



**Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
2008 Assembly Minutes
Plenary Session Four**

Split Rock Lodge, Lake Harmony PA
Friday, May 30, 2008
7:15 PM

Bishop David Strobel called the session to order. Fran Ferrari presented the opening prayer.

Pastor Bill Zimmerman was then called upon to present the Report of the Credentials Committee. There were 707 registered voting members.

Pastor Bender Schwich led the Assembly in prayer. The third ballot for bishop was distributed, votes were cast, and she declared the ballot closed.

Bishop Strobel introduced Pastor Günther Rudolph, superintendent of the Evangelische-Lutherische Kirchenbezirk Löbau-Zittau (Löbau Zittau District) of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland. He invited him to bring greetings to the assembly.

The Bishop recognized Bishop Claire Burkat from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

Bishop Strobel called Pastor Gary Harke, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, to the podium. He brought greetings to the Assembly.

Kathy Schaeffer and the Leadership Development Ministry Team presented their report.

Pastor Carl Schmoyer's 50th anniversary video was shown.

Bishop Strobel asked if there would be any objection to extending this session ten minutes since we were running late. There were no objections.

The Bishop invited Pastor Bender Schwich to the podium. She responded to the questions that had been submitted to her.

Pastor Herb Gifford presented the second report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

VI. The following resolution was received from Pr. Paul Buzzard

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2009 assembly of the ELCA, requesting that the process be started in making any needed constitutional,

bylaw, and policy changes that would grant voice and vote at synod assemblies to Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers, under appointment by their bishops.

The committee proposes the following substitution:

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod request the ELCA Vocation and Education Program Unit to make a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council regarding the possibility of granting voice and vote at synod assemblies to Synodically Authorized Lay Ministers; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly direct the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral.

The committee recommended adoption. The resolution was adopted.

- I. **The following resolution was received from Pr. Jira Albers; Pr. Kathy Ash-Flashner; Doris Binner, AiM; Marlane Druckenmiller, AiM; Pr. Chris Eichorn; Elizabeth Elterich, AiM; Karen Matthias-Long, AiM; Ruth T. Miller, AiM; Pr. Wes Poole; Leesa Wimmer, AiM; and Pr. Bill Zimmermann.**

WHEREAS, all the baptized when they affirm their baptism promise "to hear the Word of God" and "to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed"; and

WHEREAS, all parents and sponsors covenant to place the Holy Scriptures in the hands of their children and nurture them in faith and prayer; and

WHEREAS, rostered leaders (pastors, Associates in Ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers) vow to be diligent in their study of the Holy Scriptures; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has begun a Book of Faith Initiative inviting everyone to join the conversation, to make a commitment, and to become part of the initiative (see <http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith>); therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we become a "Book of Faith" synod, committing ourselves to live in and from the Word of God in all our meetings, assemblies and events, so that as we regularly and increasingly hear, read, study, share and are engaged by God's Word, we lead by example in faithful service and holy living; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop of our synod—who "as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church"—in coordination with the synod advocate lead this initiative personally and through collaborative programmatic work with congregations of the synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all voting members of this synod assembly covenant together to begin a regular practice of Bible study and prayer, gathering with others in their congregation and/or community to speak and hear the Word from one another; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we celebrate and continue to support and strengthen those places where Scripture is already taught and engaged, such as Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Men in Mission Bible studies, camping and campus ministries, lay schools, congregation councils, Sunday school and other educational groups, clusters, and mission districts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage all congregations to become a 'Book of Faith' congregation, which will find expression by

- exploring new opportunities for engaging the Bible,
- sending sufficient numbers of members to synod events for training as Bible study leaders,
- including biblical study as an integral part of all meetings and groups,

in order to become more fluent in the first language of faith—the language of Scripture—that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered, and sent by the Word.

The committee recommended adoption. The resolution was adopted.

The Witness and Service Team video was shown.

Bishop Strobel called Pastor Bender Schwich to assume the chair. She called on Vice President Kinney to lead the assembly in prayer.

Mr. Ed Cool presented the report of the third ballot for bishop.

Number of votes cast:	663
Number of illegal votes:	0
Number of legal votes:	663
Number needed to elect:	443

The number of votes received by each candidate were: Charles H. Grube, 55; William W. Fairchild, 66; Wayne A. Matthias-Long, 81; Fred S. Opalinski, 95; Mary W. Gade, 97; Samuel R. Zeiser, 124; and Carl D. Shankweiler, 145.

There being no election, the three names receiving the highest number of votes on the third ballot will appear on the fourth ballot as follows: Carl D. Shankweiler, Samuel R. Zeiser, and Mary W. Gade.

Bishop Strobel announced that the three candidates would present ten-minute Bible studies on Saturday morning.

Pastor Ziel made announcements. \$6,723 was received in the offering for World Hunger.

Dawn Baxter proposed an amendment to add twenty minutes at the last ballot to ask the final two candidates two questions. The amendment was not adopted.

The session closed with the service of Compline. Following worship, a reception was held, honoring Bishop and Doris Strobel and all of the synod staff for their ministry in the last twelve years. The reception was funded in part by Thrivent.