



# Preliminary Minutes

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Tenth Biennial Churchwide Assembly  
August 6–11, 2007—Chicago, Illinois

## Plenary Session Nine

Friday, August 10, 2007

2:00 P.M.—5:30 P.M.

The ninth plenary session of the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was called to order by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson in Exhibition Hall A at Navy Pier, Chicago, Ill., on Friday, August 10, 2007, at 2:01 P.M. Central Daylight Time. He invited the assembly to rise and sing “Behold, How Pleasant.”

### Opening Remarks

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked the assembly to approve some changes to the agenda for the session. He proposed the following sequence: Bible study, a greeting from The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, speeches by the three remaining nominees for secretary, the fourth ballot for secretary, a Dwelling in the Word moment, the report on the fourth ballot for secretary, continuation of consideration of the social statement on education, consideration of memorials, action on the budget, a greeting from the Lutheran Youth Organization, a report from the young adult convocation, a greeting from the Women of the ELCA, presentation of the *Servus Dei* medal to Secretary Lowell G. Almen, and a litany of thanksgiving for 20 years of this church. The assembly gave its unanimous consent to the proposed changes in the agenda.

### Bible Study

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited Ms. Connie D. Thomas, a member of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Chicago, to return to the stage to introduce the Bible study leader for Plenary Session Nine, the Rev. Timothy J. Wengert, Ministerium of Pennsylvania professor at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Ms. Thomas recounted a number of Professor Wengert’s accomplishments, including his service as a member of the Lutheran-United Methodist Church dialogue, the Lutheran World Federation conversation with the world Mennonite churches, and the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality. Ms. Thomas announced that the focus of Professor Wengert’s Bible study would be Galatians 5. As preparation, Ms. Thomas read Galatians 5:1-2, 6-7, 13-16, and 18-24.

Professor Wengert began the Bible study by saying, “We confess that we are in bondage to sin or captive to sin. We have all said those words as part of the service for confession and forgiveness. Well, Paul and I have good news for those of you captive and in bondage to sin. In Christ you are free. Free from sin, free from law, free from death, free from the devil and evil,

free from guilt and shame, free from doubt and despair, free from working your way into God’s good graces. You are free.”

Professor Wengert pointed out that Paul begins Galatians chapter 5 with these words: “For freedom Christ has set us free.” This verse meant so much to Martin Luther that he changed his name to “Luther” from “Ludher,” thus making reference to the Greek word for a free man, *elutherius*. We are “Elutherians,” Professor Wengert declared. We are free. But now that we are free from doing anything, what are we going to do? This question, he said, is the key to Galatians chapter 5 and to truly Christian ethics.

Paul’s first answer to the question of what to do is “Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” Professor Wengert argued that the world always has been, and still is, full of people who want to make Christians captive to some law or other. In Paul’s case, it was those who wanted to make Christians captive to the biblical law of circumcision. In Luther’s time, leaders wanted to keep people captive through guilt, making them earn forgiveness. Today, according to a recent poll, almost half of U.S. Lutherans believe that they are saved by their works and moral rectitude. Luther’s insight was that Christians are saved by God’s grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone, Professor Wengert reminded the assembly. Christian freedom never can be used as an excuse to impose any law on Christians as a means of salvation.

Paul’s second response to the question can be found in verse 13, Professor Wengert indicated: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence.” Freedom is not an excuse for Christians to harm their neighbors; instead freedom allows Christians to be slaves to one another through love. This verse, Professor Wengert stated, became the theme of Luther’s essay, “The Freedom of a Christian.” In the essay he articulated a seeming paradox: “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” In other words, Christians are free to imitate Christ by serving their neighbors.

Professor Wengert went on to say that Paul’s third insight into the Christian life of freedom contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruits of the Spirit, comparing examples of self-indulgence with Christ’s own life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, generosity, and self-control. These fruits arise not from commands and coercion but from faith and trust in Christ alone.

Professor Wengert referred to section six of the *Formula of Concord* in regard to works: “However, when people are born again through the Spirit of God, and set free from the law, that is, liberated from its driving powers and driven by the Spirit of Christ, they do everything, insofar as they are reborn, from a free

and merry spirit.”

Professor Wengert reiterated: “Now that you are free, what are you going to do—now that you do not need to do anything?” He posed some questions for assembly members to discuss:

1. How are you captive to sin? “You are free in Christ!” This is freedom from law and also from guilt, sin, death, evil, and trying to earn God’s favor. In what aspects of your life is this freedom hardest to believe?
2. Paul outlines three things we can do now that we do not have to do anything. Discuss how you have been tempted to be legalistic (#1), have fallen into the trap of making God’s grace an excuse to sin (#2), or have experienced the “free and merry spirit” and fruits of faith in your life (#3).

### ***Greeting: The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod***

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the president of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod [LCMS], the Rev. Gerald B. Kieschnick, who had been re-elected at his church body’s July 2007 convention.

President Kieschnick offered congratulations to Presiding Bishop Hanson on his re-election and described it as a blessing for the ELCA. President Kieschnick prayed for God’s blessing on Presiding Bishop Hanson, his wife, and this church. He also indicated that he had been praying for the assembly and its theme, “Living in God’s amazing grace. Thanks be to God.” God’s grace, President Kieschnick continued, is made manifest in his Son, revealed in his Word, and received by his gift of faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The theme of the 2007 LCMS convention was “One Message: Christ.” That message provides direction for the mission of his church, defines who and what it is, and motivates it, President Kieschnick said. He expressed interest in the actions on the ELCA Churchwide Assembly’s agenda, particularly those related to mission, outreach, and discipleship, as well as Book of Faith and Master Builder’s Bible for Men. Every initiative must be guided by the Word of God, he said. The goal of the LCMS is to share the message of Christ with 100,000,000 people by 2017, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.

President Kieschnick expressed the hope that the Gospel would be proclaimed through the ministries shared by the two church bodies, such as Lutheran Services in America, Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and Lutheran World Relief. Scripture must guide the work of these agencies, he stated.

He noted the differing positions on the interpretation and authority of Scripture held by the two church bodies, as well as internally in the ELCA. The difference has implications for continued work, he observed, and he prayed that everyone would live daily in God’s amazing grace and that everything be ascribed to God’s glory.

Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked President Kieschnick for his remarks.

### ***Addresses by Nominees for Secretary***

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 3–4; Section I, pages 17–19.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson explained that the three nominees for secretary who had received the highest number of votes on the third ballot would address the assembly for five

minutes each, having drawn lots for the order of their presentations.

The Rev. Paul A. Schreck said: “Oops. Let me assure you, those of you who saw my e-mail projected on the screens, that I attend to this meeting and debate with respectful attentiveness. We are also, however, used to this “other duties as assigned” clause in our job descriptions, of which I have several, and sometimes they collide. While I am used to multi-tasking in the job, I obviously am not used to publicly displayed screens. And if that got in the way of your meeting, I apologize. I am not a machine; I will make mistakes, and then I will take responsibility for them and I will do my best to correct them.

“When Secretary Almen announced his intention to retire at the end of this term, I was asked by someone if I would be open to the call. And my response, jokingly, was ‘If nominated, I will flee to Mexico. If elected, I will fight extradition.’ Because I know only too well what the job entails. But, of course, I could not withdraw from the election process. Scripture shows us again and again that if God calls you to do something, God will pursue you. Sometimes it is Christ who knocks at our door at midnight after we are comfortably in bed, and persistently knocks until we are roused, our plans are upset, and we answer the door. I know. I have done it already once. I used to be a school teacher.

“When I resigned my call at St. Mark in Butler, Pennsylvania, we had a farewell and Godspeed service to send me on my way. At the end of the service, I greeted everyone as they went into the reception—that I never personally got to—and the wife of a former pastor came up to me, held my face in her hands. She kind of shook her head and cheerfully said, ‘But you’ve got a pastor’s heart’—as if questioning why in the world I would go to Chicago and become part of the bureaucracy. As I was hugging her, I said, ‘Marvelene, isn’t that the point?’

“I would bring to this office experience with constitutions, with rosterings, with policies, annual reports, minutes, and archiving, church-to-church diplomacy, churchwide polity and governance, but I also bring a pastor’s heart. Theologically trained, Scripturally grounded, liturgically shaped, ecumenically opened, longing for the reign of God among us. If that is not what you want in a secretary, please do not call me. I do not know how to be anything else. But if this is what you desire in your next secretary, I will serve Christ and this church with courageous humility. Thank you.”

The Rev. Michael Cooper-White stated: “Sisters and brothers in Christ, thank you for this opportunity to share what is on my heart. I will confess to you that in recent days there have been many moments when I have been on the verge of closing the door and walking away from the possibility of this call. For more than two decades of our marriage, my wife, Pamela, my wonderful wife, has spent more nights alone than any husband should ask. Likewise, our teen-age daughter, Katrina, has been deprived of too many times with her dad. The possibility of my move to Chicago would further complicate our life together, but we are prepared to make that sacrifice to make it work, to even make it fun. Once in a while my wife says she likes having me gone so much of the time.

“I serve in a wonderful call with a wonderful community, our seminary at Gettysburg. Its short history is written in a book called *On the Glorious Hill*, and it is a glorious place with a

dynamic faculty, wonderful students, a great board of directors, dedicated staff, and such a broad constituency throughout the world. For seven years I served in an office on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of the Lutheran Center in Chicago. It was about 50 feet away from the office of the secretary, and from that vantage point I gained a close perspective on the work, on the burdens of office, on the dimensions of the workload that are carried out. No matter how early I would get to my office in the morning, and often it was very early indeed, the light would be on and Secretary Almen would be at his desk to fulfill the responsibilities of that office.

“But each time I have tried to close the door and to walk away from this call, there have been images in my heart and in my mind. I think they have come close to what the Bible talks about when it talks about people having a vision. I have a vision of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as an evangelist and a theologian of the cross. The first secretaries of the church—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—were called to keep a faithful record and to pass along an account of the mighty acts of God within a people of God at a particular place and time. The secretary today is called likewise to be an evangelist, always looking at our documents and our policies through the cross of Jesus Christ.

“A second image comes from the childhood of my father. Bennie Cooper arrived as a penniless orphan to study at the West Central School of Agriculture in Morris, Minnesota. He had to work his way through school. In the winter he shoveled coal into the great furnaces of the heating plant there at Morris. While his classmates slept cozily in their beds at night, Bennie was down in the furnace room tending the fires. The secretary of this church tends the fires on which so many others depend for their work: our presiding bishop and his staff, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, this assembly, and leaders in synods and congregations throughout this great church.

“The third vision is of the secretary as a midwife who stands watch and coaches through a long, dark night of labor. And then when the miracle happens, slips quietly out in the morning hours before the family arrives and the celebration of birth begins. I believe that our church is involved now and is going to be involved in the years ahead in a great birthing process, for God is at work among us, birthing anew. God is at work in this incredibly rich and diverse world, calling us to become a church of the whole global community. God is at work among us birthing new ways in which we relate to one another and embrace the gifts of all of God’s people. If you call me to be your secretary, I pledge to be a faithful evangelist and theologian of the cross, a dedicated tender of the fires, and a faithful midwife.”

Mr. David D. Swartling spoke: “In those quiet times, in those precious moments before worship begins I find myself opening up the *ELW* and reading these words to myself: ‘I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him. But instead the Holy Spirit has called me to the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common true faith.’ Those words are a core part of my belief system. They give me strength when I am consumed by my weakness and I question who I am. They provide me solace at times like this, and they

inspire me to be able to stand before you in this discernment process we are both about.

“I am honored but awed and also awkward standing before you. I am honored because so many of you have said so many kind things and expressed your confidence in me. I am also honored because of the quality of the seven other leaders who spoke to you yesterday, and I am proud to be one of them. I am awed because we are all standing in the shadow of Lowell Almen, and I am awed because of the implications of this election for you and for me. I also must express that I am a little bit awkward because a year ago, a month ago, and even a week ago I told you, many of you, that I did not aspire to this position, and I did not and do not. But I had a prophetic conversation about which you need to be aware. It was with Jan Nesse, assistant to Bishop Chris Boerger. I was advocating that he go through this process because it is a process of discernment for the church, and she said, ‘Isn’t it hypocritical for you to urge him to go forward and for you to withdraw?’ So here I am. Never argue with a theologian.

“Now I want to talk to you about ministry. I want to talk to you about the World Hunger efforts of the ELCA. I want to talk to you about disaster relief. I would love to talk with you about campus ministry at the places in our synod. But those are conversations for another day. We are here to talk about discernment and to facilitate your wise decision-making. So what attributes would I bring to you and to this marvelous church, the ELCA, as your secretary? I have many weaknesses, undeniably, but let me just focus for a few minutes on strengths and talk to you about knowledge, about skills, and about style.

“As I indicated yesterday to you, for 30 years I have been involved in the marvelous ministry of this church at each expression. I understand the concept of vocation. I understand and appreciate in my brain and in my heart the polity of the ELCA. I understand and appreciate in my brain and my heart the concept, the elegant concept, of interdependence. Skills: I have been a litigation lawyer for 30 years. If you scratch the surface, you will find that to be a successful litigation lawyer, you need to analyze, you need to communicate, and you need to know when to advise and when to advocate. Successful litigation lawyers have a sense of fairness and an understanding of the importance of process, process for all.

“A word about style. I started my professional life as a naval officer on a submarine. I learned to get along with people at close quarters. As a litigator I value my reputation as being ethical and civil and hard-working, and I want you to know that I work very, very hard at relationships and team-building. I have practiced law with some people for more than 20 years. I work with a staff, some of whom have been with me for more than a decade. I work with them. They do not work for me. I believe in collaborative leadership, and I tell new clients when they come to me that I wear two hats. I wear a counseling hat, and I wear an advocacy hat. And when I am wearing the counseling hat, I will try to tell the truth, even if they do not like to hear it. If you elect me secretary, Bishop Hanson will hear from me sometimes things he does not want to hear. But that is only one hat. The second hat is the hat of advocacy. When a decision is made, you need to move forward.

“Now I am not a theologian. I am not a church historian.

I do not use the word ‘ecclesiology’ often. But I can tell you that, at some point, this church deserves to have a lay person as secretary. Is this the time? Is this the place? I do not know, but I am willing to serve if you call me.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the assembly to express its gratitude to all three candidates, and the assembly did so with vigorous applause.

**Report of the Credentials Committee**

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I, pages 9 and 33.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called on Mr. David A. Ullrich, vice chair of the Credentials Committee, for an updated report.

Mr. Ullrich announced that, as of 1:54 P.M., 1,069 voting members were registered.

The written report of the Credentials Committee indicated the following:

Ordained Ministers	Female	138
	Male	274
	TOTAL	412
Lay	Female	342
	Male	315
	TOTAL	657
COMBINED TOTAL		1,069

**Fourth Ballot for Secretary**

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 3-4; Section I, pages 17-19.)

Prior to the fourth ballot for secretary, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked for a moment of silence. He indicated that a nominee would need to have 60 percent of all legal votes cast in order to be elected. He asked for the names of the nominees to appear on the screens in the order determined by greatest number of votes on the third ballot and read them:

1. Michael Cooper-White
2. David Swartling
3. Paul Schreck

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked that the assembly sing three times, “Come and Fill Our Hearts.” He prayed, then opened voting. After a brief time, he declared the voting closed.

**Dwelling in the Word**

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited Ms. Andrea L. Dubler, vice president of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, to share with the assembly her reflection on Dwelling in the Word.

Ms. Dubler revealed that she was by nature anxious, quiet, and fearful. She commented that it was not easy for her to be on the front lines. She was more comfortable as a follower in the background rather than a leader. God decided, however, to call her to various arenas of ministry, service, and leadership. When fears and anxieties threatened to drive her back into her shell, Scripture provided her with the assurance she needed to step forward in faith. Psalm 46 is one of her favorite passages of Scripture. It begins “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore, we will not fear.” Those words direct her to put her trust in God and find strength in him. The latter part of the Psalm helps center her in God and find the assurance she seeks: “Be still and know that I am God.”

Ms. Dubler led the assembly in a meditation on those words that she had received from her bishop, the Rev. Donald J. McCoid:

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.

**Elections Report: Fourth Ballot for Secretary**

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 3-4; Section I, pages 17-19.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon Mr. Phillip H. Harris, chair of the Elections Committee, to report on the fourth ballot for secretary.

Mr. Harris announced that 1,043 votes had been cast; 626 (60 percent) would have been necessary for election. There was no election on the fourth ballot, he indicated. The results were as follows:

Michael Cooper-White	211 (20.23%)
David Swartling	528 (50.62%)
Paul Schreck	304 (29.15%)

Mr. Harris stated that David Swartling and Paul Schreck would move on to the fifth ballot.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the assembly to thank President Michael Cooper-White for his participation in the process, and the assembly did so with applause.

**Social Statement on Education (continued)**

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 13-34; Section I, page 12.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson announced to the assembly that it was resuming discussion of the social statement on education. He recalled for voting members that when debate had ceased in the previous plenary session, a person had indicated a desire to ask the assembly’s permission to introduce an amendment. He told the assembly that it needed to vote whether to hear the amendment.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Defeated:**

**Yes-177; No-723**

To consider an additional amendment to the social statement on education.

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that the parliamentarian had reversed himself and decided it was proper to hear the amendment before deciding whether to consider it.

The Rev. Mary Kay Baum [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] read her proposed amendment:

**Moved:**

To amend the social statement on education as follows:

To add on page 22, line 56, before the end of the sentence: “and how it may have developed and is changing.”

In support of her amendment, Pr. Baum stated that the change would strengthen the last clause so that it would read: “We do not claim that religion provides a scientific account of how the natural world functions and how it may have developed and is changing.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated to the assembly that it would vote again on whether to consider the amendment, having heard its content.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Yes-162; No-737**

**Defeated:**

To consider an additional amendment to the social statement on education.

Mr. Jerry U. Key [Greater Milwaukee Synod] pointed out that he thought the assembly had to vote on whether to take any further amendments. Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that the assembly had just done so. Mr. Key expressed confusion over what had just taken place. Presiding Bishop Hanson stated that the parliamentarian had suggested that the amendment be heard before a decision on whether to consider it formally was made.

The Rev. Kevin G. Frey [Northeastern Iowa Synod] moved the previous question.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified that the motion on the floor was the recommendation to adopt the social statement as amended. He read the action, which was printed on page 13 of the 2007 *Pre-Assembly Report*, then reminded voting members that they first were going to vote on whether to end debate.

**Moved;**

**Two-Thirds Vote Required**

**Seconded;**

**Yes-806; No-77**

**Carried:**

To end debate.

Debate having ended, Presiding Bishop Hanson called on Ms. Mary R. Hock, vice president of the Nebraska Synod, for prayer. Following the prayer, he reminded voting members that it would take a two-thirds vote to adopt a social statement.

**Assembly**

**Two-Thirds Vote Required**

**Action:**

**Yes-949; No-35**

**CA07.05.21**

To adopt “Our Calling in Education,” as amended, as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2006).

Presiding Bishop Hanson declared the social statement on education adopted. The assembly responded with applause. He thanked all those who had worked on the statement. He directed voting members’ attention to the implementing resolutions on pages 33-34 of the *Pre-Assembly Report* and to the amendments in the report from the *ad hoc* committee. He asked the assembly’s permission to dispense with the reading of the implementing resolutions.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:**

To adopt the following implementing resolutions:

### *Faith Formation and Lifelong Learning*

1. To embrace our legacy as a teaching and learning church with gratitude and new vigor and to pray for God’s guidance and power to renew and live boldly our calling in education for a new century;

2. To call upon congregations and families to educate all generations in the faith and to be partners in creating and funding compelling and creative curricula and programs for all ages (children, youth, and adults), thus forming an environment of living faith;

3. To call upon members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to renew their calling in education as students, parents, educators, and citizens and to live out their baptismal vocation as lifelong learners in the faith and in their knowledge of the world;

4. To call upon the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and the Vocation and Education program units to collaborate with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to continue to expand the provision of creative and comprehensive resources necessary to enable parents and congregations to help form the faith of all generations;

5. To call upon the presiding bishop, synodical bishops, and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and the Vocation and Education program units to work with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, and other churchwide units persistently and persuasively to ensure that Christian education for all ages (adult, children, youth, and family ministry) is a priority in congregational life, seminary education, and synodical planning;

6. To call upon the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Vocation and Education, and Augsburg Fortress program units to work with synods, regions, congregations, rostered leaders, the Lutheran Association of Christian Educators, Lutheran outdoor ministries, seminaries, and other groups and organizations to share best practices for Christian education and faith formation and to encourage their use in congregations and other ministries;

7. To call upon ELCA seminaries and other teaching institutions of this church to continue their emphasis on preparing pastors, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, associates in ministry, and lay people for excellence in the practice of teaching Christian education and faith formation in service of lifelong learning;

8. To give thanks to God for and to recognize members who are educators in public, Lutheran, and other private schools at all levels of education, to encourage congregations to support them in their callings as educators, and to urge members

and all expressions of this church to encourage youth and others to enter these callings;

#### *Public Educational Institutions*

9. To call upon all schools to prepare students for living in a complex and global society as persons who are capable of critical thinking, continuing personal growth and concern for others, family responsibility, civic participation, artistic appreciation, productive work, and financial responsibility;

10. To call upon members of this church to advocate for equitable access to an excellent education for all children and youth and to support early childhood education, their public schools, colleges, and universities, advocating for policies that provide adequate resources and their fair distribution for these educational institutions;

11. To call upon members and congregations to develop strong connections with their public schools and to work with others to ensure high quality education for all students;

12. To call upon this church's advocacy ministries to support legislative initiatives that improve public schools and ensure excellent education for all students in ways that are consistent with this social statement and to support financial aid and tuition policies that provide more equitable access to higher education for low- and middle-income students;

#### *Lutheran Institutions*

13. To recognize and affirm early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, and outdoor ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as part of this church's mission, and to call upon this church's leaders to support them publicly and actively;

14. To call upon this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and lifelong learning partners to prepare and sustain leaders for schools and early childhood education centers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for them; to expect sponsoring congregations to ensure that their schools and early childhood education centers provide high quality Lutheran education; to encourage non-sponsoring congregations as well as synods to be in partnership with them; and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of addressing the challenges and opportunities facing ELCA schools and early childhood education centers;

15. To call upon synods and congregations to

support ELCA colleges and universities in their ministry of preparing people to fulfill their vocations in church and world; to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to continue its support of ELCA colleges and universities through the convening of administrators and faculty; and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of furthering the respective and mutual ministries of ELCA colleges and universities and this church;

16. To call upon synods and congregations to support campus ministries and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of addressing the challenges and opportunities facing Lutheran campus ministry and developing a strategy to increase financial support, build new and stronger partnerships, and take such additional actions as may enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of this vital ministry;

17. To affirm the Study of Theological Education, as approved by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, and its continuing value as a guide for the strengthening of the ELCA's theological education network;

#### *Social Statement Reception*

18. To call upon the Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, and Vocation and Education units, in cooperation with other churchwide units, to provide leadership and consultation for synods, seminary clusters and networks, and congregations on the basis of this social statement;

19. To call upon the Vocation and Education and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission units, in consultation with the Church in Society unit, to collaborate with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to develop educational resources to study and act upon this social statement;

20. To call upon teaching theologians, bishops, pastors, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, educators, and others to continue to deepen the theoretical and practical understanding of our calling in education through intellectual discourse and continued reflection;

21. To call upon all congregations, synods, early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, public policy advocacy ministries, and churchwide units to carry out the substance and spirit of this statement; and

22. To call upon the Vocation and Education, Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission units, and Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to oversee a process of

implementation and accountability for this social statement and to report on implementation of this social statement to the Church Council in 2009.

At Presiding Bishop Hanson's request, Ms. Judy Biffle, chair of the *ad hoc* committee on amendments to the social statement, indicated that amendments to the implementing resolutions were located on the last page of the committee's report. A fourth amendment had been recommended by the committee. She read that amendment to the assembly: "To add a new implementing resolution, number 13, and renumber subsequent resolutions to read: 13. To call upon this church's advocacy ministry to support legislative initiatives that ensure adequate funding and support for students with disabilities."

Ms. Biffle explained that the committee recommended the amendment because it supported the amendments to the social statement regarding students with disabilities.

The Rev. Dean W. Nelson, bishop of the Southwest California Synod, moved the amendments to the implementing resolutions.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To amend the implementing resolutions of the social statement on education as follows:

Page 33, #5: To add "and abilities" after "all ages" prior to parenthesis.

Page 33, #6: To add "lifelong learning centers," after "seminaries."

Page 34, #15: To add after "universities and this church;" at the end of the resolution the following: "to call upon parents and prospective students to consider ELCA colleges and universities when choosing an institution of higher education; and to call upon all members of this church to remember these institutions in their ongoing giving and estate planning."

Page 34, #13: To add a new implementing resolution, number 13, and renumber subsequent resolutions to read: "13. To call upon this church's advocacy ministry to support legislative initiatives that ensure adequate funding and support for students with disabilities."

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for discussion on the amendments to the implementing resolutions.

The Rev. Roger W. Spencer [New Jersey Synod] proposed an amendment to the proposed 13.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To replace "disabilities" with "differing abilities" in the proposed new implementing

resolution 13.

Pr. Spencer commented that the change reflected contemporary usage.

Mr. James T. Stensvaag [Virginia Synod], the author of the amendment objected, saying that while the term "disabilities" was understood widely, "differing abilities" was subject to considerable interpretation.

Mr. Monte C. Albert [Western Iowa Synod] remarked that in Iowa such people were identified as "special needs" children. He opposed the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Arthur E. Murphy [Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod] pointed out that the social statement itself used the term "disabilities," so he advocated that the implementing resolutions use the same terminology.

Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] inquired what the recommendation from the legislative team was regarding a preference for "disabilities," "differing abilities," or "special needs." Presiding Bishop Hanson referred the question to Dr. Paul Dovre, co-chair of the task force for the social statement on education, who replied that the counsel the task force had received was to use "disabilities."

Ms. Ester A. Johansson-Lebron [New Jersey Synod] desired to amend the amendment to the amendment, substituting "special needs" for "differing abilities." Presiding Bishop Hanson advised her that amending the amendment to the amendment was not in order. She would need to wait until the body voted on the amendment to the amendment before moving another amendment.

Mr. Jason Day [Delaware-Maryland Synod] moved to close debate on all matters before the house. Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that if the motion were approved, the assembly would conclude discussion on both the amendments to the implementing resolutions recommended by the *ad hoc* committee and the amendment to those amendments.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Carried:**

To end debate on all matters before the house.

**Two-Thirds Vote Required**

**Yes-929; No-67**

Presiding Bishop Hanson instructed the assembly that, debate having ended, the next vote was on whether to substitute "differing abilities" for "disabilities" in the proposed implementing resolution 13.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Defeated:**

To replace "disabilities" with "differing abilities" in the proposed new implementing resolution 13.

**Yes-123; No-893**

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that the next vote concerned the adoption of the amendments to the implementing resolutions recommended by the *ad hoc* committee.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Carried:**

To amend the implementing resolutions of the social statement on education as follows:

**Yes-972; No-29**

- Page 33, #5: To add “and abilities” after “all ages” prior to parenthesis.
- Page 33, #6: To add “lifelong learning centers,” after “seminaries.”
- Page 34, #15: To add after “universities and this church;” at the end of the resolution the following: “to call upon parents and prospective students to consider ELCA colleges and universities when choosing an institution of higher education; and to call upon all members of this church to remember these institutions in their ongoing giving and estate planning.”
- Page 34, #13: To add a new implementing resolution, number 13, and renumber subsequent resolutions to read:
- “13. To call upon this church’s advocacy ministry to support legislative initiatives that ensure adequate funding and support for students with disabilities.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that the next vote would be to approve the implementing resolutions to the social statement on education as amended.

**Assembly**

**Action:**

**CA07.05.22**

*Yes-996; No-17*

To adopt the following implementing resolutions:

*Faith Formation and Lifelong Learning*

1. To embrace our legacy as a teaching and learning church with gratitude and new vigor and to pray for God’s guidance and power to renew and live boldly our calling in education for a new century;
2. To call upon congregations and families to educate all generations in the faith and to be partners in creating and funding compelling and creative curricula and programs for all ages (children, youth, and adults), thus forming an environment of living faith;
3. To call upon members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to renew their calling in education as students, parents, educators, and citizens and to live out their baptismal vocation as lifelong

learners in the faith and in their knowledge of the world;

4. To call upon the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and the Vocation and Education program units to collaborate with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to continue to expand the provision of creative and comprehensive resources necessary to enable parents and congregations to help form the faith of all generations;

5. To call upon the presiding bishop, synodical bishops, and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and the Vocation and Education program units to work with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, and other churchwide units persistently and persuasively to ensure that Christian education for all ages and abilities (adult, children, youth, and family ministry) is a priority in congregational life, seminary education, and synodical planning;

6. To call upon the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Vocation and Education, and Augsburg Fortress program units to work with synods, regions, congregations, rostered leaders, the Lutheran Association of Christian Educators, Lutheran outdoor ministries, seminaries, lifelong learning centers, and other groups and organizations to share best practices for Christian education and faith formation and to encourage their use in congregations and other ministries;

7. To call upon ELCA seminaries and other teaching institutions of this church to continue their emphasis on preparing pastors, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, associates in ministry, and lay people for excellence in the practice of teaching Christian education and faith formation in service of lifelong learning;

8. To give thanks to God for and to recognize members who are educators in public, Lutheran, and other private schools at all levels of education, to encourage congregations to support them in their callings as educators, and to urge members and all expressions of this church to encourage youth and others to enter these callings;



### *Public Educational Institutions*

9. To call upon all schools to prepare students for living in a complex and global society as persons who are capable of critical thinking, continuing personal growth and concern for others, family responsibility, civic participation, artistic appreciation, productive work, and financial responsibility;

10. To call upon members of this church to advocate for equitable access to an excellent education for all children and youth and to support early childhood education, their public schools, colleges, and universities, advocating for policies that provide adequate resources and their fair distribution for these educational institutions;

11. To call upon members and congregations to develop strong connections with their public schools and to work with others to ensure high quality education for all students;

12. To call upon this church's advocacy ministries to support legislative initiatives that improve public schools and ensure excellent education for all students in ways that are consistent with this social statement and to support financial aid and tuition policies that provide more equitable access to higher education for low- and middle-income students;

### *Lutheran Institutions*

13. To call upon this church's advocacy ministry to support legislative initiatives that ensure adequate funding and support for students with disabilities.

14. To recognize and affirm early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, and outdoor ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as part of this church's mission, and to call upon this church's leaders to support them publicly and actively;

15. To call upon this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and lifelong learning partners to prepare and sustain leaders for schools and early childhood education centers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for them; to expect sponsoring congregations to ensure that their schools and early childhood education centers provide high quality Lutheran education; to

encourage non-sponsoring congregations as well as synods to be in partnership with them; and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of addressing the challenges and opportunities facing ELCA schools and early childhood education centers;

16. To call upon synods and congregations to support ELCA colleges and universities in their ministry of preparing people to fulfill their vocations in church and world; to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to continue its support of ELCA colleges and universities through the convening of administrators and faculty; and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of furthering the respective and mutual ministries of ELCA colleges and universities and this church; to call upon parents and prospective students to consider ELCA colleges and universities when choosing an institution of higher education; and to call upon all members of this church to remember these institutions in their ongoing giving and estate planning.

17. To call upon synods and congregations to support campus ministries and to call upon the Vocation and Education unit to convene consultations throughout this church for the purpose of addressing the challenges and opportunities facing Lutheran campus ministry and developing a strategy to increase financial support, build new and stronger partnerships, and take such additional actions as may enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of this vital ministry;

18. To affirm the Study of Theological Education, as approved by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly, and its continuing value as a guide for the strengthening of the ELCA's theological education network;

### *Social Statement Reception*

19. To call upon the Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, and Vocation and Education units, in cooperation with other churchwide units, to provide leadership and consultation for synods, seminary clusters and networks, and congregations on the basis of this social statement;

20. To call upon the Vocation and Education and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission units, in

consultation with the Church in Society unit, to collaborate with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to develop educational resources to study and act upon this social statement; 21. To call upon teaching theologians, bishops, pastors, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, educators, and others to continue to deepen the theoretical and practical understanding of our calling in education through intellectual discourse and continued reflection; 22. To call upon all congregations, synods, early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, public policy advocacy ministries, and churchwide units to carry out the substance and spirit of this statement; and 23. To call upon the Vocation and Education, Church in Society, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission units, and Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to oversee a process of implementation and accountability for this social statement and to report on implementation of this social statement to the Church Council in 2009.

Presiding Bishop Hanson declared the implementing resolutions, as amended, had been adopted. The assembly responded with applause.

### ***Report of the Memorials Committee (continued)***

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VI, pages 1–74; Section I, pages 6, 9, 11–12.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called to the podium the co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, Ms. Norma J. Hirsch and the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp. He indicated to the assembly that it first would resume consideration of Category E2: Standards for Rostered Leaders. Before the assembly was both the Memorials Committee's recommendation and a substitute moved by the Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers, bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, and amended by the Rev. Gladys G. Moore [New Jersey Synod]. He asked that those voting members who had been in line to speak take their previous places. Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the discussion would begin with a moment of silence, concluded by a spoken prayer.

Mr. John O'Malia [Metropolitan Chicago Synod], whose wife is an ELCA pastor, recalled when the American Lutheran Church in 1970 nearly voted to ordain women. He stated that it seemed that every time the church voted to become more inclusive, it became stronger. He decried the inconsistent application of the current policy, and recommended a new, more open policy.

The Rev. Callon W. Holloway Jr. [Southern Ohio Synod] expressed his hope that, although the issue was an emotional

one, speakers would refrain from generalizations about what others might do if particular resolutions were or were not adopted. He supported the Memorials Committee's recommendation to refer the memorials, which would honor the process established for the task force.

Mr. Miguel Hernandez [Rocky Mountain Synod] reminded the assembly that Christ is strong and will keep his church calm at sea, and the waves of threat will be ignored.

The Rev. Beth A. Schlegel [Lower Susquehanna Synod] stated that sexual orientation does not disqualify anyone from full participation or service in this church. There are many gay and lesbian rostered leaders already in this church, she asserted. What was at issue were matters of behavioral decisions, which every rostered leader makes on a daily basis in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Donald F. King [Northeastern Ohio Synod] contended that the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality had no intention of addressing the matter of rostering partnered homosexuals in the proposed 2009 social statement. Therefore, he urged the assembly to act now on the issue.

Ms. Ester A. Johansson-Lebron [New Jersey Synod] asked whether adoption of the substitution would preclude the task force from addressing the issue of the rostering of partnered homosexuals. Presiding Bishop Hanson referred her question to the task force, saying that a response would follow.

Ms. Rosemary I. Amato [Oregon Synod] spoke of being deeply troubled about the possibility that this church would change its doctrine and practice on marriage and sexuality. Many were questioning whether they could continue membership in the ELCA if it did not remain faithful to God's Word, to its predecessors, and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Mark Betley [Upstate New York Synod] reflected on a number of biblical stories that both supported and contradicted changing practices. He stated his identity as a baptized child of a God who is both steadfast and fresh, both unchanging and new. His best option was to support and witness to this God. The substitute would honor God, yet allow for something new.

Mr. John M. Mills [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] called for the orders of the day. Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that the assembly was working on the appropriate order of the day. Mr. Mills argued that, according to *Robert's Rules of Order*, calling for the orders moved the assembly to the next item of business. The chair consulted with the parliamentarian, then called for the assembly to vote on whether to continue debate on the issue on the floor or move on. He explained that a "yes" vote would signal the desire to move on, a "no" vote would mean continuing the current discussion. It would take a two-thirds "no" vote to continue the discussion.

The Rev. Rafaela H. Morales-Rosa [New England Synod] commented that she had thought the order of the day was the discussion on memorials. Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that Mr. Mills desired to go to the next agenda item, which was consideration of the 2008-2009 budget.

An unidentified voting member commented that questions of procedure should not decrease the time available for discussion. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that his task was to help the assembly make the best and appropriate decisions, so when he needed to consult with the parliamentarian, he would

do so. The voting member inquired whether a motion should be made to increase the time for debate. Presiding Bishop Hanson answered that another motion currently was before the assembly.

The Rev. Richard J. Foss, bishop of the Eastern North Dakota Synod, asked whether the vote would close debate permanently or merely postpone it. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that the discussion would remain on the agenda. He reiterated the meaning of the vote, then opened balloting.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Yes-152; No-874**

**Defeated:**

To move to the orders of the day.

Presiding Bishop Hanson promised to make certain the rules were clear at all times so as to aid debate.

The Rev. Theodore F. Schneider, bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, observed that his synod was a Reconciling in Christ Synod and had for years been asking this church to change its rostering policies. He agreed with his synod. Nonetheless, he was concerned about the process, wanting it to be one that gave any change in policy a good chance of success. Referring the memorials to the task force and continuing the social statement process would build trust and promote acceptance of decisions.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a moment of silence, concluded by a spoken prayer.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the debate could continue for another 20 minutes.

Ms. Hannah Wallisch [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] moved the previous question.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified that the vote was to end debate on the motion to substitute.

**Moved;**

**Two-Thirds Vote Required**

**Seconded;**

**Yes-880; No-144**

**Carried:**

To end debate on the motion to substitute.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Ms. Judith Anne Bunker to lead the assembly in prayer. After she had done so, Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that approval of the motion to substitute meant that the substitute motion would become the main motion and would be subject to debate. He asked the assembly to respond to the upcoming votes not with emotion but with prayer.

Ms. Kristen K. Phillips [Florida-Bahamas Synod] asked what a “yes” or “no” vote meant in this instance. The chair replied that a “yes” vote meant that the assembly wanted to substitute the motion made by Bishop Stumme-Diers and amended by Pr. Moore for the recommendation of the Memorials Committee as the main motion.

The Rev. James T. Lehmann [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] clarified that a “yes” vote meant that the recommendation of the Memorial Committee would disappear. Presiding Bishop Hanson concurred with this interpretation.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Yes-450; No-581**

**Defeated:**

To substitute the following resolution for the

*recommendation of the memorials Committee on Category E2: Standards for Rostered Leaders:*

RESOLVED, that the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly direct the Committee on Appeals to develop an amendment to the documents known as “Definitions and Guidelines” that removes provisions precluding “practicing homosexual persons” from the rosters of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the documents known as “Vision and Expectations” that removes provisions requiring persons who are “homosexual in their self-understanding” to “abstain from homosexual sexual relationships”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the documents known as “Vision and Expectations” that inserts this provision: “Ministers in a same-gender partnership are expected to uphold the same standard as all ministers, namely, to live in fidelity to their partner within a relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful”; and be it further;

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly direct the Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to develop an amendment to the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church that permits the reinstatement, without the usual requirement of five consecutive years without call, of persons who have resigned or been removed from the rosters solely because they are in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that this Churchwide Assembly direct the Church Council to take the actions necessary to amend “Definitions and Guidelines,” “Vision and Expectations,” and the policies on reinstatement to the rosters of this church in conformity with the amendments developed (pursuant to the preceding directions) by the Committee on Appeals and Vocation and Education unit.

Presiding Bishop Hanson declared that since the motion to substitute had been defeated, the recommendation from the Memorials Committee was before the assembly.

The Rev. Craig E. Johnson, bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, moved a substitute motion.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:**

To substitute the following for the recommendation of the Memorials Committee on Category E2:

RESOLVED, that the 2007 Churchwide Assembly direct the Committee on Appeals, Vocation and Education unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and Church Council to take the steps necessary to amend "Vision and Expectations," "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," and the policy on reinstatement to the rosters of this church, so that, for pastoral reasons and for the sake of mission and ministry, a synodical bishop, in consultation with the Synod Council and the presiding bishop, may grant an exception and permit the rostering of otherwise qualified persons in a same-gender committed relationship that is mutual, chaste, and faithful, and that once an exception has been granted, that person shall not be subject to discipline based on the same set of facts.

Speaking to his motion, Bishop Johnson called the substitute a "pathway to service." He commented that there were great leaders available, but they were precluded from service because of current policies. The substitute would permit congregations and bishops, in consultation with the presiding bishop, to enable them to serve the mission of this church. Bishop Johnson cited the accommodations made in the adoption of "Called to Common Mission" as a precedent.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified for voting members where they should stand at the microphones, depending on their support for the main motion or the substitute.

Mr. Chris R. Hardie [La Crosse Area Synod] proposed an amendment to the recommendation from the Memorials Committee.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** *To amend the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by the addition of a final paragraph:*

RESOLVED, to direct the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality specifically to address and make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any church policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church.

Mr. Thomas Salber [Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod] asked whether Mr. Hardie's motion was in order. Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that it was since the assembly's procedure was to perfect both the main motion and any substitutes at the same time.

Mr. Eric M. Peterson [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] requested clarification concerning the amendment. His concern was addressed as Mr. Hardie clarified his motion.

Mr. Hardie, speaking to his amendment, stated it was necessary for the well-being of this church that the task force address specifically the issue of rostering in its recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that it was time to move to the orders of the day and promised that when discussion resumed on the next day, copies of Bishop Johnson's substitute

motion and Mr. Hardie's amendment would be available.

An unidentified voting member inquired about the next day's agenda. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that he would try to provide a general overview later in the current plenary session. He reminded voting members waiting at microphones to remember their places, adding that the first item discussed would be Mr. Hardie's amendment.

The Rev. Gregory W. Frey [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] moved the following:

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To suspend the rules in order to continue debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that approval of the motion to suspend the rules would require a two-thirds vote.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** **Yes-555; No-425**  
**Defeated:** To suspend the rules in order to continue debate.

The Rev. David A. Weeks [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] complained that the microphone cuing system was not working properly. Presiding Bishop Hanson explained the process, pointing out the necessity of pages registering those waiting to speak as soon as possible.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the assembly to stand and sing, "I Love to Tell the Story."

### ***2008-2009 Budget Proposal***

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 47-74; Section I, pages 6, 10, 15-16.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson turned the chair over to Vice President Carlos E. Peña for consideration of the 2008-2009 budget proposal. Vice President Peña called to the podium Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton, Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, chair of the Church Council's Budget and Finance Committee, and the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration. He reminded voting members that they previously had received an introduction to the budget and had an opportunity to ask questions at about it at a hearing. He called on Secretary Lowell G. Almen to read the recommendation:

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** *2008 Budget Proposal*

To approve a 2008 current fund income proposal of \$81,670,000; and

To approve a 2008 World Hunger income proposal of \$19,250,000.

*2009 Budget Proposal*

To approve a 2009 current fund income proposal of \$81,920,000;

To approve a 2009 World Hunger income proposal of \$20,000,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

Vice President Peña called for discussion of the budget proposal. There being no discussion, he called for a vote.

### **Assembly**

#### **Action:**

**Yes-800; No-7**

#### **CA07.05.23 2008 Budget Proposal**

To approve a 2008 current fund income proposal of \$81,670,000; and

To approve a 2008 World Hunger income proposal of \$19,250,000.

#### **2009 Budget Proposal**

To approve a 2009 current fund income proposal of \$81,920,000;

To approve a 2009 World Hunger income proposal of \$20,000,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

### **Greeting: Lutheran Youth Organization**

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section III, Part I, page 12.)

Vice President Carlos E. Peña noted that there were many anniversaries to celebrate at this assembly. One of them was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO). He invited to the stage the president of the Lutheran Youth Organization, Mr. Nathaniel Viets-VanLear, and Mr. Walter M. L. Hampton II, first vice president.

Mr. VanLear spoke of the role of the Lutheran Youth Organization in developing leadership for this church. Mr. Hampton told of the 4:24 campaign, based on Acts 4:24: "When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God. . . ." The campaign encourages everyone to pause at 4:24 P.M. in silent prayer. Both men reviewed programs and emphases of the LYO. The LYO was examining its structure so that it was organized in the best way possible for its ministry. It was emphasizing networking and working inter-generationally in this church. They encouraged more participation in the Churchwide Assembly by youth and invited members to contact them through the LWO Web site.

Vice President Peña introduced a preview of the next ELCA Youth Gathering, to be held in New Orleans July 22-26, 2009, under the theme, "Jesus, Justice, Jazz." The entire gathering would be centered around service, with participants learning what it means to live as people marked by the cross of Christ for the sake of the world.

The assembly expressed its appreciation for the Lutheran Youth Organization through applause.

### **Report of the Youth Convocation**

Vice President Carlos E. Peña invited the members of the Youth Convocation to come to the stage, noting that the convocation included 36 young people from 25 states and Puerto Rico.

Individual members of the convocation engaged the assembly in the following:

- standing and participating in a "call and response" version of "Jesus Loves Me";

- locking hands with their neighbors and joining in the Lord's Prayer, recited in English and Spanish simultaneously; and
  - listening to a reading of Jeremiah 1:4-9 and 1 Timothy 4:12.
- They also described the convocation, advocated for youth leadership, thanked members of the assembly, and promised to pray for them.

Vice President Peña thanked the members of the Youth Convocation for bringing their greeting. The assembly responded with applause.

### **Greeting: Women of the ELCA**

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section III, Part I, page 51.)

Vice President Carlos E. Peña introduced the president of the Women of the ELCA, Ms. Carmen Richards from Hope, North Dakota, who brought a greeting from her organization to the assembly.

Ms. Richards expressed her appreciation for her role as an advisory member of the Church Council. She noted that Secretary Lowell G. Almen and the Rev. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, both of whom were retiring, had served as advisors to the board of Women of the ELCA. She asked them to stand and receive the gratitude of the assembly.

Ms. Richards read for the assembly the purpose statement of Women of the ELCA: "As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, this society, and the world." She recalled the many projects that the women of the ELCA had carried out in light of this statement of purpose. She summarized the work of the organization in the current triennium.

She called attention to the disease of suicide. Then she lifted up the need to share stories of ministry and the need for change and flexibility in the women's organization.

The assembly responded with applause to Ms. Richards' report.

Vice President Peña thanked Ms. Richards for her leadership and the work of Women of the ELCA. He then returned the chair to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson.

### **Announcements**

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called on Secretary Lowell G. Almen for announcements.

Secretary Almen reviewed the schedules for the evening banquet and the shuttle buses. He detailed procedures for checking out from the hotel the next day and taking the airport shuttle. He asked for prayers for the family and friends of Mr. Charles Schwartz, past president of Lutheran Men in Mission, who had died that morning.

Secretary Almen recited an ode to secretaries: "And now as the great ones go off to dinner, the secretary remains, growing thinner and thinner, as he tries to construct from out of his head what he thinks that they think they ought to have said."

Presiding Bishop Hanson provided a brief overview of the next day's plenary schedule. On the morning's agenda were the following: morning prayer, brief overview of the day, fifth ballot for secretary, update on leadership, 75 minutes on memorials (E2,

E3, E4, B3, D4), multicultural ministries report, and Reference and Counsel Committee report. The afternoon session would include Bible study, consideration of the remaining memorials, Reference and Counsel Committee report, consideration of the mission funding initiative, a Dwelling in the Word reflection, consideration of amendments to governing documents, and greetings from Lutheran Services in America.

### ***Presentation of the Servus Dei Award***

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called to the podium members of the family of Secretary Lowell G. Almen. The assembly greeted them and Secretary Almen with a standing ovation. Presiding Bishop Hanson indicated that the *Servus Dei* medal honors officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at the completion of their terms and continues a tradition that was begun in our predecessor church bodies. The *Servus Dei* medal was being presented to Secretary Almen in recognition of his leadership within this church and in thankfulness for his twenty years of service as secretary, he said.

Presiding Bishop Hanson continued by describing the medal: “The *Servus Dei* medal, approximately five inches in diameter and slightly irregular in its circular form, resembles an ancient coin. It is pictured on the cover of the program that has been distributed to you. The obverse side depicts a profile of Christ. The features are intended to convey the sensitivity, purpose, and tranquility of Christ. The crown of the head reveals—ever so slightly—the symbolism of the crown of thorns. Arranged in low relief around the lower edges are many symbols which are described in the program.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson read: “In its action to confer this medal upon Secretary Almen, the Church Council approved the following citation:

*The position of secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was established on April 30, 1987, when the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially was constituted. Elected on May 2, 1987, as the first—and thus far only—person to hold the office of secretary was the Rev. Dr. Lowell Gordon Almen. Coming to the position with a uniquely appropriate background, Secretary Almen has served this church and shaped the office in ways that will continue to guide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for years to come. In honor of his distinguished service as the secretary of this church, his leadership is acclaimed with gratitude and his contributions to the well-being of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are embraced with thanksgiving. Therefore, it is hereby declared and acknowledged:*

*The responsibilities of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are manifold and various. One constant that you have emphasized amidst this variety is service. You have insisted that the purpose of the Office of the Secretary is to be the servant of the servants of Christ, aiding the members of this church and others with promptness, courtesy, and friendliness.*

*You came to this position having served previously as a parish pastor, campus pastor, director of communications for Concordia College, Moorhead, managing editor and then editor of The Lutheran Standard, and observer of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church as it carefully constructed what became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All of these experiences have enriched your service as secretary.*

*For your continual reminders that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is one church in three interdependent expressions;*

*For your stewardship and knowledge of the history, polity, and ecclesiology both of this church and American Lutheranism and your ability to utilize that knowledge for the present and future mission and ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;*

*For your encyclopedic knowledge of the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the other governing documents of this church and your dedication to their foundational and unifying roles in this church;*

*For your untiring efforts to answer questions accurately, clearly, and thoroughly and to apply and interpret the constitutions and policies of this church fairly;*

*For your ecumenical sensibility and endeavors, linking this church to the Church catholic, particularly your roles as chair of the Lutheran–Reformed Coordinating Committee and co-chair of the eleventh round of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic dialogue;*

*For connecting the various dimensions of this church through your travel to congregations and synods, through your care for this church’s military chaplains, and through service as the representative of the presiding bishop with the boards of Augsburg Fortress, Publishers; Women of the ELCA; and the Board of Pensions;*

*For your attention to the smallest detail, including the welfare of voting members as they enter and exit escalators;*

*For your dry humor and occasional smile;*

*For your pastoral leadership throughout this church and particularly in the Conference of Bishops, the Church Council, and the churchwide organization; and*

*For forty years of ordained service to God and the body of Christ, the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offer their heartfelt gratitude to you and raise a loud shout, “Thanks be to God.”*

*May the years to come be filled for you, Secretary Lowell Almen, with much joy and enduring hope.*

*Upon approval and action by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the *Servus Dei* medal is conferred upon the Reverend Dr. Lowell G. Almen, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1987-2007).*

The assembly stood and gave its enthusiastic assent to the presentation.

A video about Secretary Almen and his career, “*Ad Multos Annos*,” was shown.

Offering tributes to Secretary Almen were the Most Rev. Richard J. Sklba, auxiliary bishop of the diocese of Milwaukee; the Rev. E. Roy Riley, bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops; Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, North America Regional Officer for the Lutheran World Federation; the Rev. Samuel H. Nafzger, executive director of the Committee on Theology and Church Relations of the The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod; and, by video on behalf of military chaplains, Commander Karla M. Seyb-Stockton of the U.S. Navy.

Following the tributes, Presiding Bishop Hanson presented Secretary Almen with a book of letters.

Secretary Almen, in response, introduced members of his family and staff of the Office of the Secretary, thanking them for their support. He expressed his gratitude to this church for allowing him to serve it.

The presentation concluded with another ovation.

### *Litany of Thanksgiving*

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson turned from recognition of Secretary Lowell G. Almen's service to celebration of this church's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He led the assembly in a litany of thanksgiving:

Let us give thanks for the whole church, and especially for God's faithfulness to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

For the life and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, sent to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed,

*Thanks be to God.*

For the gifts of Word and sacrament that awaken and confirm our faith. For worship that draws us into prayer, praise, and thanksgiving and forms us for life in the world,

*Thanks be to God.*

For a renewed commitment to broaden and deepen the rich diversity of this church and for the blessing of the many members of the one Body of Christ,

*Thanks be to God.*

For the many and varied gifts of each expression of this church. For congregations, synods and the churchwide organization, and for the unifying way our lives and ministries are woven together,

*Thanks be to God.*

For agencies and institutions. For global and ecumenical communities of faith. For all the partnerships by which we accompany one another in our calling to serve in Christ's name for the sake of the whole world,

*Thanks be to God.*

For studies and conversations, for decisions made and for actions taken that embody the ways of the Lord,

*Thanks be to God.*

For the forgiveness of our sins. For perseverance in difficulty. For disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on God alone,

*Thanks be to God.*

For these twenty years of ministry, for faithful leaders past, present and yet to come, and for a hope-filled vision of the future into which we are being called,

*Thanks be to God.*

For the daily bread that sustains us, for the kingdom already breaking in, and for the gift of living in God's amazing grace,

*Thanks be to God.*

Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ in every walk of life, together serving Christ's mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*

### *Recess*

The plenary session closed with the assembly singing "Amazing Grace." Presiding Bishop Hanson rang the bell and extinguished the candle.

The ninth plenary session of the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America entered into recess at 5:57 P.M.

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