

2009 ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD ASSEMBLY
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
APRIL 30-MAY 2, 2009
Convention Center, El Paso, Texas

The 2009 Assembly of the Rocky Mountain Synod convened with a Liturgical Opening, at 2:05pm on Thursday, April 30, 2009, in the Convention Center in El Paso, Texas. The theme of the assembly was “Milagro De La Frontera.” Bishop Allan Bjornberg presided.

FIRST PLENARY SESSION, THURSDAY, APRIL 30

The first business session was called to order at 2:07pm by Bishop Allan Bjornberg. He welcomed the assembly participants and referred them to sections of the pre-assembly report.

INTRODUCTIONS OF SPECIAL GUESTS:

Greg Villalon, ELCA representative
Margie Schmitt Ajer, Region II
Victor Thasiah, ELCA Church in Society Dept. for Studies
Kelly Macias, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
Pr. Jim Hytjan, Rocky Mountain Assistant to the Bishop, serving as Chaplain for Assembly

INTRODUCTIONS OF ROSTERED LEADERS NEW TO SYNOD:

Pastor Leta Behrens, First, Longmont, CO
Pastor Tim Bettger, St. Paul, Calhan, CO
Mary Black, Diaconal Minister, Atonement, Lakewood, CO
Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber, House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver, CO
Pastor Larry Davis, Trinity, Farmington, NM
Pastor James Drury, Ascension St. Matthews, Price, UT
Pastor Chad Kohlmeyer, Atonement, Boulder, CO
Pastor Robert Kuehner, Lutheran Family Services of Colorado, Denver, CO
Ann Maki, AIM, Trinity, Loveland, CO
Pastor Julie McNitt, Holy Trinity, Littleton, CO
Pastor Joel Pancoast, Zion, Loveland, CO
Pastor Sonja Pancoast, Zion, Loveland, CO
Carol Pyeatt, AIM, American, Grand Junction, CO
Brad Wood, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry, Denver, CO
Pastor Terri Hermsmeyer, Saron, Strasburg, CO

INTRODUCTIONS OF SYNOD COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Bishop Bjornberg introduced Pastor Kathleen Armstrong, Jim Bailey, Linda Bobbitt- Vice President, Sue Brandt, Pastor Dave Cruson, Katherine Cruson – Secretary, Pastor Charles Exley, Peggy Fetchenhier, Pastor Vera Guebert-Steward, Pastor Patricia Holman, Allison Johnson - Youth Representative, Pastor John Knutson, Jan Krakow AIM, Mike Muirhead, Richard Nehring, Dennis Reynolds- Treasurer, Paul Rosin, Robert Sandoval, Pastor Jeff St. Clair. Not able to attend: Pastor Jeff Loudon, Chris Larson Renquist

Bishop Bjornberg mentioned the Assembly Guidebook, (Yellow), Assembly Information (blue), and materials which voting members should have downloaded from the internet: Resolutions, Support for Ministry, Voting Member Handbook , and What You Need to Know. Synod Constitutions are available on the distribution table. He recognized artist Candy Mayer, who designed the backdrop for the assembly platform.

ADOPTION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Bishop Bjornberg referred the assembly to the Rules of Procedure for the Synod Assembly as printed in the Voting Member Handbook.

VOTED:

SA2009.4.1. To adopt the Rules of Procedure for this Assembly.

SA2009.4.2. To amend #11, p. 5. "Speeches during debate on any items before this assembly shall be limited to ~~three minutes~~ two minutes." Amendment approved.

SA2009.4.3. To amend #11, p. 5. To "limited each to 3 speeches pro and 3 speeches con." Amendment not approved.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

VOTED:

SA2009.4.4. To adopt the Agenda, with the privilege of the chairman to adjust the agenda as necessary.

Song by the Assembly musicians, Bread for the Journey

STATE OF THE SYNOD BY BISHOP BJORNBERG:

Thanks to all for coming to experience life on the border and to those preparing for our coming: this assembly will be more of an immersion experience, shared with ministries which assist people here. The border is not confined to the outline of our states. However, here in El Paso the issues are concentrated.

Finances: In the Congregational Statements of Intent: 50 of the congregations decreased their intention of giving to the synod, 69 increased, 33 are equal to last year's actual giving. 50% goes to wider ministry of ELCA. There is a \$5.6 million reduction of the ELCA churchwide budget. Synod Council has authorized \$66,000 of our cash reserves to be used for the synod budget. \$350 per congregation would help Rocky Mountain Synod balance their budget. Congregations are asked to tithe special gifts to model giving.

Staffing: Madelyn Busse is retiring May 31; she will continue on a part-time contract basis working with Candidacy and First Call Continuing Education.

Youth and Household Ministry: a fulltime position was authorized last year, but the budget would not allow this. Linda Staats has now been hired part time.

Jim Hytjan is a full time employee of ELCA, with essentially the same synod responsibilities he had as a part time employee of RMS. Dan Bollman primarily works with the call process. Thirty congregations are seeking new leaders. Kent Mueller is in charge of assembly planning and

programming, Theological Conference planning, and synod-wide communications. Office staff members Willie Hobbs, Cheryl Almquist, Janice Ladd-Horkey were acknowledged.

Change is all around; there is anxiety in our congregational family. As people of faith, we are always a people in transition. Hope is stronger than fear.

Pr. Kevin Maly has been serving for 8 years on the churchwide task force preparing the Social Statement on Human Sexuality.

Pray for and be proud of your church in the face of dialogue amid deep emotion

For the quality of its leadership

For its ministry for the poor and marginalized

For its place in the global community

For its continuing care for those affected by natural disasters

For its ministry with young people

For its public voice in the local, city, state, national and international arena

For your baptismal identity

For its determination to support faith development among people of every background

GREETINGS TO THE ASSEMBLY:

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary President Phyllis Anderson,

California Lutheran University –Arne Bergland

Lutheran Social Services of the South – Peter Nicolau, director. One of the missions of LSSS is to assist refugee minors whose parents are detained.

JAVIER (JAY) ALANIS, LUTHERAN SEMINARY PROGRAM OF THE SOUTHWEST, AUSTIN, TX

Anytime a person crosses a border, it is an issue of faith; the one who crosses is transformed.

Pr. Alanis told the story of the Mellenbrook family in McAllen TX, who assisted the Mexican immigrants in the community.

Assembly chaplain Jim Hytjan led a prayer.

ELCA REPRESENTATIVE GREG VILLALON

Pr. Villalon conveyed thanks from ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson via a video. We are at an intersection of fear and hope. Two hundred thirty congregations in the ELCA are under development. Thanks for the ministries of Rocky Mountain Synod and for congregational support of ELCA. Twenty-four Rocky Mountain Synod congregations are receiving loans from the Mission Investment Fund.

INTRODUCTIONS TO ELECTIONS PROCESS:

Bishop Bjornberg shared the job description of Synod Vice-President. Linda Bobbitt is nominated by Synod Council for Vice President. No other nominations were made from the floor.

VOTED:

SA2009.4.5. To close nominations.

SA2009.4.6. To elect Linda Bobbitt by acclamation.

Remarks by Linda Bobbitt: she wants a growth and faith experience for our synod; she is excited by faith and growth of synod.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL:

Bishop Bjornberg introduced Pr. Joel Brandt, chairman of the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

1. Committee: Pr. Joel Brandt, Katherine Cruson, Cynthia Biddlecomb, Pr. Bruce Freeman, Brad Wood, Ruth Hoffman
2. Deadline for submission of new resolutions is 10:15am Friday.
3. Two resolutions are about the ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality and policy revisions.

If resolutions are received after the March 1 deadline, the assembly considers whether to deliberate those resolutions, by a 2/3 vote.

The assembly will consider the resolutions in order #1 thru #5. The Committee will work with makers of resolutions to assure the resolutions are in line with our constitution(s) and to clarify wording.

Announcements were made by Madelyn Busse and prayers by Chaplain Hytjan.

A Festival Worship at 7:30pm featured Pr. Rose Mary Sanchez-Guzman as Presiding Minister and Bishop Allan Bjornberg as Preacher. Offerings will support the ministries of Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey, El Paso; Clinica Cristo Rey with Dr. Mendoza, Juarez; Annunciation House, El Paso; and Centro Santa Catalina, Juarez.

SECOND PLENARY SESSION, FRIDAY, MAY 1

Opening Prayer by Chaplain Jim Hytjan.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT LINDA BOBBITT:

Vision, Passion, Action (VPA): What is God calling us to be as synod? Phase 2-Implementation

After Mrs. Bobbitt gave a brief history of VPA over the past 4 years, she focused on the next steps: How do we align with our purpose?

1. What we focus on....
 - Identity, Discipleship, Evangelism, Congregational health, ConnectionsSynod Council in January chose these foci:
 - Connections of lay leaders
 - Promote healthy leaders & congregations
 - Faith formation in congregations
- a. How we work together: Relationships and roles
 - Accompaniment is walking together in solidarity characterized by mutuality and interdependence.

- o Connections (roads): What connects my congregation to ELCA, to other congregations? What kind of road is it? What obstacles arise? How can we build the roads and grow them?
- b. What model will we use to build on?
Localized ----- Centralized
Where we are on the line depends on the relationships.
Strong relationships: stable, less duplication of effort, economies of scale
- c. Tending to relationships:
 1. Look at new ways to coordinate, collaborate and look at priorities
 2. Work with deans and conferences

Ms. Bobbitt and the Synod Council seek the support of everyone – accompaniment: all of us working together.

VOTED:

SA2009.4. 7. In accordance with our Synod’s vision of “Every person, every congregation, every ministry, boldly serving God’s mission in Christ”: we pledge to accompany each other to improve our connections, strengthen our faith formation, and promote healthy leadership. Motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER: DENNIS REYNOLDS

Mr. Reynolds showed a chart for 5 years of intents vs. actual contributions from congregations. There is a \$108,000 loss for 2008. \$300,000 remains in cash reserves after the \$108,000 was taken out. \$60,000 of cash reserves will be used in 2009 and in 2010. Decrease in 2008 expenditures is \$480,428

GENDER EQUITY TASK FORCE:

Pr. Susan Candea reported that the survey did not compare Rocky Mountain Synod with other synods. That comparison will occur at the ELCA 45th anniversary survey of ordination of women. Recommendations are on page 2 of the report. She said thanks to task force members.

WORLD HUNGER: KAREN HART

Someone in the world dies of hunger every 3 seconds. Border Conference and North New Mexico conferences have led in offerings to World Hunger Appeal. Last year RMS was 3rd in nation in World Hunger Appeal giving.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL:

Resolution #1: Reference and Counsel Committee recommends consideration.

VOTED:

**SA2009.4.8. Resolution #1 Memorial to Churchwide Assembly Seeking 2/3rd Vote
Resolution was not adopted.**

SA2009.4.9. Resolution #2 Memorial to Churchwide Assembly Concerning a “Justice for Women” Social Statement

Reference and Counsel Committee recommends consideration.

Resolution was adopted.

Resolution #3 Memorial to Churchwide Assembly Concerning Human Sexuality

Reference and Counsel Committee recommends consideration.

Discussion was interrupted by the Orders of the Day.

COMPANION SYNOD: PR. RON ROSCHKE

Three Madagascar synods are our companion synods. Political unrest in Madagascar has two governments claiming the right to govern. Cutting our support comes at a very difficult time for our companions. We rejoice at the gift of relationship.

PEACE WITHOUT WALLS: JAN MILLER

There are six Lutheran churches in the Holy Land. A trip to Holy Land and Greece is planned for October. A page is coming soon on the synod website. A book group meets in Denver.

Announcement of the deadline for new Resolutions.

PR. KIM ERNO, DIRECTOR OF THE LUTHERAN CENTER IN MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

Our theology depends on where our feet are. Straddling the line is a vantage point to see contrasts. The U.S. border wall costs \$3 million per mile; we advocate justice not walls. Drug wars: 90% of weapons in Mexico are purchased in the U.S. for male profit, pleasure and power. The brutalization of women is countered with the hope shown by Mary, Mother of Jesus. Mary overturns patriarchal power. Boat crossings in Mark 4 and 5 talk of crossing a border.

Prayer by Jim Hytjan

Pr. Jay McDivitt and Madelyn Busse dismissed the assembly to immersion experiences for the afternoon.

A simple evening service of prayer and meditation on the day featured a message by Pr. Kim Erno, followed by prayers around a floor map of the world.

THIRD PLENARY SESSION, SATURDAY, MAY 2

Following opening music by Bread for the Journey, an Opening Prayer was led by Chaplain Jim Hytjan.

JAY ALANIS AND KIM ERNO – Q AND A

What can we do? Be aware of international forums, trade agreements. Join ecumenically with community churches for advocacy. Publicize your church's stand on immigration. Continue immersion experiences. Advocate for closing the legal loophole of gun show purchases.

RECOGNITION OF ANNIVERSARIES

1. Congregations:

125 years 1884	St. Paul, Denver, CO St. Paul, Cheyenne, WY Trinity, Laramie, WY
50 years 1959	Cross of Glory, Denver, CO Our Savior, Alamogordo, NM Peace, Las Cruces, NM St. Mark, Roswell, NM St. Andrew, Arvada, CO
25 years 1984	Faith, Castle Rock, CO

2. Rostered Leaders:

5 years	Michael Fick, Jason Korthauer, Dana Lee Simon
15 years	Douglas Hill, Julie LaHam, Hong Lee, Jeff St. Clair, Corinne Thul
20 years	Beth Graham, Patricia Holman, Carol Jeunnette, David Palma-Ruwe, Michael Struck
25 years	Bruce Kuenzel, Tyger Penson, David Risendal
30 years	Steven Berke, Steven Klemz
35 years	Dale Bauer, Paul Everett, Ronald Roschke, Bob Kuehner
40 years	Dan Benuska, Arlyn Tolzmann
45 years	Todd Penson

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY: KATHERINE CRUSON

Credentials report:	Voting members	351
	Visitors	<u>53</u>
	Total	404

Churchwide Assembly will probably approve 4 required amendments and 2 optional amendments. Watch the synod website in September for these amendments. Recognition of St. Philip, Littleton, CO for placing their congregation constitution and bylaws on their website! Every two years is the recommended time for updating a congregation constitution.

ADOPTION OF THE 2010 BUDGET:

VOTED:

SA2009.4.10. To amend 2010 budget: increase line 15 Betela Seminary to \$10,000, decrease cash reserves. Amendment approved.

SA2009.4.11. To amend 2010 budget to use cash reserves to increase by \$30,000 line 27 Campus Ministry grants, increasing the line to \$311,000. Motion not approved.

SA2009.4.12. To approve the budget as amended by \$10,000. Motion is approved.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL:

Discussion on Resolution #3 resumed from Friday.

VOTED:

SA2009.4.13. To close debate.

SA2009.4.14. Resolution #3 Memorial to Churchwide Assembly Concerning Human Sexuality was approved.

A call for a Division of the House resulted in a standing vote:

In favor: 244

Opposed: 59

Resolution #4: Voting Rights for Clergy on Leave from Call for Study Reasons

SA2009.4.15 Amendment: remove “for study purposes”. The amendment failed.

SA2009.4.16. Amendments: strike “ordained” and change to “rostered persons”. The amendment is approved.

SA2009.4.17. Resolution #4: “Voting Rights for Clergy on Leave from Call for Study Reasons” as amended is approved by a standing vote:

In favor: 152

Opposed: 123

SA2009.4.18. Resolution #5: Motion to consider the Resolution #5 is approved.

SA2009.4.19. Motion: all documents before the house: (to close conversation) Approved.

SA2009.4.20. To amend Resolved #1. lines 3 and 4 by adding “undocumented and immigrant persons”. Approved.

SA2009.4.21. Resolution #5 “On Studying Immigration and Welcoming Immigrants” is approved.

SA2009.4.22. Motion to consider Resolution #6: “Letter to Combined Congressional Delegations Regarding Brutal Interrogations” is approved.

SA2009.4.23. To close debate.

SA2009.4.24. Resolution #6: “Letter to Combined Congressional Delegations Regarding Brutal Interrogations” is adopted.

Thanks to Committee on Reference and Counsel.

Reference and Counsel Committee approved Martin Luther’s 95 Theses on the assembly tables.

JIM BARCLAY: PRESIDENT OF LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICE OF COLORADO:

LFS has had contacts with 102 CO congregations. LFS decided not to have a capital campaign. They have cut staff, but not programs.

LESLIE WHITED: LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF UTAH:

Members from Jose, El Salvador + 4 from Yugoslavia, Croatia, and Uganda, were onstage during a power point presentation about LSS of Utah.

YOUTH GATHERING: PASTOR JASON KORTHAUER, UMBRELLA TEAM

Encourage youth to “Cross the border” into action and becoming history makers:

Senior High Gathering Nov. 21-22 “One Campaign” Bishop Mark Hanson, keynote – Estes Park
Junior High Gathering Jan 15-17, 2010, Crowne Plaza in Colorado Springs.

LUTHERAN MAGAZINE: CURT PETERSON

There are almost 60% in congregational participation subscriptions to the Lutheran.

Bishop Bjornberg expressed thanks to Synod Assembly participants and thanks to Alamogordo and the Synod Assembly planning team, which has been working for 3 years. He said thank you to Madelyn Busse, who is the incarnation of what a diaconal minister is, as she serves with joy and deep commitment. He also said thanks to Greg Villadon, Jay Alanis, Kim Erno, and the musicians Bread for the Journey.

Madelyn Busse had a few closing announcements, including that Synod Assembly evaluations are emailed to participants. Thanks to Border Conference people and El Paso volunteers who helped in so many ways. Order DVD’s of speakers from Kent Mueller. The 2010 Synod Assembly will be May 27-29 at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, CO.

Pr. Hytjan prayed from “Collection of Prayer around the Cross” Holden Village, Augsburg Fortress.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:01am.

The Closing Worship included the installation of Vice President Linda Bobbitt, with Bishop Allan Bjornberg presiding and Pr. Greg Villalon preaching.

Katherine Cruson, Secretary
With the assistance of Jan Krakow