

**2003 ASSEMBLY MINUTES
PLENARY SESSION FOUR**

Saturday, May 17, 2003
2 PM

Bishop David Strobel called the session to order. He reminded members of the assembly to be sure to complete and return evaluation forms.

Pastor Dave Rowe presented the final report of the Committee of Reference and Counsel.

IV. The committee recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod has chosen in 2003 to take a ride on the Reading, gathering in this city to deliberate and celebrate, sing and pray for the healing of the world, and

WHEREAS, this journey would not be possible without the efforts of many people, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we give thanks for those who have labored with us and for us:

- **Our bishop, David R. Strobel, who exhibited such agility on the field, in the rink, and adjusting the agenda.**
- **Bishop Robert Berg, who brought us gifts of his synod's partnership, his witness of faith, and Wisconsin's finest cowpies, along with the challenge to join his granddaughter Emma in telling people about Jesus.**
- **Bishop Volker Kress, Superintendent Günter Rudolph, and Señor Roberto Stein, whose presence here makes real for us the breadth and depth of the Church of Christ.**
- **Dale Newhart, our retiring treasurer, who leaves big shoes to fill, and Arlen Zerbe, our newly-elected treasurer, who's big enough to fill them.**
- **Pastors Kurt Garbe and Carl Filer, who taught us more about Noah and Abraham than scripture ever told us, and challenged us to become closer partners with our newest companion synod, the South Central Diocese of Tanzania.**
- **The members of the Ministry Teams, committees, task groups and agencies, who showed us the scope of the ministry that is the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.**
- **The worship leaders who have given us songs to sing and prayers to offer as we lifted our hearts to God.**
- **The many volunteers from the West Berks Mission District who welcomed us to Reading with open arms and pretzels, reminding us of the ELCA's promise that we are "in the city for good."**
- **The assembly planners, ushers, tellers and countless other volunteers whose commitment helped us move smoothly through the work of the assembly.**

- **The long-suffering, late-working, early-rising synodical support staff, who once again overcame all obstacles to see to the details of our business.**
- **And finally, we give thanks to Almighty God, who calls and blesses us to be a blessing, and challenges us to proclaim that the God we know in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is the One who gives the power for the healing of the world.**

The assembly adopted the resolution with a rising vote of thanks.

The bishop called on Pastor Bill Zimmerman, who gave the report of the Worship and Spirituality Team.

Pastor Jim Wolford and Pastor Gene Handwerk gave a presentation on the stewardship theme, "Faith-Based Stewardship -- Blessed to be a Blessing."

Secretary Taylor presented the following resolution:

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Resolved, that the Synod Council recommend to the Synod Assembly the Faith Based Process for stewardship consultations in 2003.

Pastor Dennis Moore suggested that the program include an emphasis on giving permission for giving to be more faithful, more generous, and more scriptural. Following discussion and the vote, the resolution was adopted.

Bishop Strobel called on John Ziegler, chair of the Synod Council Finance Committee, to present the 2004 Program Proposal. He moved its adoption.

Resolved, that the 2004 program proposal (February 1, 2004 to January 31, 2005) be adopted. The Synod Council is hereby authorized to establish the 2004 budget no later than its January, 2004, meeting, making any necessary adjustments to the budget proposal in light of both realistic anticipation of receipts and synod priorities (in consultation with the ELCA Treasurer with respect to the ELCA portion thereof.)

The bishop allowed for discussion and then the vote was taken. The resolution was adopted.

Bishop Strobel announced that the reports of all Ministry Teams, committees, and Task Groups are before the assembly for discussion and questions.

The bishop asked for unfinished business.

Pastor David Blich presented the report of the Committee on Minutes.

Pastor William Zimmerman presented the report of the Committee on Registration and Excuse. He asked that corrections be reported to the synod office immediately

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION AND EXCUSE
2003 SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

1. There were 754 persons in attendance, consisting of 260 ordained pastors on the synod roster (including 47 retired pastors), three UCC pastors, one RCA pastor, eighteen Associates in Ministry, and five Deaconesses on the synod roster, 397 lay voting members (210 women and 187 men), 74 visitors, guests and assembly staff.
2. The following thirty-eight pastors presented an excuse for absence: Gene Parker; Wayne Kaufman; Lyn Langkamer; Eric Shafer; Vicki Reeser; William Horn; Mark Brophy; Thomas Cvammen; Kenneth Feinour; Mark Fritch; Michael Frost; Gilbert Furst; Russell Haab; James Henderschedt; F. Thomas Lichner; Tricia McMackin; Robert Mitchell; Richard Nelson; Werner Koch; John Richter; Rodney Saylor; David Schaeffer; Robert Schlotter; James Seifert; Donald Stricker; Harold Weiss; Henry Wohlgemuth; Christopher Hershman; Dody Freed; Sherrie Sneed; Peggy Sue Pfeffer; Paul Buzzard; Mary Laufer; Fred Fisher; Robert Stover; Harvey Weitzel; Cheryl Meinschein; Charles Grube.
3. There were ten absent pastors who did not present an excuse: Oliver Brown; Harry Goos; Robert Hughes; John Kunkel; James Papada; C. Alton Roberts; Mires Stine; Jay Wetzel; Patrick W. Poole; Wayne Heintzelman.
4. The following Associate in Ministry presented an excuse for absence: Patrice Kidd.
5. The following Associate in Ministry did not present an excuse for absence: Doris Binner.
6. Ninety-five retired pastors (out of 142), seven retired AiMs (out of eight) and one retired Deaconesses (out of four) were absent and are automatically excused from attendance.
7. Eighteen congregations presented an excuse for having no lay voting members: Zion, Packerton; St. John, Scotrun; St. Paul (Cementon), Whitehall; St. Mark, Wilkes-Barre; St. Peter, Easton; St. John, Farmersville; Ascension, Quakake; Zion Lehigh, Alburdis; St. James, Pitman; St. Luke, Freeland; St. John, Friedensburg; Trinity, Valley View; Grace, Macungie; St. Paul, Summer Hill; St. John, Mahoning; St. Peter (10th St.), Allentown; St. John, Jim Thorpe E. ; St. John, Brandonville.
8. Sixty-six congregations had no lay voting members and did not present an excuse: St. Stephen, Bethlehem; Zion First Hungarian, Bethlehem; Arndts, Easton; Christ, Easton; Good Shepherd, Martins Creek; New Jerusalem, Saucon Valley; Maiden creek, Blandon; St. Paul, Hamburg; Jerusalem (Red), Kempton; New Bethel, Kempton; Zion, Maxatawny; Zion, Moselem; St. Peter, Beckers; St. Luke, Shoemakersville; St. John, Gernants; Trinity, Topton; St. Paul, Big Creek; Salem, Audenreid; St. Paul, Beaver Meadows; St. John, Jim Thorpe Heights; Grace, Lehigh; Christ, Mahanoy City; Emmanuel, Nuremberg; Holy Trinity, Palmerton; Christ, Barnesville; St. John, St.

Johns; Jerusalem, Trachsville; St. Matthew, Weatherly; St. James, Allentown; St. Mark, Allentown; St. Paul, Coopersburg; San Martin de Porres, Allentown; St. John, Bath; St. John, Coplay; St. Peter Union, Lynnville; Holy Trinity, Northampton; Holy Trinity, Dingmans Ferry; St. John, Effort; St. Mark, Minisink Hills; Christ, Mt. Bethel; Trinity, Wind Gap; Shepherd of the Hills, Dushore; Holy Trinity, Kingston; St. Peter, Hughestown; St. Peter, Scranton; St. Luke Reformation, Noxen; St. John, Auburn; Friedens, Llewellyn; Zion, Minersville; English, Buck Run; Trinity, Minersville; Zion, Orwigsburg; Outwood, Pine Grove; St. Paul, Middleport; St. John, Tremont; St. Paul, Gordon; Friedens, Bernville; St. John, Gibraltar; St. John, Mohnton; Peace, Reading; Bethany, Stony Creek Mills; Community, Vinemont; St. Mark, Wilkes-Barre; St. Peter & Paul, Freeland; Holy Cross, Moorestown; St. Joseph, Allentown.

9. Twelve congregations had only one lay voting member and presented an excuse: St. Mark Community, Appenzell; St. James, Hobbie; St. Peter, Reinerton; Jerusalem, Eastern Salisbury; Messiah, Wilkes-Barre; St. Mark Nescopeck; Mt. Zion, Briggsville; St. John, Kutztown; St. Paul, Catasauqua; Bern, Leesport; Salem, Bethel; St. John, Ringtown.

10. Twenty-five congregations had only one lay voting member and did not present an excuse: Grace, Bethlehem; Christ, Lower Saucon; Hope, Tatamy; Trinity, Kutztown; Holy Trinity, Leesport; St. Matthew, North Weissport; St. James, Zenith; St. Mark, Scranton; St. John, Pine Grove; Jerusalem, Schuylkill Haven; Schwarzwald (Jacksonwald), Reading; Friedens, Shartlesville; Trinity, Hazleton; Messiah, Bethlehem; Holy Cross, Bethlehem; Mt. Zion, Zion Grove; St. John, Wilkes-Barre; St. Luke, Williams Twp.; St. John, Nanticoke; Kissinger, Wyomissing; Good News Parish; St. Paul, Weissport; Salem, Bethlehem; St. Timothy, Allentown; Christ, Hellertown.

The committee recommends:

- A. that names of the rostered persons absent without submitting an excuse be brought to the attention of Synod Council for appropriate action;
- B. that congregations having only one (male or female) or no lay voting members without submitting an excuse be brought to the attention of Synod Council for appropriate action.

Bishop Strobel announced the dates of future assemblies:

- June 3-5, 2004
- June 9-11, 2005

The assembly was adjourned, and Bishop Strobel conducted the Order for the Closing of a Synod Assembly.

Barbara-Anne G. Taylor
Secretary