

**2004 ASSEMBLY MINUTES
PLENARY SESSION ONE**

Sovereign Performing Arts Center
Reading, PA
Friday, June 4, 2004
1:00 PM

The Synod Assembly of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod for 2004 took place on June 4-5, at the Sovereign Performing Arts Center in Reading, Pennsylvania. The theme of the Assembly was "Blessed to be a Blessing."

Bishop David Strobel led the Order for the Opening of a Synod Assembly.

Bishop Strobel declared that a quorum was present. He expressed the gratitude of all present to those involved in making arrangements for this assembly:

- The Local Arrangements Committee, especially Liz Charles and Bruce Osterhout, who have been invaluable resources
- The Worship Task Group, especially Tom Yenser, and Mark Mummert and the choir
- The many volunteers, including those from Zion, Old Zionsville, St. John, Emmaus, and from the congregations of the West Berks Mission District
- Trinity, Reading, for hosting forums, lunches, and other activities, including the Augsburg Fortress bookstore and the display from Ten Thousand Villages
- Debra Matern Graf and Fred Opalinski for all their help
- St. John, Reading for hosting lunches and the evening's worship
- Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for the grant to make the Tanzania Festival possible

Bishop Strobel introduced Pastor Carol Kehler. She introduced Mayor Tom McMahon, who welcomed the Assembly to Reading.

Bishop Strobel called attention to the Rules of Procedure as printed in the Bulletin of Reports. He reminded the Assembly that only those eligible to vote would receive ballots. He explained the use of the red, green, and yellow voting cards, including the use of a green or red card when going to a microphone to indicate whether the speaker is talking for or against the motion. He reminded voting members that motions must be in writing and given to the Secretary at the time they are brought to the floor.

The Bishop noted that no breaks were scheduled during the plenary sessions and that participants should take breaks as needed.

Bishop Strobel then noted that the privilege of the floor was extended to:

- Mission District Council chairs
- Representatives of Ministry Teams in connection with their reports
- Representatives of institutions and agencies
- Presidents of the synod Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, and Lutheran Youth Fellowship
- ELCA representative Joanne Chadwick, who would address the Assembly later

Bishop Strobel noted that in accord with the constitutional change adopted by last year's Assembly, members of the Synod Council who are not voting members from their congregation have both voice and vote.

Bishop Strobel noted that several pastors from two of our full-communion partner denominations are serving Lutheran congregations. They are:

- Darryl E. Dech, United Church of Christ, Maiden creek, Blandon
- Jane Kropa, United Church of Christ, Huffs

- Thomas E. Neuviller, Reformed Church in America, Grace, Gouldsboro
- Joyce H. Pfeiffer, United Church of Christ, St. Peter, Mantzville

Bishop Strobel stated that in our full-communion relationships, it is our privilege to afford these pastors the privilege of voice and vote, and hearing no objections, it was so ordered.

Bishop Strobel introduced several other guests:

- Bishop Shadrach Manyiewa, Bishop of the South Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, and his wife Mariamu Tulasinova Manyiewa
- Bob Sitze, Director for Hunger Education for the ELCA Division for Church in Society, who will be our keynote speaker
- The Rev. Ronald Glusenkamp, vice president of customer outreach at the Board of Pensions
- The Rev. Gary Harke, executive director of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, and Kathleen Daugherty, executive director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania, who had led forums during the morning

The Bishop explained that the red ribbon attached to a name tag indicated that the wearer was celebrating a major anniversary.

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

Resolved, that the 2004 Synod Assembly program (as distributed) be adopted.

Since this motion came from the Synod Council, it needed no second. The resolution was adopted unanimously by a voice vote. The Secretary stated that copies of the 2003 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 pages 62-71 of the Bulletin of Reports.

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 as Voting Members to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly:

Clergy: Manfred Bahmann and William (Woody) Maxon
 Lay Male: Bruce Ilgen and Ernest Siegfried
 Lay Female: RoseAnn Smith

The Bishop declared nominations closed.

The Bishop pointed out that, as noted in the material that everyone received, there were several nominees running unopposed or who had been nominated by their mission districts for en bloc election. If the assembly is willing, these people can be elected by means of a unanimous ballot cast by the Secretary. He said that he would entertain a motion to do that. The motion was made and seconded. He called for the vote and declared the following people elected:

Lutheran Seminary Board, clergy: John Richter
 Committee on Discipline, clergy: Thomas Reinsel
 Voting Members to the Churchwide Assembly:
 Clergy: Walter S. Breiner
 Mary W. Gade
 Ralph Boyer, IV
 Barbara A. Davis
 Lay Male: Len Weiser
 John Ziegler

Martin Everhart
Lay Female: Melanie Werley
Leslie Schleicher
Judith Hilberg
Patsy Woodson

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.

Bishop Strobel resumed the chair and asked for a moment of personal privilege. He thanked Judy Gifford for her years of service and the Assembly thanked her with a standing ovation. The Bishop and the Assembly also thanked the Bishop's staff and support staff.

The Bishop called attention to the Reports of the Vice President and the Synod Council and asked for questions. Vice President Kinney gave a brief oral report on her work and on the work of the Synod Council.

Bishop Strobel called on Secretary Taylor for the report of the Secretary. She stated that her report was on pages 7-10 and 74 and asked that errors or omissions be brought to her attention so any necessary corrections could be made.

Bishop Strobel stated that Treasurer Arlen Zerbe was unable to be present. Lloyd Wertz, chair of the Synod Council Finance Committee, presented the Treasurer's Report.

The Bishop introduced Dr. Philip Krey, President, and Pastor Glenn Miller, Director of Development, from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. They presented the seminary report.

The Bishop called upon Pastor David Rowe, chairperson of the Committee on Reference and Counsel. He invited committee members to stand. Any resolutions to come before the Assembly had to be submitted to the committee no later than 5 PM. Pastor Rowe presented the first report of the committee.

I. The committee received the following resolution from Pastor Carol Kehler:

WHEREAS, Lutheran tradition affirms that government is God's instrument for achieving the common good, and

WHEREAS, Lutheran social teachings state that government services should be supported by a system of taxation according to the ability to pay, and

WHEREAS, Lutheran social teachings also oppose gambling as a source of government revenue, and

WHEREAS, the PA General Assembly is seriously considering legislation that would place more than 45,000 slot machines in Pennsylvania as a way to support public education through reduction of local property taxes, and

WHEREAS, many of these machines will be placed in independent casinos in some already impoverished urban areas, and

WHEREAS, the losses incurred by such gambling are known to be particularly harsh on those in poverty and others on fixed incomes, and

WHEREAS, known social consequences such as addiction, bankruptcy, crime, family violence and divorce become more prevalent as gambling venues become more accessible, and

WHEREAS, economic consequences such as the "substitution effect" are known to occur where money lost in slot machines will replace money now spent in restaurants and other businesses not connected to gambling casinos, and

WHEREAS, by promoting gambling, government promotes greed and denigrates work and saving,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in assembly, oppose any attempt by the General Assembly to bring slot machine gambling to the Commonwealth, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the synod communicate this opposition to Governor Rendell and all members of the General Assembly serving in the synod's territory, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all voting members of this assembly and others in their congregations be encouraged to communicate with their elected officials about the negative consequences of gambling, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the synod affirm support for a system of public education paid for by fair distribution of taxpayer dollars, according to the needs of individual school districts, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in order to pay for public education and other essential government services, the synod communicate to the governor and members of the General Assembly on synod territory its support for fair, progressive, long lasting tax reform in the Commonwealth that will provide responsibly for programmatic needs.

The Committee recommends adoption.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the resolution by deletion of the last two "resolved" phrases. The motion was defeated.

A motion was made and seconded to separate the last two "resolved" phrases from the rest of the resolution. The motion was defeated.

The original resolution was adopted as presented.

The Bishop introduced Bob Sitze, who introduced the Assembly Theme.

Dean David Searing 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

- Ralph A. Boyer IV
- D. Michael Bennethum
- Eckhard H. Grimm
- Thomas F. Irwin, Jr.
- Robert G. Kaltenbaugh
- Roy H. Koehler
- John R. Kuschel
- Edith B. Roberts
- Donald J. Schwarz
- Sherrie L. Snead
- Robert D. Stover
- Samuel R. Zeiser

Fortieth Anniversary

- Donald P. Beck
- John J. Deisinger
- Harry J. Goos
- Arthur L. Hahn
- Thomas J. Keener
- James C. Papada
- Thomas H. Reinsel
- Robert C. Schlotter
- David J. Wartluft
- Conrad W. Weiser
- William W. Wightman

Fiftieth Anniversary

- Paul H. Feil
- Clarence D. Reeser
- Robert F. Sauers
- Richard H. Schaefer

Sixtieth Anniversary

- Ralph R. Hellerich
- Charles K. Kershmar
- Robert J. Marshall

Sixty-fifth Anniversary

- Phares O. Reitz
- Gunther J. Stippich

The Bishop introduced Pastor Martha Sipe, chairperson of the Elections Committee. First ballots were distributed. She reminded voting members to place their ballots in the ballot boxes by 4:45 PM.

The Bishop called on Pastor Woody Maxon, who presented the report of the Witness and Service Ministry Team. A grant was presented to St. Joseph's, Allentown.

The fiftieth anniversary video of Pastor Paul Feil was shown.

Bishop Strobel introduced Joanne Chadwick, who addressed the Assembly on behalf of Presiding Bishop Hanson and the ELCA.

Associate in Ministry Kathleen Schaeffer and Pastor Kurt Garbe presented the report of the Leadership Development Ministry Team.

Bishop Strobel introduced Bishop Manyiewa and his wife. He addressed the Assembly and presented the Synod with a carving of a mother and baby giraffe as a reminder that our Synods walk together in ministry. Bishop Strobel presented them with a check for \$14,500 to be used for ministry in the South Central Diocese of Tanzania.

Bishop Strobel declared voting on the first ballot closed.

The Assembly viewed the 50th anniversary video of Pastor Bob Sauers.

The Bishop reminded the Assembly of worship after the close of the session and of the Tanzania Festival.

Secretary Taylor made several announcements. The session ended with worship.