

**Minutes**  
**Twenty Second Annual Assembly**  
**Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
**Meeting: April 24-26, 2009**  
**Plano Convention Center, Plano TX**

**Session I: Friday, April 24, 2009**

**Call to Order**

Assembly participants gathered to the playing and singing of traditional and contemporary hymns. The Assembly was called to order for the Opening Worship at 1:30 p.m., beginning with a Remembrance of the Departed, with Bishop Kevin Kanouse presiding, AIM Stephanie Varnum assisting, and Kelly Fryer preaching. Residents of MOSAIC participated in the Processional.

In her message, Ms. Fryer proclaimed how the children of God, all of us regular people, are “God’s best plan” for bringing about his kingdom. We should connect with our talents and use our abilities to do God’s will.

Offering from this worship service was designated to be equally divided between the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Lutheran Disaster Response.

The Bishop opened the Assembly with the Rite to Open the Assembly at 3:15 p.m.

It was announced that DiscipleLife University, scheduled to take place in multiple sessions throughout the day on Saturday, is designed to provide a place for training on DiscipleLife and an opportunity to reflect, as a community of faith, in our giftedness in the NT-NL. Synod Assembly Planning Team member, Ms. Becky Brakke, described the process for completing a “learning certificate” at the displays during the Assembly.

Bishop Kanouse introduced Bishop Tom Barnett of the ELCSL, ELCA World Hunger Director, Pr. Dan Rift, ELCA World Hunger Assistant Director, Jennifer Barger, and Bishop Mike Rinehart, TLGC Synod Bishop, who brought greetings from his synod. Bishop Rinehart reminded the assembly that it is necessary to leave the building to do evangelism and that when God touches a person’s heart, God touches the person’s wallet, too.

**Preliminary Report of the Credentials Committee**

Pr. Stan Larson, chair of the Committee on Credentials, presented.

Committee on Credentials Preliminary Report

Day: Friday, April 24, 2009

Time: 2:45 p.m.

Registered at Assembly:

Rostered Ministers, Ordained	108
Lay Professionals	3
SAWLs	5
Lay Persons	<u>201</u>
Total Registered at Assembly	<u>317</u>

Voting Members Present at Assembly:	
Rostered Ministers, Ordained	82
Lay Professionals	3
SAWLs	3
Lay Persons	<u>153</u>
Total Voting Members	<u>241</u>

Bishop Kanouse declared the presence of a quorum.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

The 2009 Synod Assembly Agenda, published on pages 7 through 9 of the Book of Reports, was presented to the Assembly for approval by Synod Vice President Stephanie Varnum. After discussion about adequate time being allowed to debate the Churchwide Sexuality Study, Pr. Dale Gregoriew moved the following agenda amendment:

*VOTED SA 09.04.01 to amend the agenda to start a half hour earlier to add a half-hour business session on Saturday, April 25, 2009.*

*DEFEATED*

*VOTED SA 09.04.02 to adopt the "2008 Synod Assembly Agenda."*

*APPROVED*

### **Appointment of Assembly Committees**

Synod Vice President Stephanie Varnum presented the appointment of Voting Members to Assembly Standing Committees by Synod Council:

**Committee on Credentials**—*Related Staff—The Rev. Nancy Fisher, Bishop Assistant and Irma Godinez, Latino/Hispanic Ministry Coordinator*

The Rev. Stan Larson (ETNL)--Chair  
 Ms. Celia Pietzsch (RPL)  
 Cathy Cormack (PAN)

**Committee on Reference and Counsel**—*Related Staff—The Rev. Stan Meyer, Bp Assistant*

The Rev. Jane Mar (GFW)—Chair

Ms. Janet Calico (SDA)  
The Rev. Dan Brandt (WAC)  
The Rev. Todd Bruning (NCW)  
The Rev. Ron Heimsoth (GFW)  
Mr. Timothe Mast (SDA)  
Mrs. Violetta Erickson (NCE)

**Committee on Elections**—*Related Staff*—Mrs. Tyna Oslie, Synod Administrator  
and the Rev. Jamie Bruning, Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator

The Rev. Kathy Cox (GFW)—Chair  
Mr. Bradley Linda (WAC)  
Mr. Arthurine Wade (SDA)  
The Rev. Ryan Mills (MID)  
Mr. Luis Reyes (NCW)

**Committee on Minutes**—*Related Staff*—Ms. Judy Rommel, Synod  
Administrative Assistant

The Rev. Ginger Georgulas (NCW)—Chair  
Mr. Keith Clicque (SDA)  
Mrs. Donna Sellers (MID)

**Nominating Committee**—*Related Staff*—The Rev. Nancy Fisher, Bp. Assist.

Mr. Dan Whittington (NCW)—Chair  
Mrs. Stephanie Varnum (VP of Synod)  
Mr. Kenn Mingus (MID)  
Mrs. Nona Preble (WAC)  
Mr. Lyn Stedje (PAN)  
The Rev. Patricia Dietrich (WAC)  
The Rev. Pam Dorman (RPL)  
Mr. Christian Marbach (LYO-Male Rep)

### **Adoption of Rules of Procedure**

Vice President Stephanie Varnum presented the “Assembly Rules of Organization and Procedure,” published on pages 10 and 11 of the Book of Reports, for approval.

*VOTED SA 09.04.03 to adopt the “Assembly Rules of Organization and Procedure” as published.*

*APPROVED*

Bishop Kanouse thanked Vice President Varnum for her service during her first year. He then introduced the Parliamentarians, Pr. Mel Hammer, Pr. Vince Nelson, and VP Stephanie Varnum.

**Report of the Nominating Committee**

Mr. Dan Whittington, Nominating Committee Chair, presented the Nominations for Election. Nominations from the floor were added. Bishop Kanouse introduced the candidates as the ballots were read.

**Ballot A—East TX-North LA Conference Lay Male—Elect One**

Mr. Charles F. Shoul Jr.

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot B—Panhandle Conference Ordained—Elect One**

Rev. Yvonne Kiebler

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot C—Northeast Dallas Conference Lay Female—Elect One**

Jean Irwin

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot D—North Central West Conference Ordained—Elect One**

Rev. Scott Zimmerer

Rev. Virginia Kay Georgulas

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot E—North Central East Conference Lay Male—Elect One**

Mr. Ed Edgren

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot F—Youth Female for Synod Council—Elect One**

Ms. Mariah Sowders

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot G—Consultation Committee Ordained—Elect One**

Rev. JoAnne Swehosky

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot H—Consultation Committee Layperson—Elect One**

Ms. Laura J. Prudom

Mr. Paul Stephen Stavlo

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot I—Discipline Committee Ordained—Elect Two**

Rev. Thomas Beers

Rev. Stanley A. Larson

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

**Ballot J—Discipline Committee Layperson—Elect Two**

Mr. Keith Clicque

Mr. Bill J. Jones

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed..

Motion was made to elect by acclamation those running unopposed. Seconded.

<i>VOTED SA.09.04.04 to elect by acclamation those running unopposed on Ballots A, B, C, E, F, G, I, and J.</i>
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*APPROVED*

Mr. Ed Halter presented a Mission Partner's Moment complete with celebratory noisemakers and music with audience participation.

### **ELCA Presentation**

ELCA Churchwide Representative Jennifer Barger brought greetings and introduced the new ELCA hunger director, Pr. Dan Rift. She began her presentation by playing a recorded greeting from Presiding Bishop Mark Hansen, who urged assembly participants to live out their baptismal covenant each day by serving at the intersections of faith and hope. Ms. Barger described the efforts of ELCA Churchwide during the past year, including the *Book of Faith* initiative, the 49 new congregations started throughout the US, ELCA Churchwide outreach in the form of television ads and the website. She congratulated the NT-NL Synod for exceeding the \$5 target per member of contributions to ELCA World Hunger. Pr. Rift described the ELCA groups that, like World Hunger, assist people in need, including ELCA Disaster Relief and Lutheran Social Services.

### **Report of the Treasurer**

Mr. Michael Weir, Treasurer, presented the Financial Report, referring to page 87 in the Book of Reports.

The proposed Mission Strategy (budget) for 2010 was presented, found on page 75 of the Book of Reports. It reflects a 2.8% increase in spending over the past year. It was announced that amendments to the proposed budget are due by 3:30 on Saturday, April 25, 2009.

Distribution of the funds from the proceeds of the sale of Community Lutheran's child care facility were described, as was the fact that the budget year wrapped up with \$ 5,000 in Current Fund income over expenditures and an \$80,000 surplus in the bank.

In addition, Mr. Weir explained that the 2009 audit report had no items of concern and that copies are available at the NT-NL Office upon request.

### **Report of the Committee for Reference and Counsel**

Rev. Jane Mar presented the five resolutions and memorials under consideration during the 2009 Assembly. The first two were presented for approval.

### **New Business #1**

#### **Resolution Regarding Suicide Prevention**

WHEREAS suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States and claimed over 32,000 lives in 2005 (more deaths than homicide and HIV combined) and is the 8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for men of all ages, the second leading cause of death for people ages 25-34, the third leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds, and claims the lives of over 350 ELCA members annually; and

WHEREAS suicides carry a burden of stigma, impacting an ever widening circle of people from the immediate family to friends, neighbors, work, school, faith, health communities—and all of society—that severely impedes the recovery efforts of those impacted by suicides, and the efforts to help suicidal people; and

WHEREAS those who have lost a loved one to suicide (survivors of suicide) represent a population at least 20 times the number of suicides, and, who due to stigma are a group largely without help and recovery resources or support; and

WHEREAS those who have made a life threatening act to end their lives represent a group estimated to range from 20 to 100 times larger than those who die by suicide, and who comprise a group estimated to be six times more likely than others to complete suicide in the future, but are largely unknown, and who need the understanding, care, and support of faith communities; and

WHEREAS the ELCA Message on Suicide Prevention, approved by the Church Council on 11/14/99, provides a basis for ELCA suicide prevention action in these words “Our efforts to prevent suicide grow out of our obligation to protect and promote life, or hope in God amid suffering and adversity, and our love for our troubled neighbor”; and

WHEREAS numerous new suicide prevention resources have become available since 1999, including inexpensive, web-based suicide prevention educational and training materials, federal funding for college and university prevention programs, a national suicide prevention resource center, and ELCA Suicide Prevention Endowment Fund and broad interest of national faith communities in collaborating to fight suicide; and

WHEREAS suicide happens in local congregations and communities where people live, work, and play, it is also clear that prominent and repeated support from the top leadership of this church is essential for the church to move from policy statement to action to prevent suicide, and since no existing church mechanism addresses suicide prevention; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod encourage the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to commit itself, within the availability of funding and staff resources, to take the following actions:

1. authorize the creation of a volunteer Suicide Prevention Ministry Task Force under the supervision of the Church in Society unit for a trial period of two years (with continuance beyond that left to the discretion of the Church in Society unit), with a charge to:
  - a. examine the prevalence of suicide and its impact on the church, its members, institutions and rostered persons, along with ways in which such impact may be reduced,
  - b. collaborate with other organizations on suicide prevention
  - c. invite ELCA survivors of suicide, and those who have been suicidal to serve on the Task Force, and
2. encourage the communication services of the Church to promote the church's suicide prevention work and its Suicide Prevention Endowment Fund, and
3. encourage all rostered personnel to take a web-based survey on knowledge of suicide prevention, and
4. direct the church's national advocacy office to advocate for expanded federal suicide prevention research, and
5. require the Task Force to provide the executive director of the Church in Society unit a report on the work of the Task Force and its recommendations.

Presenter: Pr. Norma Cooper  
Congregation: Holy Trinity, Irving

The Committee for Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.  
Pr. Norma Cooper explained that this resolution is relevant to people's needs today, given the poor economy and the troops returning from war.

<i>VOTED SA.09.04.05</i>	<i>to accept the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel that this resolution be adopted.</i>
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*APPROVED*

## **New Business #2 Resolution Regarding the Use of Military Language in Worship**

WHEREAS the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal has removed language of soldiers, armies, and military language from our worship hymns: (For example *Onward Christian Soldiers* was dropped; *Stand Up Stand Up for Jesus* was dropped; *The Son of God Goes Forth to War* was dropped; *Lift High the Cross*, vs. 3 was changed from "All newborn soldiers of the crucified" in the LBW to now read "all newborn servants of the crucified"; *For All the Saints* dropped a stanza, the stanza which read "Oh, may your soldiers, faithful, true, and bold, Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old, and with them the victor's crown of gold, Alleluia! Alleluia!" *Earth and All Stars* was rewritten so that the phrase "Loud Shouting Army!" in

verse 1 was omitted); and

WHEREAS this effort suggests that there is something inappropriate or unworthy of military language and imagery; and

WHEREAS military language and imagery is frequently used in the Bible, as the Bible speaks in terms of “fight the good fight” (1 Timothy 1:18), “desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul,” (1 Peter 2:11), “fellow soldier” (Philippians 2:25), “a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3), “Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:), and Christians being an “army” (Revelation 19:19); and

WHEREAS we as Lutherans understand ourselves to be both saint and sinners, people who are involved in a daily battle between sin and faith, death and salvation—as Paul writes in Romans 7:23 “I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members”; and

WHEREAS many of our members have served or do serve in the military and see this service as part of their Christian vocation; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Synod encourage the ELCA Church Council to ensure that the congregations of this church have options for working within the available worship materials and educational resources, including the option to use appropriate military language and images.

Presenter: Pr. Mark Braaten  
Congregation: Our Saviour’s, Tyler

The Committee for Reference and Counsel recommends adopting as edited.

Pr. Mark Braaten spoke to the issue regarding the use of military language and images and proposed the following amendment to the resolution. The amendment was seconded.

*VOTED SC.09.04.06 to amend the Resolution Regarding the Use of Military Language in Worship to read “that the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to ensure that congregations of this church have options for wording within the available worship materials and educational resources, including the option to use appropriate military language and images.*

**DEFEATED**

VOTED SC.09.04.07

*to accept the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel that this resolution be adopted.*

*APPROVED*

### **Keynote Presentation**

Keynote speaker, Kelly Fryer, leads an organization called A Renewal Enterprise (ARE) that aims to enhance and deepen evangelical life in the ELCA. She described how the current system of “filling slots” to get congregational members to participate “sucks the life out” of congregation members. She urged congregation leaders to look at seeing the work of a congregation as something that should be a renewal resource rather than a consuming monster. She described how members can use her PAWN Analysis to determine the purpose God intends for their lives and the identify assets, wows, and needs in their neighbors and themselves.

### **First Ballot**

Bishop Kanouse provided instructions for the elections, after which Ballot I was distributed for general elections. Bishop Kanouse offered prayer before the voting. Following the collection of the ballots, the election was declared closed. Positions included in this General Election are North Central West Conference Representative and Consultation Committee, Layperson.

Assembly chairperson, Rev. Gordon Illausky, gave directions for dinner. The session recessed at 6:10 p.m.

### **Saturday, April 25, 2009**

The day began with Morning Prayer led by Jesus Escamilla, Synodically Authorized Worship Leader at the newly-forming Iglesia Luterana San Gabriel in Alvarado.

**Saturday’s Assembly Focus was DiscipleLife University**, a series of classes presented by the six DiscipleLife Teams on the areas of synodical life that are in focus during these years. There were a approximately 35 classes held over three sessions.

During the late afternoon, Bishop Kanouse led a 90 Forum on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, presenting background on the Social Statement on Human Sexuality and the Task Force Recommendations that are referenced on our Sunday morning agenda to be dealt with at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Synod Assembly voting members participated in a social service project to build Relief Kits for Lutheran Disaster Response. More than 10,000 were completed on Saturday afternoon to be shipped immediately to New Orleans residents still in need.

Saturday evening included a concert by musical group Lost and Found.

## Session II—Sunday Morning, April 25, 2009

The Assembly reconvened at 8:15 a.m. with a prayer offered by Bishop Kanouse.

### Final Report of the Credentials Committee

Synod Vice President Stephanie Varnum presented the final report of the Credentials Committee:

#### CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE FINAL REPORT

Date: April 25, 2009  
Time: 8:00 a.m.

VOTING MEMBERS:	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
PRESENT AT ASSEMBLY SITE:			
ROSTERED MINISTERS			
With Call	65	22	87
Retired	18	2	20
<b>Total:</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>107</b>
Lay Professional	2	1	3
Lay Persons			
Lay	84	95	179
Synod Council	6	6	12
Conf. Youth	0	0	0
SAWL	4	1	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>TOTAL VOTING MEMBERS</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>306</b>
LUTHERAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION			55
REGISTERED VISITORS / GUESTS			105
<b>TOTAL ATTENDANCE</b>			<b>466</b>
<b>NOT IN ATTENDANCE (LIST ON SEPARATE PAGE)</b>			
# of Pastors excused	6		
# of Congregations	16		

Submitted by:



### Report of the Elections Committee

Pastor Kathy Cox reported on the results of the elections, as follows:

**Ballot D—North Central West Conference—Elect One**

Rev. Scott Zimmerman 129

Rev. Virginia Kay Georgulas 126

The Rev. Scott Zimmerman was declared elected.

**Ballot H—Consultation Committee Lay Person—Elect One**

Ms. Laura Prudom 179

Mr. Paul Stavlo 71

Ms. Laura Prudom was declared elected.

**Report of the Committee on Minutes**

The Rev. Virginia Georgulas, chair of the Committee on Minutes, announced that the Minutes Committee had found the minutes from the first session of the assembly to be correct and in order.

**Report of Officers**

Synod Vice President Stephanie Varnum thanked the Assembly for the opportunity to lead and welcomed the newly elected Synod Council members. She extended thanks to the six council members whose terms had ended for their years of service to the Synod.

Ms. Varnum moved that the 2010 Care and Compensation Guidelines package, approved by Synod Council (found on pages 123 and following), in the 2009 Book of Reports, be adopted.

<i>VOTED SC.09.04.08</i>	<i>to adopt the 2010 Care and Compensation Guidelines document.</i>
<i>APPROVED</i>	

Synod Secretary Ann Kirch presented two bound copies of the minutes from the 2008 Synod Assembly to Bishop Kanouse for placement in the Synod archives.

Synod Treasurer Michael Weir announced that no amendments to the Mission Strategy/Budget had been received and moved for approval of the 2010 Mission Strategy as published on pages 75 and following of the Book of Reports.

<i>VOTED SC.09.04.09</i>	<i>to adopt the 2010 Mission Strategy as published.</i>
<i>APPROVED</i>	

**Report of the Committee for Reference and Counsel**

Pr. Jane Mar, chair of the Committee for Reference and Counsel, brought forward Substitute Motion NB #3, NB #4, and NB #5.

**Substitute Motion New Business #3  
Memorial Regarding the Voting Majority at the Churchwide Assembly**

WHEREAS the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted "to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and to make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church;" and

WHEREAS the Constitutional and Legal Committee of the ELCA Church Council recommended that "any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption;" and

WHEREAS the ELCA Church Council voted 19-10 to delete this provision and is recommending rules of procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly which would require only a simple majority vote to change ELCA standards to allow pastors and other rostered leaders to be in same-sex sexual relationships; and

WHEREAS a two-thirds majority vote is usually required for major decisions including the adoption of an ELCA social statement and for amendments to the ELCA constitution and bylaws; and

WHEREAS a super majority vote - such as a two-thirds majority - would require an overwhelming majority of Churchwide Assembly voting members to make such a significant change to church teaching and practice; and

WHEREAS the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly will adopt its rules for the assembly and could set a two-thirds majority for adoption for any changes to standards for pastors and other rostered leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod in assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to add the following provision to the rules of procedure for the assembly: "Any motion to come before this Churchwide Assembly regarding changes in this church's current policy and practice for the rostering of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, and deaconesses or for the blessing of same-sex unions shall require a two-thirds vote by the assembly for adoption."

Presenters: Pr. David Eibel, Pr. Evan McClanahan, and Pr. Joel Berthelsen  
Congregations: Living Word, Grapevine and Hope, Cedar Hill  
The Committee for Reference and Counsel recommends adoption.

Speakers noted that the 2/3 vote called for in this memorial reflects the seriousness of the issue and would prevent a minority voice from reflecting the voice of the whole church.

<i>VOTED SC.09.04.10</i>	<i>to accept the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel that this memorial be adopted.</i> <i>APPROVED</i>
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#### **New Business #4**

#### **Memorial to Adopt the *Social Statement on Human Sexuality***

WHEREAS the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality has earnestly studied and struggled with these matters for eight years, and their work models and invites mutually respectful dialogue about sexuality throughout this church; and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, powerfully proclaims this church's teachings on trust, love, and service to the neighbor as the proper foundation of sexuality, while honestly recognizing that there is no consensus regarding same-gender relationships or the rostered ministry of people in them; and

WHEREAS the ELCA Church Council, at its March 2009 meeting, voted to transmit to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly the proposed social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, its implementing resolutions, and a *Recommendation on Ministry Policies*; be it therefore

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod meeting in assembly memorialize the 2009 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the proposed social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* -as transmitted by the ELCA Church Council.;

Presenter: Pastor Ginger Georgulas (retired) and Pastor Kurt Friederich  
Congregation: Ascension, Garland  
The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends adoption with edits.

Pastor Mar explained the committee's rationale: the Social Statement on Human Sexuality is a statement of faith, with much work and prayer going into the document. While the document is not perfect, neither are human beings. Diversity exists in the body of Christ, but all are joined in the body of Christ.

Some speakers encouraged everyone to read the document because it addressed every type of relationship people have. Some thought that rejecting the statement might well be going against God's will. Other speakers were concerned with omissions in the document, such as the omission of a discussion of divorce. Another speaker expressed the understanding that God's love trumps human judgment. Some said that homosexuals living under grace are holy under grace. Some speakers expressed concern that the Bible's teachings about homosexuality were not being honored by the document; others

pointed out how Biblical teachings, such as that on divorce, have been adjusted to match insights gained over time.

Pastor Chuck Hubbard moved an amendment to the resolution, which would add the language of item 2: “2. to adopt the four parts of the proposed Recommendation on Ministry Policies, as recommended by the ELCA Church Council.”

The amendment was seconded, and Pr. Mar explained that item 2 in the resolution had been struck by the Committee because the Churchwide Assembly will deal with the items separately and in stages. Not dealing with the items separately does not give the NT-NL Assembly voters the ability to consider the items separately. Other speakers agreed, saying that the issues are frequently confused by ELCA members and should be treated separately.

A motion was made and seconded to call the question on the amendment.

<i>VOTED SA.09.04.11</i>	<i>to determine whether 2/3 of the Assembly is ready to vote on the amendment.</i> <i>APPROVED</i>
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<i>VOTED SA.09.04.12</i>	<i>to amend NB #4 Memorial to Adopt the Social Statement on Human Sexuality by adding back item #2 to the “Resolved.”</i> <i>DEFEATED</i>
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Discussion returned to the recommendation from the Committee for Reference and Counsel. The question was called and seconded.

<i>VOTED SA.09.04.13</i>	<i>to determine whether 2/3 of the Assembly is ready to vote on the recommendation from the Committee for Reference and Counsel for NB #4.</i> <i>APPROVED</i>
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<i>VOTED SA.09.04.14</i>	<i>to accept the recommendation from the Committee for Reference and Counsel for NB #4.</i> <i>130—“Yes”</i> <i>107—“No”</i> <i>3—Abstained from voting</i> <i>APPROVED</i>
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The voice vote to accept the recommendation from the Committee for Reference and Counsel for New Business item #4 was difficult to determine, so a standing count on this item was taken with results recorded above.

## **NEW BUSINESS #5**

### **Memorial to Reject the *Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies***

WHEREAS the Confession of Faith of the ELCA commits this church to regarding the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as "the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life" and the Lutheran Confessions as "further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church," and

WHEREAS the appropriate relationship for sexual relations is a legally binding monogamous marriage between a man and a woman, and that sexual relations outside of such a relationship are not cause for affirmation but repentance; and

WHEREAS there already exist statements regarding human sexuality and homosexual behavior adopted by the ELCA, to wit, the statement of the October 1993 meeting of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, that "[T]here is basis neither in Scripture nor tradition for the establishment of an official ceremony by this church for the blessing of a homosexual relationship. We, therefore, do not approve such a ceremony as an official action of this church's ministry;" and, as a faithful expression of biblical and confessional teaching regarding sexual conduct of ELCA pastors and particularly the question of ordaining gay and lesbian persons in committed relationships, the statement contained within the Division for Ministry document adopted by the Church Council in 1990 "Vision and Expectations -- Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America", that "[T]he expectations of this church regarding the sexual conduct of its ordained ministers are grounded in the understanding that human sexuality is a gift from God and that ordained ministers are to live in such a way as to honor this gift. Ordained ministers are expected to reject sexual promiscuity, the manipulation of others for purposes of sexual gratification, and all attempts of sexual seduction and sexual harassment, including taking physical or emotional advantage of others. Single ordained ministers are expected to live a chaste life. Married ordained ministers are expected to live in fidelity to their spouses, giving expression to sexual intimacy within a marriage relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful. Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships;" and

WHEREAS biblical and confessional principles of the Lutheran Church affirm that

1. Sexuality is a good and gracious gift God bestows on humanity for the sake of love, devotion, and procreation.

2. By creating us male and female, God has built gender complementarity into the very fabric of human existence.
3. Marriage, the lifelong union of fidelity between one man and one woman, is the only relationship God has ordained for the full expression of human sexuality.
4. Marriage is neither a private arrangement nor merely a human construct or custom. It is, rather, a divine institution by which God has founded human community "in a joy that begins now and is brought to perfection in the life to come." (LBW, p. 203)
5. Neither the scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions grant any authorization to the church to recognize as divinely approved any relationship other than the marriage of one man and one woman for the full expression of human sexuality; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod in assembly memorialize the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to reject the proposals in the *Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

Presenter: Pr. David Eibel and Pastor Evan McClanahan  
 Congregation: Living Word, Grapevine  
 The Committee for Reference and Counsel recommends declining to consider the memorial.

Bishop Kanouse reminded the assembly that the debate needs to focus on the recommendation from the Committee for Reference and Counsel, not on the actual *Report* itself.

Some speakers felt the *Report and Recommendations* were still in too early a stage to be rejected, given that the Churchwide Assembly will address this in a four-step process. Others felt that the *Report* itself was flawed as was the *Sexuality Statement*. After considerable discussion, the question was called.

*VOTED SA.09.04.15 to determine whether 2/3 of the Assembly is ready to vote on the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel for NB #5.*

**APPROVED**

*VOTED SA.09.04.16 to accept the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel to decline to consider this memorial.*

**DECLARED DEFEATED**

While Bishop Kanouse judged a louder voice count to defeat SA 09.04.16, a motion from the floor was made and seconded contesting the interpretation of the voice count on Vote SA.09.04.16. The Chair, Bishop Kanouse, ruled that the matter should be settled with a standing count, with results as follows:

*VOTED SA.09.04.16 to accept the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel to decline to consider this memorial.*  
122—“Yes”  
116—“No”  
6—Abstained from voting

*APPROVED*

The ruling of the chair that it was proper to take this standing vote was challenged. It was explained that the Assembly would need to vote to approve the ruling of the chair to settle the matter, with a majority needed to uphold the chair’s decision to take the standing vote. Speakers for and against the chair’s handling of the matter were heard. Some at the Assembly claimed that they had not understood the original vote; others supported the chair’s fairness in the debates at the Assembly. It was explained that to provide a clearer and true vote outcome, a standing count was needed.

*VOTED SA.09.04.17 to sustain the ruling of the Chair to settle the vote on SA.09.04.16.*  
160—“Yes”  
75—“No”  
2—Abstained from voting

*APPROVED*

Thus, the Assembly voted to accept the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel to decline considering NB #5, which would have memorialized rejecting the proposals in the *Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies* from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality.

Bishop Kanouse thanked the Assembly for their pastoral and caring behavior and conversation during the debates and for being active in speaking about the issues presented in the resolutions and memorials.

### **Recognition of Anniversaries and Thanks**

Bishop Kanouse recognized Synod staff Debi Gephart, her daughter Jenny, Ms. Irma Godinez, Pr. Jamie Bruning, Pr. Nancy Fisher, to whom he acknowledged gratitude for her service in the NT-NL Synod for the past 6 six years as her call comes to its conclusion on June 30,2009, presenting her with a James Avery cross, Pr. Stan Meyer, whose change in position duties were described, Ms. Tyna Oslie, Synod Administrator, whose 20 years of service to the NT-NL were recognized with a James Avery cross, Judy Rommel, and Pr. Steve Kanouse, newly appointed ELCA Director for Evangelical Misison for the NT-NL Synod.

Ms. Becky Brakke, Assembly Planner, announced the 2010 Synod Assembly will be held on April 23 through 25, 2010, at the Amarillo Civic Center. Pastor Gordon Illausky introduced the Planning Committee members, who were thanked for their dedicated work and efforts to make the 2009 Assembly enjoyable.

Bishop Kanouse then recognized with thanks the anniversaries and milestones of rostered leaders and awarded certificates. Congregations recognized include Our Savior's Durant, 50 years of ministry, First Salem, Roscoe, 100 years of ministry, and First Lutheran, Waco, 150 years of ministry.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:30 a.m. with Closing Worship led by the Reverend Nancy Fisher, presiding, the Bishop Kevin Kanouse preaching, and Bishop Tom Barnett and Aim Stephanie Varnum assisting. The Assembly adjourned with Eucharist and the Rite to Close Assembly at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

***Ann Kirch***  
Secretary