Minutes
Twenty-Third Annual Assembly
Northern Texas--Northern Louisiana Synod
Meeting: April 23-25, 2010
Amarillo Civic Center, Amarillo, TX

Session I: April 23, 2010

Call to Order

The opening Assembly worship began at 3 p.m. with the Festival of Holy Communion, with Bishop Kevin Kanouse presiding. The Reverend Stephen Bouman gave the sermon, in which he discussed the intersection of DiscipleLife and "DiscipleLove." His message moved listeners to carry out the mission of the church and, as disciples, to extend the love of Christ to others in our communities.

At 4:45, Bishop Kanouse convened the business session. He thanked Pr. Bouman for his sermon, living DiscipleLove and DiscipleLife and thanked the Amarillo assembly committee, led by Pr. Charles Meyer, chair of the 2010 Assembly Committee.

Pr. Meyer welcomed everyone to Amarillo and extended a welcome to Pr. Doug Mills, pastor of Trinity United Methodist. Pr. Mills greeted the Assembly on behalf of the United Methodist bishop and Amarillo district superintendent. Pr. Mills wrote the resolution on Full Communion that was adopted by the United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, bringing the two churches into Full Communion. The goal now is finding visible unity with Lutherans in nearby ELCA congregations.

Bishop Kanouse extended a welcome to Dr. Shannon Jung, keynote speaker, Pastor Kate Warn, and Bishop Barnett. Because of travel problems stemming from the volcanic eruption in Iceland, Pastor Warn will arrive on Monday, so she will not be able to attend the Assembly; however, Bishop Barnett is bringing a video with him and should be attending the Assembly on Sunday morning.

Bishop Kanouse reviewed the use of the electronic voting pad with the Assembly. Electronic materials were sent ahead of time, and he encouraged the use of the internet in the Assembly room.

Preliminary Report of the Credentials Committee

Helen Beaujour, chair of the committee, reported that as of 4:15 p.m.,

Voting Members Registered Prior to Assembly

Rostered	106
Lay	185
Total	291

Voting Members Present at Assembly Site

Rostered	96

Lay	158
Total	254

Bishop Kanouse declared a quorum present.

Adoption of the Agenda
Stephanie Varnum, Vice President presented the Assembly Agenda on behalf of the Synod Council, with one amendment: the 5:15 p.m. agenda item, "The Future of DiscipleLife – Synod Visioning," will be moved to 4/24/2010 at 8:40 a.m.

VOTED SA 10.04.01	*to approve the assembly agenda with the amendment above.*
	APPROVED

Appointment of Assembly Standing Committees
Ms. Varnum presented those appointed for membership on the standing committees of the assembly, including the Committee on Credentials, the Committee on Minutes, the Committee on Elections, the Committee for Reference and Counsel, and the Nominating Committee.

<u>Committee for Reference and Counsel</u>
Related staff: Rev. Stanley Meyer and Irma Bañales
Rev. Kathy Cox (GFW), Chair
Rev. Peggy Ogden-Howe (NCW)
Rev. Franz Schemmel (GFW)
Ms. Elizabeth Rauch (WAC)
Mr. David Ellwanger (NCE)
Rev. Jeff Borgwardt (ETNL)

<u>Committee on Credentials</u>
Related staff: Rev. Jane Mar
Ms. Helen Beaujour (SDA), Chair
Rev. Willard McKiver (MID)
Mr. Dan Preble (WAC)

<u>Committee on Elections</u>
Related Staff: Ms. Tyna Oslie
Rev. Bob Barndt (WTX), Chair
Ms. Helon Krudson
Mr. James Foster
Ms. Lowellann Baker (RPL)
Mr. Don Klaus (PAN)

Committee on Minutes

Ms. Sandra Gubrud (NED), Chair
Rev. Laird Duran (CTX)
Ms. Diane Fehler (WAC)

Nominating Committee

Related staff: Rev. Jane Mar

Mr. Dan Whittington (NCW), Chair
Mr. Kenn Mingus (MID)
Mrs. Nona Preble (WAC)
Mr. Lynn Stedje (PAN)
Rev. Patricia Dietrich (WAC)
Rev. Ernie Barr (RPL)
Mr. Christian Marbach (WAC-LYO)

Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

Ms. Varnum presented a change to the rules because of the use of electronic voting being used this time.

Amendment of the *2010 Assembly Rules of Organization and Procedure*
S9.08 Elections—Each category for which an election is held is considered a separate ballot even though several categories for election may appear on the same sheet of paper or electronic screen. If the ballot is a paper ballot and more than the number to be elected is marked, that ballot is an illegal ballot. A paper ballot with fewer marked than the number to be elected shall not make the ballot illegal. In all elections, except for the Bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled.

Point of order question: A member of the Assembly asked whether a resolution can be brought to the assembly now and if an amendment be brought to a current resolution? Bishop Kanouse explained that the deadline for resolutions and memorials was two weeks ago, but amendments can be brought forward at the time of consideration of the resolutions.

VOTED SA 10.04.02 to adopt the Assembly rules of procedure with the amendment presented.
APPROVED

Bishop Kanouse introduced the Assembly Parliamentarian, Pr. Mel Hammer, by presenting him with a gold copy of Robert's Rules of Order. Bishop Kanouse also acknowledged Pr. Hammer and Hattie's 50th wedding anniversary.

Report of the Nominating Committee
Mr. Dan Whittington presented the ballots for positions currently open, with the committee's nominees:

Ballot A—Synod Treasurer—Elect One

Mr. Michael Weir
Rev. Ginger Georgulas.

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot B--Synod Council, East Texas Northern Louisiana—Elect One

Rev. Stanley Larson

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot C—Synod Council, North Central West Conference—Elect One

Bethann Hamann Vidmar

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot D—Synod Council, Mid Cities Conference—Elect One

Angie Hartmann
Linda Ness

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot E—Synod Council, Waco Conference—Elect One

Peri Segaran

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot F—Synod Council, LYO Lay Male—Elect One

Jeremiah Jackson

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot G—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Female Clergy—Elect One

Rev. Norma Cooper
Rev. Yvonne Keibler
Rev. Debra Loudin-McCann, nominated from the floor.

With no further nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot H—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Ordained Male—Elect One

Rev. Jeffrey Borgwardt
Rev. Russell Vardell
Rev. Joel Berthelson, nominated from the floor.
Rev. Marc Hander, nominated from the floor.
Rev. Steve Kanouse, nominated from the floor.
Rev. Mark Moore, nominated from the floor.

With no further nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot I—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Lay Female, Any Age—Elect One

Stephanie Varnum
Pamela Hendricks
Angela Lee, nominated from the floor.
Ann Hafften, nominated from the floor.
Sandra Thurmer, nominated from the floor.
Parma Kerstin , nominated from the floor.
Jean Irwin, nominated from the floor.

With no further nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot J—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Lay Female Under 35—Elect One

Jennifer Gebhardt
Angela Oslie-Whitfill
Lisa Cockerham, nominated from the floor.
Mariah Sowders, nominated from the floor.

With no further nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot K—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Male Any Age

Ron Gubrud
Todd Hixson

With no additional nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot L—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member--Lay Male under 35

Heath Clicque
Doug Yassen
Dan Nelson, nominated from the floor.
Darin Bronstad, nominated from the floor.

With no further nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Ballot M—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Lay Female or Lay Male of Color or Primary Language other than English

Peri Segaran
Jesus Escamilla
Karen Hixson nominated from the floor.

With no further nominations, nominations were declared closed.

Bishop Kanouse requested a motion to elect by acclamation those running unopposed.

VOTED SA 10.04.03	*To elect by acclamation those running unopposed on ballots B, C, E, and F.*
	APPROVED

Bishop Kanouse led the Assembly in practicing the use of the electronic voting response cards.

Mission Moment
Goal Team D presented a "Dwelling in the Word" Moment from Augsburg Fortress Press on the Book of Faith Initiative by showing a brief video. The video humorously showed the present reality of people who are unfamiliar with the Bible. The church needs to regain engagement with the Book of God, as well as a strategy for the long haul about becoming more fluent with the Words of Scripture.

Goal Team D also presented their purchase of Spark's Children's Study Bibles for children who are victims of abuse and invited attendees to sign the Bibles, underline favorite passages, etc., before the Bibles are distributed to the children.

Keynote Speaker
Pr. Arlen Lloyd introduced Pr. Shannon Jung, welcomed to Amarillo on behalf of the Panhandle Conference and the NT-NL Synod.

Dr. Jung led the group in a Bible study of John 21. Discipleship located between spirituality and religion somewhere between ephemeral and concrete. Hopes that weekend will be transformative. Eating and consumption practices. Encourage outreach as Jesus reached out and then worship practices, following the ninth commandment. Mission and worship at the heart of discipleship. Why do we not hear stories about Jesus cooking? Preparing food can be a spiritual practice. What does it mean that Jesus is cooking here in John 21 with charcoal? What are we hungering for? Passage talks about Jesus fulfilling needs for people.

Bishop Kanouse thanked Dr. Jung for leading us in the Bible study and introduced the Mission Moment from Goal Team E, Pr. Jim Level, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Ft. Worth. The group experienced some excitement about seeing the Spirit in action in articulating new ideas and trying things out in a new way. Are we going to follow where the Spirit is leading us?

Bishop Kanouse announced that the offering this afternoon was over $21,000. Assembly offerings will be used to defray the cost of the container, filled with dry foods, medical supplies, and school supplies, being shipped to Sierra Leone and to support Pr. Kate Warn's ministry. Bishop Kanouse reminded attendees of the two gathering opportunities this evening, a discussion on the Churchwide policy changes and the Churchwide Assembly in August 2009 as well as a contemporary worship service. Bishop Kanouse blessed the meal.
The session adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Session II: Saturday, April 24, 2010

Opening worship for the day began at 8 a.m., led by the Rev. Bonita Knox, Pastor of Trinity, Clovis.

At 8:20, Bishop Kanouse began sharing his vision for the NT-NL Synod. Noting that excitement for the capital campaign that Kairos was exploring was minimal last fall, he described how he was compelled to call together a group of 40 leaders in December to explore a couple of key questions: Is there a future for the NT-NL Synod? And, what we can do together as a Synod that

individual congregations cannot do by themselves? Sharing gifts, training, developing leaders for DiscipleLife emerged as projects that the congregations need to work together to carry out; thus, these projects should be the focus of the Synod.

Additional questions are also worth asking: What things should the Synod stop doing because they are not about carrying out the mission? What new directions should the Synod head in? What if the Synod nurtured pastors to become courageous mission directors and coordinators in their communities, not just in their churches? What if all our members become missionaries in their communities telling about Jesus and taking care of the needs of people outside their church walls? What if we deconstruct the Synod offices and create five mission areas out in the field? What if the Synod existed to equip congregations to go out into the world?
In sum, our current approach has not equipped our congregations to be in the world carrying out our mission. Our Synod needs something new or there's no point of going on. Can we transform churches into mission centers and our members into missionaries?

Report from the Committee on Elections
Elections were held using electronic voting pads with instantaneous results, as follows:
Ballot A--Synod Treasurer--Elect One
Michael Weir 192
Ginger Georgulas 53
Michael Weir declared duly elected.

Ballot D—Mid Cities Conference, Lay Female—Elect One
Angie Hartman 128
Linda Ness 132
Linda Ness declared duly elected.

Ballot G—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member--Female Clergy—Elect One
Norma Cooper, 42%
Yvonne Kiebler, 36%
Debra Loudin-McCann, 22%
Run off election with Norma Cooper and Yvonne Kiebler moving forward.

Ballot H—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member--Male Clergy—Elect One
Marc Hander 70
Mark Moore 19
Joel Berthelson 37
Jeffrey Borgwardt 19
Stephen Kanouse 73
Russell Vardell 47
Run off election with Stephen Kanouse and Marc Hander moving forward.

Ballot I—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member—Lay Female Any Age—Elect One

Angela Lee
Stephanie Varnum 78
Sandra Thurmer 36
Pamela Hendricks
Jean Irwin
Parma Kersten
Ann Hafften

Run-off election with Stephanie Varnum and Sandra Thurmer moving forward

Ballot J—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member—Lay Female under 35—Elect One

Jennifer Gebhardt 26%
Mariah Sowders
Lisa Cockerham 39%
Angela Oslie-Whitfill

Run-off election with Jennifer Gebhardt and Lisa Cockerham moving forward

Ballot K—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member—Male Any Age—Elect One

Ronald Gubrud 53%
Todd Alan Hixson 47%

Ronald Gubrud declared duly elected.

Ballot L—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member—Lay Male Under Age 35—Elect One

Keith Clicque
Dan Nelson
Darin Bronstad 30%
Doug Yassen 27%

Darin Bronstad and Doug Yassen moving forward to run-off election

Ballot M—ELCA Churchwide Assembly Voting Member—Lay Female or Lay Male of Color or Primary Language other than English

Karen Hixson
Jesus Escamilla 47%
Peri Segaran 26%

Jesus Escamilla and Peri Segaran moving forward to run-off election

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Michael Weir presented the audit report for 2009, which included no unusual findings. The auditors found the NT-NL financial statements to be accurate.

Mr. Weir also described updates to the 2010 Spending Plan and 2011 Mission Strategy. In 2009 $1.380 million in mission support was sent to the Synod, and spending was $1.416 million, so

the budget was overspent by $36,000. The good part about the budget last year was that it was not worse. In fact, the NT-NL was the only Synod in the US to give more to Churchwide in 2009 than in 2008 in actual dollar amount contributions. The offering to Churchwide described above does not include the $100,000 given for disaster relief or the $145,000 that we spent for our Sierra Leone missionary and other efforts. Mr. Weir pointed out in one of Pastor Warn's blog postings that her ministry is giving people in Sierra Leone the first opportunity for baptism and communion, even in congregations that have been in existence for many years.

Because 2009 came in so low, the 2010 mission strategy needed to be revised. The revision was first done in January, which is reflected in the book of reports, and included a $54,000 reduction in spending. This reduction resulted in cuts to ministries that are near and dear to many people's hearts. Since our congregational support is down, consequently, the NT-NL support to Churchwide will drop because that is calculated as a percentage of the NT-NL's total congregational support. Mr. Weir explained that the budget eliminated all planned raises and gifts from the budget and pointed out that clergy staff have not had a raise since 2008. Salaries for 2010 and 2011 are also flat. Lay staff also will not receive raises.

Mr. Weir explained that after 2 months, congregational support to the NT-NL Synod is down $47,000, which is the total of the budget cushion. Thus, more severe action to cutting the 2010 spending plan is necessary. The spending plan has been adjusted to show a drop of another $43,000 in congregational support. This drop will necessitate determining another $39,000 in cuts to the 2010 budget, which will come from staff cuts. Actual cuts and re-staffing plans have not yet been determined, but will be considered more carefully over the next few weeks.
Mr. Weir summarized by explaining that not much good is being seen with the current budget problems, but with congregational support and the vision we can sort it all out. God's work,Our hands. Mr. Weir reflected on Jeremiah 29:11, where it is clear that God gives us hope for a plan and a future.

The Bishop announced that amendments to the spending plan must be submitted in writing by 4:00 this afternoon. A lunch forum will be held with the finance committee and treasurer so that people can learn more about the situation.

Attendees asked several questions: Can attendees provide a special offering to help make up the short fall? What percentage do most congregations give to the Synod? Mr. Weir explained that a few congregations give 10% or more, but the average is 4.5% from congregations. Finally, someone asked what is the cap for the contribution to Churchwide Assembly? Bishop Kanouse explained that the Synod is striving for a 50-50 split.

New Business #1
Pastor Kathy Cox reported for the Committee for Reference and Counsel that tow items of business were received by the deadline. There will be one resolution for the Assembly to consider and one memorial for the Assembly to consider.

Bishop Kanouse reminded voters that "resolved" statements are the ones being considered for adoption, not the "whereas" statements. He also reminded voters that they will be voting on the recommendations from the committee, not on the resolution or memorial itself.

Memorial Regarding Rescinding the 2009 Churchwide Ministry Policies
Presenter of the Resolution: Pastor Joel Berthelsen, Hope Lutheran Church, Cedar Hill, Texas

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's constitution states, the ELCA ". . . accepts 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

WHEREAS some people of the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Synod read the scriptural passages regarding same-sex sexual activity to uphold the idea that same-sex sexual activity is not to be practiced and that it is sinful, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Synod of the ELCA memorialize the ELCA to rescind the 2009 Churchwide Assembly's decisions on 8/21/09 titled Ministry Policies.

Pastor Cox explained that the recommendation from the committee is not to adopt the memorial because the national Assembly has already made a decision at this point about the issue.
Pastor Berthelsen, who was the author of the memorial said that when we look at scriptures, they are clear about the issue of homosexuality. Adopting the memorial is not exclusionary or unloving: the right way to minister to people who are breaking the seventh commandment is to point people to the cross of Jesus, not to negate the Scriptural law.

Other speakers commented on the debate about how to read the scriptures. Another pointed out that gay and lesbian people have made faithful contributions to the lives of the congregations and we should allow them to serve among us and to engage in committed relationships. One speaker was concerned about how the seminaries will instruct potential pastors and the implications for politics.

One speaker stated that it is time to move on to other issues. We need to respect people's diverse views and move on together to do the work of Jesus Christ and to carry out the commission.

Another person spoke about Jesus' teachings as being about inclusion, not exclusion, pointing out that Christ extended invitations to tax collectors and Samaritans.

A final speaker pointed out support for Reference and Counsel's recommendation by saying that it reflects the unqualified acceptance of everyone by Christ.

The question was called from the floor.

Bishop Kanouse asked voters to respond to whether they are ready to vote on the recommendation to Memorial #1 from the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

VOTED SA 10.04.04	*to determine if the majority is ready to vote on the recommendation from the Committee on Reference and Counsel for Memorial #1.*
	APPROVED 90%

VOTED SA 10.04.05	*to adopt the recommendation on Memorial #1 from Reference and Counsel committee to not consider.*
	APPROVED 60%

Bishop Kanouse called for a 5-minute stretch moment led by Pr. Ginger Georgulas.

Mission Moment

Pastor Kay Cox and the Goal Team on Strengthening Partnerships pointed out the Mayo Clinic free health assessment available on line and the 2% reduction in health care costs to the congregation when pastors take the assessment. About 65 pastors in the NT-NL still need to take it. The team is set up with computers ready to assist pastors who would like to take the assessment at the Assembly.

Report of the ELCA

Pastor Stephen Bouman brought greetings from Churchwide. In his message, he brought to mind an image of Jacob 's ladder in the rescuers who ascended and descended the stairs on 9-11 to save people. Pr. Bouman pointed out that the world needs disciples and signs of DiscipleLife and DiscipleLove. LIFT, a Churchwide initiative, is looking at the whole ecology of the church, examining questions such as how many seminaries and synods do we have and how many do we need? The NT-NL is leading the way in calling for transformational change. We are on target by asking what God is calling us to do and how we should reconstruct to meet that need. Forty-one new church starts in first two months of this year have occurred nationwide, many of which are new immigrant groups. From Churchwide, $200,000 of direct support is directed to the new congregational starts within the NT-NL Synod, as well as in helping support Rev. Steve Kanouse and Irma Banales.

LIFT is exploring ways to invest in congregations with a vision and support their mission efforts. The road map for mission in the years ahead will require us to go deep into a renewal of our discipleship. We must increase listening to the word and develop a mission based in prayer and the scripture. Being missional in our focus deepens our prayer and care for the scripture. We must listen to our community, God, and our faith families within the church building and work together to carry out our mission. Pr. Bouman concluded with a reflection on 2 Kings 4 and asked what we have in the houses that are our gifts?

Bishop Kanouse thanked Pr. Bouman for his presentation and mentioned a lunch session and afternoon sessions.

Mission Moment

Goal Team on Giving Public Witness for Peace and Justice: Pr. Georgulas and her team explained that the World Hunger appeal last year raised giving to an average of $5.02 per baptized member, and 66 NT-NL congregations set records for giving to this appeal. This appeal is continuing, and support of the Assembly is requested within their home congregations. In addition, an Ethics of Eating and World Hunger session was held this year. In the session, participants learned about the production of food and what Americans typically eat. We each have the ability to bring change to the system through our food choices. Hunger can be ended in our lifetime in the entire world. Pastor Georgulas asked Assembly participants to get politically involved by writing legislators to support the movement to end world hunger. The team has kits available to help members begin to get involved.

Bible Study

Dr. Shannon Jung explored the Practice of Worship. Do we see public worship as a theater performance and identify stage, actors, and audience? Should we be watching a performance during church? How can worship be more engaging? Does the structure of worship shield us from worshipping God? What are we hungry for in worship? What do we want to find? Is it happening? How can it happen? Dr. Jung pointed out that people have a hunger for God and are stunted when they are not in a growing relationship with God. We should explore additional questions: What does it mean to worship God in the way we buy groceries? In other words, how do we worship God daily by being attentive to God—feeling God's love-- in all we do?

Report from the Committee on Elections

Pastor Bob Barndt brought forward the candidates for the six run-off elections, round three.

Ballot N (Previously G)—ELCA Churchwide Voting Member Female Clergy—Elect One

Norma Cooper 52%
Yvonne Kiebler 48%

Declared Norma Cooper elected.

Ballot O (Previously H)—ELCA Churchwide Voting Member Ordained Male Any Age—Elect One

Stephen Kanouse 45%
Marc Hander 55%

Declared Marc Hander elected.

Ballot P (Previously I)—Churchwide Voting Member Lay Female Any Age—Elect One

Stephanie Varnum 57%
Sandra Thurmer 43%

Declared Stephanie Varnum elected.

Ballot Q (Previously J)—Churchwide Voting Member Lay Female Under 35—Elect One

Jennifer Gebhardt 45%
Lisa Cockerham 55%

Declared Lisa Cockerham elected.

Ballot R (Previously L)—Churchwide Voting Member Lay Male Under 35—Elect One

Darin Bronstad 54%
Doug Yassen 46%

Declared Darin Bronstad elected.

Ballot S (Previously M)—Churchwide Voting Member Lay Male or Female of Color or First Language Other Than English—Elect One

Jesus Escamilla 65%
Peri Segaran 35%

Declared Jesus Escamilla elected.

Becky Brakke, Assembly Coordinator, encouraged everyone to visit the bookstore and reminded attendees that the lunch forum groups include ELCA LIFT, Synod Mission Strategy, and several conference meetings.

Bishop Kanouse announced that a whiteboard has been placed in the hallway to allow assembly participants to give responses to the vision of mission he described earlier in the morning. This afternoon the DiscipleLife Festival, will include Pastor Bouman, Youth Ministry, Ethics of Food, Generosity versus Anxiety with Kairos, Millenial Generation, Book of Faith. The Assembly met outside to bless the container being filled with food, medical, educational, and office supplies to send to Sierra Leone.

The Business meeting adjourned at noon and will reconvene at 4:15 Saturday.

Session III: Saturday Afternoon Visioning Session

Youth group leaders opened the session with the order of the day at 4:24, leading the group in the Lord's Prayer. After a creative presentation encouraging assembly participants to look for new ways of being the church, the following questions were asked:

- What would we look like if we tried to figure out God's dream for the church today?
- What would we look like if together we centered our efforts on training pastors to be our leaders for the 21st century?
- What can we learn from others like our brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone about being Christians?

Bishop Kanouse asked Assembly attendees to gather in small groups to answer the following questions: "***what is the one thing we should do together because together we can do it better than we can do it separately?***" Participants were instructed to write their answers on beach balls, toss the balls to other groups, and then have them write their answers on the balls. The next questions to answer were "***What is the one thing that is least important for us to do together as a Synod?***" and "***What is one thing your congregation does better than almost any other congregation, something that you can show others how to do?***"

The Assembly saw a video, “Mission Simple.” The video showed how the missional church trains members to go out into the community to work with people and tell God’s story in compassionate relationships.

Assembly participants were then asked to use their voting pads to respond to questions:

- I believe Jesus is Lord.
- How did you find out about Jesus?
- Do you want others to know about Jesus?
- I believe Jesus is Lord!
- Where do you tell others about Jesus?
- How do you tell others about Jesus?
- What tools could we in the NTNL develop together to tell others about Jesus?
- As a Synod, we are at our best when?
- I believe Jesus is Lord!
- What is most important about our Synod Assemblies?
- What can we most set aside or get rid of as a Synod?
- Leadership of Synod should primarily?
- I am willing to support a funds appeal.

Participants were reminded that the deadline for amendments to the Mission Strategy is Saturday afternoon at 5:30. The Living DiscipleLife Banquet Dinner is Saturday evening.

Stephanie Varnum, Vice President of the Synod, discussed the special offering suggested on Saturday morning, explaining that several members of the Executive Committee met to discuss the idea. They decided that certainly the financial support is welcome and will be appreciated. Even more supportive would be taking the news back home that programs for the Synod need to be supported and that funds are short. We are all in this together. The Synod Council does not want Assembly participants to slight the offering to Sierra Leone because it is also very important.

Saturday Evening: Banquet Dinner and Anniversary Recognitions

The Assembly met for dinner and to recognize a variety of congregational and ordination anniversaries. In addition, Pr. Mel and Hattie Hammer’s 50th wedding anniversary was celebrated. Bishop Kanouse was presented with an official western Bishop’s cowboy hat, and the efforts of the Panhandle Conference’s assembly planning committee were recognized.

Session V: Sunday, August 25, 2010

The meeting began with gathering songs at 8:00 a.m.

The Congregational Renewal Goal Team shared a mission moment, describing the work they have accomplished. Pastor Bill Metting led the group in an interactive "cardio exercise" to draw attention to the decrease in membership in the ELCA. He described the need to renew congregations and refocus on gifts each member has to bring to the congregation and to the mission of the church. This more engaging approach has enlivened his congregation and changed the lives of individual members. The team suggested that the NT-NL Synod should think about growth in ways other than just the numbers.

Final Report of the Committee on Credentials

Helen Beaujour, chair of the Credentials Committee, presented the final count on Assembly attendance, as of 4/25/2010, 8 a.m.

Voting Members Registered Prior to Assembly

Rostered Ministers	106
Lay Persons	185
Total	291

Voting Members Present at Assembly Site

Rostered Ministers	100
Lay Persons	180
Total	280

Report of the Committee on Minutes

Ms. Sandy Gubrud, Chair of the Committee on Minutes, announced that the minutes are in good order thus far.

Report of the Vice President

Ms. Stephanie Varnum, Synod Vice President, presented a resolution to thank Ed Halter for his 22 years of service to the NT-NL Synod as Director of the Mission Partners program. Mr. Halter's daughter was in attendance at the Assembly and received the recognition for her father. Bishop Kanouse also gave her a beach ball as a remembrance of the fun that Mr. Halter brought to the Assembly each year.

VOTED SA 10.04.06	*to approve the resolution thanking Mr. Ed Halter for his years of service to the NT-NL Synod as Director of the Mission Partners Program.*
	APPROVED

Report of the Secretary

Ann Kirch, Synod Secretary, presented the Care and Compensation Guidelines for 2011, described on pages 75-84 in the Book of Reports.

VOTED SA 10.04.07 to approve the Care and Compensation Guidelines for 2011. *APPROVED 94%*

In addition, she presented Resolution SC #1 to amend the synod constitution.

Amendments to the Synod Constitution

The following amendments to the *Constitution for Synods,* having been approved by the Eleventh Churchwide Assembly (August 17-23, 2009) and pertaining to non-mandatory sections of the *Constitution for Synods,* may be adopted by the Synod Assembly on a majority vote under +S18.12.

S7.26 This Synod may establish processes through the Syod Council that permit representatives of mission settings formed with the intent of becoming recognized congregations and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bylaw 10.02.03, to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with +S7.21.

S13.40 Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities

S13.41 Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

S8.42 The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:

f. Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of the requirement.

S7.22 The synod may establish processes that permit retired ordained minister, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the rosters of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with +S7.21.c above. The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and

diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with +S7.21.c. above. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered leaders specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S7.23 The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council shall also have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.

The following amendments to the bylaws for the NT-NL Synod are proposed to enact the provisions of S7.22 above, if adopted. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting (+S18.21.).

S7.22.01 All ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod who are retried and who are in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.

S7.22.02 All ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the rosters of this synod who are on leave from call and who are in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.

S7.22.03 All ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the rosters of this synod who are designated as disabled and who are in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.

VOTED SA 10.04.08 to adopt Resolution SC #1 amending the NT-NL Synod Constitution.
APPROVED 93%

The Secretary's report concluded with a presentation to the Bishop of two bound copies of the 2009 Assembly minutes.

Bishop's Report

Bishop Kanouse updated the Assembly on the effects of the Churchwide Assembly's vote in August 2009 on the sexuality social statement. A few congregations have taken votes or have contemplated taking votes to leave the NT-NL Synod. Bishop Kanouse has spent much time counseling with congregations who have taken votes and who are in discernment, struggling to determine what their future may be. It was noted that our newly forming Chinese mission had

successfully voted to leave the ELCA. The Bishop offered to come to congregations to conduct forums on the Churchwide decisions and thanked Stephanie Varnum for her time in congregational forums.

Pastor Kate Warn sent greetings and thanks for support of her ministry with Bishop Barnett, who arrived Saturday night. The Assembly viewed a video post card taped by Pastor Warn of St. John's Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone in worship. In her message, Pr. Warn stated that "We are one in the bonds of love." Assembly attendees were encouraged to check Pastor Warn's on-line blog to learn about her work.

Bishop Kanouse extended a welcome to Bishop Tom Barnett from the ELC/SL, our NT-NL Companion Synod. Bishop Barnett thanked the NT-NL Synod for the gifts we have sent and for the gift of sending Pastor Kate. He explained that she has acted courageously to spread the word, and the expression "global village" is not a cliché any longer. A volcanic eruption in Iceland is evidence because it caused transportation problems in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Like the bonds among us because of the volcano, we are one in the bonds of love and in the Spirit of God. Bishop Barnett described discussion at the African Lutheran Church Assembly about the recently adopted ELCA Churchwide statement by the ELCA and spoke about how contentious that was. The African Lutheran Church in its Assembly considered breaking bonds with the ELCA, but those calling for maintaining relationship felt they needed to pray with the ELCA to stand firm so that others who have yet to see the light of understanding and inclusiveness will learn it from the ELCA. Bishop Barnett explained that it is this spirit of love that all Christians need to share.

Bishop Kanouse asked two students from Sierra Leone to come forward and recognized their efforts to continue their education in the US. Each student expressed gratitude for the support of the NT-NL in Sierra Leone and for the support of people in their educational endeavors. The Assembly viewed a video of the Jubilee Center in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The sanctuary for the Jubilee Center may be completed in January 2011. Bishop hopes that a trip to Sierra Leone will be organized to attend the dedication of the Jubilee Center and will get information to the congregations as the plans develop.

New Business

Pastor Cathy Cox, Chair of the Committee for Reference and Counsel, presented an amendment to the Mission Strategy for 2011, below. The amendment calls for a reduction of giving to the ELCA Churchwide in order to fund NT-NL Synod projects.

Amendment to Mission 2010 Strategy

Submitted by: Phillip Schrader, Church of the Resurrection, Keller

Decrease the percentage sent to churchwide.

Increase our mission and necessary expenditures to allow our mission's programs to grow.

	Mission
Seminary Support	10,000
Briarwood	10,000
Campus Ministry	10,000
Parish Lay Ministry	2,500
Outreach Grants	8,000
Total	40,500

This would be 6.3% approximately.

He indicated that we, as responsible Lutherans have a sacred duty to our local synod's missions and the necessary funds to feed the sheep and fix the money as Pastor Bouman stated. We are first and foremost responsible to the need of our local missions and their growth and expansion. Briarwood will touch over 900 children this year that should be fed and grown.

Pastor Cox explained that the Committee for Reference and Counsel recommends referring this to Synod Council. The amendment to the mission strategy will not work procedurally. To adjust the amount being given to Churchwide would require a resolution by the assembly because the amount given to Churchwide had been approved as a resolution by a previous assembly. For this reason, the Committee for Reference and Counsel recommended that this resolution not be approved but be sent to the Synod Council for information because it identifies areas that are important to fund (which had been cut previously in order to balance the budget).

Speakers in support of referring this to Synod Council pointed out that we are in partnership with all the ELCA and need to keep our partnerships in balance. We have a reputation of supporting the efforts of Churchwide and strongly support our own ministries. We have not borne the brunt of the reductions that Churchwide has already felt. We need to look carefully at how we support them and to step up our own giving to increase support of mission areas. Congregations can use designated giving to support these areas. We still have capacity in our pockets and in our congregational budgets to meet the demands.

The author of the amendment, Philip Schrader, stated that he feels our synod and the state of the economy require us to focus on ourselves and take care of local needs rather than looking outside. The state of our national economy restricts us. We have a sacred obligation to fund our own ministries within our own state. We as a synod need to take on responsibility for the children we have birthed. We cannot reduce our funding to our own.

VOTED SA 10.04.09	*to approve the recommendation of the Committee for Reference and Counsel on the Amendment to the 2010 Mission Strategy.*
	APPROVED 81%

Report of the Synod Treasurer

Mr. Michael Weir, Synod Treasurer, presented the NT-NL Mission Strategy for 2011.

Voted SA 10.04.10	*to adopt the Mission Strategy for 2011.*
	APPROVED 91%

New Business, Memorial #2

Pastor Cathy Cox of the Committee for Reference and Counsel presented the memorial calling for the NT-NL Synod to declare the Churchwide Assembly's vote on the sexuality social statement to be unconstitutional.

Memorial Regarding Constitutionality of 2009 Churchwide Ministry Policies

Presenter of the Resolution: Mark Johnson

Congregation: Central Lutheran Church, Dallas

WHEREAS "[t]his church accepts 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

WHEREAS The Scriptures demonstrate that God's plan for human sexuality does not permit homosexual conduct, and

WHEREAS "[a]n ordained minister of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to preach, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who

is diligent and faithful in the exercise of the ministry; *and whose life and conduct are above reproach.* An ordained minister shall comply with the constitution of this church," and

WHEREAS "[o]rdained ministers shall be subject to discipline for preaching and teaching in conflict with the faith confessed by this church or willfully disregarding the provisions of the constitution or bylaws of this church" and

WHEREAS the blessing of same sex unions is a human contrivance found nowhere in the Scriptures, and that Martin Luther gravely warned us of the dangers of neglecting the Scriptures, and predicted that "men will, as the ancients did, once more turn to human schemes. . . and again issue laws and regulations to keep the people in the unity of the faith," and

WHEREAS the ELCA 2009 Churchwide Assembly's resolutions permitting the ordination and calling of pastors engaged in homosexual conduct and the blessings of same sex unions are nowhere authorized by scriptural or canonical authorities and are therefore unconstitutional. Moreover, the exercise of the resolutions violates Articles 7.22 and 20.21.01 of the ELCA Constitution. Such resolutions are also incompatible with other scriptural directives in that they have grieved many members of the body of Christ. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod declares the ELCA 2009 Churchwide Assembly's resolutions permitting the ordination and calling of pastors engaged in homosexual conduct and the blessings of same sex unions are not authorized by Scripture or canonical authorities and are therefore unconstitutional. The Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod hereby disavows and disassociates itself from any connection to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly Resolutions "Related to Ministry Policies" adopted on Friday, August 21, 2009, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and declares that it is not bound by them.

Pastor Cox explained the committee's recommendation that the resolution not be considered. A speaker brought a point of order, claiming that the Committee on Reference and Counsel does not have the ability to reject a resolution.

The Bishop ruled that the Synod Constitution does not preclude the committee's using its judgment on procedural questions and explained that it is up to the Assembly to determine whether to go with the recommendation from reference and counsel.

A speaker appealed the ruling of the chair.

VOTED 10.04.11	*to uphold the ruling of the Chair of the Assembly.*
	APPROVED 79%

The Chair's ruling that the Committee for Reference and Counsel may use its judgment on procedural questions to determine a recommendation on memorials and resolutions stands.

The Chair called for people to speak on the committee's recommendation on this business item. Mark Johnson, author of the memorial, addressed the Assembly, saying that there is a need for dialog on the Churchwide Assembly's vote on the social statement. Many feel that Churchwide actions were accomplished through a defective process and asked that we not silence brothers and sisters who need to speak about the process.

Another speaker asked why the committee is making this recommendation.

Pastor Cox, Chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, explained that no synod has the authority to call the Churchwide Assembly actions unconstitutional. We cannot disassociate ourselves without disciplinary action. This type of action would give the Synod unprecedented power over individual congregations.

Some speakers felt that the rules for bringing forward memorials should be disregarded so the resolution can be passed. The details can be worked out later. This is a deep issue of faith, a confessional issue for us.

Other speakers spoke of Jesus' love and asked that we abstain from this discussion and take a look at people with a variety of types of disabilities or differences.

VOTED SA 10.04.12	*To call the question of whether to end discussion on Memorial #2.*	*APPROVED 90%*

VOTED SA 10.04.13	*To adopt the recommendation of the committee to not consider Memorial #2.*	*APPROVED 60%*

Bishop Kanouse thanked people for their heartfelt deliberations.

Mission Moment

Matt Cleaver, leader of Goal Team B, Youth and Families spoke about how blowing things up is a good way to get the attention of youth. He described the network of youth leaders in the synod who gave him tools he needed to be a successful youth leader in his congregation. This is something that the group did better together than he could have done alone. The greatest ministry we have to offer is not programs, but people in the congregations. The people are the ones called

to go to the mission field of adolescence. We should work to build up the church leaders who are back home in the churches with the youth of their congregations the other 50 weeks of the year. The NT-NL Synod needs to be rethinking new and innovative ways to be serving our communities.

Report of the Assembly Planner

Becky Brakke announced that the 2011 Assembly will be back in the Metroplex the week after Easter, April 29-May 1, 2011. Arrangements at the Irving Convention Center are pending, and Rev. Phil Heinze will be the chair of the Assembly Committee.

Bishop Kanouse announced that he will be making presentations at the 2010 Assembly available on the NT-NL website. Assembly recessed at 10:05 to prepare for worship.

The Assembly concluded with worship and the Blessing and Order for Closing the Assembly at 12 noon, Sunday, April 25, 2010. Bishop Kanouse preached, Pastor Jane Mar presided, assisted by Caleb Geleske.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Kirch
NT-NL ELCA Synod Secretary