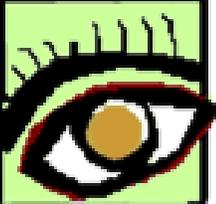


# 2011

## MINUTES of the METRO D.C. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

### 2011 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

<b>Spring Session</b> MAY 6-7	<b>To See Ourselves As Others Do</b>
<b>Fall Session</b> SEPT. 24	

Metropolitan

Washington, D.C. Synod

of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church

In America

Spring Session: May 6-7, 2011

The National Conference Center

Leesburg, Virginia

Fall Session: September 24, 2011

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

McLean, Virginia

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*Following are the minutes of the 2011 Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Spring Session.*

*The Spring Session was held May 6 and 7 at The National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. The minutes herein transcribed were prepared by the Secretary of the Synod, reviewed by the Synod Council, and recommended for approval by the 2012 Synod Assembly.*

*Submitted by:  
The Rev. Marguerite M. Rourk  
Secretary of the Synod*

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY FRIDAY

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Synod Council - Room: Belmont B

11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Registration

12 Noon - 12:45 p.m. - Orientation for new Voting Members - Room: Potomac D  
Presented by Mr. Richard Ahlberg and the Rev. Doug Jones

1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Opening Worship and Opening of Assembly - Ballroom

**PLENARY SESSION 1**  
**FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2011**  
**The National Conference Center**  
**Leesburg, Virginia**

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR

Presented by the Rev. Maggie Rourk, Secretary of the Synod

Present:

Voting Members	132
Rostered	78
Visitors	9
Total	219

**MOTION SA 11.05.01** to seat the Voting Members was adopted.

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Reading of Excused Absences

The Reverends

Louis Almen	Sherman Hicks
Myron Barbour	Robert Holum
Kathleen Blaner	Ivan Ives
Mark Blice-Baum	Wollom Jensen
John Bradford	Michael Kuchinsky
Bruce Burslie	Daniel Martensen
Harold Deal	Geraldine Opsahl
Nancy Eggert	William Perry
Renata Eustis	Sarah Scherschligt
Gregory Gaertner	Lowell Schuetze
Jane Halpern	Tiffany Towberman

Presentation of the Synod Assembly Agenda

**MOTION SA 11.05.02** to approve the Registrar's report, the excused Absences and the Synod Assembly was adopted.

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**MOTION SA 11.05.03** to approve the Rules of Procedure was adopted.

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**MOTION SA 11.05.04** to approve the Minutes of the 2010 Synod Assembly as amended today was adopted.

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#### REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Presented by the Rev. Stephanie Johnson, Chair

Nominations for Synod Officers:

Treasurer:	John Handley Michael Philpy
Secretary:	The Rev. John Bradford The Rev. James Vigen

Nominations for Synod Council:

DC Conference Lay:	Amanda Wahlig
Fairfax Conference Clergy:	The Rev. Gerry Johnson
Maryland Conference Lay	Margretta Williams
Maryland Conference Clergy	The Rev. Emmanuel Grantson
Potomac Conference Clergy	The Rev. Charles Oberkehr
Virginia Conference Lay	Shirley Gibbs
Virginia Conference Clergy	The Rev. Terry Hannon
Youth Representative	Rachel Carle
At-large Lay	Bill Johnson
At-large Clergy	no nominees

Nominations for 2011 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members:

Clergy	The Rev. Anne Dwiggin
	The Rev. Mark Edwards
	The Rev. Terry Hannon
	The Rev. Stephanie Johnson
	Dr. Robin Steinke
	The Rev. James Vigen

**MOTION SA 11.05.05** to close the nominations was adopted.

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Nominations for Committee on Discipline Clergy

The Rev. Mark Edwards  
The Rev. Craig Endicott



The synod office lease will be up at end of November, and we are currently looking for new space, with the current budget reflecting what our office costs have been.

Ken Whitlow is the new chair of the Finance Committee. The synod is most grateful to Richard Ahlberg for his many years of faithful service as chair.

#### INTRODUCTION OF COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Presented by Dr. John White, Synod Vice President

In order to bring the synod compensation guidelines up to date, the following is proposed:

- 1) Salary increases of 3%, based on current consumer price index;
- 2) Updating of parental leave guidelines to reflect current practice in secular settings, government guidelines and other corporate entities.

Synod Council member Barbara Topel convened a team to research current practices and update our synod guidelines. Synod Council moved acceptance of these guidelines.

**MOTION SA 11.05.08** to accept these guidelines was adopted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF ECUMENICAL & OTHER GUESTS

- The Rev. Father John Crossin - Director of the Washington Theological Consortium, a federation of eleven theological schools, including Gettysburg Seminary.
  - The Rev. Jonathan Barton - General Pastor, Virginia Council of Churches.
  - The Rev. David Bennett - Eastern District, Northern Province, Moravian Church
  - The Rev. Father Avalino Gonzalez - Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, Director of the Archdiocese Office of Ecumenism and Inter-religious Affairs
  - The Rev. David Maack - Lutheran church - Missouri Synod, Southeastern District, who brought greetings from the Rev. Dr. Jon Diefenthaler, District President.
  - Jodie Slattery - Washington Office, ELCA Advocacy Network, brought greetings from their 20,000 network ministries members
- and
- Daniel Lehman, Editor, *The Lutheran* magazine

#### INTRODUCTION OF VOTING DEVICES AND TUTORIAL PROGRAM

Presented by Jean Knight

INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL ECUMENICAL GUESTS

- The Right Rev. David Jones, Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, who introduced the new Anglican Bishop Isaiah Chambala from the Diocese of Keetato in Tanzania, a new diocese from the former Diocese of Mt. Kilimanjaro (see website).

INTRODUCTION OF THE ELCA REPRESENTATIVE

Mark Burkhardt, Director of Congregational Centers for Mission in the ELCA

**PLENARY SESSION 2  
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2011  
The National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**REPORT OF THE BISHOP**

Bishop Richard Graham began with Alice's question (in *Through the Looking Glass*): how are we to be the right size and how do we find our way back into the garden - good questions for us and for our beloved synod. We struggle to be in the garden where we know how to do good work and all the rest we do as church. There is a small group at work now studying the re-structuring of our synod. Now longer can the ELCA, synod and congregation structures be identical. We must learn how to do a few things excellently, support new and renewing ministries, raise up strong rostered professional leaders, and raise up and equip lay leaders in congregations. Too often what we say we want to do and what we are currently doing or funding ministries for are not the same. We have worked hard to stay in touch, to be in conversation all over the synod because it matters. We need to know and trust each other well enough to acknowledge our failures and move on, not obsessing about what hasn't worked, but moving on, identifying new opportunities all over the synod and celebrating common joys. We want everyone to know about successes, not because success is all that matters, but sharing with each other is what matters - and it matters a lot. *Amazing Grace*, a book about American religion and sociology now, examines what in our culture has caused the largest group - young adults - to not identify with any church. They often strongly identify with God, but do not believe one must belong to a church to be religious or to believe in God. Lots of Lutherans in this country still relate to their ethnic roots, but Lutherans now include people from all over the political spectrum. All can acknowledge that we have common work in the church. In our synod people can disagree about a lot of things but we are united in Jesus Christ. What is unique about us as Lutherans is what we have to offer to our culture. In a society that thinks that it is interesting but not compelling to be about God's business, we declare that being about God's business is compelling, because this is what makes it possible for us to be in Jesus' work together.

**REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL**

Presented by the Rev. Mark Edwards, Chair

Pr. Edwards explained that the Committee on Reference and Counsel advises and assists those who ask for action from a synod assembly. When a resolution meets the needs of the group asking for action, the Reference and Counsel Committee puts it in proper order; the committee then moves the resolution to the Synod Assembly. This action does not imply in any way that the Committee on Reference and Counsel is in agreement with a resolution; the process is simply in compliance with Robert's Rules of Order for preparing and presenting resolutions to the assembly.

*Resolution 7.1.1.1 – Greetings*

*Whereas, other synods throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gathering in assembly at the same time as the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod meets in Assembly, and*

*Whereas, we are partners in the Mission of the Gospel with other synods of this church; therefore be it*

*Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the Secretary of the Synod to extend best wishes to the:*

*ELCA Florida-Bahamas Synod*

*ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod*

*ELCA Southeastern Minnesota Synod*

*ELCA Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod*

*and express to them our greetings in Christ as they gather in assembly.*

**MOTION SA 11.050.09** to accept the Resolution was adopted 192-1-1.

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*Resolution 7.1.3.1-2 - Advocating Against Bullying, Harassment and Related Violence*

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

*Whereas, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Social Statement on Education (2007, page 26) we declared, "The ELCA expects communities of learning and teaching to be safe places. We recognize that school safety is an issue for all students, staff, and teachers. Unfortunately, incidents of bullying, intimidation, and other forms of violence are not unusual. We affirm that personal safety and security are essential for optimal teaching and learning;" and*

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

*Whereas, according the US Health Resources and Services Administration ([www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)), people who have been bullied have a higher risk of depression, increased thoughts of suicide, decreased academic achievement, skip or drop out of school, and are more likely to retaliate using extreme violence. People who bully others have higher risk of abusing drugs and alcohol, are more likely to have criminal records, and are more abusive to romantic partners and children; and*

*Whereas, our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves and even to include our enemies in such love (Luke10: 25-37); and*

*Whereas, the voice of the church addressing the intersection of race, economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical ability is a powerful witness to the healing and life-affirming Gospel promise; therefore, be it*

*Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly encourage congregations and pastors to speak against bullying and related forms of violence in preaching, teaching and in other appropriate forums in the life of the congregation; and be it further*

*Resolved, that Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly encourage new partnerships among congregations, synod offices and units, affiliated Lutheran ministries, and public organizations to support programs addressing bullying, harassment, and other related violence; and be it further*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting in Orlando, Florida, to encourage, support, and publicize new partnerships in ministry that emerge in our church addressing the prevention of bullying, harassment, and related forms of violence*

**MOTION SA 11.05.10** to accept the Resolution was adopted 202-8-3.

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*Resolution 7.1.5.1.2 - Investment for Positive Change in Palestine.*

**MOTION SA 11.05.11** to postpone a vote on this Resolution 7.1.5.1-2, Investment for Positive Change in Palestine, was adopted 142-61-14.

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*Resolution 7.1.7.1 - Representation of Episcopal Dioceses on Synod Program Units*

*Whereas, The Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) entered into a full communion agreement (Called to Common Mission) in 2000; and*

*Whereas, The Diocese of Virginia, ECUSA and the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod have participated in the writing of and remain signatories to the 1991 Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic, United Methodist Covenant (VA LARCUM); and*

*Whereas, this covenant commits the signatories to close consultation and cooperation at all levels of local church life; and*

*Whereas, The Diocese of Virginia, ECUSA, The Diocese of Washington, ECUSA and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod have maintained a Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee since 1996, and have conducted annual and now semiannual meetings between the bishops of these judicatories; and*

*Whereas, The Diocese of Virginia, ECUSA, at its 216th Annual Council on January 22, 2011 adopted a resolution to invite the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to name liaisons to its Diocesan Committees; therefore, be it*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the synod's bishop to invite The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, ECUSA and The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, ECUSA to appoint clergy/lay persons in their respective Dioceses as liaisons to the synod's program units in furtherance of our full communion relationship.*

**MOTION SA 11.05.12** to accept the Resolution was adopted 203-10-4.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE SYNOD MISSION SPENDING PLAN

Presented by Mr. Ken Whitlow, Finance Committee Chair

Mr. Whitlow led the first reading of the Mission Spending Plan (MSP). A workshop on the MSP follows this assembly session, and the vote on the MSP will not occur until tomorrow, Saturday, 7 May, in Plenary Session 4. The Finance Committee utilized input from congregations, the treasurer, synod records, etc. in formulating the plan at slightly over \$2 million (\$2,005,000). The bishop noted that any amendments to the Mission Spending Plan must be offered today, Friday, 6 May.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS – FIRST BALLOT

Presented by the Rev. Mitch Watney, Chair

Synod Treasurer - Votes cast 206; needed to elect 106

John Handley - 171

Michael Philpy - 39

John Handley declared elected

Synod Secretary - Votes cast 208; needed to elect 105

John Bradford - 104;

James Vigen - 104

+ Runoff on the second ballot

**MOTION SA 11.05.13** to elect to Synod Council by acclamation those persons unopposed on the ballot was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

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Declared elected by acclamation:

Amanda Wahlig - DC Conference

The Rev. Gerry Johnson - Fairfax Conference

The Rev. Emmanuel Grantson - Maryland Conference

The Rev. Christine Stephan - Montgomery Conference

The Rev. Charles Oberkehr - Potomac Conference

The Rev. Terry Hannon - Virginia Conference

Shirley Gibbs - Virginia Conference

Rachel Carle - Youth Representative

Bill Johnson - At-large

Synod Council - Votes cast 200; needed to elect 101

Gretta Williams - 141;

Annette Nije - 59

+ Gretta Williams declared elected

Voting Members to the Churchwide Assembly (Clergy, vote for one) - Votes cast 217; needed to elect 109

The Rev. Anne Dwiggin - 57

The Rev. Mark Edwards - 48

The Rev. Terry Hannon - 22

The Rev. Stephanie Johnson - 26

Dr. Robin Steinke - 64

The Rev. James Vigen - Withdrawn

The Rev. Anne Dwiggins and Dr. Robin Steinke to be on second ballot runoff

Committee on Discipline (Clergy) elect 2 - Votes cast 203; needed to elect 102

The Rev. Mark Edwards - 108

The Rev. Craig Endicott - 103

The Rev. Kate Murray - 165

The Rev. Mark Edwards and the Rev. Kate Murray declared elected

Committee on Discipline (Lay) elect 2 - Votes cast 207; needed to elect 104

Lee Shields - 114

Duke Taylor - 102

Robin Taylor - 166

Lee Shields and Robin Taylor declared elected

#### PRESENTATION BY LUTHERAN PLANNED GIVING CONSORTIUM

Presented by Alice Benson, Executive Director

#### PROPOSAL BY GIFTS OF HOPE AND UNITED LUTHERAN APPEAL

Presented by Sue Clark, Coordinator, Gifts of Hope

Entering its 20th year, Gifts of Hope has raised \$2.6 million over its two decades. Gifts of Hope and the United Lutheran Appeal are proposing to merge after conversation which began more than a year ago, with both boards supporting the merger. Gifts of Hope is run entirely by volunteers. Desiring better opportunities for greater professionalism, they propose a new dues structure, hiring a part-time administrator, and upgrading their technology to allow for electronic giving. There is a grant to supplement the program. They still have a Speakers Bureau, and they want all congregations to be familiar with member organizations and to support them with Gifts of Hope. The new organization will offer Gifts of Hope year round, not just at Christmas time. Anyone can now purchase a gift that seen in the catalog, or make a gift to the organization or institution of one's choice. There will be a new catalog before the Christmas season.

A new by-law is proposed, S15.21.A11, to replace original by-law S15.21.A02 which states: This synod authorizes the establishment of a United Lutheran Appeal to strengthen the financial support of member organizations through a unified education of and appeal to congregations and individuals of the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod. The Synod Council shall appoint ex officio members of the Board of Directors and shall approve any amendments to the Statement of Agreement which organizes the United Lutheran Appeal.

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The new by-law section, S15.21.A11 states: This synod authorizes the establishment of Gifts of Hope to increase understanding and strengthen relationships between the beneficiary organizations and the

congregations of the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod and to raise funds for the beneficiary organizations. The Synod Council shall appoint an ex officio member to the Gifts of Hope coordinating committee. The Council shall approve any changes to this statement of purpose.

This new by-law section S15.21.A11 has been moved by Synod Council.

**MOTION SA 11.05.14** to approve this constitution by-law change was adopted.

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**MOTION SA 11.05.15** to thank and recognize (by applause) the ministries of the Rev. George Handley, Sue Clark and others who have worked tirelessly for Gifts of Hope and the United Lutheran Appeal through the years was adopted by acclamation.

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#### INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER: JOSEPH MYERS

Our guest, The Rev. Joseph Myers, author of *The Search to Belong*, was introduced.

#### WORKSHOPS AND EVENING WORSHIP

Workshops included:

- Keynote Speaker - Potomac D - The Rev. Joe Myers
- Mission Spending Plan - Potomac E - Mr. Handley and Mr. Whitlow
- Human Rights of the Oromo - Potomac B
- Mr. Wondimu Wollege and the Rev. Paul Wee
- ELCA Rep. - Belmont B - ELCA Qs & Aa - Mr. Mark Burkhardt
- Middle East Working Group - Potomac A - The Kairos Document
- The Rev. Conrad Braaten and members of the MEWG
- Lifetouch - Belmont A - Representative: Mr. Bob Fahey

Festival Eucharist in the Auditorium concluded the day, with fellowship time to follow.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SATURDAY

Bible Study was offered in Belmont B led by Ms. Kathy Garrison and Mr. Wayne Ralston, Diaconal Ministers

**PLENARY SESSION 3  
SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2011  
The National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

OPENING DEVOTIONS

Presented by Ms. Kathy Garrison, Diaconal Minister

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Presented by the Rev. Mitch Watney, Chair

Churchwide Assembly clergy voting members:

The Rev. Anne Dwiggins and Dr. Robin Steinke will be on the second ballot

Synod Secretary:

The Rev. John Bradford and the Rev. James Vigen on the second ballot

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SYNOD

Presented by Dr. John White

Dr. White reported that according to the office of the Secretary of the ELCA, as of 5 May 5, 449 congregations have voted to leave the ELCA, due primarily to disagreements over the Human Sexuality statement and votes pertaining thereto at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Appreciation was expressed with applause to the bishop and bishop emeritus for their leadership of our synod in preparing and encouragement of conversations in our synod prior to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Dr. White noted that in this synod we were able to express our beliefs and feelings openly and honestly while always remaining civil and considerate of all others, even as opinions were widely divergent. Thus far, no congregation of the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod has withdrawn from the ELCA.

PRESENTATION OF THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER: JOSEPH MYERS

Presented by the Rev. Joseph Myers

**PLENARY SESSION 4  
SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2011  
The National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR**

Presented by Dr. Maggie Rourk, Secretary of the Synod

Present:

Voting Members	213
Rostered	130
Visitors	25
Total	343

**MOTION SA 11.05.16** to accept the Registrar’s Report was adopted.

.....

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS – SECOND BALLOT**

Presented by The Rev.. Mitch Watney, Chair

Secretary of the Synod - Votes cast 214; needed to elect 108

The Rev. John Bradford – 114

The Rev. James Vigen - 97

The Rev. John Bradford was declared elected.

Churchwide Assembly voting members - female clergy - Votes cast 208; needed to elect 105

The Rev. Anne Dwigins - 104

Dr. Robin Steinke - 104

The Rev. Dwigins and Dr. Steinke will be on a third ballot runoff

**REPORT ON NEW MISSION ENDEAVORS WITH YOUNG ADULTS**

Presented by the Rev. Wendy Moen, First Trinity, DC

First Trinity decided to take outreach ministry in a different direction, as they wanted to be able to tell “technomads” that our core of God’s grace and mercy can be lived out in ways different from typical traditional Sunday morning worship. Those who attend on Sunday morning stay and welcome those who come there, but they wanted to reach out also to those who do not come on Sunday morning yet aren’t involved anywhere on Sunday morning. As she meets with many in their young adults 20’s and 30’s, she finds that people she talks with bring wonderful questions that enrich her experience. They sing new and different music, drawing on our rich hymnic tradition, but they bring songs that are not necessarily in hymnals but have great meaning. Discussions include life situations, books read, current issues and events and more. They gather in worship session at 01-501, finding new ways to be together

as worshippers. "501" comes from First Trinity's address, but there are lots of 501 addresses all over the "DC area. They meet at 5:01 on Sunday evening. Matthew 5:1 tells of Jesus and his disciples starting up the mountain for the Sermon on the Mount, and we are on a spiritual journey. She meets with anyone who will meet with her and talk with her about establishing and building relationships. She brought 501 Church referral cards so that assembly attendees might give her names and contact information. She follows up with an invitation to coffee or lunch in order to listen to them. 501 is about creating the community with and for young adults. She said this isn't just her or First Trinity's or even the Synod's ministry - it is all of us together.

#### REPORT OF ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP: THE REV. AMY THOMPSON SEVIMLI

Referring to her report in the Assembly packet, she noted Jehoshaphat's prayer in II Chronicles 20:12: "We do not know what to do, Lord, but our eyes are on you." Jehoshaphat realized that he had come to a situation that he could not handle on his own, not just with his own experience or smarts. This is what she hears when she is out among the people. We cannot rely on "the way we have always done things." Changing requires risk and it requires sacrificing some of those "ways we've always done things." But this could also mean that the gospel of Jesus will be more fully known among people, especially among those who list "none" as their religious affiliation. People are not always interested in change until they realize that the children or grandchildren may be able to reconnect with Jesus through a new way of doing church. ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson has shared that few of his six kids go to church - and that what we can do for him can be creating a church that his children want to attend. She highlighted her work, especially the Base Realignment and Closure process. She noted resource people among us like Chaplain Jacobson and the Rev. Darrell Morton, Director of Federal Chaplaincies for the ELCA. She also asked Chaplain Eric Wester to investigate and report on what kind of opportunities and challenges is BRAC presenting for this synod. A conference is planned for the fall, not just about BRAC but also for ministry among and to returning veterans. Project Connect, an initiative of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries, is about helping young adults ages 18-30 to discern if they are being called to service in the church - in any capacity. We should contact her, The Rev. Mark Olsen, or The Rev. Meredith Keseley. The nature of leadership in the church is changing and we are excited about how we can develop new ways of connecting with people of all age. She is working also on Young Adult Ministry (last year's theme was The Year of the Young Adult) to increase awareness of ministry with and among young adults. They concentrate on those persons ages 18-35 without children. Young adults are all around us except in the pews, but not necessarily because they don't want to come. Many of them are searching for God and want to know if we take seriously their quest for God and for spirituality. A 22 year old wanted a weekly bible study with other young adults, but they could meet for other things as well. The goal is to have five ministries in our synod for young adults by the end of 2013. Congregations and pastors must make this a priority - to have at least 40 gathering regularly, meeting in a variety of places for worship, service, learning and fellowship. In addition to 501 Church, there is also Luther Place young adult ministry which is happening inside a traditional congregation in the District. There are myriad ways that we can approach ministry with and reach out to young adults. Go to [www.dcyoungadults.org](http://www.dcyoungadults.org) for resources and information. Pr. Sevimli stated that she would come to our congregations, as Jehoshaphat's prayer is very real for us. How do we connect with those outside our doors who seem so disinterested in us? We all desire to know Christ more intimately, to know others, and to know how we can live in Jesus Christ. He is what people are longing for and longing to know more about. We can start with Jesus, and let Jesus lead the way. The possibilities are endless.

PRESENTATION BY LOCAL MEMBER OF ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL: THE REV. AMSALU GELETA

Pr. Geleta is pastor at St. Mark, Springfield, and member of the ELCA Church Council

Bringing us greetings from the ELCA Church Council, he quoted Ephesians 3:20: Now all glory to God who is able through his mighty power at work in us to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or imagine. The Church Council is the ELCA's "board of directors," and serves as the ELCA interpretive authority between Churchwide Assemblies. The Council, made up of ELCA staff, advisors and members from various synods and regions, meets twice a year in Chicago and sometimes via conference calls between meetings. Meetings begin with prayer, Bible study and scriptural reflection before the Council takes up items of business for the church or actions on issues at hand. His first meeting was in November 2009, following the Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis, as the Council acted to implement policy changes and procedures concerning rostered leaders, etc. The Churchwide organization has been restructured to align with economic realities. Difficult choice made by the Church Council have resulted in sixty-five positions lost and many ministries being forced to consolidate or be relegated to synods. The Council also adopted a statement on persons living with disabilities, which is on the website for use by congregations. They respond to resolutions presented for the Churchwide Assembly and they examine Social Statements. Recommendations for this coming 2011 Churchwide Assembly include the LIFT Task Force report, the ELCA Malaria Campaign, the Social Statement on Genetics - Faith and Responsibility (The Rev., Carmelo Santos of this synod being one of the pastoral authors), the proposed budget with current spending authorizations for 2012 and 2013, and amendments to the ELCA Constitution and Bylaws relevant to reorganizations within the Churchwide structure. The Secretary of the ELCA keeps the Council informed on the status of congregations which are leaving the ELCA, news of ecumenical partners, the Conference of Bishops, churchwide units, and certain incorporated ministries that do the work of this church. He is amazed at the scope of ministries of the ELCA. We have many challenges, but even more reason for hope. There are countless opportunities for going forward in ministry. God can and will do amazing work in and through us.

MISSION SPENDING PLAN REPORT AND DISCUSSION

Presented by Ken Whitlow, Finance Committee Chair

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON DC SYNOD, ELCA  
2012 Budget and Mission Spending Plan**

Account		2012 Approved Budget	Difference 2012 - 2011		2011 Approved Budget	2010 Approved Budget
No.	Name		Dollars	Percentage		
1.0	<b>Donations &amp; Incomes</b>					
1.1	Congregational Benevolence	\$2,000,000	\$0	0.0%	\$2,000,000	\$2,160,000
1.2	Interest & Other Income	\$5,000	\$0	0.0%	\$5,000	\$15,000
1.3	Unidentified Income or Deficit	\$0	\$0		\$0	\$94,496
	<b>Grand Total Donations &amp; Incomes</b>	<b>\$2,005,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>\$2,005,000</b>	<b>\$2,269,496</b>
2.0	<b>Expenses</b>					
2.1	<b>THE LARGER CHURCH</b>	\$1,007,850	\$2,850	0.3%	\$1,005,000	\$1,195,809
2.1.1	Churchwide Programs	\$1,000,000	\$0	0.0%	\$1,000,000	\$1,188,000
2.1.2	Region 8 Support	\$7,850	\$2,850	36.3%	\$5,000	\$7,809
2.2	<b>SYNOD DIVISIONS</b>	\$377,650	\$28,650	7.6%	\$349,000	\$454,337
2.2.1	Congregational Life	\$29,000	(\$5,000)	-17.2%	\$34,000	\$43,000
2.2.2	Higher Education	\$90,400	\$2,400	2.7%	\$88,000	\$95,000
2.2.3	Ministry	\$130,750	\$5,450	4.2%	\$125,300	\$137,137
2.2.4	Global Mission	\$10,600	\$0	0.0%	\$10,600	\$23,150
2.2.5	New & Renewing Congregations	\$93,300	\$22,700	24.3%	\$70,600	\$100,850
2.2.6	Stewardship & Mission Support	\$23,600	\$3,100	13.1%	\$20,500	\$55,200
2.3	<b>OFFICES &amp; COMMITTEES</b>	\$9,500	(\$1,500)	-15.8%	\$11,000	\$12,600
2.3.1	Ecumenical Affairs	\$9,500	(\$1,500)	-15.8%	\$11,000	\$12,600
2.4	<b>LEADERSHIP &amp; ADMINISTRATION</b>	\$610,000	(\$30,000)	-4.9%	\$640,000	\$604,750
2.4.1	Synod Office	\$605,000	(\$15,000)	-2.5%	\$620,000	\$597,250
2.4.2	Other Admin Expenses	\$5,000	(\$15,000)	-300.0%	\$20,000	\$7,500
	<b>GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,005,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>\$2,005,000</b>	<b>\$2,267,496</b>

He asked for questions and comments.

**MOTION SA 11.05.17** to approve the Mission Spending Plan was adopted 205-4-13.

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REPORT OF THE CREATION CARE TEAM

Presented by the Rev. Christine Stephan

Last year the Synod Assembly adopted a resolution on stewardship of energy and to increase opportunities for congregations to care for the environment. Prince of Peace, Gaithersburg, held a conference on energy efficiency, there was a workshop at Together in Mission in January, and there is a website available. Some congregations have done significant work in making their facilities more efficient. Finding ways to do this can be hard work. People are invited to join the Creation Care Team, especially those with organics experience. Contact The Rev. Stephan or The Rev. Sara Scherschligt via the synod website.

## AFTERNOON INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions and afternoon workshop information was shared by Synod Assembly Planning Committee Chair, the Rev. Doug Jones.

The session adjourned with a prayer offered by Diaconal Minister Wayne Ralston.

**PLENARY SESSION 5  
SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2011  
The National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP: THE REV. PHILIP HIRSCH**

Presented by the Rev. Philip Hirsch, who is both an ELCA Director of Evangelical Mission and an Assistant to the Bishop in the Metro D.C. Synod

He noted that he has been in his position for 20 months. In the last five years more congregations have reported a decline in worship attendance, but, he added, a decline in worship does not necessarily equal a decline in activity or membership. Many people do not always attend church every week. The number of adult baptisms (of persons 6 or older) has remained unchanged in the last 20 years. In 1990 there were 67: this is indicative of the number of people who really come to faith in an age when fewer persons identify themselves as Christians. Annual infant/child baptisms through the last 20 years, however, have dropped from 690 to 450. The 12 congregations in this synod that are growing tend to be doing new things by reaching out and using innovative approaches. People have shared new ideas new ideas with him in the last year. The Rev. Christine Stephan's congregation got coaching on how to reach out to their mission field and got synod help from the New and Renewing Missions Table with a matching grant of \$3,5000. A workshop on How to Get More Members, run by Paul Hill and Kathy Townley, has attracted many folk, and they have been coaching for 501 Church. The purpose is to help congregations develop their own specific plans. There will be a two-day conference for pastors and lay leaders on Saturday and Sunday, October 22 and 23, which will reveal new approaches for mission and ministry plans. Pastors will need to get a supply! Congregations tend to have life cycles of growing and declining. They can develop a new bell curve, and those who are just tipping over the bell curve are in a great place to put in place a new plan or approach for attracting new members and growing again. When Luther Place said they wanted someone to do outreach among young adults, the New and Renewing Mission Table decided to make this available to all congregations. The Rev. Mark Olsen introduced GO Grants, which takes its name from Matthew 28 and Jesus' command to go! If we want to try something new, then there are steps to help congregations work...

1. Plan a new initiative
2. Implement and share lessons learned;
3. Apply for a GO Grant of up to \$4,000 to match what the congregation has, and use the money to implement the new plan.

GO Grant proposals should be no more than three pages, plus plans for how you will spend the money. Their goal is to give five grants this year and five the next year. If more congregations apply, then the synod will deal with that as it happens. The goal for congregations is to obtain the funds and then try something new. Each congregation must find out what works - or doesn't - in its own context. Either way, we learn, and then we can share with others our experiences of what works or doesn't in our particular context but might in another context.

Pr. Hirsch said that we can say and do these things through our confidence in Christ. We are supposed to be brave in Christ. When a tree dies in the forest, it becomes a "nurse tree," as many new seedlings take root. Not all survive, but those that do grow in groups and colonies into huge adult trees. This is a parable for us with closing congregations. Out of a nurse congregation that is closing, new ministries can

grow. A closing congregation gives 10% of its assets to charities of their choice, and out of the 90% remaining, the synod tithes 10% to the ELCA, and uses the remainder to grow new missions and ministries, continuing to bless the new kind of innovative approaches that are beginning.

501 Church is a birth out of an existing congregation. First Trinity has birthed 6 or 7 new congregations in their history. This is one of the ways that we can spawn “daughter church plants.” 80 to 100 at worship at First Trinity, and they have taken a leap of faith to do this. This is churches starting churches, planting daughter churches in a way that has been successful in various parts of this country. He encouraged us to visit other congregations and see what it feels like to be a newcomer or a visitor. A congregation can have a hospitality committee and invite people to be secret visitors, and you get feedback from them when they visit your congregation. Get great information! Give them a Starbucks card as a reward! He encourages and challenges us to pray, pray and pray! All this is primarily the work of the Holy Spirit as we pray and ask for the Spirit to come. Luther taught us that it is the Holy Spirit who calls, gathers, enlightens, makes holy and keeps in faith all the believers. He offered a prayer asking the Spirit to come among us and to move among us to help us do ministry. Response: Come, Holy Spirit.

A preview of the year to come - Theme: RePresenting Our Faith: How do Lutherans talk about their faith? Oh! We don't! But we must talk about our faith in Jesus and about grace. Pr. Hirsch closed with video on Amazing Grace, about how we can be lost, confused, liars, addicts, whatever, and then we are found by love, grace, joy, freedom, confidence - all from our Lord and Savior. We are found, and now we see.

#### PRESENTATION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The Rev. Joseph Myers addressed the group.

#### REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE AND COUNSEL

Presented by the Rev. Mark Edwards, Chair

##### *Resolution 7.1.2.1 - Policies on Child Protection and Sexual Misconduct*

*Whereas, issues of sexual abuse and harassment are emotionally painful and divisive for individuals, families, and communities; and*

*Whereas, more than 125,910 people were victims of sexual assault or rape in 2009 (Bureau of Justice Statistics – National Crime Victimization Survey - October 2010, NCJ 231327); and*

*Whereas, responding to allegations of sexual offenses within the congregation is a legal issue, as well as an issue that requires a pastoral approach to communication, protection of children within the faith community, as well as healing and faith development for all involved, including the offender; and*

*Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and other Christians, including denominations which are full communion partners with the ELCA, have developed policies and procedures to both inform and support leaders and congregations in their response (such as the United Methodist program “Safe Sanctuaries”); therefore be it*

Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the synod to:

1. provide resources for congregations of the Synod to support congregation leaders in raising awareness of sexual abuse and sexual harassment issues and responses within their congregations as they seek to make theirs a safe place for victims of such abuse;
2. provide guidance to congregations in developing a Child Protection Policy and Sexual Harassment/Sexual Abuse policies;
3. designate a team of advisors from the synod to be available to the synod and congregations in responding to allegations of child/adult sexual abuse or harassment.
4. develop Child Protection and Sexual Harassment/Abuse policies for the synod applicable to synod-sponsored events, such as youth retreats, assemblies, and meetings.

**MOTION SA 11.05.18** to approve the resolution was adopted 187-9-7.

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*Resolution 7.1.4.1-3 - Kairos Palestine Response*

*Whereas, in its Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine (2005) the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) makes known its intent to "act and speak boldly, engaging in coordinated and strategic actions for the sake of both Israelis and Palestinians" a by "Intensifying ELCA Efforts to Support Advocacy by Members;" to "encourage and support ecumenical partnership" in the Middle East b ; and for "Managing collective or personal investments with concern for their impact on the lives of all Holy Land peoples who suffer from the ongoing conflict" c ; and*

*Whereas, an ecumenical group of concerned Palestinian Christians has written the document, A Moment of Truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering, [hereinafter "Kairos Palestine"] d written first in Arabic to the people of the churches in their land, and subsequently supported by the patriarchs and heads of the thirteen historic churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in a united response e ; and*

*Whereas, Christians worldwide were moved to respond to the Kairos statement from Christians in South Africa about their oppression, and subsequent global expressions of solidarity helped end apartheid there through the nonviolent transformation of that society; and*

*Whereas, Kairos Palestine is not an in-depth analysis of the conflict, but is instead a call both to reject the oppression of the occupation itself and a strong affirmation that for followers of the Christ "... love puts an end to evil by walking in the ways of justice" f ; and*

*Whereas, Kairos Palestine is, in the words of Bishop Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), "...an expression of the aspirations of Palestinian Christians inspired by our common spiritual heritage" g ; and*

*Whereas, the ELCA has committed itself to nurturing a caring and respectful relationship with the Jewish community, we acknowledge the importance of Kairos Palestine's vision that we as Christians share with Jewish and Muslim religious and spiritual leaders, "that every human being is created by God and has been given equal dignity" h ; and*

*Whereas, ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson has called Kairos Palestine an “authentic word from our brothers and sisters in the Palestinian Christian community” and has termed the document “primarily a word of hope in a time of overwhelming pessimism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a pessimism that could lead to despair,”<sup>i</sup> and Bishop Hanson has further affirmed, “Their hope, their affirmation of love for every person, and their nonviolent resistance to the occupation inspire us to continue to do what we can to stand with our companions and partners seeking a just and lasting peace for all in the region”<sup>j</sup> ; and*

*Whereas, the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly in May 2010 resolved to call upon and urge all of its congregations, laity, and clergy to*

- 1. Read and discuss the Kairos Palestine document,*
- 2. Seek ways to achieve a deeper understanding of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, and*
- 3. Seek ways in which they can act to help end the occupation, bring about justice for all, and foster reconciliation among all the people of the Holy Land; and*

*Whereas, the synod’s Middle East Working Group has made available resources and education to synod congregations through several workshops and mailings; therefore, be it*

*Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly publicly receive the Kairos Palestine document as an authentic perspective of Palestinian Christians on the state of affairs in their homeland, and as an expression of their commitment to finding peace, justice, and reconciliation with their brothers and sisters through the way of the Christ we follow together; and be it further*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, in solidarity with the churches in Palestine and the Church of Christ throughout the world, affirm the Kairos Palestine belief that “The mission of the Church is prophetic, to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events”<sup>k</sup> ; and be it further*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the synod invite ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan (President of the Lutheran World Federation) to speak to the pastors and congregations of our synod, and be it further*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting in Orlando, Florida, to*

- 1. Call upon and urge all of its congregations, laity, and clergy to read and discuss the Kairos Palestine document.*
- 2. Receive the Kairos Palestine document as an authentic word of the Palestinian Christian perspective on the state of affairs in their homeland and of their commitment to finding peace, justice, and reconciliation with their brothers and sisters through the way of the Christ we follow together.*
- 3. Affirm the path of non-violent resistance to oppression which Kairos Palestine has set forth as the means by which the Body of Christ is called to act and live.*
- 4. Direct appropriate churchwide units to review how investment funds managed within the ELCA, including ELCA Foundation and ELCA Board of Pensions, might be construed to support activities that violate international human rights and international law within Israel and Palestine, and report back to the congregations of the ELCA through The Lutheran magazine.*

*Resolution Footnotes:*

- a *ELCA Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine (2005), I. A.*
- b *ibid. II.B. Accompaniment. 2.a.*
- c *ibid. II.B. Advocacy. 4.f.*
- d <http://www.kaiospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>
- e *Statement issued December 15, 2009*
- f <http://www.kaiospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>, 4.2.1
- g *News Release, ELCA News Service, December 11, 2009*
- h <http://www.kaiospalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>, 8
- i *In Response to the Kairos Palestine Document <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Presiding-Bishop/Messages-and-Statements/091217.aspx>*
- j *ibid.*
- k *ibid. 3.4.1*

A motion to amend the resolution by deleting the first and second Resolved paragraphs, and by deleting paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of the fourth Resolved was defeated 78-105-17.

A motion to amend the resolution by deleting paragraph 4 of the fourth Resolved was defeated 74-118-12.

A motion to amend the resolution by deleting the 3rd resolved and delete the fourth item in the fourth resolved was defeated 66-126-13.

**MOTION SA 11.05.19** to call the question and cease debate on the aforementioned amendments to the resolution was adopted 176-19-10...

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**MOTION SA 11.05.20** to approve Resolution 7.1.4.1-3 as originally presented was adopted 124-67-14.

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#### *Resolution 7.1.5.1-2 - Investment for Positive Change in Palestine*

*Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has declared its partnership in ministry with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, stated its commitment to demonstrate “balanced care for all parties in the conflict” (2005 Strategy), and advocate for a “viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian state and a secure Israel” (2005 Strategy); and*

*Whereas, Palestinian civil society needs to develop the infrastructure of a viable state for the successful implementation of a political solution between the Palestinians and the Israelis; and*

*Whereas, in August, 2009, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian National Authority detailed his working plan for developing the infrastructure and institutions of the future Palestinian State, including building government offices, a stock market, an airport, a free market economy, and an effective security apparatus 1; and*

*Whereas, these efforts appear to be bearing fruit in an economic boom in the West Bank, where the growth rate reached 8.5 percent in 2009 2 and expanded to an estimated 9 percent in the first half of 2010 3; and*

*Whereas, during this time there has been an increase in foreign investment in the West Bank, and Palestinian real estate developers have begun the first modern, planned Palestinian city north of Ramallah 4; and*

*Whereas, these positive trends are also being supported by some measures taken by Israel that enhance Palestinian economic activity and improve the security situation in the West Bank 5; and*

*Whereas, positive economic investment in Palestine is a more productive approach than boycott, divestment and/or economic sanction campaigns; and*

*Whereas, boycott, divestment and economic sanctions punish and blame one side in a complex conflict as if it bears all the responsibility for failing to reach a peaceful and just solution, thereby increasing the fear and isolation of the Israeli public and decreasing the likelihood of their being willing to take the risk inherent in any peace agreement; therefore, be it*

*Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting in Orlando, Florida, to encourage the church's members, congregations, synods, and agencies to consider making positive economic investments in those Palestinian projects and businesses that peacefully strengthen the economic and social fabric of Palestinian society.*

*Resolution Footnotes*

1 Salam Fayyad, "Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State," Program of the Thirteenth Government, Palestinian National Authority, August 27, 2009 (copy available at <http://www.palestinepmc.com/details.asp?cat=2&id=2075>)

2 International Monetary Fund, "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Fifth Review of Progress," Staff Report for the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (Madrid April 13, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2010/041310.pdf>)

3 International Monetary Fund, "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Sixth Review of Progress," Staff Report for the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (September 21, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2010/092110.pdf>).

4 See e.g., Portland Trust Palestinian Economic Bulletin (Nov. 2010), U.S. Senator John Kerry Visits The West Bank's First Planned Community (March 1, 2010) (can be obtained at [Palestinenote.com](http://palestinenote.com)).

5 State of Israel, "Measures Taken by Israel in Support of Developing the Palestinian Economy and Socio-Economic Structure," Report of the Government of Israel to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (New York, September 21, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/4F678C2F-133C-4CAC-BA18-076F8CCB9407/0/IsraelsReporttoAHLC210910.pdf>). An economic growth rate in Gaza is also estimated at 16 percent in 2010 driven by the gradual easing of the blockade. (International Monetary Fund, "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Sixth Review of Progress," Staff Report for the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (September 21, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2010/092110.pdf>).

**MOTION SA 11.05.21** to amend the resolution by striking from the resolved section "while at the same time" and the rest of that sentence with the period after "Palestinian society" in line 6 of the Resolved clause was adopted 121-56-12.

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**MOTION SA 11.05.22** to accept Resolution 7.1.5.1-2 as amended above was adopted 150-36-9.

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*Resolution 7.1.6.1-2 – Human Rights Violations Against the Oromo People*

*Whereas, we are called to follow Jesus Christ “to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4:18); and*

*Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has repeatedly called upon its congregations to intercede for those around the world who are being subjected to systematic violation of human rights; and*

*Whereas, the Constitution of the Oromo Evangelical Church in Washington, DC, like the constitutions of many ELCA congregations, calls on members to “serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless,...” (ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations C4.02.d); and*

*Whereas, the Oromo people, who number thirty million within the territory of Ethiopia, have known more than a century of persecution at the hands of successive governments; and*

*Whereas, the people of the Oromia region of Ethiopia are presently being subjected to a massive campaign to deny their human and civil rights, including arbitrary detention, the torture of detainees, and extrajudicial executions; and*

*Whereas, Human Rights Watch, in a report released of April 6, 2011, called on the Ethiopian Government to immediately release those detained without charge during “several waves of apparently politically motivated mass arrests of more than 200 ethnic Oromo Ethiopians”; and*

*Whereas, the U S Department of State, in its annual Human Rights report on Ethiopia (April 2011), has documented “unlawful killings, torture, beating, and abuse and mistreatment of detainees and opposition supporters by security forces... poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention, particularly of suspected sympathizers or members of opposition or insurgent groups” and has called on the Government of Ethiopia to comply with its commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to cease its practice of jamming Voice of America broadcasts that seek to report on the present situation and its denial of access to federal prisons by the International Committee of the Red Cross; and*

*Whereas, the Oromo Evangelical Church of Washington, DC, as well as other Oromo congregations, stand ready to provide documentation and study materials on the present situation in Ethiopia through the Synod office; therefore, be it*

*Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly encourage congregations of the synod to pray regularly for those in prison in Ethiopia and to devote time to studying the situation of the Oromo people; and, be it further*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the synod to send a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State expressing the synod’s concern for the well-being of the Oromo people and requesting that all developmental and military aid to the Government of Ethiopia be tied to that government’s compliance with internationally-recognized human rights agreements; and, be it further*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting in Orlando, Florida, to undertake programs of education and advocacy on behalf of the human rights of the Oromo people.*

*Resolution's Listed Sources*

- *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights, April 9, 2011, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, United States Department of State;*
- *Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Amnesty International 2010;*
- *Ethiopia: Submission to the UN Committee against Torture, Human Rights Watch, Nov. 2, 2010*
- *Ethiopia's Unsolved Oromo Question and Human Rights, Evangelischer Pressedienst, Nr. 51e, 9 December 2002;*
- *The New Rulers of Ethiopia and the Persecution of the Oromo, Evangelischer Pressedienst, Nr. 45e/96, 5 May, 1997*
- *Ethiopia: Free Opposition Members: Human Rights Watch report April 6, 2011, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/04/06/ethiopia-free-opposition-members>*
- *2010 Human Rights Report - Ethiopia; U.S. Department of State, April 8, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154346.htm>*

**MOTION SA 11.05.23** to accept the resolution was adopted 182-5-7.

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*Resolution 7.1.8.1-2-3 – Expression of Thanks and Gratitude*

*Whereas, the staff of the National Conference Center in Landsdowne, Virginia have served as gracious hosts for the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, providing facilities and support for this 2011 Synod Assembly; and*

*Whereas, the 2011 Synod Assembly Planning Committee and many others have worked many hours to prepare for this assembly; therefore be it*

*Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly express its gratitude and extend its heartfelt thanks to God and to all whose support and efforts have made this Synod Assembly an efficient and joyful gathering of God's people, including:*

- *the staff of the National Conference Center in Landsdowne, Virginia;*
- *the Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop;*
- *the Reverend Dr. Philip C. Hirsch, Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop for the Metro D.C. Synod;*
- *Dr. John White, Vice President of the Synod; the Reverend Dr. Marguerite Rourk, Secretary of the Synod; and Mr. John Handley, Treasurer of the Synod;*
- *the Reverend Dr. Marguerite Rourk, for her years of faithful service as Secretary of the Synod;*
- *Ms. Amy Acland for registration and on-site administrative support;*
- *the Synod office staff: Ms. Amy Acland, Ms. Karen Krueger, Mr. Harold Sargeant and their team of volunteers for their "behind the scenes" work so important to this assembly;*
- *Mr. Mark Burkhardt, Associate in Ministry, representing the Presiding Bishop and the churchwide ministries of the ELCA:*
- *Mr. Joe Myers, our keynote speaker and worship facilitator;*
- *Mr. Daniel Lehman, editor of The Lutheran magazine*
- *Ms. Jean Knight of Qwizdom, for her assistance in our electronic voting;*
- *the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Douglas Jones;*

- *Mr. Philip Meuschke for his work as volunteer Media Coordinator, and Mr. Stephen Padre and Mr. Brad Jefferson for volunteering with Communications;*
- *the Nominating Committee under the leadership of the Reverend Stephanie Johnson;*
- *the Elections Committee under the leadership of the Reverend Mitch Watney;*
- *the Assembly parliamentarian, Mr. Richard Ahlberg;*
- *those who facilitated the workshops;*
- *the Assembly Worship Planning Team, led by the Reverend Kate Murray*
  - *presider and preacher: the Reverend Richard Graham;*
  - *sacristans – the Reverend Wendy Deeben, the Reverend Stephanie Johnson, and the Reverend Kate Murray;*
  - *musician Mr. Jeremy Shoop and all others who assisted in worship;*
- *Ms. Kathy Garrison, Diaconal Minister, and Mr. Wayne Ralston, Diaconal Minister, for serving as assembly chaplains;*
- *those who permitted their names to be placed before this assembly for election as Synod Officers, to the Synod Council, to the Committee on Discipline and as a Voting Member to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly*
- *those completing their terms of service on the Synod Council:*
  - *the Reverend John Bradford*
  - *the Reverend Teka Fogi*
  - *Ms. Shirley Gibbs*
  - *the Reverend Jane Halpern*
  - *the Reverend James “Dax” Jordan*
  - *the Reverend Kendall Summers*
  - *Ms. Barbara Topel*
  - *Ms. Amanda Wahlig*
  - *Ms. Gretta Williams*
- *ecumenical and other invited guests who attended the assembly:*
  - *the Right Reverend David Colin Jones, Suffragan Bishop, The Diocese of Virginia, ECUSA*
  - *the Right Reverend Isaiah Chambala, Bishop of the Kiteto Diocese, Anglican Church of Tanzania;*
  - *the Reverend David Maack, Southeastern District, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod;*
  - *the Reverend Jonathan Barton, General Minister, Virginia Council of Churches*
  - *the Reverend Avelino Gonzales, Executive Director, Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Archdiocese of Washington;*
  - *the Reverend John W. Crossin, Washington Theological Consortium;*
  - *the Reverend David Bennett, President, Eastern District Executive Board, Moravian Church, Northern Province;*
  - *Ms. Jodi Slattery, Director of Grassroots Advocacy and Communication, ELCA Washington Office*
  - *the Reverend Richard H. Graham, Bishop of the Synod, for his leadership of this assembly, and his wife, Nancy Ann, for her faithful support of our bishop and this church.*

The Resolution of Thanks and Gratitude was **adopted by unanimous voice vote.**

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Presented by the Rev. Mitch Watney, Chair

Churchwide Assembly clergy voting member: Votes cast 221; needed to elect 111

The Rev. Anne Dwiggin - 117;

Dr. Robin Steinke - 104

The Rev. Anne Dwiggin declared elected.

CLOSE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly was closed with worship, including Installation of Synod Council Members and the Rite for the Closing of an Assembly

*Following are the minutes of the 2011 Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Fall Session.*

*The Fall Session was held September 24 at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in McLean, Virginia. The minutes herein transcribed were prepared by the Secretary of the Synod, reviewed by the Synod Council, and recommended for approval by the 2012 Synod Assembly.*

*Submitted by:  
The Rev. John C. Bradford  
Secretary of the Synod*

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

Registration was accompanied by a “Welcome Buffet.”

At 9:30 a.m., the Assembly was opened with worship, using the Order for Opening of Assembly .

**PLENARY SESSION 1  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2011  
Lutheran Church of the Redeemer  
McLean, Virginia**

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR

Present:

Rostered	80
Lay/Voting Members	113
Visitors	9
Synod Staff	3
Total	205

Approval of Absences:

Clergy	13
Lay	4

BISHOP’S REPORT

The Bishop began by stating that our synod is on the move – literally and figuratively.

Literally, the synod office will soon be relocated out of DC since the current space is too small and too expensive. We made the decision a while ago to start thinking about moving to more appropriate space and that area turned out to be in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Negotiations on the lease are ongoing, so specifics are not available for announcement at the present time. The space is close to the geographical center of our synod, is more reasonably priced, and is a much larger space that will better accommodate the functionality of our Synod Office, and will include a chapel. Our hope is that the new space will be more inviting for folks in the synod to visit and interact with the synod staff. We expect to move in early November. We will be leaving the furniture behind as we are doing a sublease that includes furniture that is better than ours. We want you to come and see us in our new space, so we will have an open house and a prayer service in the new space. It is conveniently located within a short walking distance from a metro stop. We will save around 15K a year for a while and we will be able to continue our work gracefully and faithfully.

Figuratively (and actively) our synod is on the move. Over the past several years we have enjoyed new leaders who have moved into our synod or who have returned to our area. Those of us who are baby boomers understand that there is a retirement cycle going on and retirements have the potential to go up, particularly when/if the economy rebounds. So, our leadership is in transition in many of our congregations, some of which have only known as pastor the mission developer who started the

congregation decades before. The transitions we are experiencing are opportunities for the Spirit to bring new people into our midst, and we are looking to attract the very best leaders. And so we are pleased to welcome into our synod...

The Rev. Michael Gutzler (Pastor, Good Shepherd, Woodbridge, VA)  
The Rev. Brandon Johns (Associate Pastor, St. Matthew, Lake Ridge, VA)  
The Rev. Gerry Johnson (Pastor, Bethlehem, Fairfax, VA)  
The Rev. Thomas Kenea (Associate Pastor, St. Luke, Silver Spring, MD)  
The Rev. Ray Ranker (Associate Chaplain of Campus Ministry at UMD)  
The Rev. Yvette Schock (Associate Pastor, Faith, Arlington, VA)

We also celebrate the educational opportunities in this Synod for four interns currently serving...

Brian Bankert (Abiding Presence, Burke, VA)  
Daniel Burris (King of Kings, Fairfax, VA)  
Annabelle Peake Markey (Christ, DC)  
Joanna Hertzog (St. Paul's, DC)

We are also a synod on the move in the way we do our work together. As this Assembly is probably aware (and may be tired of hearing about), I was blessed to serve on the Living into the Future Together (LIFT) task force for the ELCA which reported out at the Churchwide Assembly last month. This is a task force of the ELCA commissioned by the Church Council to develop and recommend options for the future of the ELCA in light of its identity, changes in its environment and its call to God's mission. The task force was to think about the way in which our church can be organized and structured in the future to be more effective and more useful to the Lord. My hope is that the LIFT task force report was adopted at churchwide assembly not because folks are weary of hearing about it, but because it is important to our future as a church that is on the move.

One of the items adopted from this task force is that after 2013 the ELCA will meet in assembly every three years instead of every two; other kinds of national gatherings will be offered in the second year and synodical gatherings are to be offered in the third year.

The task force also proposed a different way of thinking about the church – outside the box of hierarchy, and more with a sense of a network where people can stay in touch with each other and learn what others are doing; think together; work together; pray together. What usually happens, or what has happened in the past is that by the time one figures out what a network is, it has already become obsolete.

The notion of the ELCA that all local mission should be done by synods has not been held up in practice. The LIFT task force conveyed that the ELCA should understand itself not as a structure but as a network. Our synod is moving in a similar direction – knowing that it is vital to connect people who have similar goals – which will move us out of our “silo” ministry identity and give us a better ability to identify and work through the challenges of our culture together as we discover we face similar problems and opportunities. And even though we may be in different geographic areas, we could very well have the same potential solutions for challenges that exist all around the synod. And so the synod wants to act as a resource to bring the different parts of the synod together – to move the synod structure from boxes to something like a network that would connect people who want to be connected to one another and who want to be in relationship with each other because of the similarity and interest in the work they

want to do. As a synod on the move we want to learn to look beyond being in relationships where everyone looks like us and acts like us, but rather to become a people of a church on the move who want to get out of their shell and be in more meaningful relationships, because, frankly, being on your own probably is not going to work in the long run. And so, let us (synod) put you in touch with people – not necessarily people you know but people who have something in common with you so that together we can more effectively and efficiently meet the challenges of the day in the areas we seek to serve. Please come and see us in our new “digs” – comfortable and welcoming – a place where mission happens, a place where we are on the move – that’s what we pray that our new environment will be. Come and see what goes on all around the synod. Get a new experience of how we walk with the Lord – how we are on the move.

It is a wonderful thing to be your bishop especially on a day like today when we gather to learn and grow together. I pray that your experience here will be uplifting, interesting and exciting, and that you will go home and talk about all that happens in this place with other people.

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: LEONARD SWEET

The Rev. Phil Hirsch, Assistant to the Bishop, introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Leonard Sweet (author, preacher, scholar and ordained United Methodist clergyman) by saying...“God has always lifted up dreamers in the church to give a glimpse of how we can be lifting up the Lord and the work of the church. Len Sweet understands our past as Lutherans very well. As Professor of Evangelism at Drew Theological School in Madison, NJ, his signature image is one of a swing which moves back into the past to understand our history and then swings forward to help us get a glimpse of our future.”

Notes on Dr. Len Sweet’s first keynote presentation:

This is one of the most exciting and challenging times to be the church – to be in ministry. We must not let it pass us by because we are somewhere else. God has chosen us to serve NOW! We do not get to pick our moments – God has chosen our church to serve now, and so we cannot or should not say “I did not like that moment you gave me, God.”

By in large many of us in the church have said, “I really don’t like this age – I liked it back in the ‘Gutenberg’ age.” The problem is that we no longer live in the “Gutenberg” age – we live in a “Google” age – a time that we can call a “TGIF” culture, TGIF meaning, Twitter, Google, I Phone, and Face book. We live in a TGIF world, and as a church we are tempted to cry out, “Sorry I don’t do ‘TGIF!’” But, we have been called to serve this TGIF culture – are we going to choose the moment God has given us or are we going to try to pick another one?

Len showed a “Free hugs” video from YouTube.

God so loved (hugged) the world...not the world we wish we had, but the one we have!

If we were born before 1973, we are immigrants to TGIF. If we were born after 1973, we are natives to TGIF. (Interesting to note how few “natives” were present at this Assembly!).

Our culture is one big mission field – we must start thinking missionally. What we are dealing with is not only a post-Christian culture, but more a “anything but Christian” culture. We have to think differently.

The first thing a missionary does is study and learn the language and culture of the place being served. We can be a stubborn church and thus miss the opportunities to learn the language of the culture in which we live, and when we do that, we end up talking to ourselves instead of talking with the TGIF culture.

TGIF culture doesn't speak words, doesn't hear words, doesn't know what to do with words. Language of this culture is narrative and metaphor ("narraphor") (story and image), i.e. super bowl commercials.

Mission statements – most churches have them and believe they have to have them. We think we have to come up with a mission statement because we don't like the one Jesus gave us – "Go and make..." All of our mission statements are a bunch of words. How about a mission story or a mission image – a mission narraphor? Are we just talking to ourselves?

The challenge for us is what does it mean to speak the language of the culture in which we find ourselves?

New book – Out of Our Minds by Ken Robinson – can even take a talking head and make it into a narraphor...

Showed RSA Animate video.

How do we pass on/transmit the tradition in a narraphor age? The TGIF culture does not need authority figures to access information... don't need us to access anything!! But they do need authority figures to process information. What do they do with the information – how do they turn information into wisdom? They need us to assess the information.

Every culture has an interface – we must learn it. The interface of TGIF – is (acrostic) EPIC – meaning, experiential – participatory – Image-based – connective.

There is a revival coming! Whatever we call it, people are going to returning to church. The question is, are our churches going to be ready for them and will TGIF'ers find a place in our church or will they have to create their own?

TGIF'ers hunger for authentic, real community – and they're coming! The question is will we be ready to offer them the real thing. They don't want the fake, the poser, they don't want to pretend – they want it real, raw, authentic. They don't hide – they want a church where they can be themselves, face to face, in God's face!

Our churches have to become communities of "practice" not "perfection" -- a place where TGIF'ers are trying to get better and that takes a place where people are willing to put up with all my "mistakes" as I practice. If the church is trying to be perfect, TGIF'ers will go somewhere else. We don't exist to "keep the carpet clean." Churches are communities of practice where things get messy as we practice our spirituality.

## AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

Workshops included information on Youth Gathering 2012, Project Connect, Churchwide Assembly Report, Seeing your church building as others do, Keynote Speaker Leonard Sweet, Creation Care and Worship.

## BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study was led by Bishop Graham, using the text of 2 Kings 6:8-23.

## SYNOD COMMUNICATIONS

Presented by Karen Krueger, Synod Communications Coordinator

Ways that we regularly communicate with the Synod include the enewsletters: Leadership Ledger,, Metroliner Notes, and Metrolines. There are two blogs: Forum and Staff Insights. The synod also maintains social networking sites on Facebook and Twitter, plus a Facebook page for young adults and a Facebook page for youth. Synodical Women of the ELCA and the synod's Global Missions both have newsletters that are available to view on the Synod website.

During breaks at the assembly, short videos were shown emphasizing the theme, "To See Ourselves as Others Do."

## BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE (BRAC) INFORMATION

Presented by Chaplain Eric Wester

The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop, introduced Chaplain Wester.

Chaplain Wester said that 31,000 jobs will migrate to and around the metro DC area. In light of this information, the New and Renewing Missions Table asked whether a new mission and outreach should be launched.

- How might we foster awareness and involvement in the lives of people affected by BRAC?
- Can we strengthen and improve the quality of care for military members, veterans, and families?

Of the 31,0858 BRAC people moving, about 8,000 are relocating into the area. The remaining 23,858 will be people shifting their route and timelines for commuting to and from work.

The vast majority of jobs will move onto these military bases or the Mark Center off I-395. Gaining installations are: Ft. Belvoir (15,191); Mark Center (6409); Fort Meade (5400); Walter Reed NMMC (2200); Quantico Marine Corps Base (2658).

USAF – Bolling and Andrews AFB's;

USA – Mark Center and Forts Belvoir, Myer, McNair, Meade

USN – Walter Reed NMMC, Washington, DC Navy Yard; Anacostia Naval Base

USMC – Barracks at 8th and I, Henderson Hall, Marine Corps Base, Quantico

Ministry ideas and areas of emphasis as a result of this information:

- Concentrate on outreach
- Engage with themes of vocation and service
- Support congregations in taking initiative to provide...
  - Intentional welcome to military members and families
  - Education and reflection about the nature of military service and our baptismal vocation

Service Opportunities:

- Support others experiencing separation during deployment
- Address challenges of reintegration after deployment (including unemployment – physical, mental, and spiritual wounds of war – high-risk behaviors)
- Explore partnerships with military hospital and base chaplains for shared program activities

What has begun? Prayer Litany for the tenth anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

What is ahead?

- Half-day workshop on October 29, 2011 at Faith in Arlington, VA. Keynote Speaker, Col David Sutherland, Special Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Provide congregational ideas and resources for engaging military members, veterans, and families in four workshops.
- Opportunity to meet military chaplain leaders from various installations in the area.
- Learning about effective congregational ministry initiatives (what has been tried and what is working)
- Outreach to newly arriving military members and overview of BRAC
- Family support during deployment
- Reaching out to wounded and recovering veterans

Further ahead – consideration of prayerful recognition of service on Veteran’s Day (Sunday, November 13)

Follow-up to the workshop

- Clergy planning at the six conference meetings to link pastors and congregational leaders with nearby military base chaplains (November 2011 through April 2012)
- Overview for “pastors new to the area” – April or May 2012

#### SECOND ADDRESS BY KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Leonard Sweet continued his presentation. Notes follow.

God has been “defragging” the church for the past 20-30 years; God is getting ready to reboot the church into the original operating system – MRI = M (Missional) R (Relational) I (Incarnational)

Missional: God is on a mission. God is in motion. God calls us to join God in what God is doing in the world. We should not talk about the mission of the church, but God’s mission for the church. The question is: Is God’s mission going to have the church? God is at times more active in the world than the

church! Our church can easily be conscripted into missions other than God's. We don't go to "church" we go to "Christ." Our job is to join Jesus in what he is already doing – not to start something new. Our job in evangelism is to listen to the stories of others to find out how they are already connected to what God is doing.

Relational: Jesus said "follow me." Truth – not a set of propositions – is a person, who summons us into a relationship. The propositions are there but not to love or worship – we love and worship Jesus. Truth is Jesus. We are to be Jesus in the world – not to be "like" Jesus but to "be" Jesus. We must believe in the present tense of Jesus! How is Jesus alive in the world? Jesus is living his resurrection life in and through us. Being a disciple of Jesus is not imitation – it is implantation.

Incarnational: We live in a world that is double jointed – opposite things happening at the same time while not being contradictory. The church is getting bigger and the church is getting smaller. The world is getting more global and the world is getting more local (tribal). The church can only function globally if it has a tribal identity. We have not had "local" churches, but franchised churches – don't reflect the context of their zip codes. Need a church where people can feel like they belong and from that sense of belonging we can reach out globally. Churches that grow reflect their zip code!

#### RECOGNITION OF VOCATION

Anniversaries of Rostered Leaders, Congregations and Ministries were marked.

This time of recognition of vocation began with Assistant to the Bishop, the Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, speaking about Project Connect and young adult ministry in the Synod. The synod is hosting a young adult event on November 5, the theme of which is "I believe in God; now what?" We need to talk about "vocation." Young people need to ask the question, "What am I going to do with my life?" Project Connect emphasizes this kind of vocational work to discern if God is calling young adults to serve the church. Anniversary video – about calling – where God is calling us in life, and in fact if God is calling us to rostered ministry.

The following individuals and congregations were recognized as indicated...

##### Congregations

50 years - Emmanuel, Bethesda, MD  
50 years - Epiphany, Alexandria, VA  
50 years - Good Samaritan, Lanham, MD  
  
75 years - Good Shepherd, Alexandria, VA

##### Rostered Leaders

5 years - The Rev. Wendy S. Deeben  
5 years - The Rev. Meredith D. L. Keseley  
5 years - The Rev. Thomas M. O'Brien Jr.  
5 years - The Rev. Kendall B. Summers

10 years - The Rev. Renata E. Eustis  
10 years - The Rev. Joel L. Guttormson  
10 years - The Rev. Theresa R. Hannon  
10 years - The Rev. Mark W. Olsen  
10 years - The Rev. Abebe Tefesse

10 years - The Rev. Tiffany C. Towberman

15 years - The Rev. Shannon K. Anderson  
15 years - The Rev. Phillip A. Gaines  
15 years - The Rev. John L. Kallerson  
15 years - The Rev. David A. Sonnenberg Jr.

20 years - The Rev. Steven A. Buechler  
20 years - The Rev. Catherine A. Feil  
20 years - The Rev. Kathy F. Hlatshwayo  
25 years - The Rev. Gary R. Rhinesmith  
20 years - The Rev. Lee A. Schray

25 years - The Rev. Waaqtolaa T. Dinagdee  
25 years - The Rev. Jongkil Na  
25 years - The Rev. James F. Phillips

30 years - The Rev. Craig M. Endicott

35 years - The Rev. Scott W. Gustafson  
35 years - The Rev. Wollom A. Jensen  
35 years - The Rev. Beth S. Neubauer  
35 years - Ms. Alfreda Rulis, Associate in Ministry

45 years - The Rev. Donald K. Bentz

50 years - The Rev. LeRoy H. Beutel  
50 years - The Rev. Roger L. Dahlin  
50 years - The Rev. Ivan G. Ives  
50 years - The Rev. John C. Wetzel

55 years - The Rev. George E. Handley

#### REPORT FROM ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP: THE REV. PHIL HIRSCH

Bethany, Forestville, Md., has closed.

Resurrection, Kensington, Md., has closed. The space is occupied by the Oromo Fellowship, who should be designated as an ELCA congregation by the end of this year.

In process of developing mission strategy for Prince George's County

Continue to be in prayer for all our mission congregations in our synod

Secret Visitor Initiative was undertaken. There were 25 visits to 12 congregations. The following summarizes the experiences of the secret visitors.

- If the pastor finds the first time visitor and says hello to them...this might be a congregation that has laid out the welcome mat
- If the pastor is the ONLY ONE who says hello to the newcomers...this might be telling people to not come back
- On more than one occasion in more than one of our congregations people said they came to church, worshipped and left without a single person saying hello to them.
- If your Website still has the summer worship schedule and it's Ash Wednesday...you might be telling people to stay away
- If your website has a special section for first time visitors, pictures of people and up to date material, you might be putting out a nice welcome mat
- Old dates on the website is much more a common issue than you might think – check yours tonight. What message is that sending to people checking out your congregation?
- If it's really hard to hear what people are saying up front in worship You may be telling people to Go Away...on the other hand, if you can hear and the sermon is good...(we will be talking about preaching at the Bishop's Convocation)
- If there are good signs that direct people to park, toward unlocked doors and the sanctuary, the bathroom and the nursery....you probably put out the WELCOME MAT
- If when you drive toward the church and pass it, then circle around and can't find the right door to enter, enter the wrong one and its locked...you might as well put out the GO AWAY MAT
- If members of your church are friendly and greet each other warmly you are putting out the GO AWAY mat unless....you extend a greeting to others as well.
- When someone says, "They seemed like a group of people which was very warm and loving...to each other. I really wished that someone would have made an effort for 'A little personal interaction and a friendly smile'"

#### END OF THE DAY

The day concluded with worship, including the Rite for the Closing of an Assembly.

