907; and

**WHEREAS**, Lutheran Campus Ministry, among its many contributions to the church, is a primary arena for identifying, encouraging, and equipping future leaders of the church, including those who will enter rostered leadership and those who will serve congregations as council members, officers and ministry leaders, and teachers; and

**WHEREAS**, Lutheran Campus Ministry is an integral mission of our church to the young adult population on campus, dependent primarily upon funding from synods and the national church, and supplemented by contributions from alumni and friends; and

**WHEREAS**, the core funding of campus ministry provided by the congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the ELCA is generous but unable to keep up with the basic needs of campus ministries, and

**WHEREAS**, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod is home to 27 campus ministries at public and private schools; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod designate 2007 for special recognition and celebration of Lutheran Campus Ministry within the synod; and be it further,

**RESOLVED** that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, at its 2007 Assembly, celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lutheran Campus Ministry, including, but not limited to:

- A recognition of our campus ministries during the opening worship service
- A session dedicated to campus ministry during a workshop time
- A recognition of the Synod's partnership with Project Connect, a program to reach college-aged students for rostered ministry,

with the Campus Ministry Affinity Group from the synod providing coordination and resources for these and other activities that may be deemed appropriate; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that a special offering - designated for Lutheran Campus Ministry - be received at the 2007 Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly with each congregation of the synod encouraged to contribute at least \$ 100 as a thank offering to ensure the next century of Lutheran Campus Ministry.

The committee recommended adoption. The resolution was adopted.

Ben Larson gave a presentation on Bear Creek Camp and the program planned for the evening. A video was shown.

Nancy Bleam and members of the Worship and Spirituality Ministry Team presented their report in song.

Bishop Strobel announced the annual Assembly offering for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. The ushers received the offering.

A video was shown on the Sea Container Project and the community that received it. The Bishop thanked all who participated in the project.

Dean John Fritch presented to the Assembly the rostered leaders celebrating major anniversaries this year and invited them forward to receive a round of applause.

#### Twenty-fifth Anniversary

- |                  |                     |                  |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| • Hannelore Blew | • Lynda Haring      | • Robert Reier   |
| • James Bowers   | • John Hazel        | • David Rowe     |
| • James Covert   | • John Houck        | • Philip Smith   |
| • Jerel Gade     | • Michael Krentz    | • Gary Walbert   |
| • Mary Gade      | • Bruce MacLaughlin | • Catherine Ziel |
| • Joy Gerhart    | • Cheryl Meinschein |                  |

#### Fortieth Anniversary

- |                    |                 |                   |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| • Rudolph David    | • Gilbert Furst | • George Zacharda |
| • Frederick Fisher | • Walter Horn   |                   |

#### Fiftieth Anniversary

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| • Helmut Kaffine   | • Frank Sherman |
| • Victor Kroninger | • Richard Wolf  |

### Sixty-fifth Anniversary

- Mark Lauchnor

Another Bear Creek Camp video was shown, and a 15 minute break followed.

Pastor Martha Sipe presented the first report of the Elections Committee. Voting took place for Synod Council and for Churchwide Assembly voting members.

The Bishop introduced Phillip H. Harris, General Counsel of the ELCA and our ELCA representative for this Assembly. He presented remarks and shared the ELCA video.

Bishop Strobel announced that gifts of \$2,818.42 were received for the ELCA Hunger Appeal in the special offering this morning.

The fiftieth anniversary video from Pastor Vic Kroninger was shown.

Pastor David Rowe presented the second report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel. No resolutions were received since the opening of the Assembly.

**II. The committee received the following resolution from Pr. Hartland. H. Gifford, Judith J. Gifford, Bruce Hill, Diana J. Hill, AiM, Pr. Bruce D. MacLaughlin, Dorothea A. MacLaughlin, Karen S. Matthias-Long, AiM, Kenneth Miller, Ruth T. Miller, AiM, Pr. Daniel A. Shook, and Pr. Jay Wetzel.**

WHEREAS to affirm one's baptism is "to strive for justice and peace in all the earth" (Lutheran Book of Worship, pg. 201); and

WHEREAS Micah 6:8 states: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (NRSV); and

WHEREAS Jesus said, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40, CEV); and

WHEREAS our father in the faith, Martin Luther, maintained that civil authority was ordained by God and encouraged us to live out our God-given vocation in the world; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that this assembly call upon every member and every congregation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to join with all Christians in taking up political responsibility as their faith and conscience demand; and to work faithfully, with all persons of good will, as God has been faithful to us in Christ to seek human well-being on earth; and be it further

RESOLVED that every member and every congregation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be encouraged to learn the process by which our local, state, and federal governments operate; and determine how we can be involved in decision making in order to participate in the political process; and be it further

RESOLVED that every member of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod be urged to exercise his or her electoral privilege as a follower of Christ.

The committee recommended adoption. The resolution was adopted.

The Bishop called on Associate in Ministry Kathy Schaeffer, who presented the report of the Leadership Development Ministry Team in conjunction with team members.

Dr. Philip Krey, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, addressed the Assembly.

Synod Council member Ron Mordosky introduced the Mission Interpreter program.

Pastor Paul Braden presented the Report of the Compensation Task Force.

### **2007 MINIMUM COMPENSATION GUIDELINES**

At the request of the 1983 convention of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, LCA, the former Professional Development Committee created annual "*Minimum Base Salary Guidelines*" for pastors and lay professional leaders. The following guidelines are recommended by the Leadership Development Team for the approval of the 2005 Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA.

#### **PARISH PASTORS 2007 Minimum Salary Guidelines**

**Resolved that:**

**1) The 2007 *minimum* base salary for pastors in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA be in agreement with the following guidelines:**

| <b>Years of service<br/>In ordained<br/>Ministry</b> | <b>Minimum<br/>Salary<br/>(Parsonage<br/>Provided)<br/>\$</b> | <b>Minimum<br/>Salary<br/>(including Housing<br/>Allowance)<br/>\$</b> |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Newly ordained</b>                                | 25,000  | 39,000   |
| <b>One year</b>                                      | 25,550  | 39,550   |
| <b>Two years</b>                                     | 26,100  | 40,100   |
| <b>Three years</b>                                   | 26,650  | 40,650   |
| <b>Four years</b>                                    | 27,200  | 41,200   |
| <b>Five years</b>                                    | 27,750  | 41,750   |
| <b>Six years</b>                                     | 28,300  | 42,300   |
| <b>Seven years</b>                                   | 28,850  | 42,850   |
| <b>Eight years</b>                                   | 29,400  | 43,400   |
| <b>Nine years</b>                                    | 29,950  | 43,950   |
| <b>Ten years</b>                                     | 30,500  | 44,500   |
| <b>Eleven years</b>                                  | 31,050  | 45,050   |
| <b>Twelve years</b>                                  | 31,600  | 45,600   |
| <b>Thirteen years</b>                                | 32,150  | 46,150   |
| <b>Fourteen years</b>                                | 32,700  | 46,700   |
| <b>Fifteen years</b>                                 | 33,250  | 47,250   |
| <b>Sixteen years</b>                                 | 33,800  | 47,800   |
| <b>Seventeen years</b>                               | 34,350  | 48,350   |
| <b>Eighteen years</b>                                | 34,900  | 48,900   |
| <b>Nineteen years</b>                                | 35,450  | 49,450   |
| <b>Twenty years</b>                                  | 36,000  | 50,000   |

The Leadership Development Team plans to eliminate the grid concept altogether and simply establish a minimum base salary for newly ordained pastors. That figure would be adjusted for other pastors based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions. This year the minimum recommended is \$39,000, with a deduction of \$14,000 if housing is provided. Our goal is to increase the minimum to \$45,000 as soon as possible.

For this year the Team has again provided a grid; however, all it does is to add \$550 per year to the minimum base salary for a newly ordained pastor. The same can be extended for pastors with more than 20 years experience.

2) It is the responsibility of each congregation to provide housing for its pastor(s). This may be accomplished in either of two ways:

a) Housing Allowance. A portion of the pastor's salary may be designated as a housing allowance. This amount will vary, depending upon location and the needs of the pastor. Congregations and pastors should check current tax laws in establishing this figure. This amount should be established before the beginning of each year by a resolution of the Congregation Council or the listing of an amount in the congregation's budget.

b) Parsonage. This is free use of a church-owned house, including utilities. A portion of the pastor's base salary may be set aside for furnishings and other housing expenses according to the IRS code. An annual equity allowance of a minimum of 3%-5% of salary is recommended for all parsonage situations.

3) Congregations should remember that the figures in the grid are *minimum*. Congregations are encouraged to exceed these minimum guidelines. Additional compensation should be provided based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions.

4) Each congregation shall establish a Mutual Ministry Committee to facilitate the discussion by which these criteria are evaluated (as well as for carrying out the other functions of mutual ministry).

5) A congregation that fails to meet the synodical guidelines shall submit a report to the bishop on a form to be provided, detailing the reasons why these minimums are not being met and the steps that will be taken to establish these minimums as soon as possible.

1) A **Social Security Allowance** equal to one half of the pastor's social security liability. This allowance is taxable for income tax purposes. For 2006, the Social Security liability is expected to be equal to 15.3% of the combined base salary and housing provision. (Parsonages are subject to the fair rental value of the house for tax purposes).

2) An **Automobile Allowance** equal to IRS guidelines per mile for business travel. Pastors reimbursed for auto expense on a per mile basis do not have to report this allowance as income if they submit written mileage to the calling institution.

3) **Continuing Education** provisions including a congregation/agency providing at least \$550 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time (not vacation), and the pastor providing at least \$250. It is recommended that this money be deposited in the synod's PACE program. (Programs that include Sundays must be negotiated with the congregation council.) It is encouraged that congregations/agencies and pastors work towards a partnership goal of \$1,000.

4) Four full weeks of **vacation** time annually.

5) One to two **days off** per week, and, at least once a month, two consecutive days off.

6) For the purposes of **Worker's Compensation**, pastors are considered to be employees of the congregation and therefore should be included in Worker's Compensation insurance.

7) **Health and pension benefits** according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision.

8) Congregations may also reimburse the pastor(s) for **professional expenses** such as dues, entertainment, supplies, and malpractice insurance.

**PASTORS WITH PART TIME CALLS**

Pastors with part time calls should be compensated on a prorated basis in line with the above guidelines, in consultation with the Office of the Bishop. Vacation and continuing education provisions should be prorated, as well. Pension and health benefits are according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision.

**ROSTERED LAY PROFESSIONALS  
2007 Minimum Salary Guidelines**

**Resolved that:**

**1) The 2007 *minimum* salary for rostered lay professionals in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA be in agreement with the following guidelines:**

| <b>Years of service<br/>in Rostered<br/>Ministry</b> | <b>Minimum Salary<br/>(Bachelor's<br/>Degree)<br/>\$</b> | <b>Minimum Salary<br/>(Master's<br/>Degree)<br/>\$</b> |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Newly Commissioned</b>                            | 27,500   | 30,000   |
| <b>One year</b>                                      | 28,050   | 30,550   |
| <b>Two years</b>                                     | 28,600   | 31,100   |
| <b>Three years</b>                                   | 29,150   | 31,650   |
| <b>Four years</b>                                    | 29,700   | 32,200   |
| <b>Five years</b>                                    | 30,250   | 32,750   |
| <b>Six years</b>                                     | 30,800   | 33,300   |
| <b>Seven years</b>                                   | 31,350   | 33,850   |
| <b>Eight years</b>                                   | 31,900   | 34,400   |
| <b>Nine years</b>                                    | 32,450   | 34,950   |
| <b>Ten years</b>                                     | 33,000   | 35,500   |
| <b>Eleven years</b>                                  | 33,550   | 36,050   |
| <b>Twelve years</b>                                  | 34,100   | 36,600   |
| <b>Thirteen years</b>                                | 34,650   | 37,150   |
| <b>Fourteen years</b>                                | 35,200   | 37,700   |
| <b>Fifteen years</b>                                 | 35,750   | 38,250   |

The Leadership Development Team plans to eliminate the grid concept altogether and simply establish a minimum base hourly wage for newly rostered lay professionals. That figure would be adjusted for others based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions.

This year the minimum recommended is \$27,500 with a bachelor's degree. This represents approximately \$13.20 per hour for full time. Our goal is to increase this to \$15.00 per hour as soon as possible.

For this year the Team has again provided a grid; however, all it does is to add \$550 per year to the minimum base salary for a newly rostered lay professional. The same can be extended those with more than 15 years experience.

2) Congregations should remember that the figures in the grid are *minimum*. Congregations are encouraged to exceed these minimum guidelines. Additional compensation should be provided based on criteria such as continuing education, special skills, responsibilities, merit, and local conditions.

3) Each congregation shall establish a Mutual Ministry Committee to facilitate the discussion by which these criteria are evaluated (as well as for carrying out the other functions of mutual ministry).

4) A congregation that fails to meet the synodical guidelines shall submit a report to the bishop on a form to be provided, detailing the reasons why these minimums are not being met and the steps that will be taken to establish these minimums as soon as possible.

The following *minimum* benefits should be provided in addition to salary:

1) An **Automobile Allowance** equal to IRS guidelines per mile for business travel. Rostered lay leaders reimbursed for auto expense on a per mile basis do not have to report this allowance as income if they submit written mileage to the calling institution.

2) **Continuing Education** provisions including a congregation/agency providing at least \$550 for tuition, books, etc., and two weeks of time (not vacation), and the leader providing at least \$250. It is recommended that this money be deposited in the synod's PACE program. (Programs that include Sundays must be negotiated with the congregation council.) It is encouraged that congregations/agencies and rostered lay professional leaders work towards a partnership goal of \$1,000.

3) Four full weeks of **vacation** time annually.

4) One to two **days off** per week, and, at least once a month, two consecutive days off.

5) For the purposes of **Worker's Compensation**, rostered lay professional leaders are considered to be employees of the congregation and therefore should be included in Worker's Compensation insurance.

6) **Health and pension benefits** according to the guidelines of the ELCA, including a 12% pension provision.

7) Congregations may also reimburse the lay professional leader(s) for **professional expenses** such as dues, entertainment, supplies, and malpractice insurance.

Bishop Strobel introduced Roberto Stein of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina and Uruguay, and his wife Graciella.

The Bishop introduced Father Philip Altavilla, the ecumenical officer for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Scranton. He brought greetings from Bishop Martino.

Judy Gifford and the planning team for the LIFT event presented a report.

A third Bear Creek Camp video was shown.

The Bishop reminded the Assembly that worship would take place around the camp fire.

Secretary Taylor made several announcements.