

Minutes

**Twenty Fourth Annual Assembly
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Mission Area
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Meeting: April 29-May 1, 2011
Hurst Convention Center, Hurst, TX**

Session I, Friday, April 29, 2011

Call to Order

Assembly participants gathered for worship using the jazz setting and the Order for Opening an Assembly. Bishop Kanouse presided with Pr. Jane Mar assisting. Mr. Ken Medema and jazz musicians, a bell choir, and jazz choir accompanied provided the music.

Business Session I

Bishop Kanouse opened the first business session at 3:50 p.m. by asking Pr. Phil Heinze to come forward to welcome the Assembly to Hurst TX. Pr. Phil asked everyone to leave their phones “on” so that they can check the social networking sites for updates regularly. The Assembly will provide several opportunities to go out into the community to serve.

Bishop Kanouse introduced Ken Medema, musician; Pr. Kendra Mohn, Bible study leader; Pr. Kate Warn, Sierra Leone Pastor-in Residenced; and Mr. Carlos Pena, ELCA Vice President.

Preliminary Report of the Credentials Committee

Ms. Dawn Lloyd, chairperson of the credentials committee, reported.

Committee on Credentials Preliminary Report

Day: Friday, April 29, 2011

Time: 3:45 p.m.

Rostered ministers 82

Lay professional 4

Lay persons 143

Total 229

Bishop Kanouse declared a quorum present.

Bishop Kanouse walked participants through a practice session with the electronic voting response cards.

Adoption of Agenda and Recognition of New Synodically Authorized Worshiping Congregations (SAWCs)

AIM Stephanie Varnum, Vice President of the NT-NL Mission Area, presented the agenda for the Assembly, as printed in the Book of Reports, section A, with a few corrections involving room locations, and the addition of a session with ELCA Vice President, Carlos Pena.

VOTED SC 11.04.01 To adopt the Agenda for the Assembly.
APPROVED

Vice President Varnum recognized Abiding Grace Lutheran Mission in NE Tarrant County and Umoja International Church, worshipping at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Dallas as new SAWCs in the NT-NL Mission Area.

Adoption of Assembly Committees and Standing Rules

Vice President Varnum presented the membership of the Standing Committees of the Assembly, as printed in section A of the Book of Reports:

Reference and Counsel

- NCW--Kari Voight, Chair
- RLP--Rev. Ernie Barr
- NCE--Rev. Peder Sandager
- NED--Rev. Julio Cruz
- SDA--Timothe Mast
- CTX--Susan Williams
- MID--Tom Ness

Credentials Committee

- PAN--Dawn Lloyd, Chair
- CTX--Rev. Laird Duran
- GFW--Rev. Douglas Shoelles

Minutes Committee

- CTX--Karen Bentsen, Chair
- PAN--Rev. Craig Sagebiel
- PAN--Paul Stavlo

Elections Committee

- ETNL--Lynn Winn, Chair
- GFW--Blake Naranjo
- PAN--Cecil Biggers
- WAC--Rev. Paul Krupicka
- GFW--Rev. David Kiel
- ETNL--Erin Farley

VOTED SA 11.04.02 To adopt the membership of the 2011 Assembly Standing Committees.
APPROVED

Ms. Varnum presented the Standing Rules of the Assembly, as printed in section A of the Book of Reports, on behalf of the Mission Council.

VOTED SA 11.04.03

To adopt the Standing Rules of the Assembly.

APPROVED

Bishop Kanouse introduced the Assembly Parliamentarian, Pr. Mel Hammer, and asked him to come forward. This being his last year to serve as Parliamentarian, Pr. Hammer was honored with a gift to express gratitude for his many years of service to the Assembly as Parliamentarian.

Report of the Nominations Committee and Further Nominations

Pr. Pat Dietrich, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the Nominations for Election. Nominations from the floor were added. Bishop Kanouse introduced the nominees as their names were called.

Ballot A, Panhandle Conference

Beulah Mattingly

Myrna Lois Biggers

There being no additional nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot B, Rolling Hills Conference, Lay Male

Steve Hogan

Jeremiah Heydt was nominated from the floor.

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot C, Mid-Cities Conference, Ordained

Rev. Joel Burkholder

Rev. Pedro Portillo was nominated from the floor.

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot D, Central Texas Conference, Lay Female

Karen Bentsen

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot E, LYO, Female

Megan McBride

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot F, Consultation Committee, Ordained

Pr. Bonita Knox

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot G, Consultation Committee, Layperson

Jamie Brown

Steve Hogan

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot H, Discipline Committee, Ordained

Rev. Ginger Georgulas

Rev. Suzanne Guinn

. Rev. Mark Moore

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

Ballot I, Discipline Committee, Lay

Anna Geleske

John A Lautner

Gail Srednicki

There being no further nominations, Bishop Kanouse declared nominations for this position closed.

VOTED SA 11.04.04

To elect those running unopposed (Ballots D, E, and F) by acclamation.

APPROVED

Bible Study

After enjoying an inspirational musical interlude by Ken Medema, the Assembly focused on a Bible study based on Mark 16:15 led by Pr. Kendra Mohn. The study focused on the question, “Are you called to preach?” Since the Great Commission applies to all of us, we have all been asked to preach. “Preach the Gospel at all times; use words if necessary.” The group was given a few minutes to discuss a way someone preached the Gospel to them without using words and how they knew it was the Gospel and not someone just being kind. She also asked the group to

consider how they are uniquely gifted to preach the Gospel without words and how people they are preaching to will know that it's the Gospel. In some ways, preaching without words is more challenging today than it was before because the meaning of symbols has changed. We should ask ourselves how we've been gifted to preach the Good News today, remind ourselves of our Baptisms every day, and go out and preach the Word.

Introduction of DiscipleLife Alive! and Dinner

Ken Medema presented a musical interlude before Bishop Kanouse spoke about the need for our church to transform itself to become relevant in this time. The questions, "What does it mean to be "synod"?" and "what can we do better together than separately?" are guiding questions in our transformation. The word "synod" is an outmoded word with mostly negative connotations for many. We are not about "synod," but we are people in mission, and we have a purpose that is more significant together than when we work separately. We are on the front lines of mission, and we can be equipped in new ways. The DiscipleLife Alive! campaign will provide us with an opportunity to lift up leaders and equip them to bring the Good News to people today in relevant ways. DiscipleLife Alive! will allow us to move into the future.

Dinner and opportunity to make a financial or leadership commitment to DiscipleLife Alive!

Worship

The day ended with an emergent worship in the Taize Setting. The service was led by Intern Paul Moody of Calvary Lutheran Church—Richland Hills.

Session II, Saturday, April 30, 2011

The Assembly opened with a Bible study led by Pr. Kendra Mohn, who talked about responding to a call—the time to take action and to spread the Gospel through our actions. Pr. Mohn asked, "What is one way for a congregation to reach out to help in Macedonia (or our Mission field)?" Ken Medema performed a musical interlude during which time Assembly participants came to the microphones to share what their congregations have been doing to reach out to help build relationships in their mission fields.

Celebration of DiscipleLife Alive! Commitments

Bishop Kanouse led a celebration of the DiscipleLife Alive! commitments made at the dinner Friday evening. The group then viewed a video explaining the goals of the MEF Endowment for Mission, which will consist of \$1,000,000 and will be used to form leaders within our mission territory, including the formation of satellite mission centers throughout the area, bringing in speakers of national renown to share strategies and support leaders, and to endow scholarships to support continued development of leadership formation.

Commitments to-date were announced: the offering Friday was \$7,586, and dinner commitments of \$47,000, for a total commitment of about \$730,000, which includes commitments made and gifts given before the Assembly.

Greetings from Sierra Leone

Pr. Kate Warn and several of those who traveled to Sierra Leone in February 2011 presented an update on the mission work that is on-going in Sierra Leone. Pr. Warn thanked everyone for their support of her ministry. She extended greetings from Bishop Barnett of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Sierra Leone (ELCSL), who could not attend the Assembly this year because of his involvement in 50th anniversary of independence in Sierra Leone.

Pr. Kate Warn showed photos of scenes in Sierra Leone from several of the 23 Lutheran congregations in that country, all of which Pr. Warn has visited. One example is St. John Lutheran Church, where the road to the church is challenging, but the community vibrant. The church operates an elementary school and is a lay-led church of faith. The members preach, worship, and pass on the faith, marked by the priesthood of all believers. The congregation has few resources, but they have the faith and the spiritual disciplines of worship, fasting, and Bible study. God has been at work guiding and sustaining the congregations in the ELCSL, which is an emerging church only 22 years old.

Pr. Kate Warn pointed out that it is important to recognize how our relationship with the ELCSL is a mutual relationship. The ELCSL has much to share with us in the NT-NL in our mutual partnership so that we can tell the fullest story possible from perspectives that we cannot yet hear. We are richer for the sharing of faith together. In taking the risk to let our relationship grow deeper, we create a place where the Good News can grow.

Those participating in the consultation visit from the NT-NL shared stories about their walk in faith during their visit with those in the ELCSL. They included Stephanie Varnum, Pr. Mar, Pr. Geleske, Pr. McCann, and others. Bishop Kanouse shared that Anthony Tucker from Sierra Leone has learned that he received a scholarship to UTA. Alfred Gorvie is also here from Sierra Leone, supported by First Lutheran Church in Longview, and will be graduating this semester and getting married soon to newly-ordained Pr. Cheryl Walenta.

Pr. Scott Zimmerer presented a mission moment about the Mission Endowment Fund and presented a check for Trinity Lutheran and Faith Lutheran in Wichita Falls to provide a day camp in the community.

Business Session II

Lynn Winn, Chair of the Elections Committee, prepared the Assembly for the next round of elections. The Bishop reminded the group that positions for three ballots, where nominees were running unopposed, were elected by acclamation on Friday.

Ballot A, Panhandle Conference

Beulah Mattingly 37%
Myrna Lois Biggers 63%
Myrna Lois Biggers was elected.

Ballot B, Rolling Hills Conference, Lay Male

Steve Hogan 41%
Jeremiah Heydt 59%
Jeremiah Heydt was elected.

Ballot C, Mid-Cities Conference, Ordained

Rev. Joel Burkholder 32%
Rev. Pedro Portillo 68%
Rev. Pedro Portillo was elected.

Ballot G, Consultation Committee, Layperson

Jamie Brown 45 votes
Steve Hogan 179 votes
Steve Hogan was elected.

Ballot H, Discipline Committee, Ordained (Elect Two)

Rev. Ginger Georgulas 55
Rev. Suzanne Guinn 47
Rev. Rev. Mark Moore 42
Rev. Ginger Georgulas and Rev. Suzanne Guinn elected.

Ballot I, Discipline Committee, Lay (Elect Two)

AnnaGeleske 76
John A Lautner 11
Gail Srednicki 54
Anne Geleske and Gail Srednicki elected.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Michael Weir, NT-NL Mission Council Treasurer, presented the results of the audit, the outcome of last year's budget, and the Mission Plan for the upcoming year. The 2010 audit was

rated “unqualified” and included three funds. The fourth fund, DiscipleLife Alive! is a new fund that will be added to the audit next year. However, auditors did preliminary work with the DiscipleLife Alive! fund this year to prepare for next year’s audit.

Mr. Weir reported that the NT-NL survived 2010 financially! Congregational support decreased significantly due, perhaps in part, to dissatisfaction with Churchwide actions in 2009 and a poor economy. He noted that last year’s financial support was the worst of the past decade. Actual 2010 giving ended down \$19,000, with the surplus now standing at \$35,000. The NT-NL reduced support to Churchwide, cut staff positions, and reduced organizational support. He reminded the Assembly that during the year, the entire spending plan was rewritten. The full report is found in section B of the Book of Reports.

The DiscipleLife 2012 Mission Strategy will mirror that of 2011, with a small increase in salaries and ELCA Churchwide support moving to 47.5%. The mission strategy is printed in the Assembly materials. Amendments to the Mission Strategy need to be submitted to the secretary by 5:30 this afternoon. Mr. Weir reminded participants that a proposed increase should be balanced with a proposed reduction in another area. The proposal is included in section C of the Book of Reports

Bishop Kanouse, assisted by Irma Banales, recognized pastoral anniversaries of 20, 25, and 30 years of service in ministry. Pastors celebrating these anniversary years were called to the stage to receive a certificate.

Report of the ELCA

Mr. Carlos Pena, Vice President of the ELCA Council, greeted the Assembly. Mr. Pena explained his role as Vice President, which is a volunteer position that includes activities both in the United States and abroad. He shared his story of Hurricane Ike in Galveston and the help he received during recovery from his fellow Lutherans through Lutheran Disaster Response. One weekend, 400 Lutherans arrived to help people in Galveston clean up and set things back up. He saw “God’s Work, Our Hands” in action and understood the call to serve in Christ very tangibly. People in Galveston felt the love of Christ through the help extended and the love of God embodied in the strangers who showed up to help that day. Mr. Pena also thanked Becky Brakke, who is serving on the ELCA Churchwide Council. He presented a video greeting from Presiding Bishop Hansen, who described the work of the ELCA this year, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Worship

A Spanish-language Saturday Eucharist and worship service was led by Pr. Pedro Portillo of Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria de Guadalupe in Irving. The sermon was preached in Spanish with the English language translation projected on the screen and sent through cell phones.

Afternoon activities allowed participants to go out into the community and serve. Activities included assisting with a canned food drive, coffee shop Bible studies, sorting food at the Tarrant County food bank, building ramps with the Texas Ramp project, working on updates at the Presbyterian night shelter and the Union Gospel Mission. On-site activities included a blood drive, assembling breakfast packets for the night shelter, writing notes of encouragement for those staying at the Gospel Mission, and conversations with Pr. Kate Warn and VP Carlos Pena. The evening event was a dinner banquet. Pr. Phil Heinze served as Master of Ceremonies with entertainment supplied by Ken Medema. The recipients of the 2011-2012 Fund for Leaders Scholarships were announced, and the two new SAWCs, congregational anniversaries, and leaders' anniversaries with 35 or 40 years and more were recognized.

The closing worship was the Holden Evening Prayer, which was held outside the convention center on the patio at 9 p.m.

Session III, Sunday, May 1, 2011

Business Session III

The business session began promptly at 9:00 a.m. with announcements from the Bishop, who opened the session with prayer.

Credentials Report

Ms. Dawn Lloyd, Chair of the Credentials Committee, presented the final credentials report:

Committee on Credentials Final Report

Day: May 1, 2011

Time: 8:45 a.m.

Voting Members Present at Assembly Site:

Rostered Ministers	98
Lay Professionals	5
Lay Persons	176
Total	<u>279</u>

Registered Visitors 139

Committee on Minutes Report

Ms. Karen Bentsen, Chair of the Committee on Minutes, announced the committee has found the minutes of the Assembly thus far to be accurate and complete.

Vice President's Report

AIM Stephanie Varnum thanked Mission Council members who are going off the council this year and welcomed those who are coming on for the upcoming year. They will be installed and recognized at the closing liturgy.

Resolution in Support of the DiscipleLife Alive! Initiative

Vice President Varnum brought forward the resolution in support of DiscipleLife Alive! explaining that many members across NT-NL have been in prayer about how best to follow God's lead to spread the Good Word. The DiscipleLife Alive! initiative will enable the NT-NL to better work together by developing leaders to serve.

WHEREAS we live our days surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses-our forebears and ancestors in faith who answered the call "to run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1); and

WHEREAS we believe that *this is our moment and our time* to lay aside every weight that might constrain us and run the very same race with them and with all the faithful, "looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (v2); and

WHEREAS we feel the urgency and necessity of meeting the challenges of this new century with a refreshed zeal for discipleship, leadership and apostleship expressed through our DiscipleLife; and

WHEREAS we wish to answer the call of God and of history to rise to this moment and to engage this race with energy and determination; therefore be it

RESOLVED that we the people of the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Mission Area, in thanksgiving for the Word of grace and love that we have received in Jesus, embrace the vision and plan of DiscipleLife Alive! pledging to work tirelessly, prayerfully, and faithfully, to accomplish its vision of Leadership Formation for DiscipleLife among us for the sake of the world we are called to serve.

<i>VOTED SA 11.04.05</i>	<i>To adopt the Resolution in Support of the DiscipleLife Alive! Initiative.</i>
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APPROVED

Secretary's Report

Secretary Ann Kirch presented Bishop Kanouse with two copies of the Minutes of the 2010 Assembly. She then brought forward the Care and Compensation Guidelines for 2012 for a vote, as printed in section C of the Assembly Book of Reports.

VOTED SA 11.04.06 To adopt the Care and Compensation Guidelines for 2012.

APPROVED

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Michael Weir presented the Mission Strategy Budget for 2012 for adoption, explaining that an amendment to the Budget had been proposed, and called the Chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel to explain its recommendation for the amendment. Ms. Kari Voight presented the amendment to the budget, which proposed decreasing Churchwide support, and cutting salary increases, and increasing program support.

Ms. Voight, Chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, explained that the committee recommends that the amendment be referred to the Mission Council as information. Mr. Clique, author of the budget amendment, explained that he is aware of state employees and teachers who will experience salary cuts because of state budget problems. He feels that this is not the time to increase staff salaries. Ms. Voight explained that the amendment is unconstitutional because the constitution requires the NT--NL to be in conversation with Churchwide about our level of support. Our consultation with them on this matter has already occurred for the upcoming year, so we are not able at this time to adjust that amount as the amendment has proposed, according to our constitution.

VOTED SA 11.04.07 To adopt the recommendation from the Committee of Reference and Counsel that the proposed amendment to the 2012 Mission Strategy Budget be referred to the Mission Council as information.

APPROVED

122 voters were in favor of the recommendation of the committee; 73 voters were opposed; and 7 voters abstained from voting.

Mr. Weir then brought forward the 2012 Mission Strategy Budget as printed in section C of the Book of Reports, on behalf of the Mission Council for a vote by the Assembly.

VOTED SA 11.04.08

To adopt the 2012 Mission Strategy Budget.

APPROVED

163 voted in favor of adopting the Mission Strategy Budget; 29 voted against; and 3 abstained from voting.

New Business

Ms. Kari Voight, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee brought forward 3 resolutions, which are actions that the NT-NL intends to take. The Assembly has no memorials to consider this year. The Committee for Reference and Counsel will provide a recommendation for each resolution.

Ms. Voight presented the first resolution, the Resolution Regarding Bullying, Harassment, and other Violence, and explained that the committee recommends that the resolution be adopted.

New Business #1

Resolution Regarding Bullying, Harassment, and other Violence

Presenters of the Resolution:

Pastor Virginia Georgulas, retired

Pastor Charles Hubbard, Gloria Dei, Garland

WHEREAS “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (1Cor. 12:26); and

WHEREAS in the *ELCA Social Statement on Education* (2007) we declared, “The ELCA expects communities of learning and teaching to be safe places. We recognize that school safety is an issue for all students, staff, and teachers. Unfortunately, incidents of bullying, intimidation, and other forms of violence are not unusual. We affirm that personal safety and security are essential for optional teaching and learning”; and

WHEREAS people of all ages and from all walks of life can experience bullying, harassment and related forms of violence, but these are frequently perpetrated on the most vulnerable – the elderly, those with disabilities, those with perceived differences; and

WHEREAS increased media attention has made us acutely aware of tragic consequences (including youth suicide) if steps are not taken to prevent bullying, harassment, and other related forms of violence; and

WHEREAS the voice of the church is a powerful witness to the life-affirming Gospel when it

addresses issues of race, economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical ability, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Mission Area encourages new partnerships among our congregations, the synods, the Churchwide organization, outdoor ministries, campus ministries, Lutheran School Associations, Lutherans Concerned/North America, Lutheran Social Services, together with governmental organizations, public schools, the National Education Association, counseling centers and other appropriate organizations in order to support and offer preventative programs addressing bullying, harassment, and other related violence, especially with higher risk populations; and be it further

RESOLVED that these partnerships be encouraged to create or join with existing preventative programs which:

- a. utilize positive, inclusive, empowering and developmentally appropriate materials,
- b. raise participant's awareness about the issue,
- c. seek to change bystander behavior into ally behavior,
- d. create partnerships between youth and adults, and be it further

RESOLVED that these partnerships seek funding for these efforts from a combination of existing funds and new funding sources, and be it finally

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Mission Area forward a copy of this resolution as adopted to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as information.

Pr. Ginger Georgulas, presenter of the resolution, spoke in favor of it. She recognizes the need for a cultural change and urged everyone to vote in favor. Pr. Chuck Hubbard noted that Facebook and other electronic communication sources are also used as methods as harassment. In addition, people in public seem not to hesitate to use foul and insulting language. We need to change the tone of our public discourse in our homes and in our churches and community. We also need to develop a strategy for how we would intervene as bystanders witnessing episodes of bullying. A speaker from the floor pointed out Christ's command to love each other. When we allow bullying to occur, we allow the bully to think this is acceptable behavior, and that is not in itself acceptable.

An amendment to the resolution was proposed and seconded that the language regarding "higher risk populations" be stricken. Pr. Ginger Georgulas explained that a higher risk population is more vulnerable and that we should help those most in need when we are trying to change a trend. Other speakers pointed out that bullying anyone is unacceptable. Another speaker pointed out that the language indicates we are to lend a hand to those who are not able to defend

themselves, but we are also to defend anyone who is being bullied. Jesus called on us to care for each other, but pointed out that he called for special care for widows and orphans. As Christians, we provide extra special care to those in need. He argued that including the language simply points out that we acknowledge this group exists and needs our special care.

VOTED SA 11.04.09

To amend the Resolution Regarding Bullying, Harassment, and other Violence, to strike the language referring to “higher risk populations.”

DEFEATED

A motion was made to consider the recommendation of the Committee to adopt the resolution.

VOTED SA 11.04.10

To adopt the Resolution Regarding Bullying, Harassment, and other Violence.

APPROVED

184 voted in favor of the resolution; 8 voted against; and 7 abstained.

New Business #2

Resolution Affirming “Bread or Stones”

(A Resolution of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference)

Presenter of the Resolution: Pastor Dale M. Farley, Messiah, Monroe LA

WHEREAS the 41st Annual Assembly of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference, on March 15, 2011, adopted the resolution “Bread or Stones”; and

WHEREAS the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Mission Area of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a member judicatory of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference; and

WHEREAS the resolution adopted by the Annual Assembly of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference invited the member judicatories to pass similar resolutions at their respective judicatory legislative gatherings; and

WHEREAS the principles and action set forth in the resolution “Bread Or Stones” is consistent with the mission of the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Mission Area, as we seek ways to let the living Christ live in and through us by embracing and cherishing children as our Lord did in His earthly ministry; and

WHEREAS the Task Force on Public Policy of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference bears

the primary responsibility for developing and crafting a strategy to address the raising of quality of life indicators for children in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS the task Force on Public Policy is required to report to the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference on their progress in implementing the resolution “Bread or Stones” at the September, 2011, meeting of the Board, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Mission Area of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, affirm the resolution titled “Bread or Stones” adopted by the 41st Annual Assembly of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Mission Area, through the Office of the Bishop, move to find and appoint a member of this Mission Area to serve on the Task Force on Public Policy of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference that will develop a strategy to address the goals stated in the resolution titled “Bread or Stones” as quickly as possible.

Ms. Voight, Chair of the Committee of Reference and Counsel, explained the resolution and the committee’s recommendation that the resolution be adopted as edited.

Pr. Dale Farley, presenter of the resolution, explained that Louisiana is facing a crisis in providing only 10% of the slots needed for children eligible for early childhood programs like Head Start. A lot of work needs to be done in that state, which is currently ranked in the bottom 10 in the nation in the Kids Count indicators.

<i>VOTED SA 11.04.11</i>	<i>To adopt the Resolution Affirming “Bread or Stones” (A Resolution of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference)</i>
<i>APPROVED</i>	

199 voters approved adoption of the resolution, and 3 disapproved.

Ms. Voight then presented Resolution #3, regarding Congregational Support for LSPS (Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest). The committee on reference and counsel recommends that the resolution be adopted as edited.

New Business #3
Resolution Regarding Congregational Support for LSPS

Presenters of the Resolution:

Pastor Vicki Taylor, Lord of Life, Glenn Heights
Pastor Ernest Barr, Faith, Wichita Falls
Pastor Kathryn Cox, New Hope, Keller
Pastor Violeta Erickson, Walnut Hill, Dallas
Pastor Suzanne Guinn, Chaplain, Lutheran Sunset Ministries
Pastor Doris Harris, St. John, Dallas
Pastor Janet Kraatz, Faith, Fort Worth
Pastor Charles Hubbard, Gloria Dei, Garland

WHEREAS The Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest (LSPS) was created in 1975 to meet the special needs and gifts of theological education in the southwest, taking into account the unique demographic, inter-cultural and linguistic aspects of our area; and

WHEREAS LSPS is a program of theological education that offers an inter-cultural perspective through the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program, and serves the three Texas synods as well as others in Minnesota, Washington state, Arizona, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Arkansas and North Carolina; and

WHEREAS “just as the context of the ELCA’s mission is diverse, so also are those who come to be prepared to serve that mission: candidates young and old; candidates just out of college and candidates with a variety of work and life experience; single candidates and candidates with families; candidates who carry high debt loads and work to support themselves and their families while they prepare for ministry ... candidates who are mobile and candidates who are bound to particular places and communities; candidates who bring a variety of perspectives as women and men, as members of the dominant culture, and as members of various racial and ethnic communities ... ” (1993 Churchwide Assembly); and

WHEREAS the ELCA needs to provide options in theological education that are responsive to the varied circumstances in the lives of ministry candidates; and

WHEREAS LSPS has more than 140 M.Div. graduates, has served more than 180 M.Div. students, and currently has ten TEEM students, having graduated 14 TEEM students since 2003; and

WHEREAS the economy of funding seminary education has changed, with the percentage of theological education expenses funded through the ELCA and synods dropping from 37 to 20 percent between 1988 and 2007, and LSPS has suffered significant “downsizing” due to the recession and crisis in funding theological education;
And

WHEREAS our desire to share the Gospel with all in our communities has not diminished, and

the Texas population is now almost 38% “Hispanic or Latino”, with much higher percentages of “Hispanic or Latino” population in cities; and

WHEREAS the unique Lutheran emphasis on grace is needed and welcomed by all people including Hispanics in the southwest; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the 2011 Assembly of the Northern Texas—Northern Louisiana Mission Area encourage all congregations of our mission territory to place LSPS in their annual budgets.

Pr. Vicki Taylor spoke in favor of the LSPS resolution. She emphasized the great value and blessing of the intercultural components of the program and asked that individual churches wholeheartedly support that program. She asked those who have been supported by LSPS to stand, and many of those in the Assembly stood.

Pr. Jay Alanis, Director of the LSPS addressed the Assembly, thanking them for their support and explaining the current budget deficit in the “undesignated funds” category. Bishop Kanouse pointed out that the DiscipleLife Alive! fund will help to support the TEEM program in our mission area, which is a program funded by LSPS.

One speaker offered an amendment changing “territory” to “area.” She feels we need to be consistent and that we need to use language that is accepting and open rather than a word like “territory” which can have a negative connotation. The amendment was seconded by another speaker.

<i>VOTED SA 11.04.12</i>	<i>To change the word “territory” in the resolution to “area.”</i>
<i>APPROVED</i>	

The vote on the resolution was called.

<i>VOTED SA 11.04.13</i>	<i>To adopt the Resolution Regarding Congregational Support for LSPS.</i>
<i>APPROVED</i>	

175 voters favored approving the resolution; 22 were against; and 4 abstained.

Ms. Voight presented a resolution from the Committee, a resolution asking people who helped with the Assembly planning to stand for thanks and applause. Bishop Kanouse thanked Ms. Voight and the committee for their service.

Pastor Charles Hubbard announced that \$6.91 per person in the NT-NL was given last year to World Hunger Relief, making our area one of the highest giving areas per capita.

Ms. Karen Bentsen, chair of MEF Board, presented Beulah Hyatt of First Sagrada Familia \$1,000 for the Christian Education program.

The business meeting adjourned at 10:25.

Worship

The closing worship service was a Western Worship setting and included a Remembrance of the Departed this last year. In addition, those elected were installed. The service ended with the Order for the Closing of the Assembly. The Assembly dismissed at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Kirch
NT—NL Mission Area Secretary