



# Preliminary Minutes

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

## Plenary Session Seven

Thursday, August 9, 2007  
2:00 P.M.—5:30 P.M.

The seventh plenary session of the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was called to order by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson in Exhibition Hall A at Navy Pier, Chicago, Ill., on Thursday, August 9, 2007, at 2:02 P.M. Central Daylight Time. The assembly opened with the singing of “We are Called.”

### Opening Remarks

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the Rev. H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the ELCA from 1995-2001. He invited him to come to the stage so that the assembly could thank him for his leadership. Presiding Bishop Hanson related that during the first 18 months of his call as presiding bishop, Pr. Anderson was the one to whom he came repeatedly with questions and by whom he was nourished continually with wisdom. Pr. Anderson was greeted with a standing ovation from the assembly. Presiding Bishop Hanson thanked Pr. Anderson for his leadership as church historian, former seminary and college president, and one of this church’s wise elders. Presiding Bishop Hanson recalled his shared work with Pr. Anderson and the Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, former bishop of the ELCA, in the 2006 Hein-Fry Lectures. During the lecture series as they visited each of the ELCA’s eight seminaries, Presiding Bishop Hanson related, they all became very good friends. He observed that he and this church were blessed with the perspectives of Pr. Chilstrom and Pr. Anderson on the Gospel, this church, and this church’s role in the Church catholic. He presented Pr. Anderson a framed photograph of the mosaic displayed at the churchwide office in Chicago, Ill., which commemorates his leadership as presiding bishop.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reviewed the agenda for the plenary session. The assembly would be led in Bible study by the Rev. David L. Tiede. It would hear greetings from this church’s full communion partners; spend significant time in discussion of memorials related to the blessing of same-sex relationships, standards for rostered leaders, restraint in discipline proceedings, and referrals to the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality; and hear from the remaining nominees for the office of secretary of the ELCA as they participated in a question-and-answer forum. Presiding Bishop Hanson related to the assembly that during the afternoon they also would hear the report of the *ad hoc* committee constituted to consider amendments and substitute motions to “Our Calling in Education.”

### Bible Study

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson welcomed the Rev. David L. Tiede, Bernhard M. Christensen Chair in Religion, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota, to lead the assembly in the afternoon’s Bible study, “Clothed in Christ: Galatians 3:15-29. Professor Tiede commended the assembly for its good work in discussing issues related to sexuality. He reminded the assembly that while the Lord did not promise them life without contention, Christ did promise to be with them. He noted that the apostle Paul had moved beyond contending with adversaries to a profound vision of life in Christ Jesus. In the first portion of the passage in Galatians, Paul developed the contrast between a relationship based on a legal contract and one built on a promise or gift.

Professor Tiede asked assembly members whether they hoped to receive their birthright as children of God by claiming their rights before God or as an unmerited gift. He related that the richest gift of all is a living Christ with them, among them, and for them, noting that in his letter, Paul wrote that persons were drawn into the faith, love, and law of Christ. Paul was encouraging his readers’ faith in Christ Jesus, their love of Jesus, and their obedience to their Lord, but he was also disclosing a deeper mystery: faith in Christ was in fact Christ’s faithfulness to them. Professor Tiede observed that the love of Christ is Jesus’ profound compassion for the frail mortals and love for sinners as they are, and the law of Christ actually was fulfilled in Christ’s death on the cross establishing his reign.

Professor Tiede asked participants to consider how the traditional table blessing might be read in the context of Galatians. “Come, Lord Jesus” is taken as an authentic invitation offered with a child’s confidence, he said. “Be our guest” serves as a reminder that Jesus was often a guest of others and yet questioned the household and its hospitality, making it necessary to be cautious about assuming Jesus is “on your side” in any conversation. “Bless these gifts” highlights the truth that Jesus’ blessing of gifts doesn’t stop within the household wherein the blessing is asked; rather, the gifts are blessed in order to themselves become blessings to the world God loves.

Professor Tiede related that his prayer for the assembly and its participants was that the Word of Christ would dwell in them richly, that the love of Christ would enfold them, and that the love of Christ may be formed in them, as Paul testified.

In asking the assembly what vision the living Christ would give it, Prof. Tiede referred to the study material prepared by the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, and offered two insights that would aid the assembly’s listening for God’s word of promise in their lives. First, he said, “It’s all about the promises.” Paul indicates that God began with the promise, then brought in the rules, and ultimately made it possible through Christ to live

in the promise and not just by the rules. Secondly, "It's all about Christ Jesus," by which the apostle expresses his conviction that faith is not simply about believing in something; trusting in Jesus creates the bond by which Christ's own faithfulness, Christ's love, and Christ's law comes alive.

Professor Tiede then called upon Ms. Connie D. Thomas, a member of the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Chicago, Illinois, to read from Galatians 3:15-29. After the reading participants were invited to share with one another the meanings of the text within their own experiences by addressing the following questions:

- When are your relationships not just running by the rules but alive with promise?
- When have you sensed Christ living in your relationships?

After several minutes of discussion among assembly participants, Prof. Tiede closed the study with a prayer that the Word of Christ would dwell in all participants richly.

### ***Full Communion with Additional Provinces of the Moravian Church in America***

(Reference: 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, pages 41-42.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson opened consideration of a proposal related to the full communion agreement that the ELCA had established in 1999 with the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in America. Directing the assembly to the recommendation as printed in the 2007 Pre-Assembly Report, Section IV, page 42, the chair noted the resolution would extend the full communion relationship to the Alaska Province and the Eastern West Indies Province of the Moravian Church in America.

The chair invited the following persons to the stage to assist with the assembly's consideration of the recommendation: the Rev. Paul A. Schreck, Office of the Secretary; Mr. Michael R. Trice, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations; and the Rev. Gary L. Harke, the Moravian Church in America.

Mr. Trice provided a brief introduction to the matter before the assembly. He explained that the 1999 Churchwide Assembly, by a vote of 1007-11, had approved entering into a full communion agreement with the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in America. It also had created the Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee to discuss ways these church bodies might continue their cooperation, facilitate inter-church activities, and serve as a forum for mission possibilities. Mr. Trice offered examples of the work in which the coordinating committee has been engaged, and lifted up the leadership of a Lutheran pastor, the Rev. Frederick J. Lehr, who is serving as the director for church planting for the Moravian Church in America. Mr. Trice also noted that the Rev. Michael F. Keys, bishop of the Alaska Synod, was working to create opportunities for Lutheran and Moravian young adults to study together. The coordinating committee had observed that the lack of participation of the Alaska Province and the Eastern West Indies Province in the full communion agreement created a lack of geographic parity between this church and the Moravian Church in America, an observation that was the impetus for the proposed action. He noted that the Eastern West Indies Province had voted on August 17, 2006, to adopt "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion," the full

communion agreement, and that the Alaska Province, in January 2007, had voted to study the text further.

The presiding bishop dispensed with the reading of the full recommendation:

***Moved:***

***Seconded:***

1. To continue to rejoice in the relationship of full communion between this church and the Northern Province and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America;
2. To recognize that these two provinces of the Moravian Church in America do not cover all the geographical territory encompassed by this church;
3. To acknowledge that by extending the relationship of full communion as outlined in "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion" to the Alaska Province and to the Eastern West Indies Province, more people can participate in the closer working relationship allowed by full communion;
4. To rejoice in the action of the Eastern West Indies Province, which approved a relationship of full communion with this church by adopting "Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion";
5. To encourage the Alaska Province to take a similar action;
6. To invite the Alaska Province and the Eastern West Indies Province to appoint members to the Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee in order to live into this relationship of full communion more effectively; and
7. To declare that a relationship of full communion exists between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Eastern West Indies Province of the Moravian Church in America and between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Alaska Province of the Moravian Church in America, pending approval by the Alaska Province.

The chair called for discussion. There being none, he called for the vote, noting that two-thirds was required.

***Assembly***

***Action:***

**CA07.04.16**

***Two-Thirds Vote Required***

***Yes-999; No-23***

1. To continue to rejoice in the relationship of full communion between this church and the Northern Province and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America;
2. To recognize that these two provinces of the Moravian Church in America do not cover all the geographical territory encompassed by this church;

3. To acknowledge that by extending the relationship of full communion as outlined in “Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion” to the Alaska Province and to the Eastern West Indies Province, more people can participate in the closer working relationship allowed by full communion;
4. To rejoice in the action of the Eastern West Indies Province, which approved a relationship of full communion with this church by adopting “Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion”;
5. To encourage the Alaska Province to take a similar action;
6. To invite the Alaska Province and the Eastern West Indies Province to appoint members to the Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee in order to live into this relationship of full communion more effectively; and
7. To declare that a relationship of full communion exists between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Eastern West Indies Province of the Moravian Church in America and between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Alaska Province of the Moravian Church in America, pending approval by the Alaska Province.

Presiding Bishop Hanson invited the assembly to express the welcome of this church to the Alaska Province and the Eastern West Indies Province by applause, and the assembly did so.

### ***Ecumenical Greetings: Full Communion Partners***

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson invited the Rev. Gary L. Harke to remain on stage and called upon the representatives of other full communion partner churches to join them there and be welcomed as friends and colleagues in mission. These representatives included the Rev. Harold M. Delhagen, pastor of Pultneyville Reformed Church, Williamson, New York, and the Right Rev. C. Christopher Epting, deputy for ecumenical and interfaith relations of The Episcopal Church.

Pr. Harke presented greetings on behalf of the Northern Province and its president, the Rev. David L. Wickman; the Southern Province and its president, the Rev. Wayne Burkette; the Alaska Province; and the Eastern West Indies Province. He noted the selection of the Rev. Christopher M. Thomfoerde, an ELCA pastor, as the new president of Moravian College and Theological Seminary. While there is much to celebrate, Pr. Harke noted that there will continue to be challenges within the full communion process until clergy and congregations of these bodies come to view each other less as colleagues and more as full partners and collaborators in witness to the Gospel. He observed that, like politics, all ecumenism is ultimately local. In addressing

the place of Scripture in the life of the Moravian Church, he highlighted the publication and use of *Daily Texts*, a devotional guide, now in its 276<sup>th</sup> year, with a circulation of 1.5 million copies and available in 51 languages and dialects. Pr. Harke referenced a recent statement on Scripture issued by the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission that underscores the Moravian tradition of relational considerations, which allow for diversity in Scriptural approaches. Pr. Harke noted that many Moravians look forward to the inspiration they will receive from the ELCA’s new Book of Faith Initiative. He closed by asking God’s blessing on the continued partnership of these churches.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon the Rev. Harold M. Delhagen, pastor of Pultneyville Reformed Church in Williamson, New York, to present greetings on behalf of the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Further, Pr. Delhagen brought greetings from the Reformed Church in America’s general secretary, the Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, and the Rev. Douglas Fromm, associate for ecumenical relations. He gave thanks for the “Formula of Agreement,” which established the full communion partnership and through which the churches of the Reformed tradition have experienced God’s grace locally, nationally, and internationally. Pr. Delhagen highlighted ways in which the ELCA and the Reformed Churches have worked together at both local and international levels. In noting the tenth anniversary of the “Formula of Agreement,” which will be observed in October 2008, Pr. Delhagen offered thanks and hope for the mutual efforts of these church bodies to live out together the unity of Christ.

The Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting, deputy for ecumenical and interfaith relations of The Episcopal Church, brought greetings from Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori, President Bonnie Anderson of the House of Deputies, other staff members of the presiding bishop’s office, and the people of The Episcopal Church. He also brought greetings from members of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee. Pr. Epting noted that the coordinating committee continues its work of encouraging joint congregations, ministry with young people, and theological education. He highlighted the role of the *Book of Common Prayer* in the relationship of Episcopalians to Scripture, noting that often the *Book of Common Prayer* has been described as the Bible arranged for prayer. He also observed that in the latter half of the last century and the beginning of this century, Episcopalians have become more comfortable with, engaged in, and challenged by Holy Scripture in personal devotions, small groups, and formal study. He saluted this church for its efforts in Christian education for all ages, and he thanked the assembly for giving him its attention.

Presiding Bishop Hanson invited the assembly to stand and sing “We Are All One in Mission.”

### ***Elections Report***

(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 provide a report on the second ballot for secretary of this church. Mr. Harris reported that 1,046 votes were cast, including two invalid ballots.

With seventy-five percent of the vote required, no person had received the 785 votes needed for election. He read the following vote tallies for the eight nominees who had received the most votes:

Michael Cooper-White	277 (26.48%)
Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl	227 (21.70%)
David Swartling	114 (10.90%)
Ken Rupp	108 (10.33%)
Paul Schreck	70 (6.69%)
Glenndy Ose (Scully)	57 (5.45%)
Wm. Chris Boerger	32 (3.06%)
Mark Grorud	32 (3.06%)

Mr. Harris explained that the third ballot for secretary would be conducted by electronic voting machine. Presiding Bishop Hanson invited the eight nominees to come forward in order to draw numbers for the order in which they would answer questions at a forum later in the afternoon.

### ***Ecumenical Greetings: Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.***

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson called upon representatives of three of this church's ecumenical partners to greet the assembly. He introduced first the Rev. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), telling the assembly about the LWF's role in connecting this church with 140 other Lutheran church bodies with a combined membership of more than 66 million Lutherans in 78 nations. Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that the LWF this year marks its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In welcoming General Secretary Noko, the chair also recognized the strong partnership between the LWF and this church represented by Ms. Kathy J. Magnus, regional officer for the LWF in North America, whose office was located in the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Illinois. Noting Ms. Magnus' upcoming retirement, Presiding Bishop Hanson asked the assembly to express its appreciation for her work.

General Secretary Noko was greeted with a standing ovation from the assembly. Commenting that this was the fourth Churchwide Assembly he had attended, Pr. Noko expressed his admiration for the manner in which this church conducts God's business and the caring way members relate to one another and the world. As examples of the latter, General Secretary Noko mentioned the involvement of this church in companion synod programs, Lutheran World Relief, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, as well as the work of the Church in Society and Global Mission program units. He expressed his appreciation to the ELCA and the Church of Sweden for their financial support of an ecumenical effort with global Anglican and Reformed church bodies to address HIV, AIDS, and malaria. He thanked this church for its openness in offering educational resources to emerging leaders from LWF-member churches in other parts of the world. The general secretary noted that by its action of extending full communion more broadly with the Moravian Church in America, the assembly was acting in harmony with the LWF, which includes in its membership the Moravian Church of Southern Africa. All of these activities, he noted, were signs of this church's serious engagement in ecumenical affairs. Pr. Noko concluded that God is doing

amazing things, and extraordinary things in ordinary ways within the ELCA.

As this church celebrates its twentieth anniversary in 2007, Pr. Noko reminded the assembly that the LWF observes its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He directed the assembly's attention to maps detailing the global activity of the LWF, which had been distributed to all participants. He recalled the difficulty in arranging and holding the LWF's formative assembly in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, given the exigencies of life in post-war Europe. Although a participant in that gathering had invited the LWF to meet next in mainland China, Pr. Noko noted that it was not until 1997 that the assembly was able to meet in Hong Kong, just days after that city's incorporation into mainland China. This is evidence, he said, of the amazing things God does, and the fact that God does them in God's time.

He proceeded to note some of the important decisions made by the LWF Council at its 60<sup>th</sup>-anniversary meeting, held in Lund in March 2007. The decisions include the Lund Statement on the role of the episcopate within global Lutheranism and the adoption of guidelines enabling and encouraging churches throughout the Lutheran communion to discuss questions related to marriage, family, and human sexuality. The general secretary noted that the next LWF assembly will be held in 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany, with the theme, "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread," which, he suggested, represents an invitation to discuss engagement in matters of social justice.

Pr. Noko lifted up many current concerns related to social justice, including the increasing gap between the haves and have-nots and the failure in many parts of the world of those called to public service to discharge their stewardship of the public good. Concerns related to Darfur, the Middle East, Central America, Asia, the elderly, youth, and women all call the churches of the world to a ministry of justice and reconciliation, he remarked. He closed by wishing the assembly Godspeed and God's courage to be a missionary church and a sent church.

Following Pr. Noko's report, the chair invited the assembly to join in singing "By Grace God Calls Us."

Presiding Bishop Hanson next called on the Rev. Deborah DeWinter, program executive for the United States for the World Council of Churches (WCC), representing Dr. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the WCC. He noted that Pr. DeWinter is a minister in the United Church of Christ, a full communion partner of this church.

Pr. DeWinter brought greetings from Dr. Kobia, her staff colleagues in Geneva, Switzerland, and the member churches of the WCC, which represent a combined 580 million Christians around the world. She noted that the Rev. Walter Altmann of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, was elected moderator of the WCC at its 2006 assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Pr. DeWinter offered thanks for the ways in which the ELCA contributes to the WCC's ecumenical mandate and for the commitment of this church in nurturing young adult leaders through its involvement in the WCC. She offered as an example Ms. Jennifer L. Nagel, who had been selected by the ELCA as a rostered representative of this church to the Central Committee of the WCC, and is now co-chairing the Young Adult Task Force for the WCC and the U.S. Council of the WCC.

Pr. DeWinter reported on the WCC's commitment to

heeding Christ's call that "they all might be one," and mentioned that at its ninth assembly in 2006, the following five areas of emphasis were agreed upon for action by the WCC and its member bodies: unity, mission, evangelism and spirituality; public witness; global justice and responsibility for the stewardship of creation; ecumenical formation; and interreligious dialogue and cooperation. She closed by offering thanks to God and to the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon Ms. Clare J. Chapmann, deputy general secretary for administration and finance for the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC), to bring greetings from that organization.

Ms. Chapmann noted that the member churches of the NCCC were holding the assembly in prayer as it deliberates. She congratulated Presiding Bishop Hanson on his re-election, and gave thanks for his steadfast support of ecumenism. She saluted the Rev. Charles S. Miller for his years of engagement with the NCCC as a member of its administration and finance committee. She thanked Pr. Miller and offered best wishes upon his retirement.

In discussing the NCCC's perspective on the importance of Scripture, Ms. Chapmann offered the allegory of a porch light, reminiscent of one's return to home, welcome, and safety. The Psalmist, she noted, says God's Word is like a lamp to one's feet and a light to one's path. She thanked Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of this church, for its partnership in promoting the accessibility of Scripture in an array of media. Ms. Chapmann said Scripture is a "porch light" which shows where home is and provides a record of the steadfast presence of God. She recalled that Presiding Bishop Hanson, in October 2002, had said, "We cannot see with any clarity where God is leading us if we do not know from whence we have come and to whom we belong."

Ms. Chapmann then recounted several programs of the NCCC, including "Benefit Bank," a program geared toward economic justice and thanked this church for its participation in a national living wage initiative and other efforts aimed at eliminating institutional poverty. She closed by giving thanks for the partnership of the ELCA in mission, vision, and faithful witness along with the 35 member communions of the NCCC.

### ***Parliamentary Matters***

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked the assembly for permission to adjust the afternoon schedule and received it. He then called upon the Rev. A. Donald Main, bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod, to lead the assembly in prayer prior to its return to consideration of memorials.

The Rev. Robert B. Ierien [Northeastern Minnesota Synod] rose to move that during the forthcoming discussion on matters related to sexuality, at intervals of twenty minutes, the assembly stop for one minute of silent prayer for the unity of this church, to be concluded by a prayer for that unity led by the presiding bishop.

***Moved;***

***Seconded:*** To ask that the assembly stop for one minute of silent prayer for the unity of this church, concluded by a prayer for that unity led by the

chair, at intervals of twenty minutes during the debate of the recommendations related to the memorials on ministry issues concerning same-sex relationships.

Upon receipt of a second, Presiding Bishop Hanson offered Pr. Ierien the opportunity to speak to the motion. Stating that he did not have the answer to the questions about sexuality before the body and that he envied those who did, Pr. Ierien expressed concern over the tenor of discourse on these issues and his hope that voting members would speak with each other rather than at each other.

Mr. James M. Morrell [Oregon Synod] rose to amend the motion by stipulating that time given to prayer would not be counted against the allotted time for the discussion.

***Moved;***

***Seconded:*** To amend the motion by addition:

The one-minute intervals will not be included in the time allotted for debate.

Hearing no further discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment to append the motion.

***Moved;***

***Seconded;***

***Carried:***

To amend the motion by addition:

The one-minute intervals will not be included in the time allotted for debate.

There being no one who wished to speak, the chair then called for a vote.

***Assembly***

***Action:***

**CA07.04.17**

***Two-Thirds Vote Required***

***Yes-773; No-190***

To ask that the assembly stop for one minute of silent prayer for the unity of this church, concluded by a prayer for that unity led by the chair, at intervals of twenty minutes during the debate of the recommendations related to the memorials on ministry issues concerning same-sex relationships. The one-minute intervals will not be included in the time allotted for debate.

### ***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 invited the co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, the Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp and Ms. Norma J. Hirsch, to lead the assembly in its continued consideration of memorials.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called upon Ms. Hirsch to present the recommendation on Category E1: Blessing of Same-Sex Relationships. She directed voting members to the recommendation in the 2007 Pre-Assembly Report.

**Moved;  
Seconded:**

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Eastern North Dakota Synod, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Lower Susquehanna Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on matters related to the blessing of same-sex relationships;

To acknowledge that, as the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality stated, “the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered. This church is not of one mind”<sup>1</sup> and that it is appropriate, therefore, that matters of human sexuality continue to be the subject of ongoing study and conversation in this church;

To recognize the resolution of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.17] that urged “the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions—to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ”;

To affirm that, in the polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, policies and practices, as well as any revisions of them, must be congruent with this church’s social teachings, Confession of Faith, the process established in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and that revision of policies must be developed and approved according to the process described in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and other relevant governing documents;

To recognize the action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.18] to “. . . respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops” and to “. . . trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care for all to whom they minister”;

To underscore the March 2007 statement of the Conference of Bishops, which said, “This church is engaged in a careful study of issues related to human sexuality with the intention of adopting a social statement at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. We urge the members of this church to engage fully and faithfully in the study process as part of our ‘living together faithfully’ during this time . . .”; and

To refer these memorials and a verbatim

record of this assembly’s committee of the whole discussion of these issues to the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, urging that it consider this information in its ongoing discernment and deliberation.

Presiding Bishop Hanson opened discussion of this recommendation at 3:50 P.M.

Mr. David Lillehaug [Minneapolis Area Synod] raised a white card for a privileged motion and moved that the assembly postpone discussion of memorials in Category E1 until those in Categories E2, E3, and E4 were considered.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To postpone consideration of memorials in Category E1 until consideration of those in Categories E2, E3, and E4.

After receiving a second for the motion, Mr. Lillehaug observed that there were four memorials in Category E1 and 57 memorials in Categories E2, E3, and E4. He believed that the latter dealt with a subject of primary concern to synods and that those in Category E1 already had been addressed by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. He believed that the voting members should deal directly with the issues in Categories E2, E3, and E4 before returning to the matters addressed in Category E1.

The Rev. James F. Mauney, bishop of the Virginia Synod, spoke in opposition to the motion, stating that he was at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly and that his understanding of what had occurred was quite different. He would rather the assembly discuss same-gender blessings first.

There being no further discussion, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the motion.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Defeated:**

**Yes-455; No-561**

To postpone consideration of memorials in Category E1 until after consideration of those in Categories E2, E3, and E4.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then indicated that the Memorials Committee recommendation for Category E1 was before the voting members and called for discussion.

Mr. Edward C. Cool [Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod] moved the following:

**Moved;**

**Seconded:**

To limit time for debate on memorials to 20 minutes for each amendment to a memorial and to limit time for debate to 20 minutes on the main motion or main motion as amended.

Mr. Cool stated that the proposed rule was similar to one in place at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, Florida, which had proven to be effective and efficient while enabling both sides to speak to a motion.

Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that since this amendment was made with a pending motion on the floor, if adopted, it

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<sup>1</sup>“Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality,” January 13, 2005.

would apply only to the motion pending. The chair observed that if Mr. Cool's intention were to apply this rule to all matters in this section, then the motion would have to be made following the present consideration. Upon discerning from Mr. Cool that he intended his motion to be applicable to the entire discussion, the chair suggested Mr. Cool consider withdrawing his motion until the motion on the floor was decided, a proposal to which Mr. Cool assented.

Presiding Bishop Hanson informed voting members that consideration of the recommendation on Category E1 once again was before them.

Mr. Patrick L. Monroe [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] raised a point of information, contending that since Mr. Cool had been at the point of making his motion at the outset of consideration, the motion should be applicable to the entire discussion. The chair reiterated that Mr. Cool had the option of testing the body on his motion, and again asked Mr. Cool if he wished to do so. When Mr. Cool responded in the affirmative, the chair proceeded to invite speaking to the motion to further limit debate.

Mr. James M. Morell [Oregon Synod] rose to speak against the motion, saying that this church was in careful consideration on a serious matter. He stated his opinion that if this church is to be a sent church and not a settled church, the assembly ought not limit debate.

Presiding Bishop Hanson announced that the parliamentarian had ruled that the matter was not subject to debate, apologized for the error, and informed voting members that the matter required a two-thirds' majority for approval because it represented a change in the rules.

**Moved;** **Two-Thirds Vote Required**  
**Seconded;** **Yes-490; No-522**  
**Defeated:** To amend the rules for debate by limiting time to debate on memorials to 20 minutes for each amendment on a memorial and to limit time to debate to 20 minutes on the main motion or main motion as amended.

Presiding Bishop Hanson reminded the body that the recommendation on Category E1 was still before it and called for debate.

The Rev. Carol S. Hendrix, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, spoke in favor of the Memorials Committee recommendation. A member of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, she asked the assembly to pray with and for the task force members as they engage in the process of discernment on the subject. She also encouraged widespread participation in the task force's study. She urged referral of this and other related memorials to the task force.

Mr. Jeffrey A. Mason [Northeastern Iowa Synod] spoke in favor of the recommendation because its approval would support the orderly structure of this church and the work of the task force.

The Rev. Nancy N. Bence [Minneapolis Area Synod] opposed the motion, lifting up a traditional African American image of the Holy Spirit as a rabbit. This, she said, indicated that rather than invoking the Holy Spirit, this church should wait and

watch for where the Holy Spirit emerges. She contended that the rabbit is bounding through the ELCA on the subject of full inclusion for gay and lesbian persons, and discouraged this church from trying to cage the Holy Spirit with a calendar or time table; rather, she urged the ELCA to put on its running shoes and chase the rabbit to see where it is leading this church.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon another person speaking against the pending action since he had inadvertently called upon two consecutive speakers who were in favor.

Ms. Donna M. Treaster [Upper Susquehanna Synod] rose to speak against the recommendation, noting that memorials from many synods indicated strong support for action on the subject.

The Rev. Leonard H. Bolick, bishop of the North Carolina Synod, rose to speak in favor of the recommendation for referral to the task force. He stated that a "yes" or "no" at the current assembly would not be helpful to this church because a social statement on human sexuality should guide this church's decisions on such matters. He held that waiting until the 2009 social statement would enhance the level of trust within this church.

The Rev. Daniel W. Doerring [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] rose to ask what would happen if the motion failed. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that it would simply fail.

The Rev. William E. Baum [Metropolitan New York Synod] called the question.

The chair called for a vote on ending debate.

**Moved;** **Two-Thirds Vote Required**  
**Seconded;** **Yes-914; No-123**  
**Carried:** To end debate on the Category E1 recommendation.

Debate having been ended, Presiding Bishop Hanson called for a vote on the Memorials Committee recommendation.

**Assembly**  
**Action:** **Yes-773; No-278**  
**CA07.04.18**

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Eastern North Dakota Synod, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Lower Susquehanna Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on matters related to the blessing of same-sex relationships;

To acknowledge that, as the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality stated, "the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered. This church is not of one mind"<sup>2</sup> and that it is appropriate, therefore, that matters of human sexuality continue to be the subject of

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<sup>2</sup>"Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality," January 13, 2005.

ongoing study and conversation in this church;

To recognize the resolution of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.17] that urged “the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions—to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ”;

To affirm that, in the polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, policies and practices, as well as any revisions of them, must be congruent with this church’s social teachings, Confession of Faith, the process established in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and that revision of policies must be developed and approved according to the process described in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and other relevant governing documents;

To recognize the action of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.18] to “. . . respect the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops” and to “. . . trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care for all to whom they minister”;

To underscore the March 2007 statement of the Conference of Bishops, which said, “This church is engaged in a careful study of issues related to human sexuality with the intention of adopting a social statement at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. We urge the members of this church to engage fully and faithfully in the study process as part of our ‘living together faithfully’ during this time . . .”; and

To refer these memorials and a verbatim record of this assembly’s committee of the whole discussion of these issues to the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, urging that it consider this information in its ongoing discernment and deliberation.

A voting member indicated her voting machine did not work. After determining that the malfunction had affected only one row of voting members and, as such, would not have changed the result of the vote, Presiding Bishop Hanson asked for and received unanimous consent to rule the recommendation adopted. Since debate had reached 20 minutes, time was taken for silent prayer, followed by the presiding bishop leading the assembly in prayer.

Mr. John M. Mills [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] moved that the assembly remove all issues related to sexuality from its agenda. After consultation with the parliamentarian, Presiding Bishop Hanson determined that the motion was out of order since no such question was before the body at that time.

The Rev. Paul E. Stone [Western Iowa Synod] inquired what a “no” vote would do on any of the recommendations on Categories E2, E3, and E4. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that if a “no” vote prevailed, the body would have stated that the recommendations simply did not exist as actions of the assembly. Presiding Bishop Hanson promised to make clear the implications of each vote.

Presiding Bishop Hanson then called upon Ms. Hirsch to present the Memorials Committee’s recommendation on memorials in Category E2.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Northwest Washington Synod, Southwestern Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod, Southwest California Synod, Grand Canyon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Minneapolis Area Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, Northeastern Iowa Synod, Southeastern Iowa Synod, Greater Milwaukee Synod, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, New Jersey Synod, New England Synod, Metropolitan New York Synod, Upstate New York Synod, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on matters related to policy documents regarding standards for rostered leaders;

To acknowledge that, as the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality stated, “the disagreement over these issues before the church is deep, pervasive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered. This church is not of one mind”<sup>3</sup> and that it is appropriate, therefore, that matters of human sexuality continue to be the subject of ongoing study and conversation in this church;

To recognize the resolution of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.17] that urged

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<sup>3</sup>“Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Studies on Sexuality,” January 13, 2005, p.5.

“the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions—. . . to concentrate on finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ”;

To affirm that, in the polity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, policies and practices, as well as any revisions of them, must be congruent with this church’s social teachings, Confession of Faith, the process established in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and that revision of policies must be developed and approved according to the process described in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and other relevant governing documents;

To underscore the March 2007 statement of the Conference of Bishops, which said, “This church is engaged in a careful study of issues related to human sexuality with the intention of adopting a social statement at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. We urge the members of this church to engage fully and faithfully in the study process as part of our ‘living together faithfully’ during this time . . .”; and

To refer these memorials and a verbatim record of this assembly’s committee of the whole discussion of these issues to the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality, urging that it consider this information in its ongoing discernment and deliberation.

Mr. John M. Mills [Southeastern Minnesota Synod] moved to cease consideration of matters related to the topic of sexuality at this assembly.

Presiding Bishop Hanson advised voting members that the motion did not require a second, was not debatable, and would require a two-thirds’ majority for adoption. He rephrased the motion; approval of the cessation of consideration would require two-thirds of the “no” votes.

**Moved:** To consider the Memorials Committee’s recommendation on Category E2 at the present time.

Mr. Jeremy Posadas [Metropolitan New York Synod] clarified that a “no” vote would cease consideration of the matter before the assembly and any substitutes as well. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that such was the case.

**Moved;** **Two-Thirds Vote Required**  
**Seconded;** **Yes-753; No-280**  
**Carried:** To consider the Memorials Committee’s recommendation on Category E2 at the present time.

The Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers, bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, moved a substitute for the recommendation of the Memorials Committee on Category E2: Standards for Rostered Leaders.

**Moved;**  
**Seconded:** 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 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.

In speaking to the motion, Bishop Stumme-Diers noted that this is a great church, a strong church, a mature church, a faithful church, and a church that can be trusted to have vigorous and healthy deliberations in assembly. He observed that 21 synods through memorials had called upon this church to do take the actions outlined in his substitute motion at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, and stated that their request should be honored by giving them consideration rather than deferring or delaying them.

Presiding Bishop Hanson clarified for voting members that, under the rules adopted for this assembly, it would have both the recommendation of the Memorials Committee on Category E2 and the substitute motion before it simultaneously; however, should a voting member wish to amend, the body would first perfect the main motion before moving on to any substitute motions.

A voting member asked if the prior question about removing

the subject from the agenda took time from the debate. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied in the affirmative. He also clarified that those who wished to speak in favor of the recommendation of the Memorials Committee should speak at a green microphone and those in favor of the substitute or opposed to the main recommendation should speak at a red microphone.

The Rev. James T. Lehmann [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] inquired if it were possible to have a written copy of the substitution distributed to voting members so they would be able to compare the two recommendations. The presiding bishop replied that, logistically, it would not be feasible to do so, then asked Bishop Stumme-Diers if his substitute were similar to any of the memorials in the material available to voting members. Bishop Stumme-Diers replied that it was very close to the memorial on Section VI, page 61, column two, in the *2007 Pre-Assembly Report*, noting that his motion did not have the whereas statements from that page, but did have the resolved portion.

The Rev. Gladys G. Moore [New Jersey Synod] moved to amend the substitute motion.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** *To amend the substitute motion by inserting a new paragraph after the second resolved statement:*

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 . . . ."

Pr. Moore then spoke to her substitute motion by stating that this church's current policy excludes people whom God has called into Word and Sacrament ministry. She added, in response to those who claimed that a change in the policy would alienate African Americans and global partners, that colonialism and racism were more offensive and that interdependence in this church's global and ecumenical relationships does not mean capitulation.

Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that before perfecting the substitute motion, he wanted to see if there were any amendments to the main motion.

At this time, the assembly spent one minute in silent prayer, after which the chair led the assembly in prayer.

The Rev. David A. Weeks [Southwestern Minnesota Synod] inquired as to the margin required for adoption of the substitute. Presiding Bishop Hanson responded that it would take a simple majority. Pr. Weeks then asserted a discrepancy existed from the two-thirds majority required of similar questions considered at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, and further inquired from whence "Visions and Expectations" derived its authority.

Presiding Bishop Hanson conferred with the parliamentarian, then announced that he would defer his answer to Pr. Week's question until the chair could determine that no one in the queue was planning on amending the main motion. After determining such was the case, he declared that Pr.

Moore's motion to amend the substitute was in order. Presiding Bishop Hanson then responded to Pr. Weeks' inquiry by saying that the action requiring a two-thirds vote at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly would have changed this church's governing documents. Changes in the church's governing documents require a two-thirds vote. The presiding bishop determined that the motions under consideration did not require a change in the governing documents; hence, only a simple majority would be required for passage. The chair then ruled the second part of Pr. Weeks's question to be out of order and suggested he wait until it could be restated in the course of the debate and not as a privileged question.

Presiding Bishop Hanson directed the assembly's attention to the amendment to the substitute motion, which was on the floor. There being no further debate, he called for the vote.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Yes-739; No-268**

**Carried:** *To amend the substitute motion by inserting a new paragraph after the second resolved statement:*

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 . . . ."

Debate resumed on the substitute motion as amended.

The Rev. Donald J. McCoid, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, spoke in favor of the original recommendation offered by the Memorials Committee. He related that while the Conference of Bishops is not of one mind on the issues under discussion, it had issued a pastoral statement calling for delay in any such considerations until all study and deliberation by the Task Force on ELCA Studies on Sexuality is completed. He urged that no decisions on policy or practice be made until the foundation of a social statement was in place.

Ms. Anna K. Lindquist [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin] spoke in favor of the substitution. She believed that since twenty-one synods had adopted the memorials, it would not do those synods justice if the assembly referred them to the task force. She said that in order to be a listening church, this church should listen to the synods.

The Rev. Gregory R. Pile, bishop of the Allegheny Synod, noted that throughout eighteen years, this church has continued thorough and broad consideration of matters related to human sexuality. This church regularly has called for conversation leading to a social statement before any policy changes. He stated his belief that this church should continue its Spirit-led, deliberate, thoughtful, and prayerful process of discernment.

Ms. Sharon R. Bost [Southeastern Synod] spoke in favor of the substitute motion. She related that her son loved his church, family, and friends, and tried each day to hold himself to a high standard of behavior. Her child had perceived the call to

ministry nearly all of his life, but because he was loyal to his Lutheran tradition, this church said he must choose between the call he has discerned and a complete life with a partner.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for the orders of the day, the 60-minute time limit for debate having been reached.

### **Parliamentary Matters**

The Rev. Richard W. Overcash [New Jersey Synod] raised a point of inquiry, asking if it were possible to postpone the secretary nominees' question-and-answer forum until the next day in order to continue the discussion. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that the decision was up to the body.

Pr. Overcash moved the following:

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To postpone the introduction and questions of the nominees for secretary until tomorrow.

Presiding Bishop Hanson called for debate on the question.

The Rev. James T. Lehman [Central/Southern Illinois Synod] inquired if the previous speaker was out of order because he used a white card to make a motion. Presiding Bishop Hanson determined, after consultation with the parliamentarian, that the motion was in order because the chair had called for the orders of the day. He stated that it would require a two-thirds majority to be adopted. Presiding Bishop Hanson requested all persons in the microphone queue to take note of their places in line, then return to their seats to vote on the question at hand.

An unidentified voting members asked whether the debate should have ended with a speaker at a green microphone since it had commenced with a speaker at a red microphone. Presiding Bishop Hanson explained that what controlled the debate was the 60-minute time limit. He then called for a vote on the motion to alter the agenda.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Defeated:**

**Two-Thirds Vote Required**

**Yes-570; No-478**

To postpone the introduction and questions of the nominees for secretary until tomorrow.

Presiding Bishop Hanson returned to the orders of the day, and requested that those in line for the microphones to return to register their places with the pages. He then invited the assembly to join in singing "Come Now, O Prince of Peace."

### **Forum for Nominees for Secretary**

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

Presiding Bishop Hanson invited to the stage the eight remaining nominees for the position of secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, then turned the chair over to Vice President Carlos E. Peña to lead the question-and-answer forum.

Vice President Peña informed the assembly that each of the nominees would take turns responding to three questions, in an order determined earlier by lot. He asked that each nominee introduce herself or himself as part of the first-round responses, and noted that each response would be limited to ninety seconds.

The first question to which the nominees were to respond was the following: "The responsibilities of the secretary of this church are substantive and widely varied. What in your past experience has prepared you for the responsibilities of the secretary? What gifts do you bring to this position?"

Ms. Glenny L. Ose, associate to the bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, stated: "It is a deep privilege to stand before you this day. I think that I hear Bishop Hanson's words in that first question. When I was on his staff, that was a question that we were asked often: 'What has prepared you for this?' And many days we said, 'Nothing.' But I think that I have a variety of experience in the church and in my life. In the church I have worked in the Department for Synodical Relations in the ELCA, where I did work with long-range planning, with synod conflicts. I did a lot of planning activities. In my ministry on a synod staff I have worked with our constitutions and with the constitutions of congregations. I have worked in conflicted situations and in situations that are highly anxious. None of those things actually appear in the body of the text of what the secretary is called to do, but I think that the tasks before the secretary are tasks that call for us to understand and to inhabit our life as a church. To understand and inhabit the role of secretary as we inhabit the role of the clay jars in which the presence of God and the glory of God is held. Those are the tasks of the secretary, and my work in the church has given me the privilege to carry them out in many ways."

Mr. David D. Swartling said: "I am anxious to talk to you about mission and ministry and not *Robert's Rules of Order*. I have spent 30 years as a practicing lawyer. I do trial work. I represent people in court. I advocate for them. I advocate for plaintiffs and defendants. I write. I craft legal documents. But that is not the vocation that I would like to talk to you about. For much of the last 30 years, I have worked with this glorious church that we call the ELCA in each of its expressions. I started out as a congregational officer, a president, then went to the synod planning group and helped plan this wonderful church that we know as the ELCA. I worked on the constitution of the Northwest Washington Synod. I was elected to the first Synod Council, and then I became a synod vice president. I chaired the regional council at the Region 1 level. I then went to the ELCA Foundation and was the chairman of its board of trustees. In each of these positions I learned to appreciate the unique polity of the ELCA. It is unique, sometimes difficult to explain, but from a lawyer's perspective, it is elegant. The secretary is the interpreter of those documents. The secretary cannot interpret those documents without a basic understanding of what the role of this church is, and I want to work with you in developing that mission and ministry."

The Rev. Kenneth M. Rupp answered: "Good afternoon. I am Ken Rupp, pastor of the Lutheran Church of Our Savior in Richmond, Va. I have been in the ministry now for just over 35 years, but it has not been all stateside nor all within the ELCA. My journey began early in . . . I think it was a ULCA [United Lutheran Church in America] church, then ALC [American Lutheran Church], then it went to Missouri [The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod] and AELC [Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches], and finally it came home to the ELCA. In all of those sorts of places, I think that I shared some

positions of great responsibility, particularly at Concordia Seminary in Exile as a financial director. I created that office without a financial background, and we were very successful with that. I joined the U.S. Army as a military chaplain, and if you have been in that position before, or even connected to the military, you know that you deal with a variety of policies, procedures. You deal with sensitive issues; you deal with not-so-sensitive issues, and you deal as a chaplain with very pastoral issues. All of those kinds of experiences do not necessarily relate into the church at home in terms of various committees, but they do take a strong sense of pastoral ministry and a sense to be able to take a task, whether you understand it or not, and be able to get through it by calling upon good people to assist you in that process. I think I can do that.”

The Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White responded: “I serve as the president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. It is a great honor and a privilege and I am humbled to stand before you today in the company of these extraordinary servants of the church who are my colleagues. It has been my privilege for the past 31 years to serve as an ordained pastor of our church in a wide variety of ministries. I began as a parish pastor in urban ministry in the inner city of Los Angeles, working in a bilingual ministry. I have had the privilege of serving as an assistant to two synodical bishops and to our first two presiding bishops. For seven years I was the director of synodical relations for our church, chief staff person for the Conference of Bishops. For the past seven years it has been my great privilege to serve as the 12<sup>th</sup> president of our oldest and most historic seminary at Gettysburg. I have been able to serve from coast to coast to see this great church in its length and breadth, to serve in each of the expressions—congregational ministry, synodical, churchwide—and now in one of our historic, marvelous institutions. I would bring fluency in Spanish, a bilingual capacity to this office. It has been my privilege to serve in administrative capacities, to write and consult throughout our church.”

The Rev. William Chris (Wm. Chris) Boerger replied: “I serve as bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod. I have spent my entire ministry within the confines of the Northwest Washington Synod, having graduated from Christ Seminary–Seminex in 1975, and then starting what was then an independent Lutheran congregation, which later became part of the American Lutheran Church. At that point we started from scratch. We had no models; we had to write the constitution from the beginning. We did, and the congregation was eventually accepted into the ALC. That is how I come to be part of this church body. I was a speech and drama major in college and had to take a class in parliamentary law—why I do not know. But as the result of that class, I served as parliamentarian for district conventions for years and for the Synod Assemblies until I was elected bishop. I served on the synod planning group. I have been involved in conflict management, both before my election as bishop and in the past six years I have served as bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, serving primarily with congregations dealing with issues of ‘How are we a part of this larger church?’ We in the West like to be independent, and the question of how our polity works, both synodically, churchwide, and congregation, to the expressions of one church

is constantly before us. That would be the task of the secretary: to hold the polity under our mission and to help our congregations, synods, and churchwide.”

The Rev. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl remarked: “I serve as bishop of the South Dakota Synod. I have a cross-stitch hanging in a room in my home that says, ‘I can handle any crisis. I have children.’ One of the gifts that have been given to my husband and I is the parenting of three young adult children. That trains you in a variety of ways. I am good at hospitality. I bring the gift of planning children’s birthday parties as well as Synod Assemblies to any endeavor I take part in. I have been involved in synod ministry for these 12 years as synod bishop and prior to that as an assistant to the bishop for five other years. So I have been deeply involved in the life of the church, in problem-solving and in relationship-building, but I think more importantly involved in change, in casting a vision for the mission of this church and for building the strategies and the goals that would be needed to carry out that vision for the future. I would look forward to continuing to do that in my next call.”

The Rev. Mark A. Grorud commented: “God’s peace to all of you. My name is Mark Grorud. I am the ELCA director for relationships with large-membership congregations. I live in Fremont, Nebraska; I work in Chicago. How can that be? My wife asks that a lot, as do my superiors here in Chicago. That comes to the point of where I think some of my gifts lie. I am neither place probably often enough. I am on the road. I am visiting congregations and synod offices and bishops and utilizing the gifts that God has given me with groups of congregations, and visiting with pastors across this great country and across this great church. The gifts I bring to this opportunity have much to do with my past experience. I was 26 years pastor of a large congregation. In that position I worked with a large staff, and I organized the details that go with that position, as many of you know. Congregations are the lifeblood of the church. In our congregations things happen, programs develop, decisions are made. We need to understand our congregations. That is not congregationalism. That is just a celebration of who we are. We need to appreciate and know and give thanks for the gift of all of our congregations. I do believe that that experience will support me in this future work. Thank you so much.”

The Rev. Paul A. Schreck said: “I am Paul Schreck, executive assistant to the secretary of this church for rostering and constitutional interpretation and oversight, and I have served in the Office of the Secretary for the past 9½ years. I have had an excellent mentor, and I have been paying close attention. During the course of that 9½ years, I have prepared minutes for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, the Cabinet of Executives, and sundry other meetings at the churchwide organization. I have drafted new policy for roster manual matters and shepherded them through the adoption and implementation procedures. I regularly am involved in consultations with congregations and the bishops and synod staff members about interpreting the constitution, helping to resolve conflict in congregations. I also for a number of years was seconded to the Ecumenical Affairs Department, as it was then, and staffed a number of ecumenical dialogues, and so I would also bring that component of experience. Among my gifts, though, I would say relationship-building, collaboration, and an

impulse to team-building are the chief gifts I would bring.”

The second question was the following: “The Principles of Organization, in Chapter 5 of this church’s constitution, lifts up servant leadership as one of the high expectations that this church places on its leaders. What does that mean to you as you would assume this office?”

Ms. Ose responded: “I think servant leadership is on the one hand an easy principle to grasp and on the other an incredibly difficult principle to grasp. I believe that we work carefully to hold those two realities together in a kind of leadership. So servant leaders lead. They do not wait and follow the flow and hear what everyone is saying and decide, but they listen carefully and they hear what everyone is saying and they decided. Both of those things are critically, critically important to us in leadership in the church. I exercise those roles of servant and leader in my ministry now on the Minneapolis Area Synod staff. I exercised those roles on the churchwide staff. I think that we are servant of all and slave to none. We are called by God to serve one another, to be caring and tending our relationships, to understand, and to hear. But we are also called to lead, to speak with boldness and passion and vigor about the work of this church, about the work that God has placed before us, about these clay jars that we hold for ourselves that contain the surpassing glory of God. Servant leadership is what it is about for us.”

Mr. Swartling replied: “Each morning I drive to the ferry terminal, and I get out of the car, and I have the luxury of getting on a ferry boat. And before I do that I stop and I pause and I pray to God for the gifts of the Spirit, for wisdom and understanding and counsel and might, in fear of the Lord and joy in his presence. I try to take that attitude to work with me, and I try to take that attitude in the activities that I participate in with the church. It does involve both a servant model and a leadership. To me, a servant means treating people with dignity and respect and, as Glenn said, listening, really listening to what they have to say. But it also involves leading by example. I was hoping I would get a chance to say this to you: ‘Do you have a will?’ I do. I have an estate plan. I have a directive to physicians. I can be your servant and communicate those things which are so important to us. I believe in collaborative leadership. I believe that when you mine down that concept, the collaboration part means facilitating wise decisions. That means not always agreeing with those you are in dialogue with, but it means seeking wise decisions, and once you make those decisions, you move forward faithfully to carry them out.”

Pr. Ruppert stated: “I believe that at the heart of leadership within the church is a strong sense of calling and pastoral ministry for the church. I believe that leadership in the church in the ELCA requires an understanding of the three expressions of the church and a willingness to walk between those and among those expressions, sharing information, stories, encouragement, and so forth. I believe that leadership in our church also involves representing the whole church, listening to the whole church, and being able to tell the stories within our context of our church and across the globe into other churches as well. I believe I model this, in part, in my work in the congregation as I continually share the stories of the churchwide and synod and congregation up and down that chain. I share the stories of my

congregation with my colleagues on the Church Council and others. I share what is going on across the globe with the synod and with congregations as well. I believe we need leadership that continues to do that. I also believe that my experiences the past six years on the Church Council have given me a deeper understanding of not only the documents of our church but the wonderful leadership that we have in our churchwide offices and the caring for the church across the globe.”

Pr. Cooper-White answered: “St. Paul calls us to the ministry of encouragement. He says, ‘Encourage one another in the Lord.’ I think that servant leadership involves the constant effort to encourage: to give the encouraging word, the pat on the shoulder, to engage each person one to one with the word of encouragement and support and hope. I think servant leadership is carried out collegially, and yet finally there comes a time when leaders often must make tough decisions, make the tough calls, and do so in a timely way so that the rest of the community can get on with its work. A seminary president learns quickly servant leadership when he or she sits before a faculty of tenured faculty members. You do not have command and control. You did not choose most of those. You cannot release them. The ministry is one of encouragement, of serving, of recognizing the rich gifts that each person brings to the table, and working together to deploy those for the sake of the mission of all.”

Bp. Boerger said: “The question of servant leadership first asks the question, ‘servant of whom?’ We are servants of God first, and as servants of God, those who are called into leadership then are to be servants of the servants. We are all involved in service, and the question now is, ‘How can we enable everyone to use their gifts in that service of God?’ It strikes me that the Office of the Secretary is one that records the story of how we have done it in the past and what we have decided for the future, and then begins to ask the question, ‘What gifts exist in our congregations amongst our rostered leaders, and how might they mutually be used to build up the body of Christ?’ It is always a question of ‘Whom am I serving?’ Am I serving myself, am I serving the church, am I serving my God? And it is in that last question, ‘How am I serving my God?’ that a leader can begin to point the way to say, ‘Here is where we are going. God is calling us in this direction. God has given us these resources. God has enabled us to do these things together.’ Oftentimes the leader has to stand up and point when everyone else is running the opposite direction. It is important for us to remember whose we are and whom we serve. We serve each other in the name of Christ, and even in parliamentary procedure and constitutions, ‘How do we serve Christ?’—that is our question and that is our challenge.”

Bp. DeGroot-Nesdahl commented: “The question about servant leadership reminds me of a word I have sought to instill in our staff as I have worked in synodical ministry, and that word is ‘ensemble,’ working together, each having a particular instrument. If you use it in a musical connotation, each having a particular note and line to play. But when all the instruments are playing in tune and in the same rhythm, then you have a beautiful piece of music. That kind of ensemble experience as a team and a staff is what I think of when I think of my own experience of being a servant leader. To try to stand where people are, to listen for each of the instruments, the voices, the

gifts that they bring, to find the music that best lifts up all of those gifts and can be played at a rhythm that all of us can find the beat for and move forward with. Being a servant leader is certainly being a servant of Christ in that leadership, but it is also listening well to where Christ's voice and presence is, among those that we serve with."

Pr. Grorud observed: "Servant leadership—it is an oxymoron. It is something like 'dry ice,' or a few years ago 'Nebraska football.' They just do not go together, at least not the way we would like them to. But the connecting point, the connecting point in servant leadership, for me at least, is the word 'relationships' because regardless of which direction you work, as a servant or as a leader, it is built on relationships. For me being a servant is to be in relationship with those around me, building teams, building trust. For me, being a leader is being in relationship with those around me, building the trust and the community to the point where I am allowed to make those steps forward that can be followed as a leader. Through it all, servant leadership there is the relationship, both as servant and as leader, to Jesus Christ. We are servants, Christ's servants; we are called to lead in the name of Christ. That is a task for each and every one of us."

Pr. Schreck remarked: "You have heard much wisdom. I hope you have been taking notes. I know I have, and will add only one perspective, and that is the unique perspective of being in the Office of the Secretary. The motto, not only of the secretary but of the entire staff, is that 'We are servants of the servants of Christ.' The telephones call all day. E-mails arrive day and night, and it is chiefly from you—not you maybe individually; well, some of you—but you as a representative body. The Office of the Secretary is there to facilitate your ministry and mission and sort those things out that you find to be difficult. The secretary is there to assist the presiding bishop, who casts a vision for this church and maybe needs consultation on how to utilize the constitutional policies and governance patterns to make that happen. Synodical bishops, the Conference of Bishops, Church Council meetings are all facilitated in many ways by the Office of the Secretary. I would love for you to see behind the curtain some time the many hours and sweat that are poured out so that this meeting can be facilitated as you serve Christ."

Vice President Peña asked the final question: "During this assembly, we have heard from several people about 'Dwelling in the Word.' What has the Word of God meant to you in your life? How have you dwelled in the Word?"

Ms. Ose commented: "That is the best question yet—easiest. I was privileged to be in Dr. Rhoads' class, who did Galatians for us, the first year he taught at LSTC [Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago] "Scripture by Heart" the course was called. We memorized Scripture. Now I did that as a small child because I grew up Pentecostal, so I memorized Scripture as a child. But I convinced myself as an adult that it was probably beyond my capacities to memorize like that. In Dr. Rhoads' class I learned that it was not and that, in fact, it transforms your life, once you start memorizing the Scriptures. For my final exam I memorized John 14 and half of John 15, and I cannot tell you how those words, having taken root in my life, have changed it. 'You believe in God,' Jesus says. 'Believe also in me.' 'In my

Father's house there are many dwelling places.' Dwelling in the Scriptures is a daily piece of my life, and it is not only reading the Word and being fed by the Word, but it is letting that Word dwell in me so that in me it lives and from me it comes. It sustains my life and it sustains my ministry and then it allows me to help others sustain their ministry. It is so critical, this Word of God, to our lives of faith."

Mr. Swartling said: "Two weeks ago I was in San Diego visiting my 91-year-old father, who lives in a retirement community of the Covenant Church. I walk in, after not having seen him for a month, and the first words out of his mouth are, 'Rejoice in the Lord. I say to you, rejoice.' He is a frail 91-year-old person, and whenever I see him or talk to him, he grounds me in what is important. For more years than I like to remember, I have worn these funny glasses that have two parts on them. As you can imagine, most of my work day is spent looking out of the bottom part of those glasses intensely at document after document. You can become even more myopic doing that. The Word of God provides an opening, a way, a method for me to look out through the top of my glasses and remind me that I am part of a Christian community, a child of God, someone who is loved and is required to love those around him. It is a difficult, difficult task sometimes, given the requirements of daily life. But even my glasses, the ability to look out the top of them, lets me ground myself in the Word of God so that I might be his disciple."

Pr. Ruppard responded: "I think for those of us who preach the Word, sometimes dwelling in it is difficult. So it has to take a conscious effort to say, 'This is a Word I need to listen to. This is a Word that I need to meditate on, and not just because it might come up as a sermon text one day, but listen to the Word.' I frankly found for myself that the best way for me is reading portions of the Scripture through the use of a wonderful series of booklets called *For All the Saints*. It is a daily devotional booklet. It provides readings from the Scriptures and from contemporary literature as a way to share insights into that and then to sit quietly and think about those. I also believe that I receive the gifts of God in dwelling in the Word as I sit with other pastors and we read Scripture together every other week, and we talk about it, not to design a sermon but to ask, 'How does this Word touch your life and how does it touch mine?' I believe that dwelling in the Word is a gift I receive from others as I visit them in their homes, and they share with me what the Scriptures meant for them over 80 or 90 or 60 years or so. And I believe that all of those ways we come to dwell in the Word of God as we listen to that Word wherever God places us."

Pr. Cooper-White answered: "Some of my earliest memories of reading the Scriptures are terrifying memories because I sat alone in my room on the farm in Minnesota and read some of those apocalyptic texts in the Gospel that talked about the coming of the end of the world, and I looked around me in the 1960s at the height of the nuclear crisis and thought that it was all going to end, and there was no one beside me to comfort me. So I have valued in the course of my life and ministry working with the Scriptures together, coming to the Word of God with guides, seeking to be a guide so that other young people will not experience Scripture as a terrifying word but as a word of comfort. Some of my richest experiences delving into the Word

of God were when I did so in the years I served in Latino ministry and regularly read and proclaimed the Word of God in Spanish. I came face to face with the 'otherness' of Scripture as I read, as I proclaimed it in another language. Scripture points us to the ultimate Word of God, which is Jesus Christ. He interprets it for us. For us as a church it stands as our role and norm for faith and life."

Bp. Boerger stated: "I live in the Pacific Northwest. Biblically illiterate; 94 percent of the people in Seattle do not attend church on Sunday morning. So when we say 'the Word,' we are talking about more than just throwing the Bible down in front of someone. We are talking about how do we live the Word, dwell in the Word? When I was confirmed at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Riverview, Michigan, my pastor, Norman Ritterling gave me a verse, 'For by grace you have been saved through faith. It is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.' Now I am not sure which translation I am using because there have been so many, but I still remember the content. The content is 'For by grace you have been saved.' That is what makes us Lutherans: understanding the grace note amidst all the other notes in the Christian symphony. That is the one we need to play. So as I begin studying the Scripture, I am always asking, 'So where is the grace of God?' When I find that grace, it is usually in response to something that God has pointed out to me, 'That is where you are failing, Chris. This is the law of God, and that is where you need the forgiveness of God.' That is a daily process, a daily process of saying, 'What is God up to?' and 'How is Christ's grace sufficient for me and for those I will see this day?' That verse from Pastor Ritterling has shaped my life and my ministry. That is what I believe it is to dwell in the Word."

Bp. DeGroot Nesdahl answered: "Thank you for that question. It reminds me as a young girl of my dad being asked to be a Bethel Bible series teacher in our home congregation, and that Bible study class came with a two-year commitment and with concepts to learn and mark in your Bible and these marvelous intense pictures that showed symbolically the main concepts of those biblical stories. And I would get to quiz my dad on how well he had memorized those concepts. It was a great way to turn those relationships around between a father and a daughter, to see my dad learn the faith in those ways. He had certainly learned it before, but in that new way, and to learn it along with him as a student just past confirmation. Then as a seminarian, another vivid time of learning about the Word dwelling richly within me, I confess to hearing upperclassmen, all of them, talking about important biblical passages from the book of Hezekiah and going back to my dorm room and searching fervently for Hezekiah. I bought a new Bible. I thought I lacked the book of Hezekiah. But the process—there is no Hezekiah, in case you are going to go back to your room tonight and look for it—the process taught me that the Word is both on the page and it rises off the page and that dwelling in the Word means dwelling in the person and the reality of Jesus Christ as God's Word in the flesh. That was a powerful lesson to learn about that kind of dwelling in the Word as well."

Pr. Grorud remarked: "I hope you are pleased and amazed at these people up here. The church is going to be very well served. I am a Lutheran pastor. I did not wear my clerical collar today. I wore a blue tie. I am not angry. I am not protesting. I am not

making some statement about child labor practices in the plastics industry. This was a little surprise to me. This was God saying, 'Oh, you of little faith, put on the blue tie.' This was God saying, 'You forgot your confirmation verse, didn't you? Put on the blue tie.' But for me, dwelling in the Word is a surprise. That is what it is all about: being constantly surprised by a God who loves us, who graces us, who gifts us with that love and that forgiveness and that salvation. I am surprised by God constantly. I told my congregation when I arrived that I would be there for three years; 26 years later I told myself I would be there until retirement. That was the year that I took a call here at churchwide. Dwelling in the Word for me means being surprised by the constant presence of God, who lives, who breathes, who works among us, who calls us into life together. Dwelling in the Word—that is what makes us alive."

Pr. Schreck replied: "I wish I could say that I read Scripture daily. I am an extrovert, however, and the thought of sitting alone anywhere by myself reading is excruciating. So I thank God that so much of our liturgy comes from the Scriptures, not just the Episcopalian hymns but ours as well, and the texts of our liturgy. Because it is when I am in the gathered community that I am truly feel I am dwelling in the Word or rather that the Word of Christ dwells in me. I give thanks for that opportunity, and I hope the Book of Faith initiative people will remember us extroverts and not design everything to be on your own, quiet, and in a room."

Vice President Peña concluded the forum by asking the assembly to stand and thank the nominees. He then turned the chair back to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, who invited Secretary Lowell G. Almen to return to the podium for announcements.

### ***Announcements***

In response to questions from several assembly participants, Secretary Lowell G. Almen enumerated numerous ways in which contributions might be made to various activities of this church, and offered the reminder that the offering from the closing worship service would be used in support of the Lutheran World Federation on the occasion of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. After several other announcements, Secretary Almen concluded by noting that voting members should expect to receive at their places by the start of the next day's plenary session both the report of the *ad hoc* committee on proposed changes to the social statement on education and the text of the substitute for the Memorials Committee's recommendation on Category E2.

### ***Closing Prayer and Recess***

The chair called upon Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, a member of the Church Council from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, to lead the assembly in a hymn and prayer. After the assembly sang "Go My Children With My Blessing," Ms. Thomas prayed.

The bell was sounded, the candle extinguished, and Plenary Session Seven of the tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ended at 5:52 P.M. Central Daylight Time.

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